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GED® Knowledge & Skill Gaps

Social Studies

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Welcome



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Today's Focus

- What is a skills gap?
- Process used to identify the gaps
- Possible reasons for gaps
- Indicators, focusing themes, & content topics
- Specific examples
- General Strategies
- Session Q&A

What is a skills gap?

A gap is the differences between the actual performance and the expected performance.

- When student performance on a skill does not match what is expected, such as a straightforward skill that students seem to answer incorrectly.
- Or a common skill that is difficult but that students could answer correctly with more instruction.
- Guidance and clarification on these skills could help students improve their overall performance.

Process Used to Identify the Gaps



**Develop Items &
Passages**



**Field Test &
Analyze**



**Build/Publish
Tests**



Write
Review/Edit
Committee Review
Review/Edit
Expert Review



Construct
Review
Embed/Test
→ **Analyze data**
Add to bank



Construct
Translate
Review
Publish
Research

Possible Reasons for Gaps

- The students may need to improve their **critical thinking** and/or **reading skills**.
- Students may need additional instruction on skills identified as gaps and on specific knowledge in content topics during GED® test preparation.
- Students tend to underperform on certain items simply because the concepts are difficult.

Indicators, Focusing Themes, & Content Topics

GED® Assessment Guide for Educators

- https://ged.com/wp-content/uploads/assessment_guide_for_educators_all_subjects.pdf
- (Copy and paste link as needed or search for “Assessment Guide for Educators”)
- Social studies begins on page 180.
- Social studies **Assessment Targets** (AKA "Indicators") begin on page 185.
- Social studies **Content Topics** begin on page 187.

Skill and Knowledge gaps

- Gap 1 – Identify evidence to support inferences (SSP.1.b)
- Gap 2 – Sequence of events (SSP.3.a)
- Gap 3 – Compare differing ideas (SSP.3.d)
- Gap 4 – Discrepancies between sources (SSP.8.a)
- Gap 5 – Content knowledge

Gap 1: Identify Evidence to Support Inferences (SSP.1.b)

Cite or identify specific evidence to support inferences or analyses of primary and secondary sources, attending to the precise details of explanations or descriptions of a process, event or concept.

The gap:

- Reading comprehension
- Skill deficit in identifying evidence that supports inferences
- Skill deficit in attending to precise details

Gap 1 Example #1

In 2002, President George W. Bush released a document entitled, “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America.”

Which statement from the document provides evidence that President Bush believed his national security strategy would require *increased* U.S. military spending?

- A. “Yet, in a very short time, we had to operate across the length and breadth of that remote nation, using every branch of the armed forces.”
- B. “We must prepare for more such deployments by developing assets such as advanced remote sensing, long-range precision strike capabilities, and transformed maneuver and expeditionary forces. . . .”
- C. “We must also transform the way the Department of Defense is run, especially in financial management and recruitment and retention.”
- D. “The United States must and will maintain the capability to defeat any attempt by an enemy—whether a state or non-state actor—to impose its will on the United States, our allies, or our friends.”

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Gap 1 Example #2

This excerpt is from a 2012 press release by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The nation's urban population increased by 12.1 percent from 2000 to 2010, outpacing the nation's overall growth rate of 9.7 percent for the same period. . . . The Census Bureau released the new list of urban areas today based on 2010 Census results.

Urban areas—defined as densely developed residential, commercial and other nonresidential areas—now account for 80.7 percent of the U.S. population, up from 79.0 percent in 2000. Although the rural population—the population in any areas outside of those classified as "urban"—grew by a modest amount from 2000 to 2010, it continued to decline as a percentage of the national population.

Based on the excerpt, which statement describes a way the population changed from 2000 to 2010?

- ☐ Immigration into the country increased the urban population.
- ☐ Migration from rural areas increased the urban population.
- ☐ The number of people living in rural areas increased.
- ☐ The number of rural communities increased.

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Gap 2: Sequence of Events (SSP.3.a)

Identify the chronological structure of a historical narrative and the sequence steps in a process.

The gap:

- Reading comprehension
- Skill deficit in identifying the chronological order of events presented in a passage
- Skill deficit in social studies content knowledge

Gap 2 Example #1

The *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill

Shortly after midnight on March 24, 1989, the *Exxon Valdez* oil tanker ran aground on a reef in Prince William Sound off the coast of Alaska. The automatic pilot technology on the vessel was turned off shortly before the accident. The resulting spill of 10.8 million gallons of crude oil is one of the major environmental disasters of the twentieth century.

The captain of the *Exxon Valdez*, Joseph Hazelwood, had failed to personally direct the ship back into the proper shipping lanes after he ordered the tanker to move out of the way of icebergs. Hazelwood retired to his quarters once he gave instructions to the third mate to reposition the ship after passing the icebergs.

Neither Hazelwood nor the third mate realized how far off course the vessel was until it was too late, despite the advanced technology on the vessel. Captain Hazelwood had disembarked earlier that day to conduct business for the ship. He returned that evening to pilot the tanker out of Prince William Sound. Little did he know upon re-boarding that he would be at the center of events leading to an enormous oil spill that would impact 1,300 miles of shoreline, kill thousands of animals, and cost over two billion dollars.

Which event described in the passage happened *first*?

- A. The *Exxon Valdez* ran aground on a reef.
- B. The *Exxon Valdez* was taken off autopilot.
- C. Captain Hazelwood retired to his rooms for the night.
- D. Captain Hazelwood disembarked to conduct business.

Gap 2 Example #2

Which list shows the correct order of steps in a process used by U.S. government branches to check each other?

- ☐ Congress passes a bill; the president vetoes the bill; Congress overrides the veto; the bill becomes law
- ☐ Congress passes a bill; the president vetoes the bill; the Supreme Court declares the veto unconstitutional
- ☐ the president nominates a Supreme Court justice; the Senate does not confirm the president's nominee; the Supreme Court declares the Senate's decision unconstitutional
- ☐ the president issues an executive order; the Supreme Court declares the order unconstitutional; the president vetoes the Court decision; the executive order stands

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Gap 3: Compare Differing Ideas (SSP.3.d)

Compare differing sets of ideas related to political, historical, economic, geographic, or societal contexts; evaluate the assumptions and implications inherent in differing positions.

The gap:

- Reading comprehension
- Skill deficit in making comparisons, logical assumptions, and rational inferences

Ellipses and Glossing

- An ellipsis (“ . . . ”) shows where text appearing in the original source was removed.
- Glossing is inserting a bracketed word or phrase in place of a rarely used or difficult word or phrase.

Ellipses and Glossing – Examples

Editorial

Voter ID laws are a sensible solution to a genuine problem. The Supreme Court confirmed as much in 2008 when it upheld Indiana's voter ID law, which is very similar to the Texas law. The lead opinion in that case was written by Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens... "The application of the statute to the vast majority of Indiana voters," declared Stevens, "is amply justified by the valid interest in protecting 'the integrity and reliability of the electoral process.'"

... So the problem is real enough, and voter ID laws strike most Americans as a reasonable solution. Opponents claim that these laws will reduce turnout, especially among black Americans, but the numbers say otherwise. ...

Veto Letter

... House Bill No. 1631 purports to solve a problem which does not exist. Missouri already has strong protections in place to prevent voter fraud, and voter impersonation fraud is an extremely rare occurrence. Due to the clear and overwhelming evidence that photo ID requirements are not necessary, the [rapid spread] of these laws is widely understood to be motivated by an attempt to suppress turnout. ... Indeed, research has shown that, when controlling for other factors, photo ID requirements have a negative effect on turnout among racial and ethnic minorities.

Voting is the foundation of our democracy. ... Putting additional and unwarranted barriers between citizens and their ability to vote is wrong and detrimental to our system of government as a whole.

Gap 3 Example #1

These excerpts are from a 2014 newspaper editorial by U.S. Senator John Cornyn and a 2016 veto letter by Missouri Governor Jay Nixon.

Editorial

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Voting is the foundation of our democracy. . . . Putting additional and unwarranted barriers between citizens and their ability to vote is wrong and detrimental to our system of government as a whole.

Which idea is *only* behind the editorial?

- ☐ Public approval of a law matters.
- ☐ Minority voter turnout is affected by voter ID laws.
- ☐ Elections are a vital part of the democratic process.
- ☐ Expert opinions on voter ID laws should be considered.

Gap 3 Example #2

These excerpts are from two candidates for mayor. They were asked about the role of technology in city planning.

Candidate Jolanda Peterson's Response

Advances in technology will continue to change the world around us. Occasionally, technology surprises us—just ask any parent. So, where it makes sense, we should use state-of-the-art tools. For example, high tech meters for our water and electric system would save money and resources. We can update our traffic signal system to immediately respond to changing traffic conditions. This has proven to save time and resources; and even to improve health. If technology can improve our lives, we should take advantage of it.

Candidate Emma Kypuros's Response

As technological advancement marches on, we will continue to adapt. Current problems at City Hall are already being solved in the private sector by technology. For example, the internet allows employees to work from home, saving millions of dollars. Additionally, the growth of telecommuting means there are fewer cars on the road burning and leaking fossil fuels. Technology should be used to improve city management and efficiency. We must also ensure that technology helps not just city hall or big business, but our individual citizens as well.

Which assumption is *only* behind the response of candidate Jolanda Peterson?

- ☐ Technological innovations may not deliver the expected results.
- ☐ Some technology can have a positive effect on the environment.
- ☐ Modern technology can have a positive impact on the lives of citizens.
- ☐ Some technological solutions have not been implemented by the local government.

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Gap 3 Example #3

Man in Nature

John Locke asserted that man in nature is absolutely free, in total control of self and personal property, equal to the greatest person, and ruled by no one. Locke stressed that in a state of nature, there are no laws and no legal obligation for fair conduct and good behavior.

Which statement is an implication of Locke's claim regarding man in nature?

- ☐ He has no need for partners or allies.
- ☐ He has no need for rules or government.
- ☐ He lives in fear and is in constant danger from others.
- ☐ He lives with abundance and his needs are always met.

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Gap 4: Discrepancies between sources (SSP.8.a)

Compare treatments of the same social studies topic in various primary and secondary sources, noting discrepancies between and among the sources.

The gap:

- Reading comprehension
- Skill deficit in contrasting and comparing sources

Gap 4 Example #1

Blog Entry

As a presidential democracy, the U.S. system of government differs from a parliamentary democracy. The U.S. president has a strong role, independent from the legislative branch, but with specified constitutional restraints that may be imposed by Congress. The executive branch controls the day-to-day operations of the federal government. As head of state, the president directs foreign policy. As commander in chief of the armed forces, the president is responsible for the nation's defense. Powers this extensive can be justified by the fact that the president is elected by the people rather than by the legislative branch, as is the case in a parliamentary system.

Letter

Presidential elections dominate the news every four years. While the election of a president rightly attracts much voter attention, citizens should also remember the importance of their votes for U.S. representatives and senators. One individual controls an entire branch of government, the executive. However, the powers of the chief executive are limited in various ways by the legislative branch. For example, the president must get confirmation from the Senate for judicial appointments. A president who commits crimes can be impeached by the House of Representatives. Because such checks on presidential power are vital to our democracy, voters should exercise utmost care in electing candidates for Congress.

How do the blog entry and the letter *differ* in their analyses of presidential democracy?

- A. Only the letter mentions specific powers exercised by the executive branch.
- B. Only the letter mentions the relationship between government branches.
- C. Only the blog entry recognizes the importance of presidential elections.
- D. Only the blog entry presents a defense for strong presidential powers.

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Gap 5: Content Knowledge

Test questions assume students have a basic understanding of the social studies subject matter and terminology used in the content topics and indicators.

The gap:

- Content knowledge deficits in civics/government and economics

Gap 5: Content Knowledge

Social Studies Content Topics and Subtopics

Civics and Government	
CG.a	Types of modern and historical governments CG.a.1 Direct democracy, representative democracy, parliamentary democracy, presidential democracy, monarchy and others types of government that contributed to the development of American constitutional democracy
CG.b	Principles that have contributed to development of American constitutional democracy CG.b.1 Natural rights philosophy CG.b.2 Popular sovereignty and consent of the governed CG.b.3 Constitutionalism CG.b.4 Majority rule and minority rights CG.b.5 Checks and balances CG.b.6 Separation of powers CG.b.7 Rule of law CG.b.8 Individual rights CG.b.9 Federalism
CG.c	Structure and design of United States government CG.c.1 Structure, powers, and authority of the federal executive, judicial, and legislative branches CG.c.2 Individual governmental positions (e.g. president, speaker of the house, cabinet secretary, etc.) CG.c.3 Major powers and responsibilities of the federal and state governments CG.c.4 Shared powers CG.c.5 The amendment process CG.c.6 Governmental departments and agencies
CG.d	Individual rights and civic responsibilities

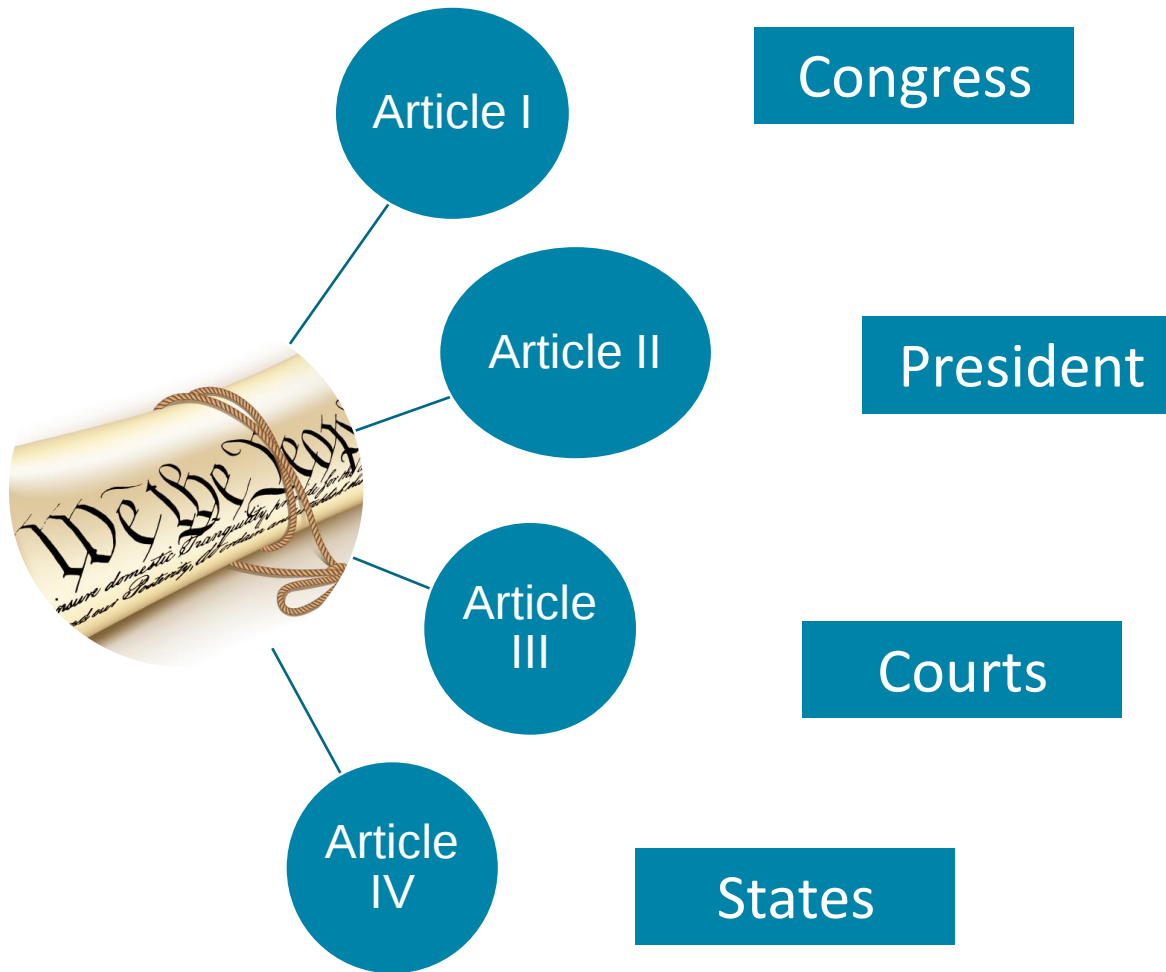
Gap 5: Content Knowledge

Economics	
E.a	Key economic events that have shaped American government and policies
E.b	Relationship between political and economic freedoms
E.c	Fundamental Economic Concepts - E.c.1 Markets - E.c.2 Incentives - E.c.3 Monopoly and competition - E.c.4 Labor and capital - E.c.5 Opportunity cost - E.c.6 Profit - E.c.7 Entrepreneurship - E.c.8 Comparative advantage - E.c.9 Specialization - E.c.10 Productivity - E.c.11 Interdependence
E.d	Microeconomics and Macroeconomics - E.d.1 Supply, demand and price - E.d.2 Individual choice - E.d.3 Institutions - E.d.4 Fiscal and monetary policy - E.d.5 Regulation and costs of government policies

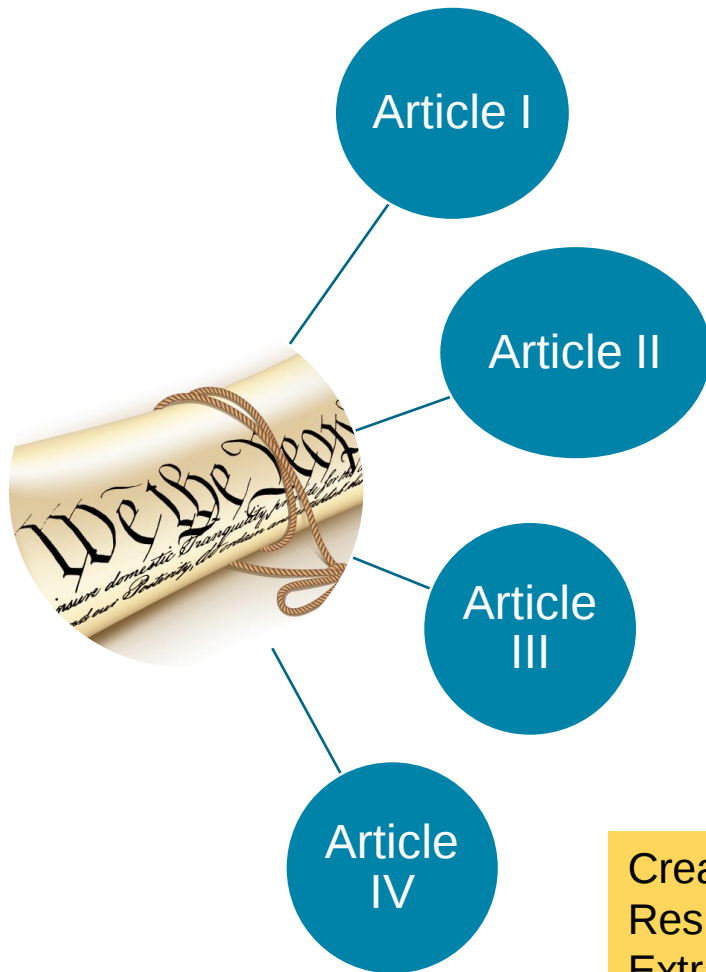
What is the Difference?

Characteristics	Constitution	Bill of Rights
Meaning	Fundamental principles and established precedents a state, organization, or any other entity has passed to be followed.	A formal declaration or assertion of the legal and civil rights that citizens of any country enjoy
Functions	Outlines how government arms function, basic rules civil officials should follow, and rights and limitations of citizens	Lists the rights every citizen is entitled to and how the government and other people should protect them
Entity	An independent body housing different rules	Is housed by the constitution 

Explore the Basics



Explore the Basics



Coin Money
Establish the Budget
Regulate Commerce
Declare war and support an army and navy
Make other laws to carry out powers

Act as Commander-in-Chief
Maintain cabinet of advisers
Negotiate treaties
Appoint Supreme Court Justices
Execute laws

Interpret the meaning of laws
Decide whether a law is relevant to a particular set of facts
Rule on how a law should be applied
Determine whether a law is constitutional

Create and enforce their own laws
Respect laws of other states
Extradite criminals
Have a representative government
Follow "supreme law of the land"

RIGHTS

Bill of Rights

- Life, Liberty, and Property
- Freedom of Religion
- Freedom of Speech and Press
- Right to Bear Arms
- Right to Assemble and Petition
- Right to Trial by Jury
- Protection from Unreasonable Searches and Seizures

RESPONSIBILITIES

Vote



Pay Taxes



Obey Laws



Serve on Jury

Welcome to [ConstitutionFacts.com](#) where you'll see the entire text of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence - and much more! You'll find interesting insights into the men who wrote the Constitution, how it was created, and how the Supreme Court has interpreted the United States Constitution in the two centuries since its creation.

The Constitution is certainly the most influential legal document in existence. Since its creation some two hundred years ago, over one hundred countries around the world have used it as a model for their own. And it is a living document. It is one of the world's oldest surviving constitutions. And, while the Supreme Court continually interprets the U.S. Constitution so as to reflect a rapidly changing world, its basic tenets have remained virtually unchanged since its inception, and unchallenged as well. People quarrel over its interpretation, but never do they question the wisdom of its underlying principles.

At [ConstitutionFacts.com](#), you'll begin to see why. You'll get a taste of some of the Founding Fathers' thoughts. You'll see some of the reasoning behind the Supreme Court's landmark decisions. But, most importantly, you'll get a feel for the United States Constitution itself and how it is that a document that was written over 200 years ago still plays an integral role in our everyday lives.

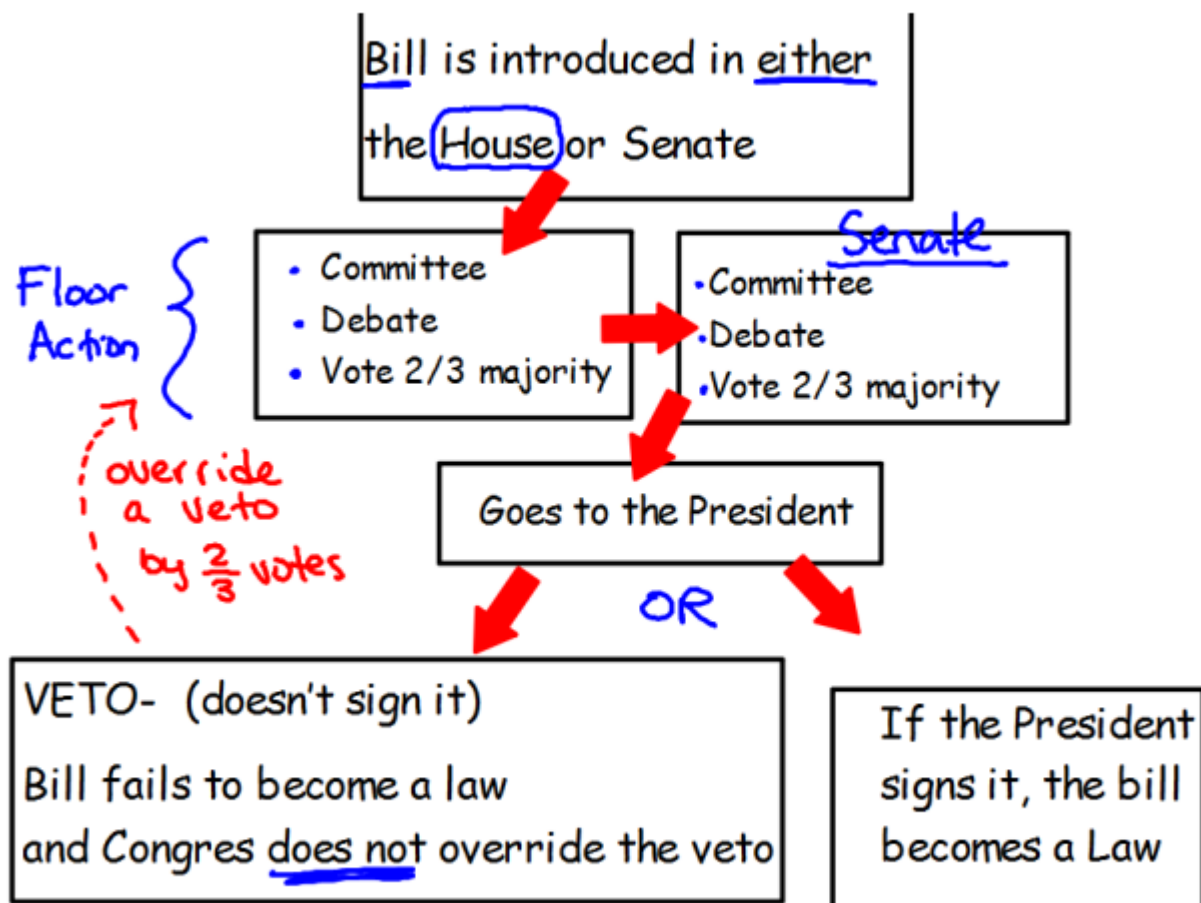


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From Bill to Law



The Constitution

Beginning with the iconic phrase, "We the People," the U.S. Constitution is composed of the Preamble, seven articles, and 27 amendments to the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights—the first 10 amendments.

[Read the Full Text](#)

[More about the Constitution](#)

ARTICLES

Preamble
We the People

Article I
Legislative Branch

Section 1: Congress
Section 2: The House of Representatives
Section 3: The Senate
Section 4: Elections
Section 5: Powers and Duties of Congress
Section 6: Rights and Disabilities of Members
Section 7: Legislative Process
Section 8: Powers of Congress
Section 9: Powers Denied Congress
Section 10: Powers Denied to the States

Article II
Executive Branch

Article III
Judicial Branch

Article IV
States, Citizenship, New States

Article V
Amendment Process

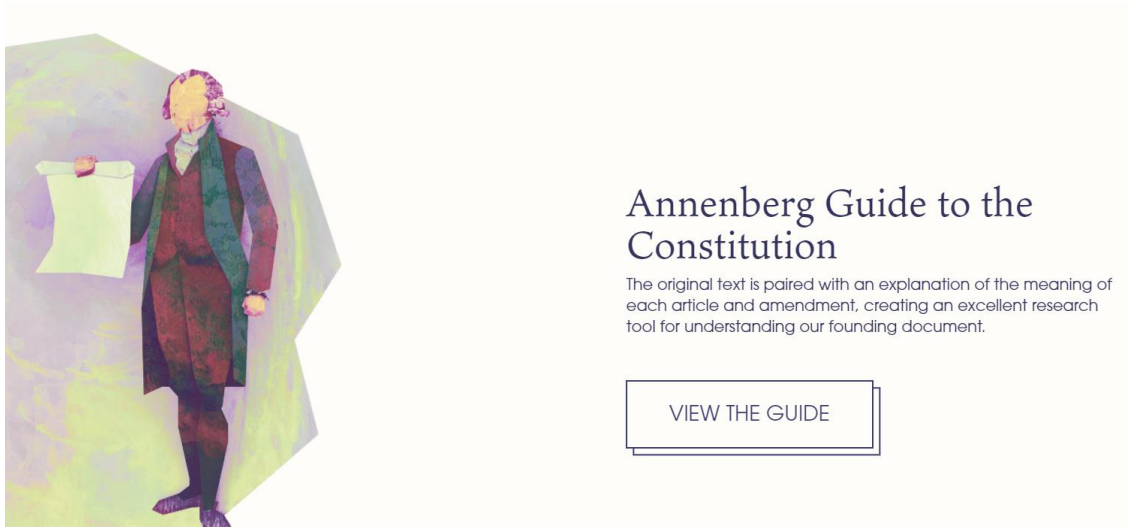
Article VI
Debts, Supremacy, Oaths,
Religious Tests

Article VII
Ratification

<https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/the-constitution>

Content Knowledge – Access Online Resources

<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org>



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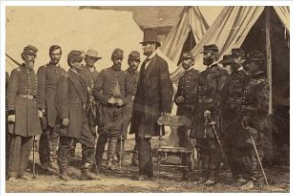
Content Knowledge – Access Online Resources



Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)



Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)



Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)



The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)



The Emergence of Modern America



The Great Depression and World War

<http://docsteach.org/>

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Content Knowledge – Access Online Resources



<http://sheg.stanford.edu/?q=node/21>

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General Strategies

- Share the GED® indicators and content topics with your students. The content topics can be used as a teaching/study guide.
- Review key foundational concepts/content.
- Remind students to carefully read the questions and excerpts.
- Encourage students to study key definitions and terms.
- Encourage students to read more. Strong reading skills will benefit students in all 4 subject area tests.
- Encourage students to analyze the content they read on a daily basis. Strong critical thinking skills will benefit students in all 4 subject area tests.

Q & A

WHICH? help? why? what? who?

HOW about? answers? WHERE when

WHY? WHEN? WHO? WHY? WHY?

FAQ? which? how?

Thank you!

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