

## Module 2: The Constitution

### Topic 4 Content: The Preamble

#### Introduction



**Glover Mint:** In today's episode, we will begin examining the United States Constitution. The beginning of the Constitution, known as the Preamble, clearly states the purpose of the Constitution. Here to help us on our journey is our resident Constitutional scholar, Jamie Madson, with his segment, *The Constitutional Connection*.

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### The Constitutional Connection



**Jamie Madson:** I'm Jamie Madson and this is *The Constitutional Connection*. To begin this episode, I would like to start with two basic questions: why do we have a Constitution and what is it? To understand why we have a Constitution, we will need to rewind back to the Articles of Confederation.

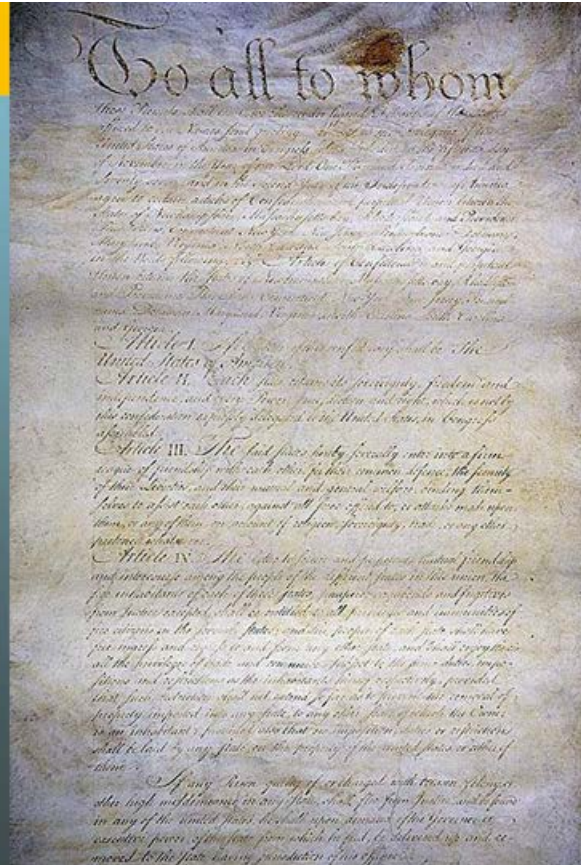
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#### The Articles of Confederation

#### The Articles of Confederation

- In September 1786, some Massachusetts farmers stormed courthouses to prevent judges from foreclosing on farms.
- The Massachusetts legislature asked Congress for support.
- Congress had the power to raise a national army, but it did not have the power to tax.
- Congress was unable to offer any support to Massachusetts during the uprising.
- Shay's Rebellion, exposed the weakness of the Articles of Confederation.



**Jamie Madson:** In September 1786, a group of Massachusetts farmers stormed several courthouses in an effort to prevent judges from foreclosing on farms. When the farmers raided a military arsenal, the Massachusetts legislature asked Congress for support.

Under the Articles of Confederation, Congress had the power to raise a national army, but it did not have the power to tax. Without any revenue to fund an army Congress was unable to raise one; therefore, it was unable to offer any support to Massachusetts during the uprising. This event, known as Shay's Rebellion, exposed the weakness of the Articles of Confederation. It was clear that a more efficient form of government was necessary.

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#### A Social Contract

##### A Social Contract

- Hobbes thought people would live in a warlike state without government.
- Hobbes argued that people must surrender some freedoms and agree to be ruled by a fair government.
- The framers tried to create a strong government with limited power.
- Citizens must agree to give their power to the government and the government should not abuse it.
- John Locke was a believer in limited government.
- The Constitution is a social contract between the American government and the American citizens.



**Jamie Madson:** Thomas Hobbes believed that without a government empowered to rule, people would be forced to live in a warlike state. He argued that people must agree to relinquish certain freedoms and agree to be governed, in order to establish a government that agrees to rule fairly on the people's behalf.

The difficulty presented to the framers of the Constitution was how to create a government that was empowered enough to rule properly, but not empowered to the point where the citizens could be abused by the government. Essentially, the citizens must agree to give their power to government and the government should not abuse that power. This is known as a limited government, where their government may only do those things that the people have given it the power to do. John Locke was a firm believer in limited government.

The United States Constitution is a social contract between the American government and the American citizens. It establishes policies that empower the government to rule and also policies that limit it in order to prevent the abuse of power.

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### Examining the Constitution

# Examining the Constitution

**The Preamble**

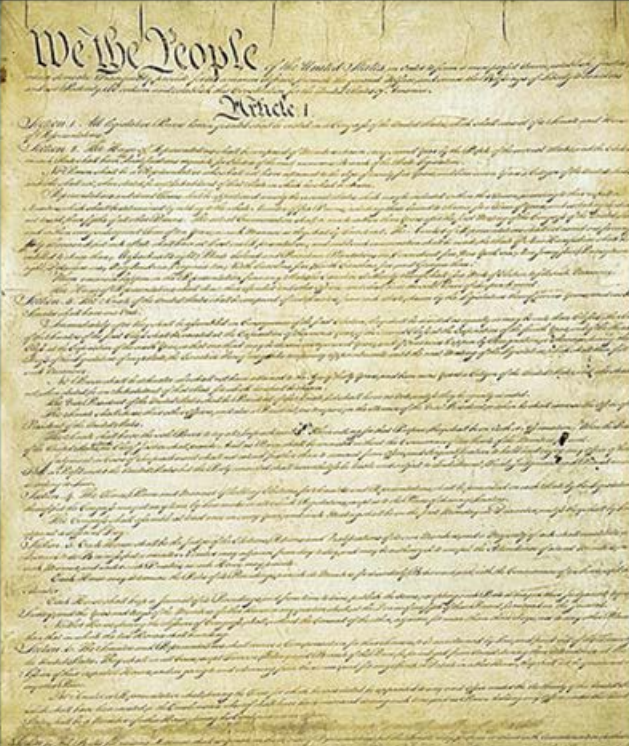
Introduction stating the 6 goals of the national government

**The Articles**

Establish and organize the federal government of the U.S.

**The Amendments**

Formal changes and additions to the U.S. Constitution



**Jamie Madson:** The U.S. Constitution is composed of three main parts: the Preamble, the Articles, and the Amendments. The Preamble is the introduction to the Constitution. In the Preamble, the framers explained six goals of the national government they hoped to establish. The seven Articles that follow the Preamble establish and organize the federal government of the United States. The Amendments are the formal changes and additions to the constitution, made to limit the government and provide for the security of civil liberties. We are going to focus on the six goals explained in the Preamble of the Constitution.

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#### The Preamble

## The Preamble

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

*The Preamble of the U.S. Constitution*



**Jamie Madson:** “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

These are the six objectives of the Constitution. Let’s break them down one at a time so we can gain a better understanding of their purpose.

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#### To Form a More Perfect Union

## The Preamble

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

### To Form a More Perfect Union

- The goal of the Constitution was to establish a national government that was strong enough to support its citizens.
- The government established by the Constitution would be organized using the federal system.
- The national government would share some of its power with state governments, but would retain enough power to remain effective.

**Jamie Madson:** The Articles of Confederation established a government that was weak and powerless. The goal of the Constitution was to establish a national government that was strong enough to support its citizens. The government established by the Constitution would be organized using the federal system. The national government would share some of its power with state governments, but would retain enough power to remain effective.

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#### To Establish Justice

## The Preamble

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

### To Establish Justice

- The laws detailed in the Constitution would be fair.
- Individual rights would be protected and measures would be put in place to prevent the national government from becoming too powerful.
- The framers wanted to prevent the mistreatment that they had endured under the British monarchy.

**Jamie Madson:** The laws detailed in the Constitution would be fair. Individual rights would be protected and measures would be put in place to prevent the national government from becoming too powerful. The framers wanted to prevent the mistreatment that they had endured under the British monarchy.



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#### To Ensure Domestic Tranquility

## The Preamble

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, **provide for the common defence, promote general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty** to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

### To Ensure Domestic Tranquility

- One of the goals of the Constitution was to establish a government that was empowered to maintain peace within its territory.
- The U.S. Constitution ensured that the government would have the power to put an end to any future uprising.
- Established peaceful relationships among the states and between the national and state governments.

**Jamie Madson:** Shay’s Rebellion revealed the weakness of the national government under the Articles of Confederation. One of the goals of the Constitution was to establish a government that was empowered to maintain peace within its territory. The U.S. Constitution ensured that the government would have the power to put an end to any future uprising.

Another goal of the Constitution was to establish peaceful relationships among the states and between the national and state governments. The framers established policies that facilitated these peaceful relationships and ensured tranquility within the boundaries of the U.S.

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#### To Provide for the Common Defense

## The Preamble

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

### To Provide for the Common Defense

- The framers of the Constitution wanted give the government the ability to raise and maintain a military force.
- This military could be used against violent uprisings and foreign countries.
- The Constitution empowers the government to protect itself against enemies and invasions.

**Jamie Madson:** The framers of the Constitution wanted give the government the ability to raise and maintain a military force that could be used to quash significantly violent uprisings, like Shay’s Rebellion, but also threats from foreign countries. The Constitution empowers the government to protect itself against enemies and invasions.

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#### To Promote the General Welfare

## The Preamble

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

### To Promote the General Welfare

- The framers wanted to establish a government that was concerned with providing for the good of the people.
- They wanted the government to have the ability to raise funds for provisions such as schools, health care, roads, etc.

**Jamie Madson:** The framers wanted to establish a government that was concerned with providing for the good of the people. They wanted the government to have the ability to raise funds for provisions such as schools, health care, roads for travel, and anything else that benefits citizens.

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#### To Secure the Blessings of Liberty

## The Preamble

Next

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

### To Secure the Blessings of Liberty

- The Constitution establishes a government that protects the individual freedoms of its citizens.
- The government established by the Constitution also ensures that the rights of society as a whole are protected.

**Jamie Madson:** The Constitution establishes a government that protects the individual freedoms of its citizens, while still ensuring that the rights of society as a whole are protected.

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Ending of Episode



**Glover Mint:** This concludes our episode on the Preamble of the U.S. Constitution. Thank you for joining us for this episode of WUSG News.