

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



As American citizens, we have rights that cannot be taken away. The Constitution, which went into effect in 1789, describes our country’s system of government. In 1791, our leaders approved 10 amendments, or changes, to the Constitution. The first 10 amendments are called the Bill of Rights, and they protect our individual freedoms. There are now 27 amendments to the Constitution.

Read the chart below to learn about some of your rights. Fill in the spaces on the right. Then answer the questions.

Amendments	Why This Amendment is Important to Me
<p>Amendment I People have the right to freedom of religion, speech and the press. They also have the right to assemble for meetings and to ask the government to make changes.</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Amendment IV Says that the government cannot search people and their homes without a strong reason and written permission from a judge.</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Amendment V Says that every person has the right to a fair trial and to have his or her rights protected while awaiting trial. A person tried and found innocent cannot be tried again for the same crime. Also, private property cannot be taken without payment.</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Amendment VI Says that every person has the right to a “speedy and public trial.” A person also has the right to a trial by jury and to be represented by a lawyer.</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

1. Which amendment says that people can express their ideas even if others don’t agree with them?

2. What does a “speedy and public trial” mean? _____
3. Why do you think the founders of our country had to write out these freedoms?

4. Why do you think the founders included these freedoms in the Bill of Rights?

BONUS Why do you think it is important to understand and protect the Bill of Rights? Write your ideas on the back of this page