

# UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION: THE PREAMBLE



The 13 American colonies gained their independence from Great Britain in 1776. By 1787, delegates from each state met in Philadelphia at the Constitutional Convention to draft a constitution for a new government. The first part of the Constitution was called the **Preamble**. The Preamble provided the vision for the proposed government. Writing the Preamble was mainly the work of a man named Gouverneur Morris, who was a delegate representing Pennsylvania.

**Read the Preamble below.**

*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 the 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 lists six goals for the new government. Match each phrase with the description that best explains its meaning. Choose from the text bank of descriptions below.**

| Goal   | Meaning |
|--|---------|
| Form a more perfect Union                                      |         |
| Establish Justice  |         |
| Insure domestic Tranquility                                    |         |
| Provide for the common defence                                 |         |
| Promote the general Welfare                                    |         |
| Secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity |         |

**Text Bank: Descriptions**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Protect individual freedoms for present and future generations | Protect the peace and promote harmony among its citizens |
| Make the bonds among the 13 states even stronger               | Defend the country against foreign threats               |
| Make fair laws   | Encourage what is best for the country as a whole        |

**Bonus question:** Now think about the beginning and end of the Preamble: "We the people of the United States . . . do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." These words tell us that the authority to make the new government comes from whom?

- a. The president of the United States
- b. The American people
- c. The British government
- d. The colonial governments