Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Key\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**The Constitution- Structure and Principals**

*Use the “America” textbook (pages 254-257) to complete the following information.*

**Structure of the Constitution (Parts):**

What are the three main parts of the US Constitution?

1. The Preamble

2. The Articles

3. The Amendments

**Preamble:** In the chart below, explain each of the six basic goals outlined in the Preamble of the Constitution.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Goals** | **Explanation and/or Illustrations** |
| To form a more perfect union: | All states should work together as a unified nation. |
| To establish justice: | Everyone should be treated equally & fairly under the law. |
| To ensure domestic tranquility: | The government has the responsibility to ensure peace & order at home. |
| To provide for the common defense: | The government has responsibility to protect its citizens against foreign attacks. |
| To promote the general welfare: | The government has the responsibility to promote the well-being of all its citizens. |
| To secure the blessings of liberty: | The government should value & protect the rights of its citizens. |

**Articles:**

The main body of the Constitution is divided into seven SECTIONS. Together, they establish the FRAMEWORK for American government.

The first three articles describe the THREE BRANCHES.

Article 4 deals with RELATIONS BETWEEN THE STATES

Article 5 provides a PROCESS TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION.

Article 6 states that the CONSTITUTION IS SUPREME LAW OF THE LAND.

Article 7 sets up a procedure for THE STATES TO RATIFY THE CONSTITUTION.

**Amendments:**

The amendments are formal CHANGES that have been made to the Constitution. In more than 200 years, only 27 changes (amendments) have been made, and the first 10 are known as the BILL OF RIGHTS.

**Principles of the Constitution:**

The Constitution rests on 7 basic principles. Define, explain or illustrate each principle below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Principles** | **Explanation and/or Illustrations** |
| Popular Sovereignty | Asserts that people are the primary sources of the government’s authority. |
| Limited Government | The government has only powers that the Constitution gives it. |
| Separation of Powers | Divides the government into three branches. |
| Checks and Balances | Each branch has the power to check or limit the actions of the other two. |
| Federalism | Division of power between the Federal Government & the states. |
| Republicanism | Citizens elect representatives to carry out their will. |
| Individual Rights | Constitution protects individual rights. |

**Breaking Down the Three Branches**

(Use pp. 256-263 in the *America* textbook)

***What does each branch of the Federal Government do?***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Article i** | **Article II** | **Article III** |
| **LEGISLATIVE**  **Branch** | **EXECUTIVE**  **Branch** | **JUDICIAL**  **Branch** |
| Passes Laws | Carries Out Laws | Interprets Laws |
| ***Who works for this Branch?***  100 Senators (2per state)  435 Representatives (based on a state’s POPULATION) | ***Who works for this Branch?***  PRESIDENT VICE PRESIDENT CABINET DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES | ***Who works for this Branch?***  9 Supreme Court JUSTICES  Other federal judges |
| responsibilities | responsibilities | responsibilities |
| Power to make laws; | Negotiates Treaties; Vetoes Bills; | Final court of appeal; |
| Collects taxes; Coin money; | Proposes Laws; Grants Pardons; | Hear cases that have been tried in lower courts |
| Establish P.O’s; Declares war | Appointments |  |

***What are “Checks and Balances” and how does each branch watch over the other two?***

In the chart below, list examples of how the branches check the powers of the others.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Legislative Branch | Checks Executive Branch by:   1. Override vetoes; confirms executive appointments 2. Ratifies treaties; can declare war 3. Appropriates money; can impeach/remove president | Checks Judicial Branch by:   1. creates lower federal courts; can impeach/remove judges 2. can propose amendments to overrule decisions 3. approves appointments of federal judges |
| Executive Branch | Checks the Legislative Branch by:   1. can propose laws; can veto laws 2. can call special session of Congress 3. makes appointments; negotiates foreign treaties | Checks the Judicial Branch by:   1. appoints federal judges 2. can grant pardons to federal offenders   (You can mark out the 3 here) |
| Judicial Branch | Checks the Executive Branch by:  1.can declare executive actions unconstitutional | Checks the Legislative Branch by:  1.can declare acts of Congress unconstitutional |