What Is the US Constitution

Name / chosen name: _____

Use after the activity. Open responses can differ; accept drawings, spoken responses and supported writing.

Ideas supported by the text

The US Constitution sets out the structure and powers of the federal government. It was signed in 1787 and took effect through state ratification. It has been changed by amendments.

The federal government has legislative, executive and judicial branches. Their powers are divided, with checks on one another. State governments also have important powers. This is the US system, not the Australian system.

Sources: National Archives — US Constitution

US Three Branches Matching

Name / chosen name: _____

Use after the activity. Open responses can differ; accept drawings, spoken responses and supported writing.

1. Congress → C. Makes federal laws
2. President and executive branch → A. Carries out federal laws
3. Federal courts → B. Interpret and apply federal law in cases

Checks and Balances Connections

Name / chosen name: _____

Use after the activity. Open responses can differ; accept drawings, spoken responses and supported writing.

1. President → C. Can veto a bill passed by Congress
2. Congress → D. Can override a veto with two-thirds in each House
3. Senate → B. Considers confirmation of many presidential appointments
4. Federal courts → A. Can review whether government actions fit the Constitution

Bill of Rights Scenarios

Name / chosen name: _____

Use after the activity. Open responses can differ; accept drawings, spoken responses and supported writing.

1. Speech / press — First Amendment
2. Religion — First Amendment
3. Fair criminal trial — Sixth Amendment
4. Protection from unreasonable searches — Fourth Amendment

These introduce concepts, not legal determinations about real situations.

Constitutional Convention Timeline

Name / chosen name: _____

Use after the activity. Open responses can differ; accept drawings, spoken responses and supported writing.

1. 1787: Delegates meet in Philadelphia; the Constitution is signed on 17 September.
2. 1788: The ninth state ratifies, meeting the requirement for the Constitution to take effect.
3. 1789: The new federal government begins operating.
4. 1791: The first ten amendments, the Bill of Rights, are ratified.

Check distinctions in the student source notes; do not treat an ongoing period as a single event.