GRADES 2–3

What Is the US Constitution

Name / chosen name: _____

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.

1. What is the main idea of the text?

2. What is one detail that supports it?

3. What would you check in the source?

Sources: National Archives — US Constitution

GRADES 2–3

US Three Branches Matching

Name / chosen name: _____

Match each numbered term to a lettered description. Write the letter beside the term.

1. Congress _____

2. President and executive branch _____

3. Federal courts _____

Description bank

A. Carries out federal laws

B. Interpret and apply federal law in cases

C. Makes federal laws

Sources: National Archives — US Constitution

GRADES 4–5

Checks and Balances Connections

Name / chosen name: _____

Match each numbered term to a lettered description. Write the letter beside the term.

1. President _____

2. Congress _____

3. Senate _____

4. Federal courts _____

Description bank

A. Can review whether government actions fit the Constitution

B. Considers confirmation of many presidential appointments

C. Can veto a bill passed by Congress

D. Can override a veto with two-thirds in each House

Sources: National Archives — US Constitution

GRADES 4–5

Bill of Rights Scenarios

Name / chosen name: _____

Match fictional situations to a Bill of Rights idea. These examples introduce concepts; real legal questions depend on details.

speech / press · religion · fair criminal trial · protection from unreasonable searches

1. A community newspaper publishes criticism of a government decision.

2. A person chooses a religious practice.

3. A person accused of a crime receives a public trial and can have assistance from a lawyer.

4. Officials consider whether a search needs legal authority.

Sources: National Archives — Bill of Rights

GRADES 4–5

Constitutional Convention Timeline

Name / chosen name: _____

Put the cards in time order by writing 1–4, or cut and arrange. “Today” is an ongoing period, not a single dated event.

1789 · The new federal government begins operating.
Order: _____

1788 · The ninth state ratifies, meeting the requirement for the Constitution to take effect.
Order: _____

1791 · The first ten amendments, the Bill of Rights, are ratified.
Order: _____

1787 · Delegates meet in Philadelphia; the Constitution is signed on 17 September.
Order: _____

1. One question about a milestone

Sources: National Archives — US Constitution · National Archives — Bill of Rights