

Preamble to the U.S. Constitution

United States Constitutional Convention Lesson scope: the Preamble only.

How does the Preamble turn a list of governmental purposes into a claim about the source of political authority?

TOTAL TIME	TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION
30 minutes	Preamble to the U.S. Constitution - complete Preamble

TEACHER SETUP

Open the work in the Enhanced Reader and cue the span using the START and END anchors below.

START	We the People of the United States,
END	do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.
PASSAGE ID	sec-constitution-preamble-01

SOURCE / ATTRIBUTION NOTE

The Preamble was reported by the Convention's Committee of Style; its final literary form is commonly associated with Gouverneur Morris.

THE MOVE

Analyze how grammar assigns agency in a foundational political text

WHY THIS PASSAGE

The Preamble begins with a collective subject - "We the People" - and follows it with a sequence of purposes before reaching the governing verbs "ordain and establish." The syntax makes the people, not the document or government itself, the grammatical source of authority.

MARK

Box the complete grammatical subject. Underline each purpose introduced after "in Order to." Circle the final governing verbs.

NOTICE

- Who is performing the action in this sentence?
- Why place the purposes between the subject and the main verbs?
- How would the claim change if the sentence began "The government hereby establishes"?

THINK

Answer provisionally: How does the Preamble turn a list of governmental purposes into a claim about the source of political authority? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response. Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.

STRONG ANSWER

The Preamble makes popular authority grammatical. "We the People" is the subject that carries through every stated purpose and finally performs the actions "ordain and establish," so government is presented as something created by the people for named ends.

EVIDENCE

Use the opening subject, at least two purposes, and the final verbs "ordain and establish."

WATCH FOR

Do not merely list the six purposes. Explain how the sentence structure identifies who possesses the authority to create the government.

SOLO

Read independently.

SUPPORTED

Narration + highlighting.

LISTENING

Listen; same evidence task.

STUDENT PAGE · GRADE 12 · LESSON 323

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WORK	Preamble to the U.S. Constitution
TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION	Preamble to the U.S. Constitution - complete Preamble
PASSAGE ID	sec-constitution-preamble-01

Your teacher will open or cue the work in the Enhanced Reader. Use the location and verbatim anchors below to confirm the assigned span.

START

We the People of the United States,

END

do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

READ / LISTEN TO THE ASSIGNED PASSAGE SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration and highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the assigned passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. **MARK** Box the complete grammatical subject. Underline each purpose introduced after "in Order to." Circle the final governing verbs.
2. **NOTICE** Who is performing the action in this sentence? Why place the purposes between the subject and the main verbs? How would the claim change if the sentence began "The government hereby establishes"?
3. **THINK** Answer provisionally: How does the Preamble turn a list of governmental purposes into a claim about the source of political authority?
4. **WRITE** Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.
5. **CLOSE** Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.