

Primary Source

Limiting Government Through the Bill of Rights

Guiding Question

- How do the amendments in the Bill of Rights protect individual liberties and limit government power?

Objectives

- ☐ I can explain how the government's power is limited by the Bill of Rights.

Background Information

Below are selections from the Bill of Rights amendments. The Bill of Rights is the first ten amendments to the Constitution. The Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution in 1791 after debates between the Federalist and Anti-Federalists. Federalists believed the people and states automatically kept any powers not given to the federal government, so there was no need for that to be explicitly mentioned in the Constitution. Anti-Federalists wanted power to remain with state and local governments and favored a written bill of rights to safeguard individual liberty. Ultimately, the Federalists agreed to compromise with the Anti-Federalists and pass a bill of rights after the Constitution was ratified.

Directions: Read each excerpt then each scenario. Answer the question that follows the scenario, then answer the reading comprehension questions.

The Bill of Rights, Amendments I, III, IV, and VIII

Source: <https://billofrightsinsitute.org/primary-sources/bill-of-rights>

Text	Vocabulary and Context	Scenario
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press;	abridging- reducing or diminishing	A group of young people gather at a local park on a Saturday to protest a new rule banning skateboarding in the city. They peacefully hold signs and chant slogans, but a

or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.	redress of grievances- to seek remedy for a wrong	police officer tells them they must leave. ● <i>Is this protest protected under the First Amendment? Why or why not?</i>
No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.	quartered- to be housed and provided for prescribed by law- required by a legal rule	Liam's town is hosting a big national military training event. One day, a group of soldiers knock on Liam's door. The soldiers tell Liam and his family they need to stay in their house for a few days. The soldiers say there aren't enough places to stay in town, and the government has decided that families must provide housing for them. ● <i>Does this situation violate the Third Amendment? Why or why not?</i>

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures...	secure in their persons- protection of one's physical body effects- property	A city passes a new law requiring people to install security cameras inside their homes so the government can monitor illegal activity. The law says it will help prevent crime. ● <i>Is this a violation of the Fourth Amendment? Why or why not?</i>
Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.	imposed- forced to be accepted inflicted- cause to be suffered	Jessica is caught jaywalking (crossing the street without using a crosswalk). The judge fined her \$10,000. ● <i>Would this be considered a violation of the Eighth Amendment? Why or why not?</i>

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. In what ways is the government limited by the:
 - a. First Amendment?
 - b. Third Amendment?
 - c. Fourth Amendment?
 - d. Eighth Amendment?
2. What group originally wanted a bill of rights included in the Constitution?
3. What reasons did they give to justify the need for a bill or rights?
4. Why did others think a bill of rights was not necessary?
5. How do you think limiting government power is related to protecting individual rights?