Bill of Rights Day

The Bill of Rights is the first 10 amendments to the Constitution. When the Framers wrote the Constitution, they did not focus on individual rights. They focused on creating the system and structure of government. Many Americans believed that the Constitution should guarantee the rights of the people, and they wanted a list of all the things a government could not do. They were afraid that a strong government would take away the rights people won in the Revolutionary War.

Themed Resources

- Presidents´ Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Constitution Day and Citizenship Day
- Bill of Rights Day

James Madison, one of the Framers of the Constitution, wrote a list of individual rights and limits on the government. These rights appear in the first 10 amendments, called the Bill of Rights. Some of these rights include freedom of expression, the right to bear arms, freedom from search without warrant, freedom not to be tried twice for the same crime, the right to not testify against yourself, the right to a trial by a jury of your peers, the right to an attorney, and protection against excessive fines and unusual punishments. The Bill of Rights was ratified on December 15, 1791. Today, we recognize December 15 as Bill of Rights Day.

Understanding the Bill of Rights is also an important part of the naturalization test. During the naturalization interview, prospective citizens may be asked, "What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?" as part of the civics test. Applicants may also be asked to read the words, "Bill of Rights," during the English test.

Learners

USCIS has educational materials to help you learn about the United States and prepare for the naturalization process. Here are several products that talk about the Bill of Rights:

- 100 Civics Questions and Answers with MP3 Audio
  This is the official list of civics questions and answers on the naturalization test in MP3 audio format.
- Naturalization Self Test
  This online practice test allows you to test your knowledge of U.S history and government.
- Preparing for the Oath: U.S. History and Civics for Citizenship
  This web resource provides online videos and activities on the 100 civics questions from the naturalization test and highlights museum objects from the Smithsonian Institution. Visit the "Writing the Constitution" theme for information on the Bill of Rights.
- Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons for the Naturalization Test

  This study booklet will help you prepare for the civics and English portions of the naturalization interview. It contains the 100 civics questions on the naturalization test with background information and vocabulary from the English portions of the naturalization test.
- A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants
  This 12-minute film focuses on the history and founding of our nation and the important rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship.

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- The Citizen's Almanac
  This publication includes information on prominent foreign-born Americans, presidential quotes on citizenship, patriotic songs and poems, and several of our essential founding documents, including the Bill of Rights.
- Pocket size Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States
  Read the text of the Bill of Rights in this pocket-size version of America's founding documents.

Teachers

In addition to the products highlighted above, USCIS offers free online tools and materials for educators and volunteers. Some examples include:

- Lesson Plans and Activities
  Visit this page to find lesson plans, student handouts, and answer keys on a variety of topics, including beginning level lessons on Benjamin Franklin and the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights and Other Amendments.
- Preparing for the Oath: U.S. History and Civics for Citizenship
  This web resource, described above, also has a "Teachers" section with teacher guides. The guides provide strategies and handouts for each theme. For Bill of Rights Day, be sure to visit the teacher guide on "Writing the Constitution".
- A Promise of Freedom: An Introduction to U.S. History and Civics for Immigrants
  This 12-minute film focuses on the history and founding of our nation and the important rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship. Accompanying the DVD is a discussion booklet that aims to encourage discussion and review of the basic concepts of American democracy outlined in the film.
- Citizenship Foundation Skills and Knowledge Clusters
  This booklet highlights the knowledge and skills needed for students to be successful on the naturalization interview and test. Refer to page 6 for information about where the Bill of Rights can be included in a citizenship curriculum.

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