



A Day Americans Can Celebrate!

Before Reading Poll

On September 17th, we celebrate the Constitution's creation and the rights it protects for American citizens. On this day, Americans are encouraged to celebrate their citizenship and learn more about the Constitution. What do you think?

It is important for all Americans to celebrate our nation's most influential document.

Agree

Disagree

Explain why you voted the way you did.

Article

PHILADELPHIA, Pennsylvania (Achieve3000, August 31, 2020). Fifty-five men huddled inside a stuffy room in Philadelphia. Its windows were sealed to hide their secret purpose. They were tearing down their young nation's rocky foundation—and building a new one.

Tempers flared and temperatures rose as the steamy summer days turned to months. But by the end, the men had written a document that changed history. It was the United States Constitution. And it was signed on September 17, 1787.

George Washington was the first to sign. Alexander Hamilton and Benjamin Franklin signed soon after. This was, they all knew, an important day for the young country.

The event is remembered every September 17 as part of a U.S. holiday. It's called Constitution Day and Citizenship Day. It honors the Constitution's creation and the rights it protects for citizens. Americans are encouraged to celebrate being citizens and to learn more about the Constitution.

Did you know the Constitution is the world's longest surviving written charter of government? It was written more than 200 years ago to replace the Articles of Confederation. Under the Articles, the 13 original states operated almost like countries. Each one had its own laws and leadership. The Constitution was different. It established a central government that was strong enough to act on a national level. But it also couldn't take away citizens' basic rights put forth in the Declaration of Independence, such as "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

That's certainly something worth celebrating. But Constitution Day and Citizenship Day isn't just about the signing of a document. It also celebrates *all* American citizens. Some people are citizens because they were born in the U.S. Others came to the country and became citizens by being naturalized. To become naturalized citizens, immigrants must take a test and pledge the Oath of Allegiance.

All U.S. citizens are expected to honor some important rights and duties. They need to respect the opinions of others and take part in their communities. They promise to "support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America."

The laws that established the September 17 holiday said that U.S. government organizations and public schools have a job to do. They need to teach people about the Constitution and the duties of citizenship. Many observe the occasion with activities about the events of that blistering summer of 1787. Some honor the day by staging conventions and writing their own constitutions. Other programs teach about the leaders who had a hand in creating the Constitution. Gouverneur Morris was one. He spoke out against enslavement. He became known as "the penman of the Constitution" because he polished the document's language.

Morris's powerful words help explain why the Constitution's signing and American citizens are celebrated on the same day. He crafted the Preamble to the Constitution. It begins by declaring where the document's power comes from: "We the People"—the nation's citizens.

More than 200 years later, those words still ring true. And that's why Americans celebrate the creation of the ideas put forth on that famous September afternoon, because they continue to guide the nation today.



Photo credit:
alancrosthwaite/iStock/Getty Images
Plus

The Constitution was signed in 1787, and its ideals continue to guide the United States today.

Dictionary

charter (*noun*) a document issued by a government that gives rights to a person or group

document (*noun*) an official paper that gives information about something or that is used as proof of something

foundation (*noun*) something (such as an idea, a principle, or a fact) that provides support for something

naturalize (*verb*) to allow (someone who was born in a different country) to become a new citizen

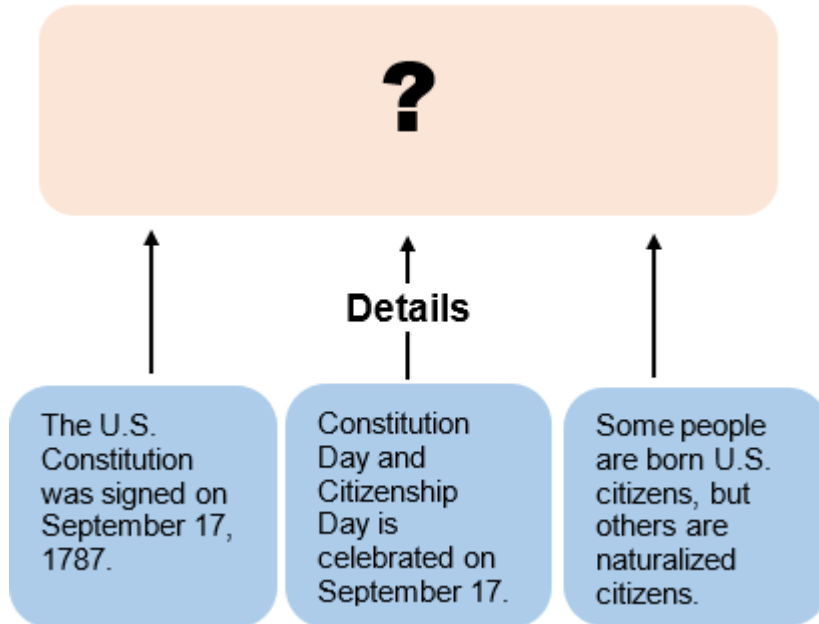
survive (*verb*) to continue to exist

Activity

PART 1

Question 1

Main Idea of the Article



Based on the Article, which best replaces the question mark in the diagram above?

- Ⓐ A federal holiday is celebrated with activities like staging conventions and writing personal constitutions.
- Ⓑ A federal holiday honors the signing of the U.S. Constitution and celebrates all U.S. citizens.
- Ⓒ The U.S. Constitution set up a strong central government and aimed to bring the states together.
- Ⓓ The U.S. Constitution was written by men who were huddled inside a stuffy room where tempers flared.

Question 2

Read this passage from the Article:

Tempers flared and temperatures rose as the steamy summer days turned to months. But by the end, the men had written a *document* that changed history. It was the United States Constitution. And it was signed on September 17, 1787.

Which words from the passage help you understand the meaning of the word *document*?

- Ⓐ it was signed
- Ⓑ steamy summer days
- Ⓒ by the end
- Ⓓ temperatures rose

Question 3

Think about the Article. How were the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution different?

- Ⓐ The Articles established a central government, while the Constitution let the states operate almost like countries.
- Ⓑ The Articles protected citizens' rights as put forth in the Declaration of Independence, while the Constitution took them away.
- Ⓒ The Articles let the states operate almost like countries, while the Constitution established a central government.
- Ⓓ The Articles took away citizens' rights as put forth in the Declaration of Independence, while the Constitution protected them.

Question 4

Which of these is an opinion?

- Ⓐ The U.S. Constitution is a document that was signed on September 17, 1787, in Philadelphia.
- Ⓑ People will respect the Constitution more if they do activities on Constitution Day and Citizenship Day.
- Ⓒ Citizens of the United States are expected to follow the laws written in the U.S. Constitution.
- Ⓓ The U.S. Constitution is more than 200 years old and is the world's longest surviving written charter of government.

Question 5

Read this passage from the Article:

The event is remembered every September 17 as part of a U.S. holiday. It's called Constitution Day and Citizenship Day. It honors the Constitution's creation and the *rights* it protects for citizens.

Which is the closest synonym for the word *rights*?

- Ⓐ advances
- Ⓑ freedoms
- Ⓒ discoveries
- Ⓓ inventions

Question 6

Which question is **not** answered by the Article?

- Ⓐ How do some schools observe Constitution Day and Citizenship Day?
- Ⓑ When did Constitution Day and Citizenship Day become a holiday?
- Ⓒ How do immigrants become naturalized U.S. citizens?
- Ⓓ What documents let the original states operate almost like countries?

Question 7

The author probably wrote this Article in order to _____.

- Ⓐ encourage readers to join in some Constitution Day and Citizenship Day activities
- Ⓑ show the complete steps an immigrant must take to become an official U.S. citizen
- Ⓒ argue that the Articles of Confederation made U.S. states stronger and more independent
- Ⓓ explain to readers the history and importance of Constitution Day and Citizenship Day

Question 8

Suppose Sonia wants to find out about Gouverneur Morris. She would find **most** of her information _____.

- Ⓐ in a book about the Articles of Confederation
- Ⓑ on a website about important U.S. holidays
- Ⓒ on a website about America's Founders
- Ⓓ in a book about how to become a U.S. citizen

After Reading Poll

Now that you have read the article, indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement.

It is important for all Americans to celebrate our nation's most influential document.

Agree

Disagree

Explain why you voted the way you did. Then read and respond to what others have to say.

Sorry, comments are not available at this time. Please try again later.

Thought Question

Explain why we celebrate Constitution Day and Citizenship Day. *Use facts and details from the Article in your answer.*

Type your answer in the text box below.

Poll Results

OPINION STATEMENT: It is important for all Americans to celebrate our nation's most influential document.

BEFORE READING	AFTER READING
<p>HOW YOU VOTED</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Disagree</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Disagree</p>

WORLDWIDE RESULTS					
Agree	<input type="text"/>	79%	Agree	<input type="text"/>	83%
Disagree	<input type="text"/>	21%	Disagree	<input type="text"/>	17%

9% changed their opinion after reading the article.

Stretch Article

PHILADELPHIA, Pennsylvania (Achieve3000, August 31, 2020). It was a tense endeavor sizzling with debate. Fifty-five men huddled inside a stuffy room in Philadelphia. Its windows were sealed against eavesdroppers to conceal the men's purpose. They were tearing down their young nation's rocky foundation—and building a new one.

Tempers flared and temperatures rose as the steamy summer days turned to months. But by the end, the men had assembled a document that changed history. It was the United States Constitution. And it was signed on September 17, 1787.

George Washington was the first to sign. Alexander Hamilton and Benjamin Franklin added their signatures soon after. The Founders knew it was a monumental day for the young country.

That important event is remembered every September 17 as part of a federal holiday. It honors the Constitution's creation and the rights it protects for citizens. Each year, on Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, Americans are encouraged to celebrate their citizenship and learn more about the Constitution.

Did you know the Constitution is the world's longest surviving written charter of government? It was written more than 200 years ago to replace the Articles of Confederation. The Articles were the U.S.'s first governing documents. Under them, the 13 original states operated more like individual countries. Each one had its own laws, legislative bodies, and leadership. The Constitution was different. It established a central government that was strong enough to act on a national level. But it also couldn't take away citizens' basic rights put forth in the Declaration of Independence, such as "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

That's certainly something worth celebrating. But Constitution Day and Citizenship Day doesn't only commemorate the signing of the landmark document. It also celebrates *all* American citizens. Some people are citizens because they were born in the U.S. Others came to the country and became citizens by being naturalized. To become naturalized citizens, immigrants must take a test and pledge the Oath of Allegiance.

All U.S. citizens are expected to honor some important rights and responsibilities. They need to respect the beliefs and opinions of others, participate in their local communities, and "support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America."

The laws that established the September 17 holiday set some requirements for federal government organizations and public schools. They need to teach people about the Constitution as well as the civic rights and responsibilities that accompany citizenship. Many schools and organizations observe Constitution Day and Citizenship Day with activities highlighting the historic events that played out that blistering summer of 1787. Some honor the day by hosting mock conventions and drafting their own constitutions. Other programs spotlight some of the less-famous Founders who had a hand in creating the Constitution. Gouverneur Morris was one. He spoke out against enslavement and gave more speeches than any other attendee. He became known as "the penman of the Constitution" because he polished the document's language.

Morris's powerful words help explain why the Constitution's signing and American citizenship are celebrated on the same day. He crafted the Preamble to the Constitution. It begins by declaring the source of the document's power: "We the People"—the nation's citizens.

More than 200 years later, the Founders' words still ring true. And that's why Americans celebrate the creation of the ideals put forth on that fateful September afternoon, because they continue to guide the nation today.



Photo credit:
alancrosthwaite/iStock/Getty Images
Plus

The Constitution was signed in 1787, and its ideals continue to guide the United States today.

Dictionary

commemorate (*verb*) to do something special in order to remember and honor (an important event or person from the past)

endeavor (*noun*) a serious effort or attempt

naturalize (*verb*) to allow (someone who was born in a different country) to become a new citizen

participate (*verb*) to be involved with others in doing something: to take part in an activity or event with others

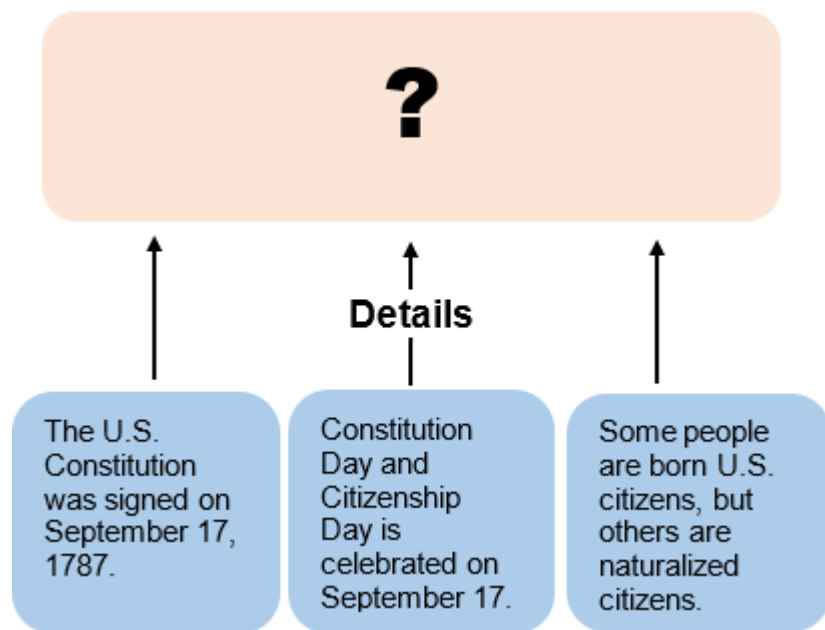
survive (*verb*) to continue to exist

Stretch Activity

PART 1

Question 1

Main Idea of the Article



Based on the Article, which best replaces the question mark in the diagram above?

- Ⓐ The U.S. Constitution was written by men who were huddled inside a stuffy room where tempers flared.
- Ⓑ A federal holiday is celebrated with activities like mock conventions and the drafting of personal constitutions.
- Ⓒ The U.S. Constitution established a strong central government and aimed to unite the states.
- Ⓓ A federal holiday honors the signing of the U.S. Constitution and celebrates all American citizens.

Question 2

Which is the closest **synonym** for the word *participate*?

- Ⓐ graduate
- Ⓑ engage
- Ⓒ interfere
- Ⓓ register

Question 3

According to the Article, how were the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution different?

- Ⓐ The Articles established a central government, while the Constitution let the states operate more like individual countries.
- Ⓑ The Articles took away citizens' rights as put forth in the Declaration of Independence, while the Constitution protected those rights.
- Ⓒ The Articles protected citizens' rights as put forth in the Declaration of Independence, while the Constitution took away those rights.
- Ⓓ The Articles let the states operate more like individual countries, while the Constitution established a central government.

Question 4

Which of these is a statement of opinion?

- Ⓐ People will appreciate the Constitution more if they do some activities on Constitution Day and Citizenship Day.
- Ⓑ The U.S. Constitution is a document that was signed on September 17, 1787, in Philadelphia.
- Ⓒ Citizens of the United States are expected to honor the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Ⓓ The U.S. Constitution is more than 200 years old and is the world's longest surviving written charter of government.

Question 5

Which two words are the closest **antonyms**?

Only some of these words are used in the Article.

- Ⓐ belief and viewpoint
- Ⓑ tense and relaxed
- Ⓒ assembled and developed
- Ⓓ observe and investigate

Question 6

Which question is **not** answered by the Article?

- Ⓐ When did Constitution Day and Citizenship Day become a federal holiday?
- Ⓑ What were the first governing documents in the United States called?
- Ⓒ How do immigrants become naturalized citizens of the United States?
- Ⓓ How do some organizations observe Constitution Day and Citizenship Day?

Question 7

The author probably wrote this Article in order to _____.

- Ⓐ illustrate the complete steps an immigrant must take to become an official U.S. citizen
- Ⓑ encourage readers to join in some Constitution Day and Citizenship Day activities
- Ⓒ explain to readers the history and importance of Constitution Day and Citizenship Day
- Ⓓ argue that the Articles of Confederation made U.S. states stronger and more independent

Question 8

Suppose Sonia wants to find out about Gouverneur Morris. She would find **most** of her information _____.

- Ⓐ on a website about federal U.S. holidays
- Ⓑ in a book about the Articles of Confederation
- Ⓒ in a book about how to become a U.S. citizen
- Ⓓ on a website about America's Founders