



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

CONSTITUTION DAY FACTS

How many words are in the U.S. Constitution?

4,440 words are in the U.S. Constitution. It is the oldest and shortest written Constitution of any major government in the world.

How many days did it take to actually “frame” the Constitution?

One hundred days

When the Constitution was signed, how many people lived in the United States?

- A) 5 million
- B) 4 million
- C) 2.5 million

The correct answer is B) 4 million. The population is now more than 300 million. Philadelphia was the nation’s largest city, with 40,000 inhabitants.

How many times does the word “democracy” appear in the Constitution?

- A) Five
- B) Three
- C) None
- D) One

The correct answer is C) None. The word democracy does not appear at all in the Constitution.

DID YOU KNOW?

- One of the most glaring mistakes in the Constitution is the misspelling of “Pensylvania” above the signers’ names.
- The Constitution was “penned” by Jacob Shallus, a Pennsylvania General Assembly clerk, for a fee of \$30 (\$325.29 today). It was stored in various cities until 1952, when it was placed in the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C. During the daytime, pages one and four of the document are displayed in a bullet-proof case. The case contains helium and water vapor to preserve the paper’s quality. At night, the pages are lowered into a vault, behind five-ton doors that are designed to withstand a nuclear explosion. The entire Constitution is displayed only one day a year – September 17, the anniversary of the day the framers signed the document.
- There was initially a question as to how to address the President. The Senate proposed that he be addressed as “His Highness the President of the United States of America and Protector of their Liberties.” Both the House of Representatives and the Senate compromised on the use of “President of the United States.”
- When the time came to sign the Constitution, Benjamin Franklin’s mind was active, but his body was deteriorating. He was in constant pain due to gout and having a stone in his bladder. He could barely walk. Benjamin Franklin entered the convention hall in a sedan chair carried by four prisoners from the Walnut Street jail in Philadelphia. As he signed the Constitution, tears streamed down his face.
- The Pennsylvania State House (where the Constitutional Convention took place) was where George Washington was appointed the commander of the Continental Army in 1775 and where the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776. It was also where the Articles of Confederation were adopted as our first constitution in 1781.

SOURCE: Johnson, T.L. (Ed.). (2007). The U.S. Constitution and fascinating facts about it. Naperville, IL: Oak Hill Publishing Company.

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