

The U.S. Constitution can be formally amended in two different ways. An amendment can be introduced by Congress or it can be introduced at a Constitutional Convention. A Constitutional Convention requires that two-thirds of state legislatures request for the convention to happen, and then at this convention, a new amendment can be introduced. If introduced by Congress, the amendment has to be proposed by a two-thirds vote by both Houses of Congress. After the amendment is introduced, it has to be ratified. In order for an amendment to be ratified, it is required that it gains approval from three-fourths of state legislatures or by three-fourths of the conventions called in each state for the purpose of ratification. The process for amending the constitution can be found within Article V of the Constitution.

The Amendments to the U.S. Constitution

Amendment Number	Amendment Name	Real-life Example of Amendment	Amendment Rank of Importance	Rationale of Ranking Based on Importance
1	Freedom of Religion, Speech, Press, Assembly, and Petition	I can choose to be Christian and the government can not stop me. I can also say whatever I want about other people, print whatever writing I want to, gather with other people to protest, and have protests to petition the government to change things.	1	This amendment is so important because of the freedoms that it rewards, such as the freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly which have served as the basis of democracy and created the American identity.
2	Right to Bear Arms	I can own a rifle which I use to hunt animals.	6	It gives people the chance at rebelling if the government were to no longer be doing what it was set out to do and because it allows people to have a livelihood hunting.
3	Right Not To Quarter Soldiers	I do not have to house soldiers in my home unless it is wartime.	17	This protects people financially and also helps to separate the armed forces from our everyday lives which keeps the nation from getting too close to a military ruled country.
4	Search and Seizure	The government can not search my home, car, or other property without obtaining a warrant first.	7	This allows private property to be truly private, even to the government, and prevents the government/justice department from overstepping in people's lives (since they can't search without a warrant or probable cause).
5	Grand Jury, Double Jeopardy, Self Incrimination, Due Process, Takings	If I am being charged with murder, I am not required to take the stand, I can't be tried for that crime twice, and I will be tried by a fair jury. The government also can not take my house away without providing compensation.	3	These rights provide everyone with a fair, equitable, and reasonable trial.
6	Right to Speedy Trial by Jury, Witnesses, and Counsel	If charged with murder, I have the right to a fast trial (meaning I won't be held in detention for an excessive amount of time), the jury will be impartial, I will be informed of what crime I am being tried for, I can have witnesses appear, I can confront (cross-examine) witnesses, and I have the right to a lawyer (legal representation).	4	The right to a speedy trial as well as witnesses and counsel helps to ensure that everyone has a fair shot at being proven innocent.
7	Jury Trial in Civil Lawsuits	If I am being sued for millions of dollars by a large organization civilly, I have the right to a jury.	15	Helps to maintain the integrity of the judicial system especially when cases involve large amounts of money.
8	Excessive Fines, Cruel and Unusual Punishment	The bail imposed on me while I am being held can't be excessive, the fine for stealing can't be excessive, and the way in which I am being punished for stealing can't be cruel or unusual (meaning it should just be a fine or minor jail time).	5	It helps to protect those who are found guilty of crimes which is important because they should still be treated as people with rights and shouldn't be mistreated or cruelly punished.
9	Non-Enumerated Rights Retained by People	I have the ability to move throughout the country freely even though it's not in the Constitution.	18	Prevents the government from taking control of people's lives by taking rights that aren't specifically described in the Constitution.
10	Rights Reserved to States	States have the right to run schools since the federal government doesn't have that right in the Constitution.	11	It prevents the federal government from having too much power and gives power to state governments by giving them more rights.
11	Suits against States	As a citizen of New York, I can't sue the state of Massachusetts.	24	Prevents citizens from suing other states but has a more limited use case and doesn't impact the majority of people.
12	Election of President and Vice President	When voting for president, I choose the president and vice president as a pairing instead of the runner up becoming the vice president.	12	This ensures that the president and vice president will be motivated towards the same goals instead of being split which could cause little progress to occur.
13	Abolition of Slavery	I can not be enslaved by anyone nor can I own another person.	2	Having all people of the U.S. be "free" is a continuation of the ideas that the founding fathers started and without it, our nation wouldn't have grown to the incredible height that it has.
14	Citizenship Rights, Equal Protection, Apportionment, Civil War Debt	Since I was born on U.S. soil, I become a U.S. citizen and receive equal rights, no matter my race.	19	Gives people born in the United States full citizenship rights, no matter their race, creating equality within the nation.
15	Right to Vote Not Denied by Race	No matter if I am white, African American, or any other race, I can not be denied the right to vote (even if I was a former slave).	9	It gave a group of people the right to vote instead of denying it based solely on race.
16	Income Tax	The federal government can take part of my paycheck as income tax.	16	This money helps to provide for the armed forces and other important services the national government provides.
17	Popular Election of Senators	When I or other citizens am able to vote, I vote for the senators I want instead of the state legislature selecting them.	10	This helps to reduce the possibility of corruption and also gives people more voice in government by allowing them to choose Senators.
18	Prohibition of Liquor	When the amendment existed, even over the age of 21, I wouldn't be able to produce, transport, or sell liquor/alcohol.	27	Repealed to show it isn't important and that the federal government shouldn't be interfering that much in people's decisions.
19	Women's Right to Vote	Any citizen, such as myself, can vote once they reach the required age, no matter their gender.	8	This was hugely important in U.S. history as it gave half the population the right that they had previously been denied.
20	Presidential Term and Succession, Assembly of Congress	If I became a member of Congress, I would take office on January 3rd at the required first meeting, attend the president's inauguration on January 20th, and if the president was not chosen through the electoral college, then we would select as Congress.	21	It helps to provide a backup plan in case an abnormality were to happen and provide stability to the nation if needed.
21	Repeal of Prohibition	After this amendment was implemented, I could begin to manufacture, produce, and sell alcohol (over the age of 21).	26	Limited impact since it just repealed a previous amendment but helps to show what the true purpose of amendments and how the repealing process can be used effectively.
22	Two-Term Limit on Presidency	If I were to become president, I would only be able to serve two terms (and if I had taken over for the majority of another person's term, then I would only be able to serve one more term).	20	It's important because it limits the power that one individual can have over the nation.
23	Presidential Vote for D.C.	I would still be able to vote for the presidential election if I became a resident of Washington D.C. even though it is not a state.	14	Gives people the ability to vote even if they live in Washington D.C. which is important because all U.S. citizens should have the ability to vote no matter where they live.
24	Abolition of Poll Taxes	When I go to vote in an election, I do not have to pay a tax in order to vote.	13	This allows people of any economic status to vote and prevents the rich from gaining too much power.
25	Presidential Disability and Succession	If I were vice president and the president were to be removed from office, resign, or die, then I would become president.	25	Helps to provide stability in case of emergency but doesn't have a significant everyday impact.
26	Right to Vote at Age 18	Once I reach the age of 18 I will be able to vote in federal, state, or local elections.	23	Important at the time to those being drafted in the war but doesn't have as much importance in the time of peace.
27	Congressional Compensation	If I became a member of Congress and made a law to change the salary of the members of Congress, that law wouldn't go into effect until the next election.	22	Helps prevent corruption from occurring by stopping people from raising their own salaries.