

# Neither Living Nor Dead: A Citizen User Guide to the United States Constitution

The United States Constitution is the supreme law of the land. It is the foundation of our government and the guarantor of our rights and freedoms. Yet, for many citizens, the Constitution is a mystery. They don't understand its history, its structure, or its key provisions.



## Neither Living Nor Dead - A Citizen's User's Guide to the United States Constitution by Ralph Nader

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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This article is a citizen user guide to the United States Constitution. It will provide you with a comprehensive overview of this important document, so that you can better understand your rights and responsibilities as a citizen.

## History of the Constitution

The United States Constitution was written in 1787 by a group of delegates from the thirteen original states. The delegates were meeting in

Philadelphia to revise the Articles of Confederation, which had been the governing document of the United States since 1781.

The Articles of Confederation had proven to be weak and ineffective. They gave the federal government very little power, and they failed to provide for a strong national economy. The delegates at the Constitutional Convention believed that a new constitution was needed to create a more perfect union.

The Constitution was a radical document for its time. It established a new form of government, based on the principle of popular sovereignty. This meant that the government would be based on the consent of the governed, rather than on the will of a monarch or a small group of elites.

The Constitution also included a Bill of Rights, which guaranteed certain individual freedoms, such as the freedom of speech, the freedom of religion, and the right to bear arms.

The Constitution was ratified by the states in 1788, and it has been the supreme law of the land ever since.

## **Structure of the Constitution**

The Constitution is divided into seven articles. The first article establishes the legislative branch of government, which is made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The second article establishes the executive branch of government, which is headed by the president. The third article establishes the judicial branch of government, which is headed by the Supreme Court.

The fourth article deals with relations between the states, and the fifth article provides for the amendment of the Constitution. The sixth article establishes the supremacy of the Constitution, and the seventh article provides for the ratification of the Constitution.

In addition to the seven articles, the Constitution also includes a Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights consists of ten amendments to the Constitution that guarantee certain individual freedoms.

### **Key Provisions of the Constitution**

The Constitution contains many important provisions, but some of the most important include:

\* **The principle of popular sovereignty:** The government is based on the consent of the governed. \* **The separation of powers:** The government is divided into three branches (legislative, executive, and judicial), each with its own powers and responsibilities. \* **Checks and balances:** Each branch of government has the ability to check the power of the other branches. \* **A Bill of Rights:** The Constitution guarantees certain individual freedoms, such as the freedom of speech, the freedom of religion, and the right to bear arms.

These are just a few of the key provisions of the Constitution. For a more complete understanding of the Constitution, it is important to read the entire document.

The United States Constitution is a remarkable document that has served as the foundation of our government for over two centuries. It is a testament to the wisdom and foresight of the Founding Fathers, who

created a system of government that is based on the principles of popular sovereignty, separation of powers, checks and balances, and individual rights.

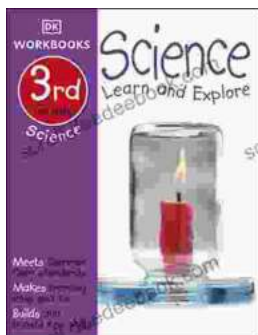
The Constitution is not a perfect document, but it is a living document that can be amended to meet the needs of a changing society. It is the responsibility of every citizen to understand the Constitution and to uphold its principles.



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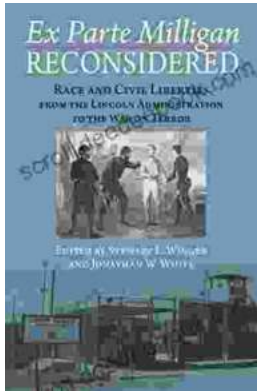
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