Name: Date: Score: / 6

The Constitution: Reading Comprehension

Nonfiction: History · about 240 words

Read the passage. Then answer each question. Circle the best answer or write your answer on the lines.

📜 The Constitution

After the American colonies won independence from Great Britain, the new nation needed a plan for its government. The first plan, called the Articles of Confederation, created a very weak national government. It could not collect taxes, and each state acted almost like its own country.

In the summer of 1787, 55 delegates met in Philadelphia to fix the problem. George Washington led the meeting, which became known as the Constitutional Convention. The delegates argued for months. Large states wanted representation based on population, while small states wanted equal votes. They reached a compromise: Congress would have two parts. In the House of Representatives, states with more people get more members. In the Senate, every state gets two senators.

The Constitution divides power among three branches. The legislative branch, Congress, makes laws. The executive branch, led by the president, carries out laws. The judicial branch, headed by the Supreme Court, decides what laws mean. Each branch can limit the others. This system of checks and balances keeps any one branch from becoming too powerful.

The Constitution begins with the famous words "We the People." Those three words mean that the government gets its power from the people.

In 1791, ten amendments, called the Bill of Rights, were added. They protect freedoms such as speech, religion, and the press. The Constitution has been amended only 27 times, and it is the oldest written national constitution still in use today.

1. **Main idea:** What is this passage mostly about?

   A. the American Revolution B. how the U.S. Constitution was created and how it works C. the history of Philadelphia D. the life of George Washington

2. **Detail:** What was a problem with the Articles of Confederation?

   A. It made the states too small. B. It was written in French. C. The national government was too weak. D. It had too many presidents.

3. **Detail:** What was the compromise about Congress?

   A. Each state gets ten members. B. There would be no Senate. C. The House is based on population, and each state gets two senators. D. Only large states could vote.

4. **Vocabulary:** Checks and balances means...

   A. states balance their budgets B. each branch can limit the others C. the president makes all laws D. banks check money

5. **Detail:** What does the Bill of Rights protect?

   A. freedoms such as speech, religion, and the press B. the size of states C. the president's salary D. the right to own a castle

6. **Inference:** What do the words "We the People" show about the government?

ANSWER KEY

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   The government gets its power from the people.