

## Constitution of the United States

- Structure
  - 4,543 words
  - Seven articles
  - Amended 27 times
  - Separation of powers
  - Organization not rigid
  - Parts of system overlap
- Checks and Balances
  - Each branch has role in actions of others
  - Each branch is politically independent
- Framers' goal = efficient administration of gov't
  - Establishes executive branch; puts single individual @ top
  - Grants broad powers to Congress
  - Courts "judge" issues that arise under system
- The Bill of Rights

- First ten amendments
- Outline our fundamental rights
- Proposed by First Congress Sept 25, 1789
- Originally 12 amendments
- Guided through Congress by Madison
- Amending the Constitution (Art V)
  - Two separate processes involved
  - Ratification w/in "some reasonable time after the proposal"