



Maggie's Civics Corner

Lesson 12

Today's lesson is about the Bill of Rights: In Maggie's Corner, we've learned about following Rules and how the Constitution is America's most important set of Rules. But the Constitution also includes something called "The Bill of Rights," which is a list of things we are allowed to do! A few years after the Constitution was ratified, the Government wanted to add even more rights for citizens. These are called the Amendments, and the Bill of Rights includes the first ten. For example, the First Amendment protects our right to speak – or in my case, to bark!

Amendments 1-10: Read the following Amendments, and think about why each is important.

1. Congress cannot make laws prohibiting free speech, religion, news reporting, assembling, or petitioning the Government.
2. Citizens have the right to own certain weapons.
3. Soldiers cannot live in a citizen's home unless the citizen gives permission.
4. The Government and police cannot search or seize property without a reason.
5. People cannot be convicted of the same crime twice; no person can be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law; and the Government cannot take property without compensating the owner.
6. People accused of crimes have the right to a speedy and public trial with a jury.
7. People in civil cases, like when someone sues a business, have the right to a jury trial.
8. The Government cannot inflict cruel and unusual punishment on people.
9. People reserve rights even if they are not necessarily listed in the Constitution.
10. Powers not mentioned in the Constitution are reserved for the States.

Sticky Situation: The Constitution does not mention education, meaning there is currently no constitutional right to go to school at the federal level. Imagine your state decides to close all of its schools. You and your friends are upset because you love learning new things and playing with classmates! Propose an Amendment to the Constitution that makes education a right.

Civic Resources: For a video explaining the Bill of Rights with cartoons, see:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYefLm5dLMQ>.