



***What should be the 28th Amendment to the Constitution?***

Draft a proposed amendment to the Constitution. Think of a right or freedom that you believe needs to be protected or a part of the Constitution that needs to be changed. Is there a new power or limit on power that needs to be added to the Constitution?

In your essay, please discuss the following:

Why is your proposed amendment needed?

What is the problem you are addressing?

Why is an amendment the best way to solve the problem?

*Prior to this lesson, students should be familiar with the Constitution and Bill of Rights. You may use [The Constitution](#) and [Bill of Rights](#) lessons found in [Maggie's Civics Corner](#).*

First, briefly explain to the students how the amendment process works. It is probably best to simply describe the most common path: An amendment may be officially proposed if it passes  $\frac{2}{3}$  of both the Senate and the House of Representatives. It then must be ratified by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of state legislatures.

Organize students into groups of four and have them complete the historical examples chart. You can review the content or have them research the amendments on their own. You may find the [Freedom of Speech](#) and [Voting Age](#) lessons a helpful resource. Each group should then choose and analyze another amendment that has been added to the Constitution.

Once students have completed Handout #1: Historical Examples, direct them to Handout #2: New Amendment Ideas. With your help, each group should brainstorm possible amendments, and then choose a top three. Once they complete the chart, each group should decide which proposal has the strongest argument. The chosen idea and their work in the chart will operate as a solid foundation for the Citizen Challenge!

The essays will be judged on the four areas of Content Development, Focus, Organization and Style. Each area will be worth 25 points. By following this plan you will ensure that your students have strong grasp on the content, are focused on the three question prompts, and their essay is organized. Simply ensure the students are following proper grammar and spelling conventions, and using persuasive language to get the maximum points for style. On the following page you will find some possible ideas if your students are struggling.

**To generate discussion among your students, you might consider prompting them for their thoughts on the following possible amendments:**

*You may decide that some of these are more or less appropriate than others depending on your classroom.*

- Impose a ban on assault weapons
- Make gay marriage a fundamental right
- Impose term limits for Congress and/or for the Supreme Court
- Make the right to vote by mail and/or internet a national right.
- Enact a Constitutional right to privacy
- Impose a ban on corporations from contributing to political campaigns
- Prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation
- Require women and men to register for the Selective Service System (the “draft”)
- Make access to mental health services a Constitutional right
- Ban lawmakers from buying stocks.
- Remove term limits for U.S. Presidents
- Place an age limit on U.S. Presidents or for Supreme Court
- Make higher education free
- Outlaw the death penalty
- Recognize a Constitutional right to a free public education
- Recognize equal rights for women in the Constitution (compared with equal rights under statutes like the Civil Rights Act)
- Abolish the Electoral College
- Recognize a Constitutional right to environmental security
- A right to universal health care
- Lower the voting age even more

## Handout #1: Historical Examples

	Why was this amendment needed? What problem was it addressing?	Why was this amendment the best way to solve the problem? What are the benefits of this amendment?
The 1st Amendment		
The 26th Amendment		
Choose Another:		

## Handout #2: New Amendment Ideas

	Why is this amendment needed? What problem is it addressing?	Why is this amendment the best way to solve the problem?
Idea One:		
Idea Two:		
Idea Three:		

