

American Government Preamble to the United States Constitution

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

The words written in italics above are the **Preamble**¹ to the Constitution of the United States. The Constitution is the document that defines our American democracy. It sets forth the nation’s laws. It also spells out the rights and liberties of the American people.

The preamble, or introduction, tells why people wrote the Constitution. The first three words are, “We the People.” At the time, these words were **revolutionary**². Before the United States was established, the 13 colonies were part of England. Their ruler was the king of England. The colonists had no say over what happened to them.

When the colonists established their own government, they wanted it to be “by the people, for the people, and of the people.” They wanted the Constitution to create a democracy. In a democracy, the people elect, or vote for, whom they want to run their government. The government’s power comes from the people. The government cannot exist without the **consent**³ of the **majority**⁴ of its people. If the government fails to protect the people, then the people can use their voting power to abolish the government and establish a new one.

What should the government do for the people? The preamble answers part of this question. It says that the government should be just, or fair with its people. It should ensure tranquility by working to solve problems within the

¹ **preamble** – introduction to a speech or piece of writing

² **revolutionary** – bringing or causing great changes

³ **consent** – agreement, permission, or approval

⁴ **majority** – more than half of a group of people or things