

## The Amendments

The [1st Amendment](#) protects the people's right to practice religion, to speak freely, to assemble (meet), to address the government and of the press to publish.

The [2nd Amendment](#) protects the right to own guns.

The [3rd Amendment](#) guarantees that the army cannot force homeowners to give them room and board.

The [4th Amendment](#) protects the people from the government improperly taking property, papers, or people, without a valid warrant based on probable cause (good reason).

The [5th Amendment](#) protects people from being held for committing a crime unless they are properly indicted, that they may not be tried twice for the same crime, and that you need not be forced to testify against yourself. It also contains [due process](#) guarantees.

The [6th Amendment](#) guarantees a speedy trial, an impartial jury, that the accused can confront witnesses against them, and that the accused must be allowed to have a lawyer.

The [7th Amendment](#) guarantees a jury trial in federal civil court cases. This type of case is normally no longer heard in federal court.

The [8th Amendment](#) guarantees that punishments will be fair, and not cruel, and that extraordinarily large fines will not be set.

The [9th Amendment](#) is simply a statement that other rights aside from those listed may exist, and just because they are not listed doesn't mean they can be violated.

The [10th Amendment](#) is the subject of some debate, but essentially it states that any power not granted to the federal government belongs to the states or to the people. See the [Federalism Topic Page](#) for more information.

The [11th Amendment](#) more clearly defines the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court concerning a suit brought against a state by a citizen of another state.

The [12th Amendment](#) redefines how the President and Vice-President are chosen by the Electoral College, making the two positions cooperative, rather than first and second highest vote-getters. It also ensures that anyone who becomes Vice-President must be eligible to become President.

The [13th Amendment](#) abolished slavery in the entire United States.

The [14th Amendment](#) ensured that all citizens of all states enjoyed not only rights on the federal level, but on the state level, too. It removed the three-fifths counting of slaves in the census. It ensured that the United States would not pay the debts of rebellious states. It also had several measures designed to ensure the loyalty of legislators who participated on the Confederate side of the Civil War.

The [15th Amendment](#) ensured that race could not be used as a criteria for voting.

The [16th Amendment](#) authorizes the United States to collect income tax without regard to the population of the states.

The [17th Amendment](#) shifted the choosing of Senators from the state legislatures to the people of the states.

The [18th Amendment](#) abolished the sale or manufacture of alcohol in the United States. This amendment was later repealed (erased).

The [19th Amendment](#) ensures that sex could not be used as a criteria for voting.

The [20th Amendment](#) set new start dates for the terms of the Congress and the President, and clarifies how the deaths of Presidents before swearing-in would be handled.

The [21st Amendment](#) repealed the 18th Amendment.

The [22nd Amendment](#) set a limit on the number of times a President could be elected - two four-year terms. It has one exception for a Vice-President who assumes the Presidency after the death or removal of the President, establishing the maximum term of any President to 10 years.

The [23rd Amendment](#) grants the District of Columbia (Washington D.C.) the right to three electors in Presidential elections.

The [24th Amendment](#) ensured that no tax could be charged to vote for any federal office.

The [25th Amendment](#) clarifies even further the line of succession to the Presidency, and establishes rules for a President who becomes unable to perform his duties while in office.

The [26th Amendment](#) ensures that any person 18 or over may vote.

The [27th Amendment](#) requires that any law that increased the pay of legislators may not take effect until after an election.