



DISCOVER AMERICA

Pocket Constitution Teacher Guide

4th Grade



Foundations of Freedom:
Understanding and Using your Pocket Constitution

Table of Contents

- 3** | Themes & Values
- 4** | Learning Objectives
- 5** | Key Terms
- 7** | Lesson
- 17** | Constitutional Rights Role-Play
- 20** | Constitution Worksheet
- 22** | Constitution Worksheet Answer Key
- 24** | Resources List
- 25** | Notes



Themes & Values

Key Themes

- **We the People:** Unity and Democracy
- **The Framework of Government:** Checks and Balances
- **Rights and Responsibilities:** The Bill of Rights
- **Living Document:** Amendments and Adaptability
- **Constitution in Everyday Life:** Practical Applications

Core Values

- Community
- Liberty
- Life



Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Explain that the Constitution is the foundational document that outlines the fundamental rules and principles guiding the United States government.
- Identify and describe the Preamble, articles, sections, and clauses of the Constitution, understanding their roles in organizing and explaining the structure of the government.
- Interpret the Preamble as an introduction that explains the purpose and goals of the Constitution, highlighting the concepts of justice, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
- Explain how the Constitution divides the government into three branches and describe the specific roles and responsibilities of each branch.
- Examine the significance of the Bill of Rights and other amendments in protecting individual freedoms and ensuring fair treatment under the law.
- Use their pocket Constitutions to explore and apply their rights in various real-life situations, helping them understand how the Constitution affects their daily lives and ensures fairness in society.

Key Terms

- 1. Amendment:** a change or addition designed to improve the original document.
- 2. Article:** a chapter in the U.S. Constitution that explains how part of our government works.
- 3. Bill of Rights:** the name for the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution.
- 4. Clause:** a sentence or a specific point within a section in the U.S. Constitution which explains particular rules or ideas very clearly.
- 5. Congress:** the part of the United States government that makes laws. It is made up of two parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives.
- 6. Eighth Amendment:** prohibits excessive fines and cruel or unusual punishment.
- 7. First Amendment:** protects the freedoms of speech, religion, press, assembly, and the right to petition the government, ensuring that individuals can express their beliefs and ideas without government interference.
- 8. Fifth Amendment:** ensures that no one can be forced to testify against themselves in court, and guarantees due process of law.
- 9. Fourth Amendment:** protects individuals from unreasonable searches and seizures of their property.
- 10. Ninth Amendment:** acknowledges that people have rights that are not specifically mentioned in the Constitution.

11. Preamble to the Constitution: declares the beliefs, principles, and aims of the U.S. Constitution.

12. Second Amendment: allows people to own and carry weapons.

13. Section: a smaller part of an article in the U.S. Constitution that gives more details about specific rules or jobs in the government.

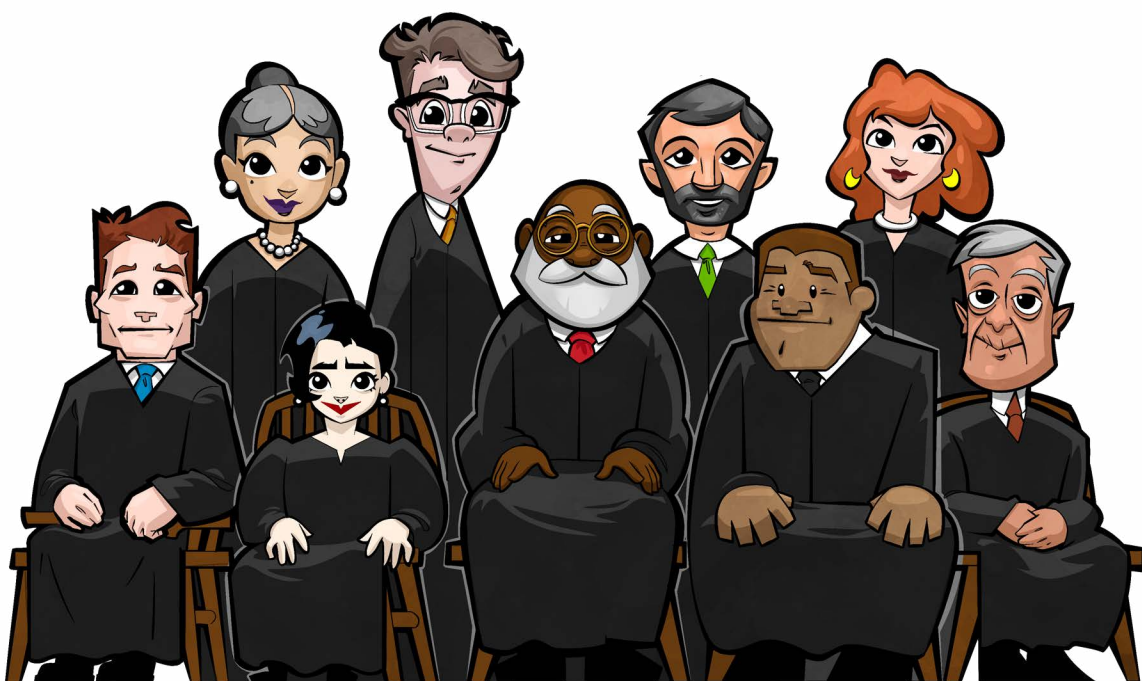
14. Seventh Amendment: extends the right to a jury trial in federal civil cases.

15. Sixth Amendment: provides the right to a speedy and public trial by jury, representation by an attorney, and the chance to confront witnesses.

16. Supreme Court: the highest court in the United States, which is made up of nine judges.

17. Tenth Amendment: states that powers not given to the federal government by the Constitution belong to the states or to the people, maintaining a balance of power.

18. Third Amendment: prevents soldiers from taking over private homes without permission.



Lesson

TELL Students

Today, we are going to explore a very important document called the Constitution. This smaller version of the Constitution is called a pocket Constitution. [Show pocket Constitution.] This small book holds the fundamental rules that guide our nation. Let's begin by opening our pocket Constitutions to the preamble. The word "preamble" refers to the introduction of an important document that explains the reason and the purpose of its content. The **Preamble to the Constitution** declares the beliefs, principles, and aims of the United States Constitution, the basic framework for the system of government. Please open your pocket Constitution and turn to the Preamble.

ASK Students

What is the Preamble?

TELL Students

The Preamble is the very beginning of the U.S. Constitution, serving as its introduction. It tells us why this important document was written and sets the stage for the rules and laws that follow. It starts with the words "We the People," which means that the Constitution isn't just a set of rules for one person or a small group. It is instead an agreement by everyone in the country to work together for a fair and peaceful society. This part of the Constitution is like a promise that helps everyone understand the purpose of the rules it contains—to ensure justice, liberty, and happiness for all citizens.

ASK Students

Can everyone find the phrase “We the People” and read it aloud with me?

TELL Students

“We the People!” This means everyone in the country, including us. It says that we all agree to follow these rules to have a fair and free life. Now, let’s learn about the branches of government. Please turn to Article I.

ASK Students

What do you notice about this part of your pocket Constitution?

TELL Students

There are ten sections inside Article I. The U.S. Constitution is organized into parts called articles and sections, much like a book is divided into chapters and paragraphs. Each article focuses on a major aspect of how our government works, such as the role of Congress in Article I, the President in Article II, and the courts in Article III. Within these articles, sections break down the information further, grouping together related rules or duties to provide explanations. For instance, in Article I, different sections discuss the specific powers of Congress, how laws are passed, and other legislative responsibilities. [Point out each section using a smart board and a copy of the pocket Constitution.] This structure helps organize and clarify the responsibilities and processes in our government.

ASK Students

What do you think would happen if the U.S. Constitution didn’t have articles and sections to organize how our government works?

TELL Students

If the U.S. Constitution didn't have articles and sections to organize how our government works, it would be much harder for everyone to understand the roles and responsibilities of different parts of the government. This could lead to confusion and inefficiencies because people would not be clear about who is supposed to do what. Having a well-organized Constitution helps ensure that everything runs smoothly and that the laws and processes are clear and accessible to everyone.

In the U.S. Constitution, an **article** is like a big chapter that tells us about a main part of how our government works, such as what Congress or the President does. A **section** is a smaller part of an article that gives more details about specific rules or jobs in the government, like how laws are made or what powers the President has. A **clause** is even smaller, like a sentence or a specific point within a section, which explains particular rules or ideas very clearly, such as the requirement that the President must be at least 35 years old.

ASK Students

What is a clause?

TELL Students

Clauses are smaller parts within sections of the Constitution. Think of them as important sentences or paragraphs that explain one specific rule or idea. [Point out a clause for students in their pocket Constitution.] For example, in a section about making laws, a clause might explain just one rule about how a law gets approved. This helps everyone understand the rules better and know exactly where to look if they have a question about how something works. Clauses help organize our government's rules.

ASK Students

Why is it helpful to have clauses in the Constitution that explain each rule clearly, like the one we just looked at in your pocket Constitution?

TELL Students

Having clauses in the Constitution that explain each rule clearly is very helpful because it makes it easier for everyone to understand exactly what the rules are and how they are supposed to work. This helps prevent misunderstandings and ensures that the government functions smoothly. Now, let's learn about Article I of the Constitution, which focuses on the legislative branch, the part of our government that makes laws. This article sets up Congress, which is divided into two parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives. **Congress** is an important part of our government in the United States that makes the rules and laws we all follow. It is like a big team split into two smaller teams. People from all over the country choose representatives to go to Congress and speak up for what they need and want. These representatives talk about different ideas, vote on them, and work together to make sure the laws are fair and help everyone.

ASK Students

What two smaller teams make up Congress?

TELL Students

The Senate has 100 members, two from each state, so every state has the same number of senators to make things fair. The House of Representatives has 435 members, but states with more people have more members, kind of like how a class with more students might need more helpers. Together, they work on important jobs like deciding how to spend money, making new laws, and making sure the rules are good and fair for everyone. They meet in a special building called the Capitol in Washington, D.C. Now, turn to Article II, which describes the job of the President.

ASK Students

Can anyone find a picture or symbol that might represent the President?

TELL Students

The White House is where the President lives and is shown here [Point to White House above Article Two.] Article II of the Constitution establishes the executive branch of the federal government, outlining the powers and responsibilities of the President and Vice President. It details the process for electing the President, the qualifications for holding office, the President's role as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, the power to make treaties (with Senate approval), the authority to appoint federal officers and judges, and the duty to ensure that laws are faithfully executed. Article II also provides the procedures for impeachment and removal of the President and other federal officials. Next, let's find Article III. This article discusses the **Supreme Court** and the judicial system. The Supreme Court and the judicial system are like the referees of our country's laws. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States. It is made up of nine judges, called justices, who make decisions on really important legal questions that affect the whole country. They look at the laws and the Constitution to decide if something is fair or if it needs to be changed. They have the important job of making sure the laws follow the country's rule book, the Constitution. Their decisions help everyone understand the rules better. Besides the Supreme Court, there are other courts and judges all over the country, and they all work together as part of the judicial system. This system helps solve disagreements, make sure people follow the laws, and ensure that everyone is treated fairly.

ASK Students

What is the job of the Supreme Court justices, and how do they decide who is right in a disagreement?

TELL Students

The job of the Supreme Court justices is to make sure that the laws in our country match what our Constitution says. When there is a disagreement about the laws, the justices listen to all the details, think very carefully, and then decide who is right based on what the Constitution says. Their decisions help everyone understand the laws better. Now, let's find the Bill of Rights at

the end of the Constitution. [Give students time to turn to the Bill of Rights.] The **Bill of Rights** is the name for the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution. An **amendment** is a change or addition designed to improve the original document. These amendments were added to protect the basic rights of all citizens, like freedom of speech, the right to practice any religion, and the right to a fair trial. These rights are very important because they help make sure everyone is treated fairly under the law.

ASK Students

Can anyone find the First Amendment?

TELL Students

The First Amendment in the Bill of Rights is very important because it protects several key freedoms for everyone in the United States. The **First Amendment** protects the freedoms of speech, religion, press, assembly, and the right to petition the government, ensuring that individuals can express their beliefs and ideas without government interference. It says that the government cannot make rules about what religion to follow, so people can choose their own religion or not follow one at all. It also protects the freedom to say what you think, without getting in trouble with the government, and the freedom to gather in groups peacefully to protest or for other reasons. Lastly, it guarantees that people can ask the government to fix problems without fear of punishment. This amendment helps make sure that everyone can share their ideas and beliefs freely.

ASK Students

Why is the First Amendment important?

TELL Students

The First Amendment is important because it lets everyone in our country share their ideas and beliefs without getting in trouble, helping us all learn from each other and making our country a better place. There are ten amendments in the Bill of Rights, each protecting specific aspects of American freedom and ensuring fair treatment under the law. [Have students refer to the associated icon as you discuss each amendment.] The **Second Amendment** allows people to own and carry weapons for protection. The **Third Amendment** prevents soldiers from taking over private homes without permission. The **Fourth Amendment** protects individuals from unreasonable searches and seizures of their property.

ASK Students

Why do you think the Second Amendment, which allows people to own and carry weapons for protection, is important for keeping people safe?

TELL Students

The Second Amendment is important because it gives people the right to own and carry weapons, which can help them protect themselves and their families. This protection helps people feel safe and secure in their homes and communities. Now, let's find the Fifth Amendment. It is another important part of the Bill of Rights. The **Fifth Amendment** ensures that no one can be forced to testify against themselves in court, and guarantees due process of law. This means that the government must follow certain rules and steps before it can punish someone, helping to make sure that justice is served fairly for everyone.

ASK Students

How does the Fifth Amendment help make sure that everyone is treated fairly by the law?

TELL Students

The Fifth Amendment helps make sure that everyone is treated fairly by the law because it requires the government to follow certain rules before punishing someone. This means that people can't be forced to say something that could get them into trouble, and they have the right to a fair process before being judged or punished. This helps protect people's rights and ensures that justice is done properly. Now, let's move on to the **Sixth Amendment**. The Sixth Amendment guarantees that if someone is accused of a crime, they have the right to a speedy and public trial, the right to know what they are being accused of, the right to have a lawyer, and the right to question the witnesses against them. This amendment helps make sure that everyone has a fair chance to defend themselves in court.

ASK Students

Why do you think it is important for the government to follow specific rules, like those in the Fifth Amendment, before punishing someone?

TELL Students

It is important for someone accused of a crime to have the right to a speedy and public trial because it ensures that they are not kept waiting too long before their case is heard, which could be unfair and stressful. A public trial helps make sure the process is transparent and fair, with everyone able to see what's happening. Having a lawyer is also crucial because it means the accused person has someone knowledgeable to help them understand the law, defend their rights, and make sure they are treated fairly in court. Now, let's find the **Seventh Amendment**. The Seventh Amendment extends the right to a jury trial in federal civil cases. This means that in these cases, a group of ordinary people can listen to the evidence and decide the outcome. This amendment helps ensure that the decisions in important disputes are made fairly and by a group of peers, rather than just a judge.

ASK Students

Why do you think it is important to have a group of ordinary people, called a jury, help decide the outcome of a trial instead of just a judge?

TELL Students

It's important to have a group of ordinary people, called a jury, help decide the outcome of a trial because it ensures that the decision is made by a diverse group of people from the community, bringing different perspectives and experiences. This helps make the trial fair, as the jury can represent a broader view of what is just, rather than leaving the decision up to just one person, like a judge. The jury system allows the community to be involved in the justice process, which can lead to more balanced and fair outcomes. Now, let's find the Eighth Amendment. The **Eighth Amendment** prohibits excessive fines and cruel or unusual punishment. This means that if someone is found guilty of a crime, the punishment must be fair and not too harsh. This amendment helps ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and that the penalties for crimes are reasonable and just.

ASK Students

Why do you think it is important for the Eighth Amendment to protect people from punishments that are too harsh or unfair?

TELL Students

The Eighth Amendment is important because it protects people from punishments that are too harsh or unfair. This means that even if someone is found guilty of a crime, the punishment they receive must be reasonable and not overly severe. The amendment ensures that everyone is treated with dignity and that the penalties are just and appropriate for the crime. By preventing excessive fines and cruel or unusual punishment, the Eighth Amendment helps maintain fairness and justice in our legal system. Now, let's find the Ninth Amendment. The **Ninth Amendment** acknowledges that people have rights that are not specifically mentioned in the Constitution. This means that just because certain rights are listed in the Constitution doesn't mean that

people don't have other rights as well. This amendment is important because it recognizes that people have many other rights that might not be specifically mentioned in the Constitution, but are still important and deserve protection. It ensures that the rights of the people are broad and not limited to just those written down. Finally, the **Tenth Amendment** states that powers not given to the federal government by the Constitution belong to the states or to the people, maintaining a balance of power.

ASK Students

For our final activity, please choose one amendment that interests you, and share why it might be important to us today. [Give students time to discuss with a partner or a group of students.]

TELL Students

I chose the Second Amendment because it talks about safety. Each amendment in the Constitution plays a crucial role in protecting the rights that allow us to live freely and pursue happiness. These rights are not just for adults—they are for students like you too. The Constitution ensures that you have the freedom to express your ideas, practice your beliefs, and enjoy the safety and fairness that everyone deserves. It allows you to learn, play, and grow in a country that values your voice and your future. As we wrap up today's lesson, remember that the Constitution is the cornerstone of our government and our way of life. Understanding and upholding the Constitution is important because it safeguards the freedoms that make our country a place where everyone has the opportunity to live a happy and fulfilling life. Keep your pocket Constitution in your desk as a reminder of the rights you have and the important role you play in continuing to learn about and protect these freedoms in the United States. Now, let's watch an episode of "Star Spangled Adventures" to learn how the Constitution was created.

WATCH

[Star Spangled Adventures Ep. 6: The Constitutional Convention](#)

Constitutional Rights Role-Play

Objective

Help fourth-grade students understand their rights and the Constitution by acting out real-life scenarios where these rights are applied.

Materials Needed

- Pocket Constitutions for each student
- Pre-written scenario cards (describing situations related to specific rights in the Constitution)
- Simple props (optional, like signs, hats, or badges to represent different roles)
- Reflection worksheets

Introduction

- Explain to the students that today they will be using their pocket Constitutions to explore how the rights protected by the Constitution apply in everyday situations.
- Discuss how understanding these rights can help them recognize when they or others might need to stand up for their rights.

Scenario Introduction

- Have students retrieve their pocket Constitutions and explain that they will be looking at specific amendments as they relate to different scenarios.
- Briefly review key amendments (like the First, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments) to ensure students are familiar with the rights involved.

Role-Play Scenarios

- Divide the class into small groups and give each group a scenario card. Each card should describe a situation where constitutional rights are involved.
- In their groups, students will use their pocket Constitutions to identify which rights are involved and discuss how they would handle the situation.
- Each group will then act out their scenario in front of the class, showing how they would apply their constitutional rights.

Sample Scenarios

- **First Amendment:** You want to start a petition at school to bring back a favorite lunch item that was removed from the menu.
- **Fourth Amendment:** A teacher wants to search your backpack because they think you have something you shouldn't, but you know you haven't done anything wrong.
- **Fifth Amendment:** You are asked to admit to something you didn't do during a class discussion about honesty.
- **Sixth Amendment:** You are accused of breaking a classroom rule, and you want a chance to explain your side before any punishment is decided.
- **Second Amendment:** You're at a debate club meeting discussing whether people should be allowed to protect themselves, and someone mentions the Second Amendment. How would you explain what it means?
- **Eighth Amendment:** A teacher gives a very harsh punishment for a minor mistake in class. How would you respond, knowing your rights?
- **Seventh Amendment:** Two students are arguing over who owns a toy. How could they use a jury of their peers to settle the dispute fairly?
- **Ninth Amendment:** A new rule at school limits something that isn't mentioned in the Constitution, but you believe it's unfair. How might you argue that the Ninth Amendment still protects your rights?
- **Tenth Amendment:** The school decides to make a new rule about what students can wear, but some students think this should be up to individual classes to decide. How does the Tenth Amendment help you understand who should make the rules?

Discussion and Reflection

- After each group presents, lead a discussion on what the students learned from the role-play.
- Ask the class how the Constitution helped the characters in each scenario.
- Distribute reflection worksheets where students can write about what they learned and how they might use their constitutional rights in real life.

Wrap-Up

- Recap the importance of understanding and using the rights protected by the Constitution.
- Encourage students to keep their pocket Constitutions handy and to think about how these rights affect their lives every day.

Extension

- Have students create their own scenarios and share them with the class.
- Use the scenarios as a basis for a class discussion on current events where constitutional rights are being debated.



Constitution Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions

Please read each question carefully. Then, use your pocket Constitution to answer each question in a complete sentence.

1. What is the purpose of the Preamble in the Constitution?

2. Find the First Amendment in your pocket Constitution. Write down two rights it protects and explain why they are important.

3. Look up the Fourth Amendment. What protection does it offer you, and why is it important?

4. The Fifth Amendment talks about due process. What does this mean, and how does it protect people?

5. The Sixth Amendment guarantees a right to a speedy trial. Why do you think this is important?

6. What does the Eighth Amendment protect you from, and why do you think this is necessary?

7. Find the Tenth Amendment. Who does it give power to, and how does that affect your community?

8. What does the Ninth Amendment say about rights that are not specifically listed in the Constitution?

Constitution Worksheet

Answer Key

1. What is the purpose of the Preamble in the Constitution?

The Preamble introduces the Constitution and explains the reasons why the Constitution was written. It outlines the goals of the document, such as forming a more perfect union, establishing justice, ensuring domestic tranquility, providing for the common defense, promoting the general welfare, and securing the blessings of liberty for all Americans.

2. Find the First Amendment in your pocket Constitution. Write down two rights it protects and explain why they are important.

The First Amendment protects the freedom of speech and the freedom of religion. These rights are important because they allow people to express their thoughts and beliefs openly without fear of government interference, and they ensure that people can practice their religion freely.

3. Look up the Fourth Amendment. What protection does it offer you, and why is it important?

The Fourth Amendment protects people from unreasonable searches and seizures. This means that the government cannot search your property or take your belongings without a good reason (probable cause) and, in most cases, a warrant. This protection is important because it ensures privacy and prevents the government from abusing its power.

4. The Fifth Amendment talks about due process. What does this mean, and how does it protect people?

Due process means that the government must follow fair procedures before depriving a person of life, liberty, or property. This protects people by ensuring that they have a fair chance to defend themselves in legal proceedings and that their rights are respected throughout the process.

5. The Sixth Amendment guarantees a right to a speedy trial. Why do you think this is important?

A speedy trial is important because it prevents people from being held in jail for a long time without a trial. It also helps ensure that the evidence and testimonies in a case are fresh and reliable, leading to a fairer outcome.

6. What does the Eighth Amendment protect you from, and why do you think this is necessary?

The Eighth Amendment protects people from excessive fines, excessive bail, and cruel or unusual punishment. This protection is necessary to ensure that punishments are fair and not overly harsh or inhumane, maintaining justice and human dignity.

7. Find the Tenth Amendment. Who does it give power to, and how does that affect your community?

The Tenth Amendment gives power to the states or the people for any powers not specifically granted to the federal government by the Constitution. This affects communities by allowing state and local governments to make decisions on issues that are not covered by federal law, enabling them to address the specific needs and values of their communities.

8. What does the Ninth Amendment say about rights that are not specifically listed in the Constitution?

The Ninth Amendment states that just because certain rights are listed in the Constitution, it doesn't mean that people don't have other rights as well. This ensures that people retain all their fundamental rights, even if they are not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution.

Resources List

- » <https://www.nps.gov/moru/learn/kidsyouth/how-big-are-the-heads.htm>
- » <https://www.nps.gov/moru/learn/historyculture/carving-history.htm>
- » <https://www.nps.gov/moru/learn/historyculture/the-workers.htm#:~:text=Over%20the%20fourteen%20year%20period,fatalities%20during%20the%20carving%20work.>
- » <https://www.nps.gov/liho/learn/historyculture/housedivided.htm#:~:text=%22A%20house%20divided%20against%20itself,thing%2C%20or%20all%20the%20other.>
- » <https://www.nps.gov/moru/learn/historyculture/memorial-history.htm>
- » <https://www.nps.gov/moru/playourvisit/index.htm#:~:text=Just%20over%20two%20million%20people%20visit%20Mount%20Rushmore%20each%20year.>
- » <https://www.travelsouthdakota.com/trip-ideas/story/75-surprising-facts-about-mount-rushmore>
- » <https://www.chicagotribune.com/2018/06/26/50-years-later-the-st-louis-arch-emerges-with-a-new-name-and-a-skeptical-view-of-western-expansion/>
- » <https://www.nps.gov/jeff/playourvisit/architect.htm>
- » <https://www.nps.gov/jeff/playourvisit/materials-and-techniques.htm>
- » <https://www.goldengate.org/bridge/history-research/statistics-data/design-construction-stats/>
- » <https://www.goldengate.org/exhibits/bridging-the-gate-the-beginning/>
- » <https://www.goldengate.org/exhibits/working-under-water/>
- » <https://www.goldengate.org/exhibits/worlds-tallest-bridge-towers/>
- » <https://www.goldengate.org/bridge/history-research/statistics-data/faqs/>
- » <https://www.goldengate.org/exhibits/all-in-a-days-work/>
- » <https://www.goldengate.org/bridge/history-research/bridge-construction/joseph-strauss/>
- » <https://www.goldengate.org/bridge/history-research/statistics-data/faqs/>
- » <https://www.goldengate.org/bridge/history-research/bridge-construction/joseph-strauss/#poems>

