

THE PREAMBLE – EXPLAINED

[Watch It! – Barney Fife and the Preamble to the Constitution \(4:03\)](#)
[Watch It! – School House Rock Preamble Hip Hop Remix \(3:42\)](#)

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, 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 Preamble is the introduction to our Constitution.
- It is a long list of the reasons we have government/what the government is supposed to do for us.
- The Preamble is written from the perspective of the Founding Fathers.
- In other words, this is what the Founding Fathers believed the government should do for the people.

PREAMBLE PHRASE	MEANING
<i>We the People</i>	In 1787, "We the People" actually only referred to white men who owned property. Because of the 13 th , 14 th , 15 th , 19 th , and 26 th Amendments (changes to the Constitution), it now refers to all people who are U.S. citizens 18 and older.
<i>of the United States,</i>	The original draft of the Preamble referred to all thirteen states. It was changed to "We the People of the United States". However, each state still saw itself as separate. We know this because, according to historian Shelby Foote, before the Civil War it was said, "The United States are." After the Civil War, it was always "The United States is". The words "of the United States" are important because it made it possible for us to be considered one country instead of 13 separate, though united, states.
<i>in Order to form a more perfect Union,</i>	By creating a new constitution and government structure, and scrapping the Articles of Confederation, the delegates therefore hoped to form a more perfect union. This government was to be "more perfect" than the one that existed under the Articles of Confederation.
<i>establish Justice,</i>	Justice – Fairness, moral rightness, lawfulness What does the United States government DO to <i>establish Justice</i> ? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create good laws, hold public trials, citizens serve on juries, balance of power between the three branches
<i>insure domestic Tranquility,</i>	domestic – home, specifically inside the United States Tranquility – peacefulness What does the United States government DO to <i>insure domestic Tranquility</i> ? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a police force, duty to obey the law
<i>provide for the common defence,</i>	common defence – defense of the entire nation (everyone) What does the United States government DO to <i>provide for the common defence</i> ? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A national military (armed forces)
<i>promote the general Welfare,</i>	general Welfare – the well-being of everyone in society in general What does the United States government DO to <i>promote the general Welfare</i> ? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make schools, pay for firefighters, army, postal service, paved roads, subways, EMT, sewer systems
<i>and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity,</i>	the Blessings of Liberty – the good things about freedom Posterity – future generations of people (people who come after us) What does it mean to say that the Constitution will <i>secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity</i> ? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our government will make good decisions so that we have the good things about freedom and that future generations have freedom (and rights) too!
<i>do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.</i>	ordain – to make official So . . . what the Preamble really means is . . . "We the People of the United States, in order to (do all of these things), we will make official and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."