Comparing Constitutions
Comparing the U.S. and Florida Constitutions

Benchmarks
SS.7.C.3.13 Compare the constitutions of the United States and Florida.
What is a constitution?

- Provides a framework for government
  - Outlines responsibilities and powers
- Limits government authority
- Protects the rights of the people

Think of a constitution as a rule book for government.
Structural Similarities
The U.S. and Florida Constitutions

• Both documents have:
  – A Preamble
    • An introduction; outlines the intent of the constitution
  – Articles
    • Provides for the structure of government
  – Amendments
    • Changes to the document
  – Rights of the people/individual freedoms
What similarities and differences can you find?

Using the outlines of the U.S. and Florida Constitutions, compare the documents on your *How Do They Compare?* Handout.

**U.S. Constitution**
Write the differences under the correct label.

**Florida Constitution**
Write the differences under the correct label.

Write the similarities in the center.

**Hint – Look for:**
- Structural differences
- Content differences
- Dates
- Responsibilities
- Services
## Some differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United States Constitution</th>
<th>Florida Constitution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Written in 1787</td>
<td>• Current constitution approved in 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sets up structure of federal government</td>
<td>• Sets up structure of state and local government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Bill of Rights and other amendments are included after the Articles</td>
<td>• Declaration of Rights are in Article I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provided for the coinage of money</td>
<td>• Names education as one of the rights of the people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Made English the official language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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There are also different methods for amending the Constitutions of the United States and Florida.
Comparing the Amendment Processes

AMENDING CONSTITUTIONS
## Changes to the Constitutions

### United States Constitution
- 27 amendments ratified
  - Over 10,000 amendments have been proposed
  - The U.S. Constitution has been amended only 17 times since the first 10—which make up the Bill of Rights—were ratified in 1791.

### Florida Constitution
- Over 100 amendments since 1968
  - Florida has more ways to amend the constitution than any other state
There are two parts to the constitutional amendment process. See Article 5 of the US Constitution.

1. Part One: Proposal Process

2. Part Two: Ratification Process
Proposing Amendments to the U.S. Constitution

- Consent of 2/3 of Congress

- Constitutional convention (never been used)
  - 2/3 of the legislatures of the states call a convention
Approving (Ratifying) Amendments to the U.S. Constitution

- Ratified by \( \frac{3}{4} \) of state legislatures
- Ratified by \( \frac{3}{4} \) of constitutional conventions
Amending the Florida Constitution

- Florida has more ways to amend its Constitution than any other state.

- **5 ways to amend the Florida Constitution (Article XI):**
  1. Proposal by legislature
  2. Revision commission
  3. Voter initiative
  4. Constitutional convention
  5. Amendment or revision election
## Amendments (Changes) to the Constitutions

### United States Constitution
- **Proposing amendments:**
  1. Consent of 2/3 of Congress
  2. Constitutional convention (never been used)
     - 2/3 of the legislatures of the states call a convention
- **Ratifying Amendments**
  - Ratified by ¾ of state legislatures
  - Ratified by ¾ of constitutional conventions

### Florida Constitution
- **Proposing amendments:**
  1. Proposal by legislature
  2. Revision commission
  3. Voter initiative
  4. Constitutional convention
  5. Amendment or revision election
- **All proposals must pass with 60% voter approval**
Cite the Source!

- Read the selected quote.
- Your group will need to decide:
  - Which document it is from - the U.S. or Florida Constitution
  - Where in the document this quote is found

Work together and use your outline to make your best decision!
The...power to establish post offices...

Where is this quote from?

United States Constitution
Counties may be created, abolished or changed by law...

Where is this quote from?

United States Constitution
It is a paramount duty...to make adequate provision for the education of all children residing within its borders...

Where is this quote from?

United States Constitution

Florida Constitution
He shall have the power to make Treaties...

Where is this quote from?

United States Constitution

Florida Constitution
The U.S. Constitution is the "Supreme Law of the Land."

United States Constitution

Acts of Congress

Florida Constitution

State Statutes (laws)

City and County Ordinances

The Hierarchy of Law
Checking for Understanding

The Venn diagram below compares some features of the U.S. and Florida constitutions.

U.S. Constitution
- written in 1787
- established a post office
- provided for the coinage of money

Florida Constitution
- current constitution ratified in 1968
- called for the election of the cabinet
- made English the official language

Which feature completes the Venn diagram?

A. created property taxes
B. established a zoning board
C. required a balanced budget
D. guaranteed individual freedoms