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American Government The Bill of Rights: Part I

The Constitution of the United States was written in 1787, but the government it created couldn't rule over people's lives until one more step was taken. Each state had to vote to **ratify**¹ or approve of it.

By 1789, eleven states had ratified the new government. Their votes were enough to put the Constitution into effect. Two states, however, refused to sign it—North Carolina and Rhode Island. Critics in these states objected that a Bill of Rights had not been included. They worried that without a Bill of Rights the government might eventually become too strong. It might be unjust and put people in jail without a reason. It might take away a person's ability to speak freely, or keep some books from being written. They wanted people's rights spelled out so the government could never take them away.

The "**founding**² fathers," who created the Constitution, knew the document would have to be flexible in order to survive over time. They knew they would have to allow **amendments**³. In their first **session**⁴ of Congress in 1789, they agreed to add a Bill of Rights. James Madison led the way. Of the 11 amendments he suggested, 10 were eventually ratified by the states. They were made a permanent addition to the Constitution. These first 10 amendments are known as the Bill of Rights.

The Bill of Rights became part of the Constitution on December 15, 1791.

Some rights, such as freedom of speech and the press, support democracy. Others, such as the right to a trial by jury, are important for **justice**⁵. The ideas for these rights are very old. They date back to ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. Without them, we wouldn't enjoy the freedom we do as a nation today.

¹ **ratify** - to agree to or approve of something

² **founding** - starting something officially

³ **amendment** - a change that is made to a law or a legal document

⁴ **session** - a formal meeting

⁵ **justice** - fair and impartial behavior or treatment

Home Science Physics Matter & Energy electromagnetic radiation, in classical physics, the flow of energy at the universal speed of light through free space or through a material medium in the form of the electric and magnetic fields that make up electromagnetic waves such as radio waves, visible light, and gamma rays. In such a wave, time-varying electric and magnetic fields are mutually linked with each other at right angles and perpendicular to the direction of motion. An electromagnetic wave is characterized by its intensity and the frequency ν of the time variation of the electric and magnetic fields. In terms of the modern quantum theory, electromagnetic radiation is the flow of photons (also called light quanta) through space. Photons are packets of energy $h\nu$ that always move with the universal speed of light. The symbol h is Planck's constant, while the value of ν is the same as that of the frequency of the electromagnetic wave of classical theory. Photons having the same energy $h\nu$ are all alike, and their number density corresponds to the intensity of the radiation. Electromagnetic radiation exhibits a multitude of phenomena as it interacts with charged particles in atoms, molecules, and larger objects of matter. These phenomena as well as the ways in which electromagnetic radiation is created and observed, the manner in which such radiation occurs in nature, and its technological uses depend on its frequency ν . The spectrum of frequencies of electromagnetic radiation extends from very low values over the range of radio waves, television waves, and microwaves to visible light and beyond to the substantially higher values of ultraviolet light, X-rays, and gamma rays. The basic properties and behaviour of electromagnetic radiation are discussed in this article, as are its various forms, including their sources, distinguishing characteristics, and practical applications. The article also traces the development of both the classical and quantum theories of radiation. Close to 0.01 percent of the mass/energy of the entire universe occurs in the form of electromagnetic radiation. All human life is immersed in it, and modern communications technology and medical services are particularly dependent on one or another of its forms. In fact, all living things on Earth depend on the electromagnetic radiation received from the Sun and on the transformation of solar energy by photosynthesis into plant life or by biosynthesis into zooplankton, the basic step in the food chain in oceans. The eyes of many animals, including those of humans, are adapted to be sensitive to and hence to see the most abundant part of the Sun's electromagnetic radiation—namely, light, which comprises the visible portion of its wide range of frequencies. Green plants also have high sensitivity to the maximum intensity of solar electromagnetic radiation, which is absorbed by a substance called chlorophyll that is essential for plant growth via photosynthesis. Physics, according to Britannica, takes as its focus "the structure of matter and the interactions between the fundamental constituents of the observable universe." Test how much you know about matter and more with this quiz. Practically all the fuels that modern society uses—gas, oil, and coal—are stored forms of energy received from the Sun as electromagnetic radiation millions of years ago. Only the energy from nuclear reactors does not originate from the Sun. Everyday life is pervaded by artificially made electromagnetic radiation: food is heated in microwave ovens, airplanes are guided by radar waves, television sets receive electromagnetic waves transmitted by broadcasting stations, and infrared waves from heaters provide warmth. Infrared waves also are given off and received by automatic self-focusing cameras that electronically measure and set the correct distance to the object to be photographed. As soon as the Sun sets, incandescent or fluorescent lights are turned on to provide artificial illumination, and cities glow brightly with the colourful fluorescent and neon lamps of advertisement signs. Familiar too is ultraviolet radiation, which the eyes cannot see but whose effect is felt as pain from sunburn. Ultraviolet light represents a kind of electromagnetic radiation that can be harmful to life. Such is also true of X-rays, which are important in medicine as they allow physicians to observe the inner parts of the body but exposure to which should be kept to a minimum. Less familiar are gamma rays, which come from nuclear reactions and radioactive decay and are part of the harmful high-energy radiation of radioactive materials and nuclear weapons. Get a Britannica Premium subscription and gain access to exclusive content. Subscribe Now

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