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CHAIR, COMMISSION ON THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

The years 1987 to 1991 marked the 200th anniversary of the writing, ratification, and implementation of the basic documents of American democracy, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Our Constitution has stood the tests and stresses of time, wars, and change. Although it was not perfect, as Benjamin Franklin and many others recognized, it has lasted because it was carefully crafted by men who understood the importance of a system of government sufficiently strong to meet the challenges of the day, yet sufficiently flexible to accommodate and adapt to new political, economic, and social conditions.

Many Americans have but a slight understanding of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the later amendments to which we pledge our allegiance. The lessons in this book are designed to give you, the next generation of American citizens, an understanding of the background, creation, and subsequent history of the unique system of government brought into being by our Constitution. At the same time, it will help you understand the principles and ideals that underlie and give meaning to the Constitution, a system of government by those governed.
**Introduction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit One</th>
<th>What basic ideas about government did the Founders have?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 1</td>
<td>What were the British colonies in America like in the 1700s?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 2</td>
<td>Why did the Founders believe that people needed a government?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 3</td>
<td>What is a republican government?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 4</td>
<td>What is a constitutional government?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 5</td>
<td>What ideas did the Founders use in the Declaration of Independence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 6</td>
<td>What were the first state governments like?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Two</th>
<th>How did the Framers write our Constitution?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 7</td>
<td>What was the first national government like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 8</td>
<td>How was the Philadelphia Convention organized?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 9</td>
<td>How many representatives should each state have in Congress?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 10</td>
<td>What did the Framers do about the problem of slavery?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Three</th>
<th>How does the Constitution organize our government?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson 11</td>
<td>What basic ideas about government are included in the Preamble to the Constitution?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Reference Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Declaration of Independence</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Constitution of the United States</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>