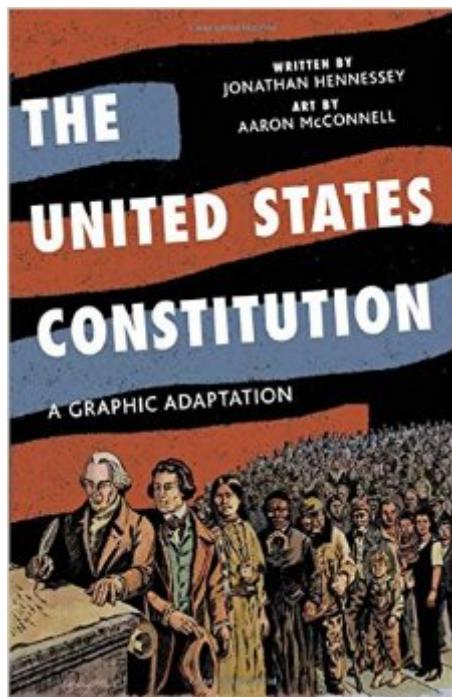


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# The United States Constitution: A Graphic Adaptation



## **Synopsis**

Our leaders swear to uphold it, our military to defend it. It is the blueprint for the shape and function of government itself and what defines Americans as Americans. But how many of us truly know our Constitution? *The United States Constitution: A Graphic Adaptation* uses the art of illustrated storytelling to breathe life into our nation's cornerstone principles. Simply put, it is the most enjoyable and groundbreaking way to read the governing document of the United States. Spirited and visually witty, it roves article by article, amendment by amendment, to get at the meaning, background, and enduring relevance of the law of the land. What revolutionary ideas made the Constitution's authors dare to cast off centuries of rule by kings and queens? Why do we have an electoral college rather than a popular vote for president and vice president? How did a document that once sanctioned slavery, denied voting rights to women, and turned a blind eye to state governments running roughshod over the liberties of minorities transform into a bulwark of protection for all? The United States Constitution answers all of these questions. Sure to surprise, challenge, and provoke, it is hands down the most memorable introduction to America's founding document.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

So many people nowadays talk about the Constitution, its provisions and its history. I wonder how many of them actually read it, and even more so, understand it. Bringing the Constitution to the American Masses, Jonathan Hennessey and Aaron McConnell have done so in a fairly unique and

inspiring way: threw the form of a graphic novel. Part Constitutional primer and part history, *The United States Constitution: A Graphic Adaptation* is a pleasant meandering through the visionary paper that founded our government. Hennessey and McConnell's job is not easy; taking this document and making it accurate, relevant, and real to today's audiences, with a sense of whimsy that graphic novel allows, is quite the balancing act. They accomplish this with a smart blend of historical information, interpretation, and graphics that illustrate, sometimes fantastically, the concepts they discuss. For example, in discussing the role of the judiciary, the character walks around with a Supreme Court building head. Odd, but appropriate. They managed to squeeze in most major cases that the Supreme Court has ruled on in its years of existence; from *Marbury* to *Roe V. Wade*, especially as they amplify parts of the Constitution (whether you agree with that amplification or not). Placement is accurate, and illuminates their points well. (One would think that someone could pass this book on to a certain VP nominee, and get her up-to-date on some of the most major cases!). One drawback to the book I found is the general failure to list the actual parts of the Constitution it was discussing, especially in the realm of the amendments. I often was sent scurrying to my iPhone (to which I've downloaded a free Constitutional app!) to read the actual language of the provision, article or amendment.

The authors and artists involved with creating "*The United States Constitution : a graphic adaptation*" have done a masterful job of conveying the complexities, history and controversies associated with the US Constitution into a graphic format. The 3/5 Compromise, in which African American slaves were counted as 3/5 of a person or the purpose of allocating seats in the House of Representatives is conveyed by showing human beings with slightly more than half of their bodies showing. The conflict between states and the federal government is shown by the various state birds in conflict with a bald eagle. The various factions and interests (large states, small states, etc.) battling for control over government are shown as various individuals pulling wires to hold up an ungainly, smoke-belching machine, piloted by the Founding Fathers, as it maneuvers on a high wire. Creative, apt images are used to indelibly portray lofty and seemingly abstract principles. Controversies are put in historical context. The current battle over the Second Amendment -- giving citizens the right to bear arms -- is put in context of the world of the late 18th century in which the amendment was written. "Persons" (inhabitants of the country) are contrasted with "the People" (those with legal rights). Whatever your position on the 2nd Amendment, this distinction is instructive. The book also provides some insights into the Constitution's development and interpretations over time. The language of incorporation, born with the 14th Amendment ending

slavery -- shows how limitations on the Federal government -- such as the inability to establish religion -- were placed on the states as well. Cases where the Supreme Court has reversed itself are noted, notably Plessey v Ferguson and Brown v Board of Education.

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