

THE AMENDMENTS

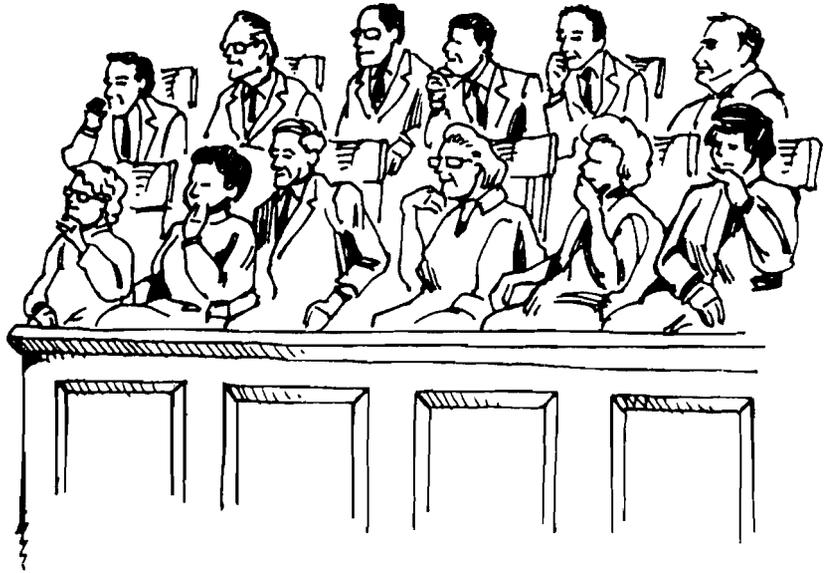
The Bill of Rights, 1791: Amendments VII-X

(See Amendments VII, VIII, IX, X)

The final section of the Bill of Rights deals with legal rights and also with powers given to the states.

The Seventh Amendment guarantees Americans the right to a trial by a jury in any case involving more than twenty dollars. In today's society there are many lawsuits going through the court system. It is our right to have our case decided by a group of our peers, a *jury*. Or, it is our right to not have a jury and have only a judge decide the case.

The Eighth Amendment protects us from having to pay excessive *bail* or be punished in cruel and unusual ways. Bail is money that is given in order to be released from jail. The money is returned when the accused appears in court for the trial. Protection from paying excessive bail means that one wouldn't have to pay one million dollars to be released from jail for stealing a candy bar! Cruel and



unusual punishment is being tortured or punished in ways that are not humane. There are many different opinions as to what is cruel and unusual punishment.

The Seventh Amendment guarantees the right to a trial by jury.

The Ninth Amendment is the "etcetera" amendment. Under this amendment, other rights not listed in the Constitution are also given to the people. The rights in the Constitution are not the only rights Americans have—they are just a few. The Ninth Amendment protects other rights that might not have been listed.

Finally, the Tenth Amendment gives all powers not specifically listed in the Constitution to the states and its peoples. For example, education is not mentioned in the Constitution; therefore, it is the job of the individual states to educate its people. What is not written in the Constitution is given to the states and the people.

The Bill of Rights is an important addition to the Constitution. Without the statement of these rights, certain freedoms like religion, speech, or public trials might have been lost in the passage of time.

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≈ **Challenges** ≈

1. What is a jury? _____

2. What does the Seventh Amendment guarantee? _____

3. What is excessive bail? _____

4. What would you consider cruel and unusual punishment? _____

5. What does the Eighth Amendment protect us from? _____

6. What does the Ninth Amendment say about rights not listed in the Constitution?

7. The power to set up school districts is not stated in the Constitution. Who has the authority to create schools?

What amendment gives them that power? _____

8. How many amendments are contained in the Bill of Rights? _____
