**The Bill of Rights**

The Bill of Rights consists of 10 amendments that explicitly guarantee certain rights and protections to US citizens by limiting the power of the federal government.

* The First Amendment prevents the government from interfering with the freedoms of speech, peaceable assembly, and exercise of religion.
* The Second Amendment declares that properly constituted militias are a safeguard of liberty and that the right to bear arms will be protected.
* The Third Amendment restricts the quartering of soldiers in private homes—an extremely contentious issue that had led the colonists to war with Great Britain.
* The Fourth Amendment protects citizens against unreasonable searches and seizures of private property.
* The Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Amendments establish a variety of guarantees relating to legal proceedings and criminal justice, including the right to a trial by jury; protection against self-incrimination and double jeopardy, being tried twice for the same offense; the right to due process; prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment; and the right to face one’s accuser, obtain legal counsel, and be informed of all criminal charges.
* The Ninth Amendment acknowledges that the other eight amendments are not an exhaustive list of all of the rights and protections to which citizens are guaranteed, and the Tenth Amendment declares that any powers not explicitly delegated to the federal government in the Constitution are to be left to the states. This reinforced the principle of federalism, or separation of powers, by ensuring that the federal government could not usurp rights and powers that were not explicitly authorized in the Constitution.