

A Guide to US Constitution Pocket Guides

Compiled by Michele Holt-Shannon for *The Democracy Imperative*

These guides are often handed out to groups of students. The University of New Hampshire gave one to every first year student in the fall of 2007 as a part of Constitution Day and a University Dialogue on Democracy. I've compiled this list to assist educators who are considering doing something similar.

Pure US Constitution

These three are all simple copies of the US constitution and amendments. No worrisome partisan commentary included but also without helpful explanations.

LittleBigBooks Pocket Guide - U.S. Constitution & its 27 Amendments [UNABRIDGED]

<http://www.amazon.com/LittleBigBooks-Pocket-Guide-Constitution-Amendments/dp/0972408908>

This pocket guide contains the entire U.S. Constitution (unaltered text from the original) and the twenty-seven amendments written to date. This version does not have commentary explaining the meaning of articles and amendments.

108th CONGRESS, 1st SESSION / HOUSE DOCUMENT 108-96

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=108_cong_documents&docid=f:hd096.pdf

A pdf version of a pocket guide available to download for free.

Pocket Constitution from the Constitution Center

<http://www.constitutioncenter.org/constitutionday/display/NccP/Pocket+Constitutions>

I really like this one. At the time of posting, this was also the best price for a published version (\$.40 each or less).

With Helpful Commentary

I thought these three were the most helpful in terms of providing some commentary about the text.

A Pocket Guide to the U.S. Constitution

By Andrew B. Arnold

<http://www.pearsonhighered.com/educator/product/A-Pocket-Guide-to-the-US-Constitution/9780558874445.page>

This version includes more headings and explanations and was written “as a sort of cheat sheet for my students.” The author wanted students to see the structure and history of the Constitution as well as to be able to quickly find and understand the various clauses mentioned in class, news, and assignments.

The US Constitution and Fascinating Facts About It

<http://www.constitutionfacts.com/index.cfm?section=bookstore&page=bookstore.cfm>

This version includes the entire text of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence. It also includes interesting insights into the men who wrote the Constitution, how it was created, and how the Supreme Court has interpreted the Constitution in the two centuries since its creation.

The Heritage Guide to the Constitution

<https://secure.heritage.org/bookstore/>

The Heritage Pocket Guide to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States is a handy and portable copy of America's primary Founding documents. It includes the text of the Declaration, the Constitution, all of the amendments to the Constitution, and a foreword by Matthew Spalding, director of the Heritage Center for American Studies. It is available for \$1.00 a copy.

The United States Constitution: What It Says, What It Means

A Hip Pocket Guide

<http://www.us.oup.com/us/catalog/general/subject/HistoryAmerican/?view=usa&ci=9780195304435>

This version is published by **Justice Learning.org**, a comprehensive on-line resource that offers wide-ranging non-partisan materials relating to civics education.

With Stronger Ideological Perspectives

There are also a variety of versions with stronger commentary embedded in the text. This is one such example I found.

The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Constitution

https://www.conservativebookclub.com/Join/SingleBookJoin.asp?sour_cd=sb376az&prod_cd=c7065

The Democracy Imperative works to mobilize higher education to improve public life by advancing deliberative and inclusive democracy.

We advocate for education that is grounded in democratic principles of justice, equity and freedom and in democratic practices of inclusive dialogue, public reason, shared governance, conflict transformation, and collaborative policymaking and action.

We work to strengthen the capacity of communities and higher education to teach, learn, and generate knowledge about the arts, skills, and habits of democracy.

<http://www.unh.edu/academic-affairs/democracy/>

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