
WE THE PEOPLE of the United States, in Order
§1. The preamble. to form a more perfect Union, es-
tablish Justice, insure domestic
Tranquility, provide for the common defence,
promote the general Welfare, and secure the
Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Pos-
terity, do ordain and establish this Constitution
for the United States of America.

The First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in September, 1774
and adopted the Declaration and Resolves of the First
§2. Formation of the Continental Congress, embodying rights and principles
Constitution. later to be incorporated into the Constitution of the
United States. The Second Continental Congress adopted in November,
1777 the Articles of Confederation, which the States approved in July,
1778. Upon recommendation of the Continental Congress, a convention
of State representatives met in May, 1787 to revise the Articles of Confed-
eration and reported to the Continental Congress in September a new Con-
stitution, which the Congress submitted to the States for ratification. Nine
States, as required by the Constitution for its establishment, had ratified
by June 21, 1788, and eleven States had ratified by July 26, 1788. The
Continental Congress adopted a resolution on September 13, 1788, putting
the new Constitution into effect; the First Congress of the United States
convened on March 4, 1789, and George Washington was inaugurated as
the first President on April 30, 1789.