
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.

§2. Formation of the Constitution. The First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in September of 1774 and adopted the Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress, embodying rights and principles later to be incorporated into the Constitution of the United States. The Second Continental Congress adopted in November of 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 Confederation and reported to the Continental Congress in September a new Constitution, 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.