

The Massachusetts Constitution

1780 | Grade 2 · Read & notice

Words to know

constitution — a set of basic rules for a government

rights — freedoms and protections people are entitled to

government — the system that makes and carries out public decisions

Look closely



Massachusetts State House

Read the story

Massachusetts adopted a constitution, a plan for government. John Adams was its main author. The document described rights and branches of government. It remains in use with amendments. Rights were not equally enjoyed by everyone.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. What happened in this reading? Tell one fact.
2. Who or what is this reading mostly about?
3. Choose a word from the word bank. Explain it in your own words.
4. Look at the picture and its caption. What does it help you notice? Is it from the time of the event?

Follow-up reading: Elizabeth Freeman wins freedom

1781

An enslaved woman known as Bett went to court with a man named Brom. They challenged their enslavement and won. Bett later used the name Elizabeth Freeman. Her action helped challenge slavery in Massachusetts.

How are the two readings alike or different? Tell a partner one connection. Which event came first?

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.2.1: ask and answer questions; RI.2.2: identify a main topic; RI.2.7: use images and words; W.2.2 and SL.2.1: explain and discuss.

These tasks support selected skills in the [Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework](#); they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: Massachusetts adopted a constitution, a plan for government. John Adams was its main author. The document described rights and branches of government. It remains in use with amendments. Rights were not equally enjoyed by everyone. It is widely described as the oldest written constitution still functioning in the world. Read that claim with attention to written form and continuing use. Its equality language became important in freedom cases.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

[Research source for this event ↗](#)

[Research source for follow-up ↗](#)

[Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗](#)

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[Image source and rights record ↗](#)

The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event's [HTML page](#). External sources may need adult guidance.