The Constitution Source #1

The Constitution of the United States is a document that outlines the basis of the federal (national) government of the USA. It was written in 1787 at the "Constitutional Convention," held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in what we now call Independence Hall. The 55 men at the convention are called the "Founding Fathers" of the USA, and are also known as the "Framers of the Constitution." Some of the more famous of the framers are George Washington (the first President of the USA), James Madison (the fourth President of the USA), Benjamin Franklin, and Alexander Hamilton.

The US Constitution was ratified (approved) by nine states on June 21, 1788 (Delaware was the first state to ratify it); it was later ratified by the remaining states. It replaced the earlier set of government rules, the *Articles of Confederation*, which were the law of the land from 1781 until 1788 (this document created a group of semi-independent states plus a weak national Congress, with neither an Executive nor a Judicial branch).

The Constitution sets up the United States with a federal (national) government plus state governments. It also specifies that the USA will be a republic, with an elected President, a bicameral congress (consisting of two legislative branches, a House of Representatives and a Senate), and a system of courts headed by a Supreme Court.

The Constitution is composed of a Preamble (an introduction), the main body (which consists of seven articles), and amendments (additions to the Constitution made after the Constitution was created).

http://www.enchantedlearning.com/history/us/documents/constitution/