

Finding American Constitutional Amendment Information in the Library

There is a wealth of information available on the Constitution and its Amendments. This guide will show you how to find books, use electronic resources (databases) and quality Internet sites to find information on Constitutional Amendments.

Books

In the Reference Collection are several books that are a great place to start researching Amendments. Below is a list of books to start your research. Call numbers (where the book is on the shelf) follow the titles.

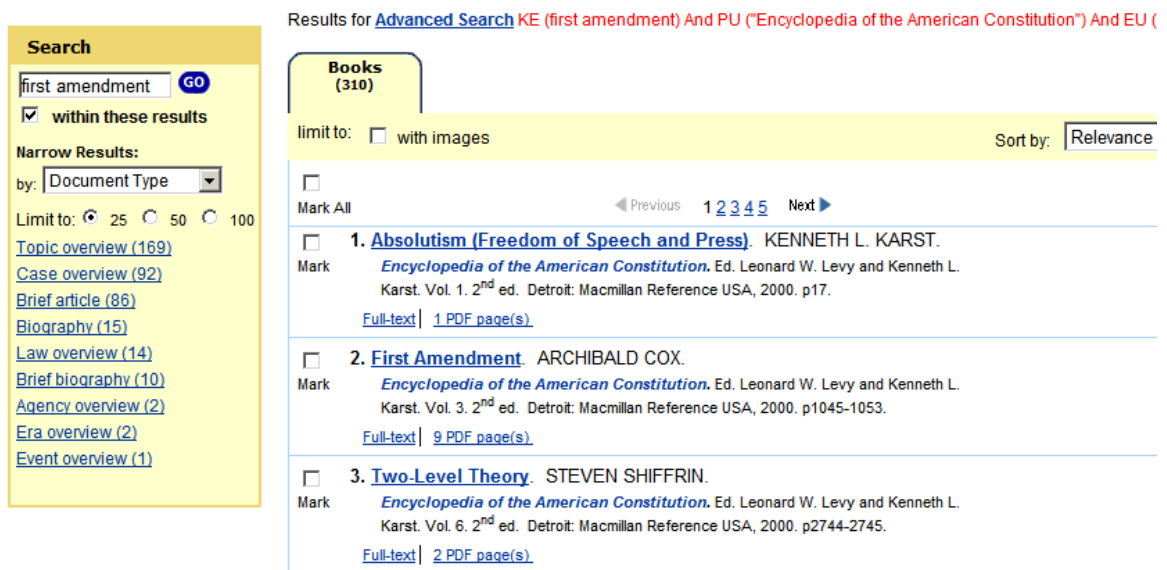
- **Constitutional Amendments: from Freedom of Speech to Flag Burning:** KF 4557 .P46 – this set has an excellent introduction to the Constitution and amendment process. Each Amendment has a detailed chapter which includes text of the Amendment, ratification facts, detailed history and background, and summarizes relevant Supreme Court cases for each amendment.
- **Constitutional Amendments: 1789 to the Present:** KF 4557 .G65 – this has a detailed chapter on each Amendment with an overview, a section on the pre-constitutional origins of principles embodied in the Amendment, and references to relevant Supreme Court cases.
- **The U.S. Constitution A to Z:** KF 4548 .M33 – Includes an essay on Amendments, the text of the Amendments, and a table listing some proposed Amendments not ratified by the States.
- **The United States Constitution: Questions and Answers:** KF 4550 .V553 – dozens of answers to common questions about the Constitution and the Amendments.
- **The Creation of the U.S. Constitution:** KF 4541 .C683 – this book has essays of opposing viewpoints regarding the Constitution, such as a debate on whether the Constitution needs a Bill of Rights or not, written at the time of ratification.
- **Great American Court Cases:** This multi-volume set is one of many reference books that summarize Supreme Court cases about Constitutional issues. It is organized by topic (freedom of speech, religion, etc.). The articles have excellent summaries of each case and its significance and two to three pages of analysis of the case. Related cases are also listed in each entry.

Electronic Resources

The library subscribes to several electronic databases with excellent Constitutional content. They are on the Electronic Articles page of the Do Research section of the Library Web site.

- **Issues & Controversies in American History** – This database is an excellent place to research the Constitution. Under the Subject Index, click *Birth of a Nation* and then the *Bill of Rights* link. This leads to a detailed article and includes primary documents and links to related articles. You could also search for “bill of rights” to access this article.
- **Issues & Controversies** – In this database is a Special Features section with one of the features being an article titled *Bill of Rights in Debate*. It has questions about issues covered by the Bill of Rights organized by Amendment with links to articles about those issues.
- **Gale Virtual Reference Library** – Click on the *Encyclopedia of the American Constitution*. Search for the Amendment you want information on (First Amendment for example). You will find a list of articles related to that Amendment plus a detailed article about the actual Amendment itself.

Results for [Advanced Search](#) KE (first amendment) And PU ("Encyclopedia of the American Constitution") And EU (



Search

first amendment

within these results

Narrow Results:

by:

Limit to: 25 50 100

[Topic overview \(169\)](#)

[Case overview \(92\)](#)

[Brief article \(86\)](#)

[Biography \(15\)](#)

[Law overview \(14\)](#)

[Brief biography \(10\)](#)

[Agency overview \(2\)](#)

[Era overview \(2\)](#)

[Event overview \(1\)](#)

Books (310)

limit to: with images Sort by:

Mark All ◀ Previous 1 2 3 4 5 Next ▶

1. [Absolutism \(Freedom of Speech and Press\)](#). KENNETH L. KARST.
Mark [Encyclopedia of the American Constitution](#). Ed. Leonard W. Levy and Kenneth L. Karst. Vol. 1. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2000. p17.
[Full-text](#) | [1 PDF page\(s\)](#)

2. [First Amendment](#). ARCHIBALD COX.
Mark [Encyclopedia of the American Constitution](#). Ed. Leonard W. Levy and Kenneth L. Karst. Vol. 3. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2000. p1045-1053.
[Full-text](#) | [9 PDF page\(s\)](#)

3. [Two-Level Theory](#). STEVEN SHIFFRIN.
Mark [Encyclopedia of the American Constitution](#). Ed. Leonard W. Levy and Kenneth L. Karst. Vol. 6. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2000. p2744-2745.
[Full-text](#) | [2 PDF page\(s\)](#)

This set of results allows you to read the broad overview (result #2) or read about specific topics covered by the Amendment such as freedom of speech (result #1). The First Amendment article runs 9 pages, and covers the origins and history of the Amendment, links to related subjects in the encyclopedia, and extensive hyperlinked cross references at the bottom of the article that lead to related articles in the encyclopedia.

- **SIRS** - this database has a copy of the Constitution which includes the Amendments. There are also Supreme Court case summaries and full text of decisions for hundreds of cases. To access the Constitution, click the gray database features tab at the top of the main SIRS page. Then click the *Historic Documents* link in the center column. Type in *constitution* as a search and click on *U.S. Constitution (1787)*. To see Supreme Court case summaries and opinions, click the database features tab and click U.S. Supreme Court in the center column. When searching for a case, be sure to choose **Case Name** (see below):

The screenshot shows the SIRS database search interface. At the top, there are four tabs: "Quick Search", "Advanced Search", "Topic Browse", and "Database Features". Below the tabs is a search area with a purple sidebar on the left containing the word "Search" vertically. The main search area has a yellow background and is titled "U.S. Supreme Court Decisions". Below the title is the text "Locate constitutional articles, amendments, and case documents by". There is a search input field containing the text "engel" and a "Search" button. Below the input field are three radio buttons: "Full Text", "Case Name" (which is selected), and "Subject Headings". To the right of the radio buttons is a link for "Search Tips".

You will get three results. The Syllabus is the Court-issued summary of the decision. The other results are the majority opinion and the dissenting opinions.

- Another option to find the full text of many of the Supreme Court decisions is the Internet. Listed below are two good sites:
 - **Cornell University Law School** (<http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/cases/historic.htm>) – this site has hundreds of opinions, with a great index. More than 600 of the most famous cases are included. You can easily read just the majority or dissenting opinions.
 - **FindLaw** (<http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/supreme.html>) – this collection features decisions from 1893 to the present.