

Famous Quotes

About The Constitution

“I confess that there are several parts of this Constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am not sure I shall never approve them. For having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged by better information, or fuller consideration, to change opinions even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise.”

— **Benjamin Franklin**, 1787

“My political curiosity, exclusive of my anxious solicitude for the public welfare, leads me to ask who authorized them (the framers of the Constitution) to speak the language of ‘We, the People,’ instead of ‘We, the States’?”

— **Patrick Henry**, 1788 (Orations of American Orators)

“As the British Constitution is the most subtle organism which has proceeded from the womb and long gestation of progressive history, so the American Constitution is, so far as I can see, the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man.”

— **W. E. Gladstone**

“The Constitution, on this hypothesis, is a mere thing of wax in the hands of the Judiciary, which they may twist and shape into any form they please.”

— **Thomas Jefferson**

“I am exceedingly distressed at the proceedings of the Convention—being ... almost sure, they will ... lay the foundation of a Civil War.”

— **Elbridge Gerry (Massachusetts Delegate)**, 1787

“I consider the difference between a system founded on the legislatures only, and one founded on the people, to be the true difference between a league or treaty and a constitution.”

— **James Madison**, at the Constitutional Convention, 1787

“Let our government be like that of the solar system. Let the general government be like the sun and the states the planets, repelled yet attracted, and the whole moving regularly and harmoniously in several orbits.”

— **John Dickinson** (Delaware Delegate), 1787

About Democracy

“Too many people expect wonders from democracy, when the most wonderful thing of all is just having it.”

— **Walter Winchell**

“In free countries, every man is entitled to express his opinions and every other man is entitled not to listen.”

— **G. Norman Collie**

“Democracy is the form of government that gives every man the right to be his own oppressor.”

— **James Russell Lowell**

“You can never have a revolution in order to establish a democracy. You must have a democracy in order to have a revolution.”

— **Gilbert K. Chesterton**

“Democracy is based upon the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people.”

— **Harry Emerson Fosdick**

“Democracy is the government of the people, by the people, for the people.”

— **Abraham Lincoln**

“Democracy is good. I say this because other systems are worse.”

— **Jawaharlal Nehru**

“Democracy ... is a system of self-determination. It's the right to make the wrong choice.”

— **John Patrick**

“In a democracy, the individual enjoys not only the ultimate power but carries the ultimate responsibility.”

— **Norman Cousins**

“Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.”

— **Reinhold Niebuhr**

“A free government is a complicated piece of machinery, the nice and exact adjustment of whose springs, wheels, and weights, is not yet well comprehended by the artists of the age, and still less by the people.”

— **John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, May 19, 1821**

“It is much easier to pull down a government, in such a conjuncture of affairs as we have seen, than to build up, at such a season as the present.”

— **John Adams letter to James Warren, 1787**