Suggested Reading


2) American Epic: Reading the U.S. Constitution by Garrett Epps (Oxford). Epps leads a fascinating literary explanation of the 7,500 words of the document itself.

3) The Summer of 1787: The Men Who Invented the Constitution by David O. Stewart (Simon and Shuster). A compelling narrative of the brilliant though sometimes angry and scheming personalities who produced the first written charter for a republic.

4) The Federalist Papers by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay (various). First published as newspaper advocacy pieces, these 85 essays on the new American government have never been surpassed.

5) Ratification: The People Debate the Constitution, 1787-1788 by Pauline Maier (Simon and Schuster). Once the U.S. Constitution was written, the state still had to ratify it, which proved to be a difficult, dramatic, and enlightening process.

6) James Madison and the Struggle for the Bill of Rights by Richard Labunski (Oxford). The framers of the U.S. Constitution forgot to include most protections for individual rights, so Madison and the First Congress undertook that essential effort in 1789.


9) Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 by Gordon S. Wood (Chirp Books). Identifies, traces, and explains the changes that took place in American constitutional thinking between independence and the writing of the federal constitution.