Class 11 Political Science (Indian Constitution at Work) Chapter 1: Constitution: Why and How? - Notes, Important Questions and MCQs (2026-27)

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These Class 11 Political Science Chapter 1 notes cover “Constitution: Why and How?” from the NCERT textbook Indian Constitution at Work (2026-27): why a society needs a constitution, its four main functions, what gives a constitution authority, how the Indian Constitution was made by the Constituent Assembly, the Objectives Resolution and the features India borrowed from other constitutions – with tables, Q&A, 10 MCQs and a free PDF.

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Chapter Overview

A constitution is a set of fundamental rules that allows a society to live together. It specifies who has the power to make decisions, limits what governments can do, and expresses the aspirations of a society – such as justice, liberty and equality.

India’s Constitution was framed by the Constituent Assembly between 1946 and 1949 and came into effect on 26 January 1950. It drew on India’s freedom struggle, the Government of India Act 1935 and the best features of other constitutions, and its authority comes from the way it was made, the balance of its provisions and the trust of the people.

Important Topics and Concepts

Why Do We Need a Constitution?

- To provide a set of basic rules for coordination and trust among members of a society.
- To specify who has the power to make decisions (allocation of power).
- To set limits on the powers of government – e.g. fundamental rights protect citizens.
- To enable the government to fulfil the aspirations of a society and create conditions for a just society.
- To express the fundamental identity of a people.

Authority of a Constitution

- Mode of promulgation: a constitution drafted by a popularly elected body enjoys more legitimacy.
- Substantive provisions: it must allow everyone a stake – freedom, equality and fair rules.
- Balanced institutional design: power divided among institutions with checks and balances so no group can subvert it.
- Constitutions fail when they are imposed by rulers or concentrate power – as seen in some countries.

Making of the Indian Constitution

- The Constituent Assembly was elected indirectly by members of the Provincial Legislative Assemblies under the Cabinet Mission plan (1946).
- After Partition, its membership was reduced to 299.
- Dr B.R. Ambedkar chaired the Drafting Committee; Dr Rajendra Prasad was the President of the Assembly.
- It worked through open discussion, committees and consensus, taking almost three years; the Constitution was adopted on 26 November 1949.

Inheritance of the National Movement

- The Objectives Resolution moved by Jawaharlal Nehru (1946) set out the core values – a sovereign, democratic republic; justice; equality; freedom; protection of minorities.
- Institutional arrangements drew on the Government of India Act 1935 and parliamentary practice.
- Ideals of the freedom struggle – universal franchise, rights, federalism – were built in.

Borrowed Features

- British Constitution: parliamentary form of government, rule of law, first-past-the-post, Speaker.
- US Constitution: fundamental rights, judicial review, independence of the judiciary.
- Irish Constitution: Directive Principles of State Policy.
- Canadian Constitution: quasi-federal government with a strong Centre, residuary powers with the Centre.
- French Constitution: liberty, equality, fraternity.

Functions of a Constitution

Most-asked table.

Function	Meaning	Indian example
Coordination and trust	Basic rules everyone follows	Constitution as supreme law
Allocation of power	Who makes decisions and how	Parliament makes laws
Limits on government	Protects citizens from misuse of power	Fundamental Rights
Aspirations and goals	Creates a just society	Directive Principles
Identity of a people	Shared values and vision	Preamble

Borrowed Features of the Indian Constitution

Source	Features
British Constitution	Parliamentary system, rule of law, FPTP, Speaker
United States	Fundamental rights, judicial review, independent judiciary
Ireland	Directive Principles of State Policy
Canada	Quasi-federal system, residuary powers with Centre
France	Liberty, equality, fraternity
Government of India Act 1935	Administrative structure, federal scheme

Important Definitions and Terms

Term	Meaning
Constitution	Body of fundamental rules governing a state
Constituent Assembly	Body that drafted India’s Constitution
Promulgation	Formal adoption of a constitution
Checks and balances	Institutions limiting each other’s power
Objectives Resolution	Nehru’s 1946 statement of constitutional goals
Drafting Committee	Committee chaired by Dr B.R. Ambedkar
Cabinet Mission	1946 plan that shaped the Assembly
Sovereign	Free from external control
Republic	Head of state is elected, not hereditary
Rule of law	Everyone is subject to law

Short Answer Questions

Q1. Why does a society need a constitution?

To provide basic rules for coordination, decide who holds power, limit government and express shared goals.

To provide a set of basic rules that allow minimal coordination among members of a society.

Q3. How does a constitution limit government?

By guaranteeing fundamental rights that the government cannot violate.

Q4. What gives a constitution authority?

Its mode of promulgation, its fair substantive provisions and its balanced institutional design.

Q5. When was the Indian Constitution adopted and when did it come into force?

Adopted on 26 November 1949; came into force on 26 January 1950.

Q6. Who was the chairman of the Drafting Committee?

Dr B.R. Ambedkar.

Q7. What was the Objectives Resolution?

A resolution moved by Nehru in 1946 stating the aims and values of the Constitution.

Q8. Name two features borrowed from the US Constitution.

Fundamental rights and judicial review.

Long Answer Questions

Q1. Explain the main functions of a constitution.

Provides basic rules for coordination and trust.

Specifies who has decision-making power.

Sets limits on what governments can impose on citizens.

Enables governments to fulfil the aspirations of society.

Expresses the fundamental identity of a people.

Q2. What makes a constitution effective and authoritative?

Made by a popularly elected, representative body.

Gives everyone a stake through rights and fair rules.

Balanced institutional design with checks and balances.

Flexible enough to adapt, yet stable.

Respected by people and leaders in practice.

Q3. Describe the composition and working of the Constituent Assembly.

Formed in 1946 under the Cabinet Mission plan, elected indirectly by provincial assemblies.

299 members after Partition, representing different regions and groups.

Worked through committees and open debate aiming at consensus.

Guided by the Objectives Resolution and values of the freedom struggle.

Adopted the Constitution on 26 November 1949.

MCQs with Answers

1. The Constitution came into force on(a) 15 August 1947 (b) 26 November 1949 (c) 26 January 1950 (d) 9 December 1946Answer: (c) 26 January 1950

2. Chairman of the Drafting Committee(a) Rajendra Prasad (b) B.R. Ambedkar (c) Jawaharlal Nehru (d) Sardar PatelAnswer: (b) B.R. Ambedkar

3. Directive Principles were borrowed from(a) USA (b) Ireland (c) Canada (d) UKAnswer: (b) Ireland

4. Judicial review was borrowed from(a) UK (b) USA (c) France (d) IrelandAnswer: (b) USA

5. Objectives Resolution was moved by(a) Nehru (b) Ambedkar (c) Gandhi (d) PrasadAnswer: (a) Nehru

6. Members of the Assembly after Partition(a) 389 (b) 299 (c) 250 (d) 545Answer: (b) 299

7. Constituent Assembly was formed under the(a) Cripps Mission (b) Cabinet Mission plan (c) Simon Commission (d) Mountbatten PlanAnswer: (b) Cabinet Mission plan

8. Parliamentary system is from the(a) British Constitution (b) US Constitution (c) Irish Constitution (d) French ConstitutionAnswer: (a) British Constitution

9. Limiting government power mainly protects(a) ministers (b) citizens' rights (c) judges only (d) partiesAnswer: (b) citizens' rights

10. Liberty, equality, fraternity were inspired by(a) France (b) Japan (c) Canada (d) AustraliaAnswer: (a) France

Quick Revision Points

- Functions: coordination, power allocation, limits, aspirations, identity.
- Authority: promulgation, provisions, balanced design.
- Constituent Assembly (1946), 299 members, Ambedkar, Prasad.
- Adopted 26 Nov 1949; in force 26 Jan 1950.
- Objectives Resolution (Nehru).
- Borrowed features table.

Chapter Summary

A constitution provides the basic rules of a society, decides who holds power, limits governments, enables a just society and expresses a people's identity. Its authority depends on how it was made, the fairness of its provisions and a balanced design with checks and balances.

India's Constitution was framed by the Constituent Assembly through open deliberation, guided by the Objectives Resolution and the ideals of the national movement. It blended Indian experience with features from British, American, Irish, Canadian and French constitutions.

Exam Tips and PYQ Pattern

- Learn the five functions with examples.
- Remember key dates and personalities.
- The borrowed-features table is frequently asked.
- Use “mode of promulgation” terminology correctly.
- Link constitutional values to the Preamble.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is this chapter in the 2026-27 CBSE syllabus?

Yes. It is part of the NCERT Class 11 Political Science textbook “Indian Constitution at Work”, prescribed in the CBSE 2026-27 syllabus.

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Yes. Use the free PDF link at the top of this page – no signup needed.

What are the functions of a constitution?

Coordination and trust, allocating power, limiting government, fulfilling aspirations and expressing identity.

Who drafted the Indian Constitution?

The Constituent Assembly, with Dr B.R. Ambedkar as chairman of the Drafting Committee.

Conclusion

Constitution: Why and How? explains the foundation of Indian democracy. Learn the function and borrowed-feature tables, practise the Q&A here and save the free PDF for revision.

More Notes: Class 11 Political Science (Indian Constitution at Work) Chapter 2: Rights in the Indian Constitution notes | All Class 11 Political Science notes

Author Bio: Written and reviewed by the Nextoper Editorial Team, a group of CBSE political science educators who build chapter notes directly from the NCERT textbook and past board paper patterns.

Freshness Note: These notes follow the NCERT Class 11 Political Science (Indian Constitution at Work) textbook, Indian Constitution at Work (NCERT reprint 2026-27, rationalised syllabus), and the CBSE syllabus for the 2026-27 session. Last checked on 25 November 2026.