



Not just for kids

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Author Cathy Travis prefaces her large-format hardcover with a message to parents and teachers about her reasons for writing this book--to demonstrate how the Constitution affects modern political events. The preface to kids encourages young readers to help show adults what the Constitution actually says.

As a twenty-something with a dual degree in engineering and economics, I consider myself fairly well-versed in politics and history, but I learned a lot in just the first few pages of this book. From the introductory timeline, I read that 1776 was just the start of a "bloody, devastating war for independence [which lasted] for seven years." Had I been asked, I would have been unable to fill in most of this timeline. I don't remember "bloody" and "devastating" being covered in my 5th grade American history education, nor would I have put the war at nearly a decade! My memory of history class was that we Americans were moral and right and had no choice but to do the right thing. Plus, now I can impress my friends with the fact that, "The U.S. Constitution is the shortest, and oldest Constitution, of any government in the world."

The bulk of the book is a two-column presentation of the Constitution with the original text on the left and a modern, 5th grade reading-level translation on the right. Forget the schoolkids for a moment--every adult needs to take a few moments to read this book and get familiar with both the original document and the last two centuries of amendments to what was always intended to be a living document.

The book concludes with coverage of the branches of the U.S. government and a comprehensive glossary. While the text is non-partisan overall, Travis does a service to readers both young and old with a final chapter that provides the historical context for each of the amendments. Another concluding chapter is a detailed examination of some of the proposed amendments, complete with arguments for and against each one.

Don't leave this book for just the grade school students to enjoy!!