

Directions—Read the following excerpt from a letter to Edward Carrington from Thomas Jefferson and answer the questions.

Paris May 27. 1788.

Dear Sir

... I learn with great pleasure the progress of the new Constitution. Indeed I have presumed it would gain on the public mind, as I confess it has on my own. At first, tho I saw that the great mass and groundwork was good, I disliked many appendages. Reflection and discussion have cleared off most of these... There are two amendments only which I am anxious for... The 2d. amendment which appears to me essential is the restoring the principle of necessary rotation, particularly to the Senate and Presidency: but most of all to the last. Re-eligibility makes him an officer for life, and the disasters inseparable from an elective monarchy, render it preferable, if we cannot tread back that step, that we should go forward and take refuge in an hereditary one. Of the correction of this article however I entertain no present hope, because I find it has scarcely excited an objection in America. And if it does not take place ere long, it assuredly never will. The natural progress of things is for liberty to yeild, and government to gain ground. As yet our spirits are free. Our jealousy is only put to sleep by the unlimited confidence we all repose in the person to whom we all look as our president. After him inferior characters may perhaps succeed and awaken us to the danger which his merit has led us into. For the present however, the general adoption is to be prayed for...

1. What were Jefferson's original thoughts about the Constitution? What does he think of it at the time he wrote this letter?
2. What does Jefferson think ought to be the second amendment to the new Constitution? Why does he think it is necessary?
3. Why doesn't Jefferson have any hope of getting this new amendment?
4. Jefferson writes, "if it does not take place ere long, it assuredly never will." Which amendment addressed Jefferson's concern and when was it ratified?

Letter text:

Boyd, Julian P. ed. "From Thomas Jefferson to Edward Carrington, 27 May 1788." *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson vol. 13, March-7 October 1788*. Founders Online, National Archive. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956. 208-210.

<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-13-02-0120>