THE CONSTITUTION WITH CARL

Volume 19 - The Eighteenth Amendment - Prohibition

Prohibition: The Amendment That Banned a Business

Central question: What happens when the Constitution bans a drink?





Every amendment in this series so far has guarded a right, settled who governs, or changed how leaders are chosen. This one did something none of the others tried. It reached into daily life and forbade a whole trade: making, selling, and carrying intoxicating liquor as a drink, everywhere in the United States.

Read the words with care when you reach page 3. The amendment banned the *business* of liquor: its manufacture, sale, and transportation for beverage purposes. It was not written as a simple ban on a person drinking, and this book will not pretend otherwise. That difference shaped everything that followed.

The story is a serious one, and this book tells it at history level, in plain facts. Behind the amendment stood a movement a hundred years old, families hurt by drunkenness, and a real argument about saloons and politics. Ahead of it stood thirteen years of a great national experiment, obeyed by many, broken by some, and ended by the only repeal in the Constitution's history. The repeal has its own book: Volume 22 tells how the Twenty-first Amendment undid this one. This book ends where this amendment's own working life ends, with the lessons it left behind.

For ages 7 to 11. Level Up boxes reach to age 13.

START HERE

Meet Carl and the Four Strands

Carl the Cardinal is Temperance Carl in this volume. He stands before a saloon door that has closed for good, its shade drawn, its sign blank. His wings are folded and his face is thoughtful, because this amendment asks thoughtful questions. What may a whole nation decide together? What happens when a rule written into the Constitution meets the daily habits of millions of people?

The four strands, kept separate

Strand	What it is
THE WORDS	The amendment itself, in ORIGINAL WORDS, plus a PLAIN LANGUAGE EXPLANATION set apart from it.
THE HISTORY	Evidence from before and around 1919 about why the words were added, and the record of what happened under them.
COURTS HAVE SAID	Named cases with years. This is interpretation by judges, labeled as interpretation.
STILL DEBATED	Real disputes that remain. Stated fairly, never as settled fact.

How to use this book

- Read the words aloud first. Then read the explanation.
- Write, draw, point, or dictate your answers. All of those count.
- Three dates run this whole book, and they are easy to mix up. The amendment was **ratified** on January 16, 1919. It took **effect** one year later, on January 17, 1920. It was **repealed** in 1933, a story saved for Volume 22.
- One guardrail runs through the whole book: the amendment banned making, selling, and moving liquor for drinking. It did not, by its own words, ban drinking itself. Watch for that line on every page.
- Alcohol is a grown up subject. This book keeps it at history level: plain facts, no detail that belongs in a grown up conversation. Family Talk, on page 19, is where the family viewpoint lives.

CARL'S ONE DISTINCTION

Carl keeps one distinction in front of him from the first page to the last: **a rule and its enforcement are two different things**. The amendment is the rule. The Volstead Act was the enforcement law Congress wrote under it. Half the confusion of the Prohibition years, and half the arguments since, comes from mixing those two up. The sorting activity on page 16 is built on keeping them apart.

MEET CARL BOX

Carl in this volume is a witness at a closed door. He does not cheer and he does not sneer. A great many honest people wanted that door closed, for reasons any family can understand, and a great many honest people later concluded the experiment had failed. Carl's job is to read the record straight, honor the reasons on both sides, and let the evidence teach what it teaches.