Searches, Seizures, and Warrants

Central question: What must the government show before it can search or take?





Rights are God given and protected by the Constitution. They are not granted by government. This book reads the Fourth Amendment the careful way: the words first, then the history, then what courts have said, and only then what is still debated. Those four parts stay separate on every page.

The amendment holds two protections, and this book keeps them separate. The first bans unreasonable searches and seizures. The second sets the rules for warrants: a warrant may issue only on probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized. The first protection is distinct from the second; not every government search is preceded by a warrant. What the amendment will not allow is an unreasonable search, and a warrantless entry into a home is generally unreasonable unless a recognized exception applies.

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

START HERE

Meet Carl and the Four Strands

Carl the Cardinal is Constable Carl in this volume. He holds a warrant up to the light and reads every word before he acts. That is the habit this book teaches: read the paper, check what it names, and check the reason behind it.

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 1791 about why the words were added.
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.
- Activities use fictional evidence cards only. No activity in this book asks you to search a real person, a real home, or real belongings.
- Answers are printed in the answer key near the back, so you can work first and check after.
- Family Talk is where the family viewpoint lives. It is never presented as a court holding.

Meet Carl box

Carl in this volume is Constable Carl. He holds a rolled, sealed warrant up toward the light, reading it carefully, with his satchel at his side. A good constable in this book is not the fastest searcher. He is the one who checks the warrant first.