

THE PERIODIC TABLE OF THE PRESIDENTS™

The Sixth Amendment

Introduction:

The Sixth Amendment explains the rights of the accused in a criminal trial. It outlines the requirement that a trial be both speedy and public. It also demands that the accused has access to an attorney and witnesses. Like all amendments in the Bill of Rights, the Sixth Amendment acts as a layer of protection against the government.

The text of this amendment reads, "In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence."

Questions:

1. What right is protected under the Sixth Amendment?
2. What year was the Sixth Amendment ratified?
3. Does the Sixth Amendment apply to civil or criminal cases?
4. How quickly must a prosecutor begin the trial of the accused?
5. What is a "subpoena"?
6. What happens in a plea bargain?
7. What was the Supreme Court's ruling in *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963)?
8. Why would the Founders insist upon a public trial?
9. What is "voir dire"?
10. Why is it important that the accused know the charges against him?