Summaries of the 27 Amendments:

**Amendments 1-10 (a.k.a., The Bill of Rights)**

1) -- Freedom of speech, press and assembly.  
 -- Free exercise of religion.  
 -- No establishment of religion by the government.

-- Right to petition the government with grievances (a.k.a. right to protest).

2) -- Right to bear arms.

3) -- No quartering of soldiers in private homes w/o owner’s consent.

4) -- No illegal search or seizure.

5) -- (Federal) government can’t deny life, liberty, or property w/o due process.  
 -- Freedom from self-incrimination (a.k.a., you have the “right to remain silent”).  
 -- No double jeopardy. (meaning if a jury finds you “not guilty” that’s final)  
 -- No taking of private property for public use (a.k.a., “eminent domain”) w/o just  
 compensation.

6) -- Right to a speedy and public trial by jury in criminal cases.  
 -- Right to counsel (a.k.a., a lawyer) in criminal cases.  
 -- Right to call witnesses on your own behalf and confront those against you.

7) -- Right to trial by jury in civil cases (meaning if someone sues you).

8) -- No cruel or unusual punishment.  
 -- No excessive bail or fines.

9) -- People also have “unenumerated” rights (meaning others which might not

be specifically listed in this Bill of Rights).

10) -- Powers not specifically granted to the national government belong to the  
 states and/or the people (a.k.a., Federalism).

**Amendments 11-12 & 27 (post-Bill of Rights procedural Amendments).**

11) -- Lawsuits against a state must be brought in that state’s court.

12) -- Created a vote in the Electoral College for the vice-presidency (instead of

having the runner-up for the presidency automatically become VP).

-- No person constitutionally ineligible to become president can become VP.

**Amendments 13-15 (Reconstruction Amendments).**

13) -- Outlawed slavery.

14) -- No STATE government can deny life, liberty, or property w/o due process.

-- No state can deny the equal protection of the laws.

-- Any person born in the U.S. is automatically a citizen of both the United States  
 and the state in which they were born.

15) -- The right to vote cannot be denied based on race, color, or “previous  
 condition of servitude” (meaning a person used to be a slave).

**Amendments 16-19 (Progressive-era Amendments).**

16) -- Federal government can collect an income tax.

17) -- Direct election of U.S. Senators by the people (instead of the selection of

Senators by the state legislatures).

18) -- Prohibited the sale, manufacture, and transport of alcoholic beverages.

19) -- Gave women the right to vote.

**Amendments 20-22 (New Deal-era Amendments).**

20) -- Moved up the date that the newly elected president takes office to Jan. 20th and  
 the newly elected Congress to Jan. 3rd (both used to have to wait until  
 Mar. 4th to take office).

21) -- Repealed the prohibition of alcohol (i.e., repealed the 18th Amendment).

22) -- No person may be elected president more than twice (i.e., two-term limit).  
 -- 10-years is the maximum for someone who takes office in the middle of a term.

**Amendments 23-26 (Civil Rights-era Amendments).**

23) -- Gave 3 electors in the Electoral College to the people who live in the District

of Columbia (which is not located in any state).

24) -- Outlawed state poll taxes (which were designed to keep black people from

voting in the South after the passage of the 15th Amendment).

25) -- Provides for filling the presidency and VP if either office becomes vacant in

the middle of a term.

-- Provides for the VP to become “acting president” whenever a president

becomes incapable of doing the job.

26) -- Lowered the voting age to 18.

**Amendments 11-12 & 27 (post-Bill of Rights procedural Amendments).**

27) -- Prevents Congressional pay increases from becoming effective until after

the next election after the increase was passed (this Amendment was proposed way back in 1789, but not ratified by the required number of states until 1992).