

# Letters Patent

*An instrument issued by a government that conveys a right or title to a private individual or organization, including conveyances of land and inventions.*

Although Article I, Section 8, Clause 8, of the U.S. Constitution confers upon Congress the power to secure to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries, this constitutional clause is not self-executing. Rather, formal application for letters patent must first be made in the manner prescribed by statute (35 U.S.C.) and regulations (37 C.F.R.) promulgated pursuant thereto.

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LETTERS PATENT. The name of an instrument granted by the government to convey a right to the patentee; as, a patent for a tract of land; or to secure to him a right which he already possesses, as a patent for a new invention or discovery; Letters patent are a matter of record. They are so called because they are not sealed up, but are granted open. Vide Patent.

A Law Dictionary, Adapted to the Constitution and Laws of the United States. By John Bouvier. Published 1856.