Curriculum Units and Learning Outcomes

Content Area: Civics	**Grade Level:** 8
Unit Title: The philosophical foundations of the United States political system	
Unit Summary: Students will explore the roots of the ideas that influenced the development of the United States political system. This will include discussion of ancient Athens and the Roman Republic, as well as the influence of Enlightenment Era thinkers. Finally the legacy of British ideas and practices in our nation's government will be traced.	

Massachusetts Standards:

Topic 1. The philosophical foundations of the United States political system

1. Explain why the Founders of the United States considered the government of ancient Athens to be the beginning of democracy and explain how the democratic political concepts developed in ancient Greece influenced modern democracy (e.g., *civic participation, voting rights, trial by jury, legislative bodies, constitution writing, rule of law*).
2. Describe the government of the Roman Republic and the aspects of republican principles that are evident in modern democratic governments (e.g., *separation of powers, rule of law, representative government, and the notion of civic duty/common good*).
3. Explain the influence of Enlightenment thinkers on the American Revolution and framework of the American government (e.g., John Locke, Charles de Montesquieu).
4. Explain how British ideas about and practices of government (e.g., *the Magna Carta, the concept of* habeas corpus*, the Mayflower Compact, self-government, town meetings, the importance of education and literacy, the House of Burgesses, colonial legislatures, the Albany Plan of Union*)influenced American colonists and the political institutions that developed in colonial America.--
5. Analyze the evidence for arguments that *the principles of government of the United States were influenced by the governments of Native Peoples (e.g. the Iroquois Confederacy).*

Enduring Understandings:

The historical events of ancient, medieval, and colonial societies have had a strong influence on the foundation of modern democratic systems.

Essential Questions:

- How have historical events and philosophies influenced the development of modern democratic systems?

Students will demonstrate KNOWLEDGE of:	**Students will be SKILLED at**:
● how ancient Greece and Rome impacted the creation of American government and justice systems. ● how Enlightenment thinkers' philosophical ideas influenced our government framework and founding documents. ● how British ideas affected the concepts and practices of American government.	● organizing information and data from multiple primary and secondary sources. (blue box) ● analyzing the purpose and point of view of each source; distinguish opinion from fact. (blue box) ● Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions. (RL2) ● Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies. (RL4) ● Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content. (W1)* ○ Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims/critiques, and organize the reasons and evidence logically in paragraphs and sections. ○ Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources. ○ Use words, phrases, and clauses with precision to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims/critiques, reasons, and evidence. ○ Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing). ○ Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Estimated Duration: 13 lessons