

UNIT 1: Foundations in American Government

This unit will review the history, key players, and essential philosophies of the founding of the American system of government. Though America's break with Britain involved insecurity and disagreement, it fostered some of the most critical questions and timeless themes on people's rights and the government's responsibility.



<http://www.stuffundieslike.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/founding-fathers.jpg>

Topic 1.1 and 1.2: What are the characteristics, forms, and purpose of government, as well as the characteristics and origins of the state?

- **Key Terms:** government, public policies, legislative power, executive power, dictatorship, democracy, Aristotle, state, sovereign, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke
- **Key Terms:** autocracy, oligarchy, unitary government, federal government, division of powers, confederation, presidential government, parliamentary government, autocracy
- I can **classify governments** using the above vocabulary terms.
- **Key Questions:** What is **social contract theory**? How does social contract theory explain why governments are created? What political thinkers are associated with social contract theory? How does it compare to the Divine Right Theory?

Topic 1.2: What are the origins and characteristics of Democracy? (1.2) (B) What are the citizen's responsibilities, duties, and obligations in a democracy?

- **Key Terms:** Democracy (4 traits), Free Enterprise System
- What are your responsibilities as a citizen in this democracy?

Topic 1.4 and 2.1: How did the documents, ideas, and traditions of Great Britain influence the North American English colonists' views about the structure and powers of government?

- **1.4 Key Terms:** majority rule, compromise, citizen, free enterprise system,
- **2.1 Key Terms:** limited government, representative government, Magna Carta, due process, Petition of Right, English Bill of Rights, charter, proprietary, bicameral.
- Excerpts from Magna Carta, and/or English Bill of Rights will appear on test.
- **Key Questions:** What Enlightenment principles can be seen in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution?

Topic 2.2: What events led to the adoption of the Declaration of Independence and (B) and what are the main ideas in that document?

- **Key Terms:** Albany Plan, French and Indian War, the Stamp Act, the Boston Tea Party, Intolerable Acts, Ben Franklin, popular sovereignty, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, delegates, confederation.

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Topics 1, 2 and 3

- **Key Questions:** What were the most significant events that led to the Declaration of Independence and in what order did they happen? What gave the signers of the Declaration of Independence the authority to dissolve their status as a British colony and create a new government?

Topic 2.3: What were the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation and how did the Constitution remedied those weaknesses?

- **Key terms:** Articles of Confederation, ratification, full faith and credit, Shay's Rebellion, Daniel Shays, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison
- **Key Questions:** What were the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation and how did those weaknesses lead to a stronger national government?

Topic 2.4: What were the key differences between the Virginia Plan to the New Jersey Plan? What were the compromises that enabled the Framers to create the Constitution? (2.4)

- **Key terms:** Framers, Virginia Plan, New Jersey Plan, Three-fifths Compromise, Commerce and Slave Trade, George Mason, Connecticut Compromise
- **Key Questions:** What were the primary arguments of the Federalists and Anti-Federalists over the ratification of the Constitution?

Topic 3.1: What are the six core principles of the constitution and what function do they serve?

- **Key terms:** bicameral, popular sovereignty, limited government, constitutionalism, rule of law, separation of powers, checks and balances, veto, judicial review, federalism.
- Memorize the Preamble to the Constitution
- **Key Questions:** What are the six basic principles of the Constitution? How did the Constitution solve the problems of the Articles of Confederation?

Topic 3.2: How can the constitution be amended? What are the important changes that have been made through amendments since the founding of the country?

- **Key terms:** Bill of Rights, amendment, ratification, formal amendment, executive agreement, treaty, cabinet, senatorial courtesy.

Target 3.3, 3.4: What are the different powers held by federal and state governments according to the Constitution? How do they share those powers?

- **3.3 key terms:** Bill of Rights, amendment, ratification, formal amendment, executive agreement, treaty, cabinet, senatorial courtesy.
- **3.4 Key Terms:** enabling act, act of admission, grants-in-aid programs, categorical grants, block grants, project grants, interstate compacts, Full Faith and Credit Clause, extradition, Privileges and Immunities Clause
- What powers in the constitution are a) given to the federal government b) given to states c) shared by both d) denied to the federal government e) denied to the states?

Essay Questions: 1 of the 5 will randomly appear on the test.

1. Answer all three components of the question below:

After reading the Preamble and excerpts from John Locke, answer the following questions.

- A) Describe the difference between Divine Right Theory and Social Contract Theory.
- B) Explain a specific example of how the US Government today carries out the roles identified in the Preamble.
- C) If the government was unable to carry out the role you described in section B, do you think John Locke would consider this to be a reason for the “establishment of a new legislative... [to] provide for [the people’s] own safety and security. . .”? Use specific ideas from John Locke in your answer.

2. Answer all three components of the question below:

A) Identify 3 of the English Landmark documents that influenced the founder's views on government.

B) Describe what the foundational documents say about two of the following ideas

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| 1. trial by jury | 4. limited government |
| 2. constitutionalism | 5. representative government |
| 3. imposing taxes without consent | 6. due process |

C) Explain the impact that these two ideas had on our own government.

3. Answer all three components of the question below:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government,...”

A) Identify the purpose of the Declaration of Independence and who it was written to.

(B) Select two of the following documents that came before the Declaration of Independence:

- John Locke Two Treatises of Government
- Mayflower Compact
- Magna Carta
- English Bill of Rights

(C) Explain specifically how these documents helped the colonists justify breaking away from England.

4. Review the two examples of problems that arose under the Articles of Confederation listed below:

- Under the Articles, every State had one vote, regardless of size.
- Under the Articles, Congress had no means to enforce its laws.

A) Identify one more weakness of the Articles of Confederation to add to the two above.

B) For each of the three problems, explain the solution that the Framers of the Constitution devised. In your answer, include the terms Virginia Plan, New Jersey Plan, and The Great Compromise (or Connecticut Compromise).