**Regions of the United States**

* the Northeast—smallest area, dense population, most urban, largely industrial, important historical landmarks (Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland)
* the South—agricultural, includes U.S. capital, growing cities (Virginia, W. Virginia, N. Carolina, S. Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana)
* the Midwest--“breadbasket of the nation”, the rust belt, farming & manufacturing, gateway for pioneers heading west in the 1800s. (Missouri, N. Dakota, S. Dakota, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa)
* the interior West—dry, farming/ranching/mining, least populated, dramatic geographical features. (Colorado, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Nevada, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming)
* the Pacific—borders the Pacific Ocean, coastal plains rise to the mountains, diverse, tourism/computer/film/electronic industries. (California, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii, Alaska)

**U.S. Citizenship**

* Natural-Born Citizens
  + A person automatically becomes an U.S. citizen if he/she was born
    - In any of the 50 states, U.S. territories, or in the District of Columbia
    - On a U.S. military base overseas
    - On American soil to people who are not U.S. citizens
  + A person born in another country can claim U.S. citizenship if
    - Both parents are U.S. citizens
    - One parent is a U.S. citizen who has lived in the U.S.
* Naturalized Citizens
  + Must be age 18 or older
  + Must have been a lawful permanent resident for 5 years, or 3 years if married to a U.S. citizen
  + Able to read, write, and speak English
  + Be of good moral character
  + Must show an understanding of American civics

**Comparison of Democratic and Authoritarian Governments**

* Democracy (including republic, constitutional monarchy)
  + Leaders are chosen in free, fair elections
  + Power is limited by a constitution and laws
  + Citizens’ rights and freedoms are protected
  + The government relies on the Rule of Law
  + Multiple parties compete for power
* Authoritarianism (absolute monarchy, dictatorship, totalitarianism)
  + Rulers inherit their positions or take power by force
  + Rulers have unlimited power
  + The government may impose an official ideology and control all aspects of political, economic, and civic life.
  + The government relies on state control of the media, propaganda, military or police power, and terror
  + Power lies with a single party

**Types of Government**

* Democracy—works on the principal of the majority rule. Candidates from 2 or more parties compete for the voters’ approval. Ruling majorities are determined by free, fair elections.
  + Direct democracy—began in ancient Greece, all voters meet to discuss and vote on issues in person. (The U.S. is too big to do this!)
  + Representative democracy—where citizens elect leaders to represent them. (We do this!)
* Monarchy—a government with a hereditary ruler, a monarch/king/queen. These days, most are limited by constitutions, making them a *constitutional monarchy*. These are headed by a *Prime Minister*.
* Socialism—a system in which the government owns the businesses and industries that produce products. The government decides how resources are used. It provide the people with education, health care, and services for the poor.
* Communism—a system developed by Karl Marx in the 1800s. The government or “state” owns all natural resources, industries, and business. It is usually run by a single party. It controls all forms of communication, goods, and services.
* Oligarchy—a type of government where a small group of people hold power, usually gained from their military position, wealth, or social status. If an election is held, there is usually one candidate and opposing the group’s power is prevented through force.
* Autocracy—is a type of government where one person has all the power. This includes past kings and emperors who inherited their position and had all the power to rule.
  + *Dictatorship*—come by their power through force and have complete control of their government. Use fear, violence, and propaganda to control their people

**Systems of Government**

* Federal—power is divided among a central, national government, and smaller self-governing political units such as states. (This is our system of government!)
* Parliamentary—citizens elect representatives to the parliament or national legislature (Think: Great Britain)
* Unitary—the central or national government is supreme. It can give or take power at will since there is no constitution

**Three Colonial Regions**

* New England Colonies (Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island)
  + Most New Englanders lived in towns.
  + Cold climate, rocky soil; farming was difficult
  + Trade & industry flourished
* Middle Colonies (New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware)
  + Temperate climate with more fertile soil for farming
  + Trade made NYC and Philadelphia busy port cities
  + Rich in natural resources like lumber, metals, and natural harbors
  + Sawmills, mines, and other businesses flourished
* Southern Colonies (Virginia, Maryland, N. Carolina, S. Carolina, Georgia)
  + Warm climate, long growing season, and rich soil made large scale farming successful
  + Large plantations developed, eventually leading to dependence on African slaves
  + Few large towns and little industry

**Documents that Influenced American Colonial Government**

* The Magna Carta—In 1215, nobles rose up against the English King John and forced him to sign this document which limited the king’s power. It made it illegal for him to place certain taxes without consent of the nobles. It, also, gave rights to free men. These included the right to a trial by peers, fair & equal treatment under the law, and the right to rebel if the agreement was broken by the King. It is IMPORTANT because it established the principle of LIMITED GOVERNMENT and the RULE OF LAW.
* The English Bill of Rights—set out rights of English citizens that no monarch (king/queen) could violate; established Parliament as leading force in England.
* Mayflower Compact**—**established self-governance and a direct democracy in Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts by the Pilgrims in 1620.
* Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*—used the ideas of John Locke to make a case for American colonial independence from England.

**Enlightenment Thinkers who Influenced the Founding Fathers**

* John Locke—believed all people are born equal with certain God-given rights. The natural rights are life, liberty, and property. He believed that a social contract exists between the people and government meaning that people give up some of their rights and in return, the government protects them, but should that government fail to protect the peoples’ rights, the contract is broken, and the people can overthrow the government and choose new leaders.
* Baron de Montesquieu—believed in separation of powers so no single branch of government could become too powerful.
* Thomas Hobbes—introduced the idea of social contract and thought people needed strong leaders because they were too weak to govern themselves.

**Colonists Object to British Policies**

* Proclamation of 1763—prohibited colonists from settling west of the Appalachian Mountains
* Stamp Act—Colonial tax meant to help pay British debts incurred during the French & Indian War
* Declaratory Act—Parliament had the right to tax the colonies and to make all of the decisions for them
* Townshend Act**—**placed taxes on a wide range of imported goods; attempted to combat colonial smuggling
* Tea Act—Hurt colonial tea merchants by making British tea cheaper than other tea sold in the colonies
* Coercive Acts—laws meant to punish colonists for the Boston Tea Party and for resisting British rule

**The Declaration of Independence**

* American colonists’ big break up letter to the King of England
* Written by Thomas Jefferson
* Influenced by John Locke’s ideas about natural rights (Changed them to unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness) and the social contract between government and the people
* Directly mentioned grievances like having to quarter British soldiers in the homes of colonists

**The Articles of Confederation**

* Was the first constitution of the United States, ratified in 1781
* Established a “league of friendships” among the states that had no executive or governor
* Created a one-house legislature, the Confederation Congress
* Gave each state one vote in the legislature
* Allowed states to keep their own powers & freedoms
* National government had NO supremacy over the states
* Stated the states would come together for issues dealing with defense and foreign countries

**Weaknesses of The Articles of Confederation**

* Limited powers
* Passing a law required 9/13 votes
* All states had to agree before changing the Articles
* Congress could not enforce the laws it passed
* No power to tax or to regulate trade
* No executive or governor to lead the nation
* No national court system
* The government was powerless to maintain law & order (Shays’s Rebellion)

**Constitutional Convention**

* Delegates from 12 states met in Philadelphia, PA to fix the Articles
* The delegation decided to scrap the Articles and to start over in favor of writing a new constitution
* Compromises
  + Three-Fifths Compromise—every five enslaved persons would equal three free persons
  + Great Compromise.—combined Madison’s Virginia Plan (a president, courts, 2-house congress with population determining the number of representatives in each house) and Paterson’s New Jersey Plan (no president, one-house congress that could levy taxes and control trade, each state = one vote, committee to carry out laws)

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| **The Great Compromise** | |
| Senate | 2 members per state |
| House of Representatives | Number of members based on population of state |

**Parts of the Constitution**

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| --- | --- |
| Preamble | States the goals and 6 purposes of the U.S. government |
| Articles | This is the major part of the Constitution. It explains how the government is set up. |
| Amendments | There are 27 amendments which are additions or changes to the Constitution. |

**The Preamble--**States the goals and lists the 6 purposes of the U.S. government

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| **Phrase from the Preamble** | **What it Means** |
| We the People | Government by the people and for the people |
| In order to form a more perfect union | Unite the states so they act together for the good of all |
| Establish justice | Make sure that all citizens are treated equally |
| Insure domestic tranquility | Provide order and keep citizens safe; keep peace |
| Provide for the common defense | Protect the country from attack |
| Promote the general welfare | Help people to live the best possible life |
| Secure the blessings of liberty | Guaranteeing the basic rights of all Americans |

**The Seven Articles of the Constitution**

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| **The Articles of the Constitution** |
| **Article I:** Outlines the powers of the legislative branch |
| **Article II:** Outlines the powers of the executive branch |
| **Article III:** Outlines the powers of the judicial branch |
| **Article IV:** Describes how the state and national governments work together |
| **Article V:** Tells the ways the Constitution can be changed |
| **Article VI:** Declares that the Constitution is the “supreme law” (Supremacy Clause) |
| **Article VII:** Describes how the Constitution was to be ratified |

**27 Amendments of the Constitution**

The Bill of Rights

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| **Amendments** |
| 1st Amendment (I)—freedom of religion, speech, petition, and peaceful assembly |
| 2nd Amendment (II)—right to bear arms (guns) |
| 3rd Amendment (III)—No quartering of soldiers |
| 4th Amendment (IV)—protection against illegal search & seizure |
| 5th Amendment (V)—protection against self-incrimination, double jeopardy, protection of due process, & the right to a grand jury |
| 6th Amendment (VI)—right to a public & speedy trial, impartial jury, & right to counsel |
| 7th Amendment (VII)—right to a trial by jury in common law cases |
| 8th Amendment (VIII)—protection against cruel & unusual punishment & against excessive bail |
| 9th Amendment (IX)—the enumeration of rights in the Constitution won’t be used against the people |
| 10th Amendment (X)—reserved powers to the states |
| 11th Amendment (XI)—states are protected from being sued by citizens of another state |
| 12th Amendment (XII)—separated balloting procedures for the President and Vice-President (Made them a team) |
| 13th Amendment (XIII)—Abolition of slavery |
| 14th Amendment (XIV)—Granted former slaves citizenship and equal protection under the law |
| 15th Amendment (XV)—African-American men could vote |
| 16th Amendment (XVI)—Established federal income tax |
| 17th Amendment (XVII)—direct election of U.S. senators |
| 18th Amendment (XVIII)—Prohibition (of alcohol) |
| 19th Amendment (XIX)—women have the right to vote |
| 20th Amendment (XX)—the President’s & Vice-President’s term of office begins on Jan. 20 instead of in March. |
| 21st Amendment (XXI)—Repeal of Prohibition |
| 22nd Amendment (XXII)—President is limited to 2 terms of office |
| 23rd Amendment (XXIII)—D.C. given Presidential electors |
| 24th Amendment (XXIV)—Poll taxes are illegal |
| 25th Amendment (XXV)—establishes V.P. as successor if the President is unable to serve. President can nominate a V.P. if the office is vacant. |
| 26th Amendment (XXVI)—18-year-olds have the right to vote |
| 27th Amendment (XXVII)—Congressional pay raises will only take effect after the next election |

**Major Principles of Government**

* Popular Sovereignty—the power of government rests with the people
* Limited government—one that can only do what the people allow
* Rule of Law—everyone, including government leaders, must follow the law; no one is above it
* Separation of Powers—per the influence of Montesquieu, this principle divides the national government into three branches (executive, legislative, & judicial) with assigns different jobs in each branch to prevent misuse of power and to protect people’s freedoms.
* Checks and Balances—works with Separation of Powers to keep leaders from having unlimited authority. Each branch can “check” the power of other branches in different ways in order to keep “balance”.

**Types of Power**

**Under Federalism, the national government & the states share power. No one level of government has too much authority. The Constitution grants three types of power:**

* Enumerated Powers or Expressed Powers—are powers that are directly granted to the national government
* Reserved Powers—are powers set aside for the states
* Concurrent Powers—are powers that both levels of government are allowed to carry out

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| **Federal & State Powers** | | |
| **National Government** | **National & State Government** | **State Government** |
| Coin money | Establish courts | Regulate trade within the state |
| Maintain the army & navy | Enforce laws | Protect public welfare & safety |
| Declare war | Collect taxes | Conduct elections |
| Regulate trade between states and with foreign nations | Borrow money | Establish local governments |
| Carry out all expressed powers | Provide for general welfare |  |

**Branches of Government**

* The Legislative Branch—makes the laws
  + Congress is *bicameral*, or two part, body made up of the House of Representatives & the Senate
    - The House of Representatives is based on population
      * 435 members are elected for 2-year terms
      * Presided over by the Speaker of the House
    - Every state sends 2 representatives to the Senate
      * Senators serve 6-year terms
      * Led by the Vice-President
  + Requirements to be in Congress
    - Senators must be, at least, 30 and a citizen for, at least, 9 years
    - Representatives must be, at least, 25 and a citizen for, at least, 7 years
    - Law degree preferred
    - Leadership experience, an outgoing personality, and community involvement is, also, preferred
  + Powers of Congress
    - Money Powers—levy & collect taxes, borrow money, coin/print/regulate money
    - Commerce Powers—regulate foreign & interstate commerce
    - Military & Foreign Policy Powers—declare war, raise/support/regulate an army & navy, punish acts committed on international waters & against the laws of nations.
    - Other Legislative Powers—establish laws of naturalization, establish post offices, create lower federal courts, & govern Washington, D.C.
    - Nonlegislative Powers—suggesting amendments to the Constitution, check powers of the other branches (example: approve/reject Presidential nominees for various offices), impeach officials from office
  + Limits on Congressional Powers
    - Cannot block writs of habeas corpus which directs the police to bring a prisoner before the court and explain the charges against the person
    - Cannot pass bills of attainder which are laws that would allow citizens to be punished without a trial
    - Cannot pass ex post facto law which would say that an act is a crime after the act has been committed
    - Can be checked by the other branches (Example: the President can veto, or turn down, a law passed by Congress. Congress can override the veto by a 2/3 vote. The Judicial Branch can declare a law to be unconstitutional)
* The Executive Branch—enforces the laws
  + The President of the United States is the head of this branch who may serve up to 2 consecutive terms of 4-years each
  + The Constitution lists only 3 requirements for becoming President
    - Must be, at least, 35 years old
    - Must be a native-born American citizen
    - Must have lived in the U.S. for, at least, 14 years
  + Elections held every 4 years
    - People vote for *electors* or member of the *Electoral College* who cast their votes for President. It is NOT decided by a popular vote.
    - There are 538 member of the Electoral College and most states give all of their electoral votes to the candidate who wins the popular vote. To be President, a candidate must win, at least, 270 of the electoral votes.
  + Presidential Powers
    - Can veto bills passed in Congress
    - Can call a special session of Congress
    - Serves as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces
    - Receives leaders & officials of foreign countries
    - Can make treaties with other countries which then need the approval of the Senate
    - Names the heads of executive agencies, judges of the federal court, ambassadors, and other top government officials. These still need Senate approval
    - Can pardon or reduce the penalties against people convicted of federal crimes
    - The Constitution states that the President must tell Congress about the “State of the Union” each year.
  + Presidential Roles
    - Chief executive
    - Chief diplomat
    - Head of state
    - Commander in chief
    - Legislative leader
    - Economic leader
    - Party leader
* The Judicial Branch—interprets the law & settles disputes among states
  + The Constitution established the Supreme Court which has the power of *judicial review* or the power to determine whether laws passed in the legislative branch are constitutional
  + Later, Congress established lower courts
  + Dual Court System
    - Federal Courts
      * Three levels: trial, appeals, Supreme
      * Derive powers from the U.S. Constitution and federal laws
      * Hear cases involving federal law
      * Most judges appointed for life
      * U.S. Supreme Court: appeals from state supreme courts allowed
    - State Courts
      * Three levels: trial, appeals, supreme (structure and names of courts vary by state)
      * Derive powers from state constitutions and state laws
      * Hear cases involving state law
      * Most judges elected or appointed for set terms
      * State appeals courts: no cases that originate in federal courts

**Structure of the Federal Court System**

**U.S. Supreme Court**

**(Judges/No Jury)**

**Jurisdiction: Limited Original jurisdiction and appellate jurisdiction**

**U.S. Court of Appeals**

**(Judges/No jury)**

Jurisdiction: **Appellate**

**U.S. District Court**

**(Judges & Juries)**

**Jurisdiction: Original**

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| **Landmark Cases of the Supreme Court** |
| **Marbury v. Madison (1803)**  Set three principles of judicial review. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. If there is a conflict between the Constitution and any other law, the Constitution rules. The judicial branch has a duty to uphold the Constitution. It must be able to nullify laws that are found to be unconstitutional. |
| **Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)**  When it came to the “separate but equal” doctrine used by Southern states to practice segregation, the Supreme Court held that the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment did not require equal access to the same facilities, just equal public facilities for the two races. |
| **Brown v. Board of Education (1954)**  This case overruled Plessy v. Ferguson and abandoned “separate but equal” in public schools. The Court held that racial segregation violates the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. The Court’s ruling has extended beyond public education to nearly all public accommodations and activities. |
| **Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)**  The Supreme Court ruled in this case that poor defendants facing criminal charges have the right to a state-paid attorney under the 6th Amendment. |
| **Miranda v. Arizona (1966)**  This case held that a person in police custody cannot be questioned unless told that   * He/she has the right to remain silent * He/she has the right to an attorney, at public expense if the person is unable to pay * Anything that person says after acknowledging that he/she understands these rights can and will be used against them in a court of law |
| **In re Gault (1967)**  The Supreme Court ruled that juveniles are entitled to the same due process as adults after 15-year-old Gerald Gault was charged and convicted in juvenile court without representation by an attorney. |
| **Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)**  The Supreme Court held that public schools could not violate the 1st Amendment rights of students after students were suspended for wearing armbands in protest of the Vietnam War. |
| **Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier (1988)**  The Supreme Court decided that students’ 1st Amendment rights do not include deciding what will and will not be published in the school newspaper that is part of the school curriculum. |
| **United States v. Nixon (1974)**  When President Nixon resisted a court order on the basis of presidential confidentiality, the Supreme Court disagreed and held that not all presidential communications are protected from a judicial order of disclosure. This case highlighted that no one is above the law (Rule of Law). |
| **Bush v. Gore (2000)**  When the presidential election of 2000 was close to a tie in the state of Florida, the state supreme court ordered a recount. Lawyers for the Republican candidate, George W. Bush, appealed the case to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ordered the recount to stop. The reason was because across Florida, different counties used different methods of voting, and every ballot would not be treated equally. As a result, Bush became President. |

**Appeals Process**

Reverses trial court’s decision

Upholds trial court’s decision

Sends back to the lower court to be tried again

Possible decisions…

**Appeals Court (panel of 3 or more judges)**

**OR**

Violation of procedural due process

Error of Law

Losing Party Claims

**Trial Court makes decision**

**Political Parties—2 Major American political parties (2-Party System)**

**Parties in American politics**

* Democratic Party
  + Formed in 1828
  + In the past, it stressed its ties to the common people
  + Today, the party believes the government should become directly involved in regulating the economy, providing jobs, housing, and other welfare assistance to the poor
* Republican Party
  + Formed in 1854 to oppose slavery
  + Today, the party believes the government should have minimal involvement in the economy
* Third Parties
  + Third parties exist as “Watchdogs” to help monitor the government
  + Struggle to be recognized and are usually formed around a specific cause

**Reasons to Vote**

* It’s a right and a responsibility
* Provides the people with a “voice” in government
* Gives the citizens power

**Impact of the Media on Government**

* Inform the people about issues
* Connect citizens to their elected officials
* Monitor the actions of government leaders
* Influence the public agenda

**Types of Interest Groups**

* + Business and labor groups (examples: The National Automobile Dealers Association, The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations)
  + Other types work for people who share similar interests (examples: NAACP, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the League of Women Voters)

**Impact of Interest Groups on Government and Public Policy**

* Being active in elections
* Working through the courts
* Working directly with lawmakers
* Trying to shape public opinion
  + Sometimes use propaganda, or information presented in a biased manner in order to make the public feel a specific way. It can be posters, videos, written material)

**Types of Laws**

* Civil Law—deals with disputes between people
* Criminal Law—deals with acts that prevent people from living together peacefully. There are two basic types:
  + Misdemeanors—involve minor crimes such as vandalism usually resulting in fines and less than a year in jail.
  + Felonies—serious crimes such as murder and robbery that involve more severe penalties
* Military Law—is a special set of statutes that people serving in the military must follow in addition to civil law
* Constitutional Law—deals with the structure and meaning of constitutions
* Case Law—is law that is based on earlier decisions by judges
* Administrative Law—involves all the rules and regulations created by the executive branch

**Human Rights—a basic freedom that all people should have, including:**

* the right to food, safety, & shelter
* the right to be protected under the law
* the right to exercise freedom of thought

**International Organizations**

* The United Nations (UN)
  + Formed after WWII in 1945 as a peacekeeping organization
  + Main Bodies of the UN are:
    - General Assembly
      * Main forum of 193 member nations
      * Each member nations has a voice
    - Safety Council
      * Consists of 5 permanent members (United Kingdom, United States, Russia, France, & China) and 10 other members elected to two-year terms
      * Deals with immediate threats to world peace
      * Each permanent member can veto or block actions
  + Other bodies
    - Court of Justice, or World Court, settles legal disputes between nations
    - The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) helps children worldwide
    - The United Nations Educational, Scientific, & Cultural Organization (UNESCO) encourages science, education, and culture
  + Members developed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
* The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
  + Maintains and defends the freedom and safety of its 28 members
  + Created in 1949
  + Works with non-members to keep peace
* World Trade Organization (WTO)
  + Global membership of 160 nations
  + Focuses on free trade and resolving trade conflicts among member nations
* World Heath Organization (WHO)
  + Looks for ways to fight and prevent diseases
  + Conducts research on public health issues
  + Is a part of the UN
* International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
  + Based in Switzerland
  + Unites aid societies from around the world
  + Helps people who are victims of war or natural disasters while remaining neutral
  + During war, it protects civilians and makes sure prisoners of war are treated properly

**Recent Conflicts**

* The Cold War—not an actual declared war, it was part of the American efforts to keep the Soviet Union’s control and communism from spreading. The Korean War and the Vietnam War were fought to keep communism from spreading, as well.
* The 9/11 Attacks—terrorists from the group al-Qaeda used high-jacked commercial planes to attack the Twin Towers in NYC and the Pentagon. A failed attempt resulted in the crash of a plane into a field. That plane was believed to be targeting the White House. More than 3,000 people were killed.
  + Homeland Security: this department was created in response to the 9/11 attacks and put in charge of preventing terrorist attacks, reducing the threat of these attacks, and with recovery in the aftermath of terrorism and natural disasters
  + The Patriot Act: this act was passed in 2001 in response to the 9/11 attacks. It gave government the power to gather information assumed to be related to terrorism and for government officials to search the homes of potential terrorists without having to obtain a search warrant.
* Iraq—in 2003, the “War on Terror” extended to Iraq as Pres. Bush was concerned that the Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein, would use a *weapon of mass destruction* against the United States and others. Though no such weapons were found, Hussein was captured and executed. His government was overthrown and a democracy was put into place.

**Vocabulary to Know**

**accused**—person officially charged with a crime

**adjudication hearing**—the procedure used to determine the facts in a juvenile case

**alien**—a foreign-born resident of the U.S. who has not been naturalized

**ambassador**—an official representative of a country’s government

**amendment**—a change to the Constitution

**amnesty**—a pardon to a group of people

**Anti-Federalists**—those who opposed ratification of the Constitution

**appellate court**—type of court where a party who lost a case in a lower court asks judges to review that decision and reverse it.

**appellate jurisdiction**—the authority of a court to hear a case appealed from a lower court

**arbitration**—situation in which union and company officials submit the issues they can’t agree on to a third neutral party for a final decision

**article**—one of several main parts of the Constitution

**Articles of Confederation**—the first U.S. constitution

**authoritarian regime**—a government in which one leader or group of people holds absolute power

**ballot**—a list of candidates for which you cast your vote

**bias**—good or bad feelings about a person or group that affects judgment

**biased**—favoring one view

**bicameral**—a legislature consisting of two parts, or houses

**Bill of Attainder**—a law that punishes a person accused of a crime without a trial or a fair hearing in court

**Black Codes**—laws from after the Civil War that kept African Americans from holding certain jobs, gave them few property rights, and limited their rights in other ways

**boycott**—a refusal to purchase certain goods or services

**brief**—a written document explaining the position of one side or the other in a case

**cabinet**—a group of advisers to the president that includes the heads of 15 top level executive departments

**caucus**—a meeting of political party members to conduct party business

**censorship**—the banning of printed materials or films due to alarming or offensive ideas

**census**—a population count taken by the Census Bureau

**charter**—a government document granting permission to organize a corporation

**checks and balances**—a system in which each branch of government is able to check, or restrain, the power of the others

**citizen**—community member who owes loyalty to the government and is entitled to its protection

**citizenship**—rights and duties of citizens

**civics**—the study of the rights and duties of citizens

**civil**—of or relating to citizens

**civil case**—court case in which one party in a dispute claims to have been harmed in some way by the other

**civil liberties**—freedoms to think and act without government interference or fear of unfair legal treatment

**closed primary**—an election where only the declared members of a party are allowed to vote for that party’s nominee

**cloture**—a procedure used in the Senate to limit debate on a bill

**common law**—a system of law based on precedent and customs

**communism**—a one-party system of government based on the idea of state ownership and direction of property and industry

**concurrent jurisdiction**—authority for both state and federal courts to hear and decide cases

**concurrent powers**—powers shared by the state and federal governments

**confederation**—a group of individuals or state governments

**consent**—express willingness or to agree

**constituent**—a person from a legislator’s district

**constitution**—a written plan for government

**constitutional law**—branch of law dealing with formation, construction, and interpretation of constitutions

**Constitutional monarchy**—monarchy in which the power of the hereditary ruler is limited by the country’s constitution and laws

**democracy**—a government in which citizens hold the power to rule

**double jeopardy**—putting someone on trial for a crime which he or she was previously found not guilty

**due process**—following established legal procedures

**duty**—an action we are required to perform; a tax on an imported good

**economics**—a system for making choices about ways to use scarce resources to make and distribute good and services to fulfill people’s needs and wants

**Elastic Clause**—clause in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution that gives Congress the right to make all laws “necessary and proper” to carry out its expressed powers

**elector**—person appointed to vote in presidential elections for president or vice president

**electoral college**—a group of people named by each state legislature to select the president and vice-president

**embargo**—an agreement among a group of nations that prohibits them all from trading with a target nation

**enumerated powers**—powers granted directly to the national government by the Constitution; another name for expressed powers

**ethnic group**—a group of people who share a common national, cultural, or racial background

**executive branch**—a branch of government that carries out laws

**executive order**—a rule or command the president gives out that has the force of law

**export**—to sell good to other countries

**ex post facto law**—a law that would allow a person to be punished for an action that was not against the law when it was committed

**expressed powers**—power that the U.S. Constitution has that is specifically listed in the Constitution

**federal system**—the sharing of power between the central and state governments

**federalism**—a form of government in which power is divided between the federal, or national, government and the states

**The Federalist Papers**—a series of essays written to defend the Constitution

**Federalists**—supporters of the Constitution

**felony**—a crime more serious than a misdemeanor

**filibuster**—a tactic for defeating a bill in the Senate by talking until the bill’s sponsor withdraws it

**genocide**—the attempt to kill all members of a particular ethnic group

**gerrymander**—an oddly shaped election district designed to increase the voting strength of a particular group

**global interdependence**—the reliance of people and countries around the world on one another for goods and services

**Great Compromise**—agreement providing a dual system of congressional representation

**House of Representatives**—the lower house of Congress, consisting of a different number of representatives from each state, depending on population

**impeach**—to accuse government officials of misconduct in office

**implied power**—power that Congress has that is not stated explicitly in the Constitution

**import**—to buy goods from another country

**indictment**—a document issued by a body called a grand jury that formally charges someone with a crimei

**interest group**—a group of people who share a point of view about an issue and unite to promote their beliefs

**judicial branch**—the branch of the government that interprets laws

**judicial review**—the power of the Supreme Court to say whether any federal, state, or local law or government action goes against the Constitution

**jurisdiction**—a court’s authority to hear and decide cases

**legislative branch**—the lawmaking branch of the government

**levy**—to demand and collect a tax or other payment, either by force or authority

**libel**—written untruths that are harmful to someone’s reputation

**liberty**—the state of being free

**lobbyist**—representative of an interest group who contacts lawmakers or other government officials directly to influence their policy making

**misdemeanor**—the least serious type of crime, minor crime for which a person is usually fined and receives less than one year in jail

**natural rights**—freedoms people possess relating to life, liberty, and property

**nullify**—to cancel legally

**open primary**—an election in which voters need not declare their party preference

**ordinance**—a law, usually of a city or county

**original jurisdiction**—the authority to hear cases for the first time.

**pardon**—a declaration of forgiveness and freedom from punishment

**petition**—a formal request for government action

**plaintiff**—person in a civil case who claims to have been harmed; person who files a lawsuit

**polling place**—where voting is carried out

**popular sovereignty**—government receives power from the people

**popular vote**—the vote cast by individual voters in a presidential election, as opposed to the electoral votes which are cast by electors

**Preamble**—the opening section of the Constitution

**precedent**—a ruling that is used as the basis for a judicial decision in a later, similar case

**ratify**—to vote approval of

**representative democracy**—a government in which citizens choose a smaller group to govern on their behalf

**repression**—preventing people from expressing themselves or from freely engaging in normal life

**republic**—a representative democracy in which citizens choose their lawmakers

**reserved powers**—powers that the Constitution does not give the national government as they are reserved for the states

**rule of law**—principle that the law applies to everyone; no one is above the law

**Senate**—the upper house of Congress; consisting of 2 representatives from each state

**separation of powers**—the split of authority among the legislative, judicial, and executive branches

**Shays’s Rebellion**—an uprising of Massachusetts farmers who did not want to lose their farms because of debt caused by heavy state taxes after the American Revolution; highlighted the weaknesses of The Articles of Confederation

**Slander**—spoken untruths that are harmful to someone’s reputation

**social contract**—an agreement among people in a society with a government

**spoils system**—rewarding people with government jobs on the basis of their political support

**statute**—a law

**suffrage**—the right to vote

**supremacy clause**—the clause in Article VI of the Constitution that makes federal laws prevail over state laws when there is conflict

**tariff**—a tax on an imported good

**trial court**—a type of court in which a judge or a jury listens to the evidence and reaches a verdict , or a decision, in favor of one party in the case

**unicameral**—having a one-house legislature

**welfare**—the health, prosperity, and happiness of the members of a community; aid given to the poor

**writ of certiorari**—an order a higher court issues to a lower court to obtain the records of the lower court in a particular case

**writ of habeas corpus**—a court order that requires police to bring a prisoner to court to explain why the person is being held

**The most important thing to know:**

I am proud to be your teacher. I have watched your brain wrinkles of knowledge form all year, so you’re going to pass this Civics EOC. Breathe!

Oh, and don’t forget to get plenty of sleep and to eat a good breakfast each morning. I’ll have your peppermints waiting for you on the morning of the EOC. ☺

Your Favorite Teacher Ever,

Ms. McLeod