



UNIT 1      What Were the Founders' Basic Ideas about Government?  
REGIONAL + STATE QUESTION

**1. Thomas Jefferson once wrote that the nation's Founders were students of history.\* What were some important lessons about history that the Founders learned from their studies?**

- Why was the history of the Roman Republic both an example and a warning to America's founding generation?
- Why do you think the Founders chose a republican or representative government rather than other known forms of government?
- To what extent does the common good of our society today depend on the classical republican ideal of civic virtue?

\* Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia (Paris, 1785).



UNIT 1

What Were the Founders' Basic Ideas about Government?  
STATE QUESTION

**2. How did both classical republicans and natural rights philosophers influence the Founders' views about government?**

- What are the essential differences between classical republicanism and natural rights philosophy?
- Explain what John Locke meant by the social contract. Do social contracts exist today? Give examples.
- Do you think government should have purposes that classical republicans and natural rights philosophers did not include in their writings? Explain your answer.



UNIT 2

What Shaped the Founders' Thinking about Government?  
REGIONAL + STATE QUESTION

**1. The Declaration of Independence has been described as “the most revolutionary political statement in American history.”\* What new ideas about government and its purposes are set forth in the Declaration, and why might they be considered “revolutionary”?**

- What principles expressed in the Declaration are traceable to John Locke and other natural rights philosophers?
- Using the Declaration as your source, in your own words describe the principles of good government contained within this document.
- Under what circumstances does the Declaration justify a right of revolution? Do you agree with the justification? Why or why not?

\* Alan Dershowitz, *America Declares Independence* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2003), jacket copy.



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STATE QUESTION

**2. Shortly after the start of the Revolutionary War in 1775, many of the new states began to write their constitutions. All of them included some basic principles. What were those basic principles and why were they important?**

- How would you explain legislative supremacy, and why did most states favor it?
- What ideas drawn from natural rights philosophy were reflected in the new state constitutions?
- Why do you think most state constitutions began with a preamble and a declaration of rights?



UNIT 3

What Happened at the Philadelphia Convention?  
REGIONAL + STATE QUESTION

**1. The U.S. Constitution has often been called a “bundle of compromises,” since the delegates often had to reach compromises on various issues. What compromises were made at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia?**

- What process did the Founders use for arriving at decisions during the Philadelphia Convention?
- What role should compromise play in our government today?



UNIT 3

What Happened at the Philadelphia Convention?  
STATE QUESTION

**2. Articles I, II, and III of the Constitution list the powers delegated to the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the national government. How does the Constitution both empower and limit the three branches of government?**

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of having enumerated powers, denied powers, and reserved powers?
- Why is it important that the judicial branch be independent of the political process, unlike the other two branches?



UNIT 4 How Was the Constitution Used to Establish Our Government?  
REGIONAL + STATE QUESTION

**1. The Federalists and the Anti-Federalists agreed about certain principles of good government, including popular sovereignty, constitutionalism, rights, and representative government. However, there were also major differences in their thinking about how these principles should both empower and limit government.**

- How did the arguments of the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists reflect their points of view regarding natural rights, republicanism, and constitutionalism?
- The Anti-Federalists were in favor of term limits. Do you believe there is a need for term limits for elected officials and/or Supreme Court justices? Why or why not?
- What is the relevance of arguments or points made by the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists to contemporary events under our present government?



UNIT 4 How Was the Constitution Used to Establish Our Government?  
STATE QUESTION

**2. “Contemporary political scientists suspect that democratic politics is fundamentally unworkable without parties and partisanship. Parties connect the ordinary citizen to government and politics and offer them broad policy choices, thereby giving voters a chance to direct and control government through party politics.”\* Do you agree or disagree? Why? What evidence can you offer to support your response?**

- Why did the Founders initially oppose the formation of political parties, and why did they change their stances?
- In what ways does America’s two-party system promote its constitutional principles? In what ways might it hinder them?
- Why do you think the United States has remained essentially a two-party system, while many democracies have multiparty systems?

\* Rick Valelly, “Who Needs Political Parties?” in *Princeton Readings in American Politics*, ed. Richard M. Valelly (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 513.





UNIT 5

How Does the Constitution Protect Our Basic Rights?  
REGIONAL + STATE QUESTION

**1. The First Amendment states that “Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech.” Even so, the courts have established limits to freedom of expression. What are the limits to freedom of expression determined by the courts?**

- What criteria has the U.S. Supreme Court used to limit freedom of expression?
- Should language that offends people be limited by the government? Why or why not?
- Do students enjoy the same protections of freedom of expression in public schools as they do in society? Why or why not?



UNIT 5

How Does the Constitution Protect Our Basic Rights?  
STATE QUESTION

**2. How and why did the Fourteenth Amendment enlarge and extend due process protections?**

- The Constitution does not define due process of law. How would you explain the meaning of due process of law?
- How can the rights of individuals and the rights of society conflict?
- How does due process of law protect individuals from possible abuses of powers? Provide examples in the response.



UNIT 6

What Are the Responsibilities of Citizens?  
REGIONAL + STATE QUESTION

**1. An English historian once said, “The powers of technology appear to be unlimited. If some of the dangers may be great, the potential rewards are greater still.”\* Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not? Provide examples of how technology has had both positive and negative effects on our lives today.**

- In what ways, if any, does modern technology affect the privacy rights of Americans?
- How might the Internet encourage or discourage the achievement of democratic principles and values?
- What actions, if any, do you think citizens, Congress, or your state legislature should take to limit the tools of modern technology, such as social media?

\* D.S.L. Cardwell, Dictionary of the History of Ideas, vol. 4, Technology (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1973), 364, quoted in Practically Speaking: A Dictionary of Quotations on Engineering, Technology and Architecture, ed. Carl C. Gaither and Alma E. Cavados-Gaither (Bristol, UK: Institute of Physics Publishing, 1999), 364.



UNIT 6

What Are the Responsibilities of Citizens?  
STATE QUESTION

**2. “The first requisite of a good citizen in this Republic of ours is that he shall be able and willing to pull his weight.”\* Do you agree or disagree with President Theodore Roosevelt? Why or why not? What are the attributes of good citizenship?**

- How is citizenship defined in the Fourteenth Amendment?
- What, if any, are the responsibilities of citizenship in the United States?
- Is criticizing the government, when necessary, consistent with good citizenship? Why or why not?

\* Theodore Roosevelt, *Addresses and Presidential Messages of Theodore Roosevelt, 1902–1904*, introduction by Henry Cabot Lodge (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1904), 85.