



UNIT 1 What Were the Founders' Basic Ideas about Government?
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?

- How did the Framers adapt the ideals of classical republicanism to the large, diverse group of colonies that became the United States?
- 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).
(<https://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/jefferson/jefferson.html>)



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2. To natural rights philosophers like John Locke, why was it necessary to have a government?

- What did Locke think people were like in a state of nature? Do you agree or disagree with his assessment? Why?
- Do you think government might have other purposes that Locke did not mention? Explain.



UNIT 2

What Shaped the Founders' Thinking about Government?
STATE QUESTION

1. 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? Why were they important?

- How did states seek to protect rights in their first constitutions?
- What do you think were the most important lessons the Framers learned from their experiences with these early state constitutions?



UNIT 2

What Shaped the Founders' Thinking about Government?
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2. “Despite its weaknesses, the Articles of Confederation made lasting contributions to American government.”* Do you agree with this assessment? Why or why not?

- How, if at all, did the Articles of Confederation reflect the founders' fears about a strong national government?
- How, if at all, did the Articles of Confederation attempt to check states' powers over one another?
- What did the Framers learn from the Articles' inadequacies, and how did they correct them in the Constitution?

*The Concise Encyclopedia of Democracy (New York: Routledge, 2000), 32.



UNIT 3

What Happened at the Philadelphia Convention?
STATE QUESTION

1. Some commentators have called the federal judiciary the “least dangerous” branch of government.* Others have called it the “most dangerous” one. What are the benefits, if any, of having a judicial branch that is independent of the political process, unlike the other two branches?**

- What role, if any, should the executive and legislative branches play in interpreting the Constitution?
- When deciding cases, should courts consider how the public feels about their decisions? Why or why not?

*Federalist No. 78. (https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed78.asp)

**David A. Kaplan, *The Most Dangerous Branch* (New York: Crown, 2018).



UNIT 3

What Happened at the Philadelphia Convention?
STATE QUESTION

2. In Federalist 70, Alexander Hamilton argued, “Energy in the Executive is a leading character in the definition of good government. It is essential to the protection of the community against foreign attacks; it is not less essential to the steady administration of the laws.”* Do you agree or disagree? Why?

- How does the Constitution both empower and limit the executive branch?
- What arguments were discussed in the Constitutional Convention and ratification debates about the power of the executive branch? Are they relevant today? Why or why not?

*Federalist No. 70 (https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed70.asp)



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

1. How, if at all, did the ratification process of the Constitution reflect the concepts of social contract and consent of the governed?

- What were the Anti-Federalists' primary objections to the proposed Constitution?
- How did the Federalists respond to Anti-Federalist objections?
- Today, how do people show that they consent to be governed under the Constitution?



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2. James Madison argued in Federalist 45 that the powers of the states would “extend to all the objects which, in the ordinary course of affairs, concern the lives, liberties, and properties of the people, and the internal order, improvement, and prosperity of the State.”

- What governing powers does the U.S. Constitution leave to the states? What powers does it deny to the states?
- What is the relationship between the power of the national and state governments today? Has it changed since the founding? Why or why not?

*Federalist No. 45 (https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed45.asp)



UNIT 5

How Does the Constitution Protect Our Basic Rights?
STATE QUESTION

1. “The very essence of civil liberty certainly consists in the right of every individual to claim the protection of the laws, whenever he receives an injury.”* What can individuals do when their constitutional rights are violated?

- Do you think some constitutional rights are more important to protect than others? If so, which ones?
- What additional rights, if any, do you think should be added to the Constitution? Why?

**Bivens v. Six Unknown Named Agents of Federal Bureau of Narcotics*, 403 U.S. 388, 397 (1971) (quoting *Marbury v. Madison*, 1 Cranch 137, 163 (1803)).



UNIT 5

How Does the Constitution Protect Our Basic Rights?
STATE QUESTION

2. The Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution provide the idea that “no person...shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.” How would you explain the meaning of due process of law?

- How and why did the Fourteenth Amendment enlarge and extend due process protections?
- How can the rights of individuals and the rights of society conflict? When resolving those conflicts, should we give greater weight to individual rights or the needs of society?



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UNIT 6

What Are the Responsibilities of Citizens?
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?
- 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?

- What are the rights and responsibilities of citizens? How, if at all, do they differ from the rights and responsibilities of non-citizens?
- Is criticizing the government 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.