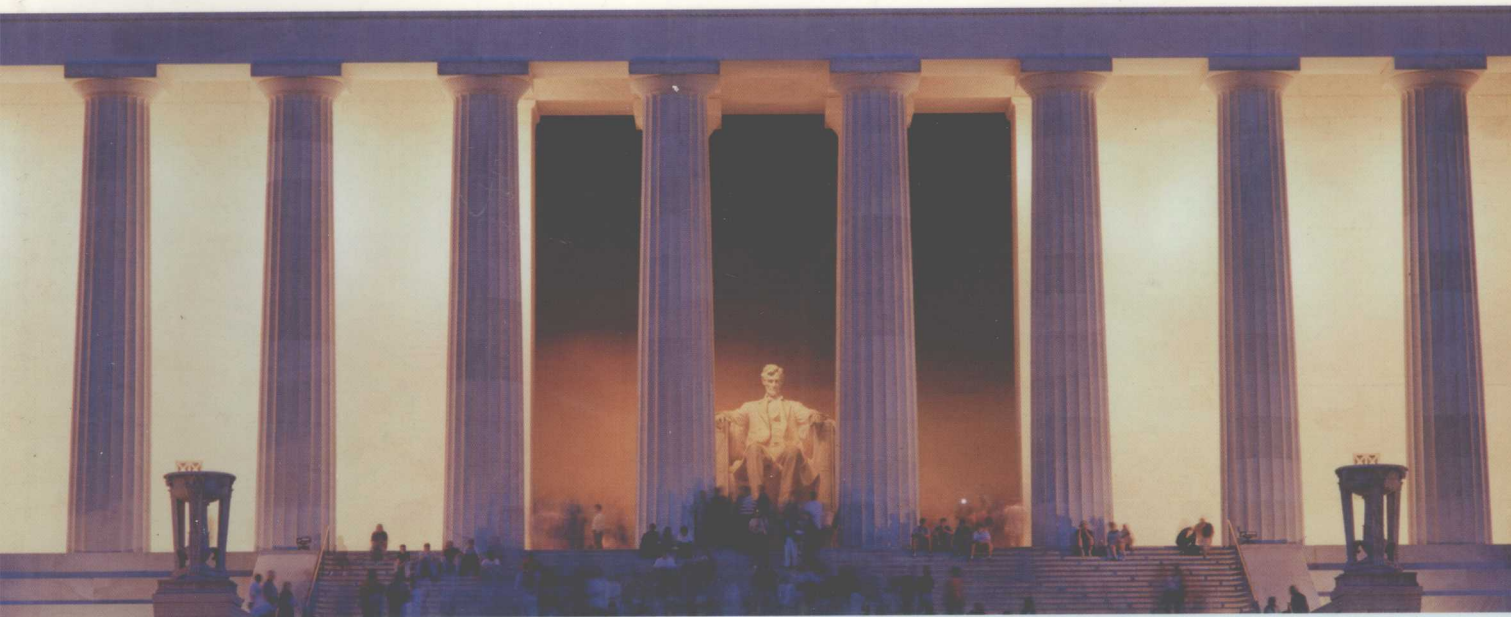


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FOR

## SOCIAL STUDIES

# GOVERNMENT & CITIZENSHIP



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NANCY WHITE & FRANCINE WEINBERG, SERIES EDITORS

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P297

# Get Ready! for Social Studies GOVERNMENT AND CITIZENSHIP

David Pence, Jr.

Series Editors

Nancy White  
Francine Weinberg

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# Introduction

In recent years, the media have told us that many students need to know more about history, geography, and civics and to improve their writing skills. While schools are attempting to raise standards, learning need not be limited to the classroom. Parents and other concerned adults can help students too. *Get Ready! for Social Studies* provides you with the information and resources you need to help students with homework, projects, and tests and to create a general excitement about learning.

You may choose to use this book in several different ways, depending on your child's strengths and preferences. You might read passages aloud, you might read it to yourself and then paraphrase it for your child, or you might ask your child to read the material along with you or on his or her own. To help you use this book successfully, brief boldface paragraphs, addressed to you, the adult, appear from time to time.

Here is a preview of the features you will find in each chapter:

## **Word Power**

To help students expand their vocabulary, the "Word Power" feature in each chapter defines underlined words with which students may be unfamiliar. These are words that students may use in a variety of contexts in their writing and speaking. In addition, proper nouns and more technical terms appear in boldface type within the chapter, along with their definitions. For example, the word decade is defined as "period of ten years" on a "Word Power" list. The word **cartography** would appear in boldface type within the chapter and be defined there as "the science of mapmaking."

## **What Your Child Needs to Know**

This section provides key facts and concepts in a conversational, informal style to make the content accessible and engaging for all readers.

## **Implications**

This section goes beyond the facts and concepts. Here, we provide the answers to students' centuries-old questions, "Why does this matter?" and "Why is this important for me to know?"

## **Fact Checker**

A puzzle, game, or other short-answer activity checks children's grasp of facts—people, places, things, dates, and other details.

## **The Big Questions**

These questions encourage students to think reflectively and critically in order to form a broader understanding of the material.

## **Skills Practice**

Activities provide the opportunity for children to learn and to apply reading, writing, and thinking skills basic to social studies and other subjects as well. These skills include learning from historical documents, map reading, identifying cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, and writing analytically and creatively.

## **Top of the Class**

In this section, creative suggestions help students stand out in class. By taking some of these suggestions, students can show their teachers that they have been putting in the extra effort that means the difference between average and excellent performance.

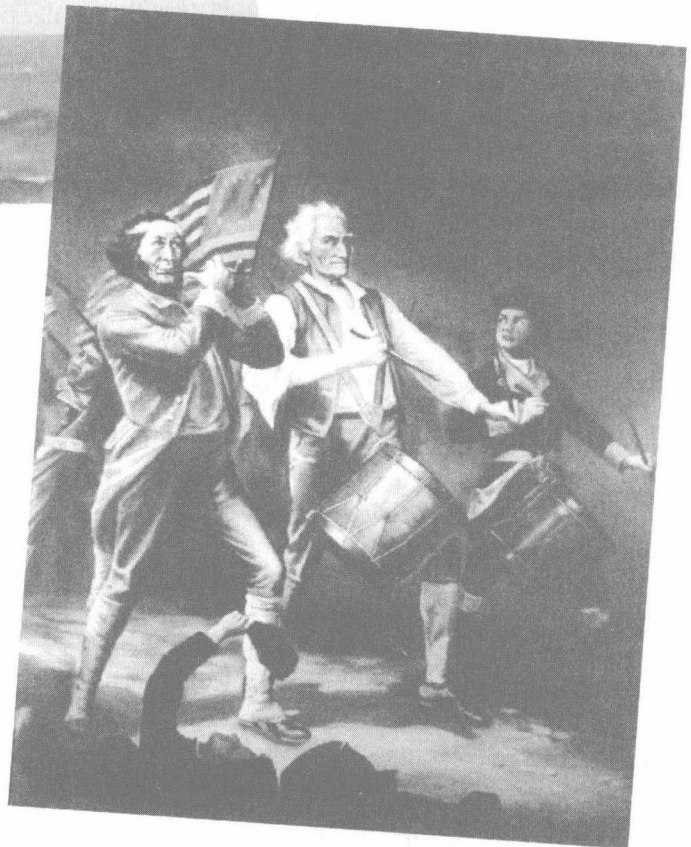
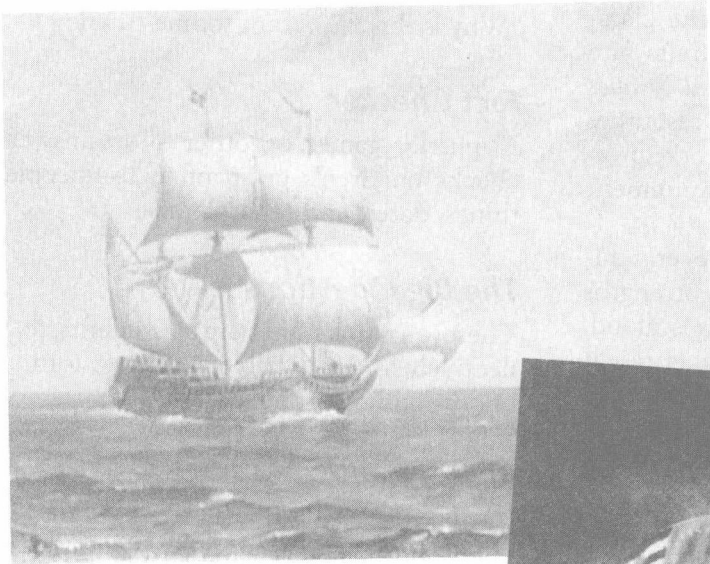
The book you are now holding in your hand is a powerful tool. It will help you boost your child's performance in school, increase his or her self-confidence, and open the door to a successful future as a well-educated adult.

*Nancy White and Francine Weinberg*

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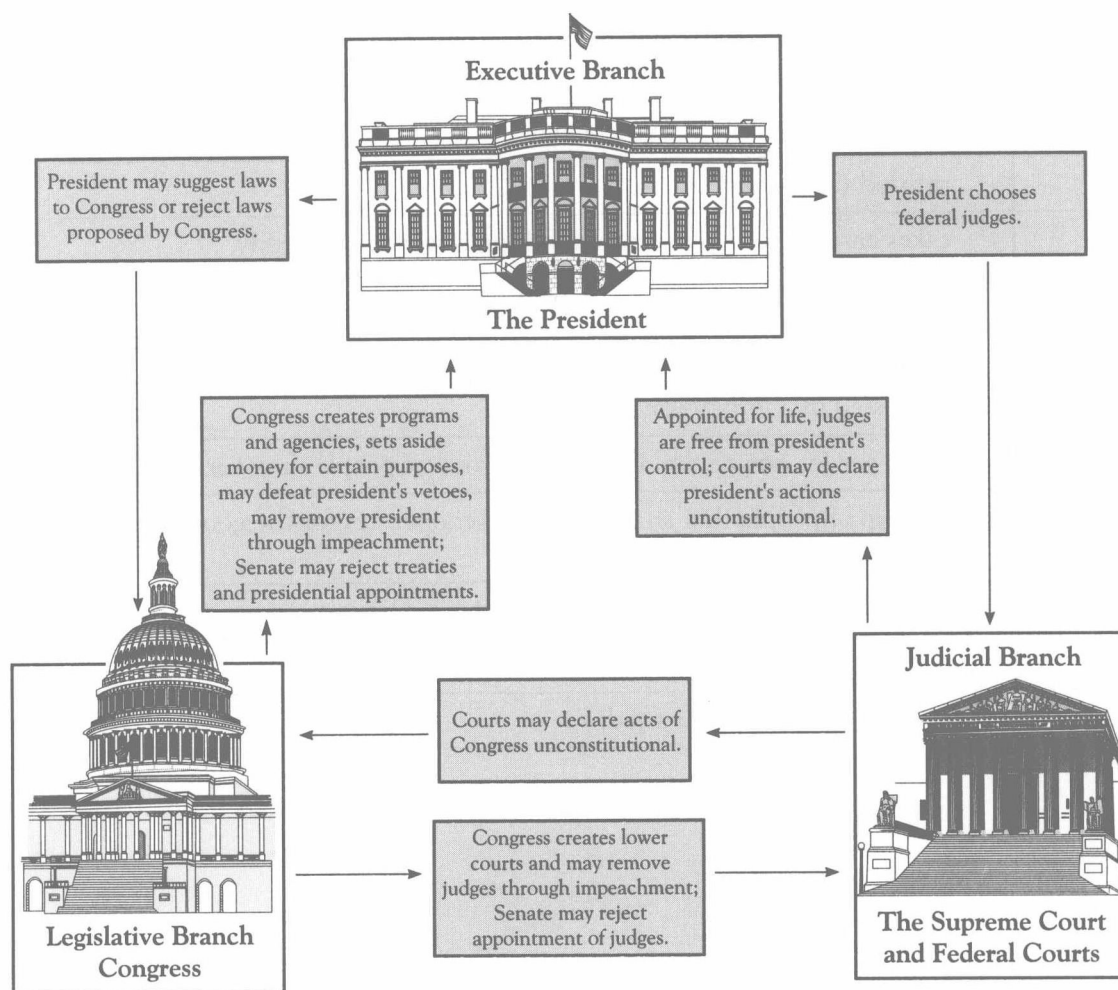
CHAPTER 1

# Foundations of United States Government

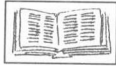


This flowchart provides an overview of how each of the three branches of the U.S. government checks and balances the other two branches.

### Checks and Balances







## Word Power

The words on the following chart are underscored in the section called “What Your Child Needs to Know.” Explain their meanings to your child as needed when they come up in reading or discussion. Keep the list handy for you and your child to use.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
authority	the power or right to make decisions or give orders
boundaries	borders
enforcing	making sure people obey (a law)
issued	printed (as money)
maintains	takes care of; sees to it that something is working properly
majority	more than half of a group of people
minority	less than half of a group of people
proposed	suggested in a formal way
represent	speak for (as one person <i>represents</i> a group of people in government)
society	a group of people that shares laws and cooperates for the good of its members
taxes	money the government collects from the public
violates	breaks a promise, rule, or law
void	cancel (verb); cancelled (adj.)



## What Your Child Needs to Know

You may choose to use the following text in several different ways, depending on your child's strengths and preferences. You might read the passage aloud; you might read it to yourself and then paraphrase it for your child; or you might ask your child to read the material along with you or on his or her own.

### WHAT IS A GOVERNMENT?

Throughout history—even in prehistoric times—human beings have been living in groups. Over time, we have learned that in order for a group to survive and succeed as a society, it needs one person or a few people to exercise authority over the members of the group. When a society is organized so that it occupies a particular place with definite boundaries and has a system for making and enforcing its own laws, the society is called a **state**. The group of people who hold authority in the state is called the **government**. This chapter reviews the basic functions of nearly all governments and examines the ideas that became building blocks for the government of the United States.

### WHAT DOES A GOVERNMENT DO?

A government does more than hold authority over people. It also provides important services for them. Most governments provide the following services:

- *A government keeps order.* A government makes and enforces laws and punishes people who break them. By keeping law and order, a government helps members of a society live and work together.
- *A government provides public services.* For example, a government takes care of building roads, bridges, and tunnels. It provides transportation systems such as trains, buses, and ferries. It creates public parks. It maintains systems that bring water to people and take away waste.

- *A government protects its citizens.* A government trains and supports armed forces (an army, a navy, and an air force) to protect a state from outside invasion.
- *A government provides and controls an economic system.* That is, it manufactures money, collects taxes from citizens, and uses the tax money to pay for the services it provides.

## THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Although governments perform many of the same functions, they differ greatly from time to time and from place to place. Following is a brief history of how the government of the United States took shape and came to be what it is today.

### The English Connection

The first Europeans to settle in North America came from England. These early American colonists brought with them ideas from England—ideas that were the building blocks of our U.S. government. To understand our present government, then, we must look briefly at the history of English government.

For many centuries, England was an **absolute monarchy**—a state in which a monarch (a king or queen) has total authority over everyone. The monarch was believed to rule by **divine right**—by the will of God. The monarch's advisers were a group of nobles called the Great Council. So far, this doesn't sound anything like our government of today.

However, as early as the 1200s, things began to change. Groups in different parts of England elected people to represent them in meetings with the Great Council. Together, the Great Council and the elected representatives made up the **legislature**, or lawmaking body, of the English government. It was called **Parliament**. Later, the Great Council would be called the **House of Lords**, and the elected representatives would form the **House of Commons**.

In 1215, a group of people banded together and wrote a document called the **Magna Carta** (Great Charter). The Magna Carta said that people could not be punished, killed, or have their property taken from them by the government unless the government acted legally, or under the law. In

other words, even the king could not have a person killed just because he felt like it. The Magna Carta also said that people could not be forced to pay certain taxes unless the people themselves agreed to pay them.

King John, the king of England at that time, was pressured into signing the Magna Carta. By doing so, he turned the absolute monarchy into a **limited monarchy**. There were limits set on what the monarch could do. At least in a few respects, the king had to obey the law and ask for the people's approval. The Magna Carta introduced to the world two very important ideas: the idea of **limited government**—government in which the powers of those in authority are limited by law; and the idea of **consent of the governed**—agreement by the people that they accept the authority of the state.

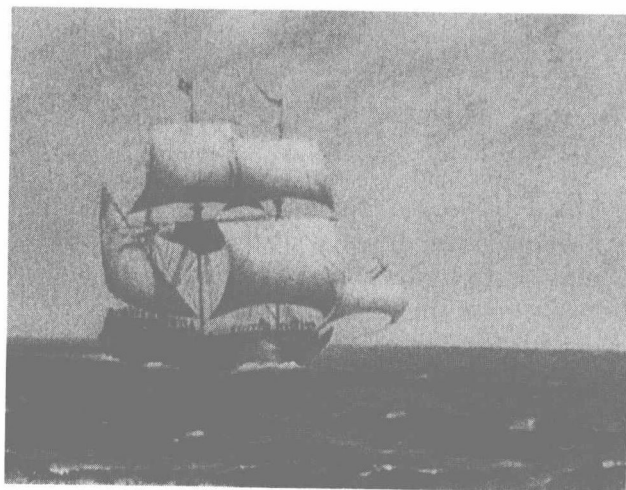
Much later, in 1689, the **English Bill of Rights**, was passed. This document further limited the power of the monarchy in several ways. Here are some of the ideas this important document contained: (1) monarchs do not rule by divine right; (2) the monarch must not collect taxes without the agreement of the people's representatives in Parliament; (3) the monarch cannot control elections in Parliament; (4) people accused of crimes have the right to a fair trial; (5) people convicted of crimes should not receive cruel punishments.

The rest of this chapter will show how the people who formed our government used principles that originated in England. It will also show how it was these very ideas that prompted the colonists to declare their independence from England.

### **Government in the Thirteen Colonies**

After the signing of the Magna Carta, ideas regarding human rights and fair representation in government continued to grow and spread in England. These ideas traveled across the Atlantic Ocean when the first English colonists crossed the sea to settle in the "New World." (We call these people *colonists* because a **colony** is an area governed by a land far away—in this case, England.)

The **Virginia House of Burgesses**, a legislature made up of elected representatives, was established in 1619 in the colony of Jamestown.



Painting of *Mayflower* by Charles Austin Needham

One year later, in 1620, as the ship the *Mayflower* neared the coast of present-day Cape Cod, the people on board wrote and signed the **Mayflower Compact**, an agreement to create "just and equal laws" for the good of the colony they would form. Each person promised to obey these laws. In other words, the colony they would form would be based on consent of the governed. They founded the colony of Plimouth (now spelled *Plymouth*), in the southeastern part of what is now Massachusetts.

As the American colonies grew, England let them take care of their own affairs, for the most part. Each colony established a government, elected leaders, and set up assemblies of representatives to make laws. Each colony chose **representative democracy** as its form of government. **Democracy** means "government by the people." In a representative democracy, as opposed to a direct democracy, the people do not vote directly on specific laws; rather, the people elect representatives to vote for the laws they support. It is easy to see how the English ideas of limited government, representative democracy, and consent of the governed influenced the colonies.

### **Independence**

After the English Bill of Rights was passed in 1689, colonists assumed that the Bill applied to them as well as to people living in England. But



Detail of painting *The Spirit of '76* by Archibald MacNeil Willard, 1875

as time went on, colonists began to feel that they were being deprived of the basic rights of English people. By 1760, they thought that the king of Great Britain, as England was then called, was treating them unfairly. For example, **King George III** forced colonists to pay heavy taxes for things that everyone needed—paper, sugar, glass, and tea.

The colonists certainly did not agree to these taxes, and they were not allowed to send elected representatives to bring their complaints to Parliament. This is how the expression “no taxation without representation” became a slogan of the colonists. Finally, when George III sent British soldiers to enforce his unfair laws in the colonies, the colonists decided they must stand up for their rights. They still considered themselves loyal to Great Britain, and they wanted the rights promised to all British people.

American political leaders such as **Samuel**

**Adams** and **George Washington** met in the fall of 1774 and decided to stop all trade with Britain. In April 1775, gunfire broke out between British soldiers and colonists in Lexington, Massachusetts. The war for independence known as the **American Revolution** had begun.

Within a few weeks, **delegates**, or representatives, from each colony met in Philadelphia. They ordered that an army and a navy be organized and that money be issued to pay for the war. The delegates asked **Thomas Jefferson** to write a document stating that the colonies were now independent from Britain. That document, completed and signed in 1776, is our **Declaration of Independence**.

In addition to stating that the colonists were now separate from Great Britain, the Declaration of Independence also stated that a new government would be formed, built on the ideas of human liberty and consent of the governed. With the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the thirteen American colonies became the United States of America, and the colonists began to think of themselves as Americans.

### ***The Articles of Confederation***

When the war was over and the Americans had won, the new country needed a permanent **federal**, or national, government to bind the thirteen states together. The delegates, however, were afraid to take power away from the individual states and turn it over to a central government. They didn't want to go back to living under a monarchy, and that is what they feared might happen if they made the federal government too strong. The delegates finally agreed on a plan for a simple federal government consisting of a council, made up of elected representatives from each state. The plan was called the Articles of Confederation. The Articles allowed individual states to keep their power and independence. In fact, they gave so much power to the states that the federal government was left far too weak. When states could not agree on issues such as borders, taxes, and trade, the federal government did not have the authority it needed to step in and make decisions.

## THE CONSTITUTION

In May 1787, all thirteen states sent delegates to Philadelphia once again to take part in the **Constitutional Convention**. There, the Constitution of the United States, which would replace the Articles of Confederation, was written. It mapped out a new plan for government and clarified the new government's powers and duties. The people who participated in the creation of this important document are known as the **framers** of the Constitution. The Constitution continues to guide our nation today.

### The Constitutional Convention

The fifty-five state delegates spent the summer of 1787 deciding what would be in the Constitution. During the four months the Constitutional Convention remained in session, delegates argued about how to divide power between the federal government and the governments of the individual states. They split into two groups. The **Federalists**, led by **John Adams**, supported a strong federal gov-

### America's First Constitution

More than two hundred years before the U.S. Constitution was drafted, Native American leaders in what is now New York State developed an unwritten constitution that united the **Iroquois Confederation of the Five Nations**. The Five Nations included the Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, and Seneca tribes. These tribes joined together in order to gain strength. The constitution was spoken aloud and agreed upon in 1570.

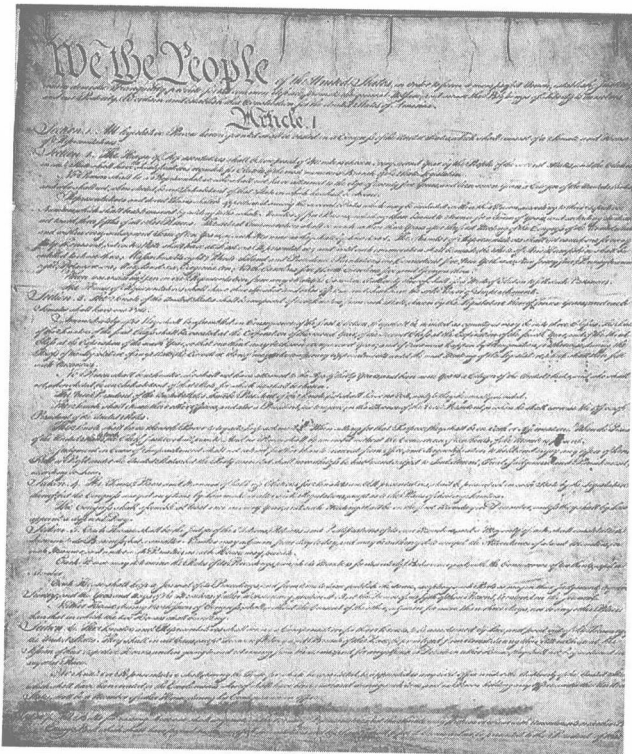
Each nation included several groups called **clans**. Each clan sent its chief to represent it at meetings of the Confederation. Therefore, the larger nations, or those with more clans, were represented by more chiefs than the smaller nations. To ensure equality among the Five Nations, each nation's group of chiefs had only one vote on Confederation issues. Clan chiefs, therefore, had to agree before casting a vote for their nation.

The Confederation's constitution clarified this organization, as well as various rules and goals. It helped the Five Nations avoid war among themselves for over two centuries. The success of the Confederation of the Five Nations impressed the leaders of the new United States of America. They saw in the Confederation an inspiring example of representative government. They used the Confederation's oral constitution as a model as they set about drafting their own Articles of Confederation in 1777.

During the American Revolution, some Confederation members supported the colonies, while others supported the British. This split finally broke up the Confederation.

ernment; the **Anti-Federalists**, led by Thomas Jefferson and **James Madison**, believed that the Constitution gave too much power to the federal government and too little to the state governments.

The delegates finally agreed on what the federal and the state governments could and could not do. For example, the Constitution says that the federal government has the power and the respon-



Constitution of the United States

sibility to maintain an army and a navy, whereas state governments control school systems and make laws about marriage and divorce. Some powers are shared by federal and state governments. For example, both have the power to tax citizens, establish courts, and make laws.

Delegates also disagreed about how many representatives the states would have in the legislature, which was called **Congress**. Should all states be represented equally? Or should states with more people have more representatives than states with fewer people? Finally, the delegates agreed that the Constitution should establish a two-part, or **bicameral**, legislature. In other words, like the British Parliament, Congress would consist of two houses. The upper house, or **Senate**, would have two representatives from each state, but the number of representatives in the lower house, or **House of Representatives**, would depend on the number of people in each state. In the House, therefore, the more heavily populated states would have more representatives.

### **The Main Ideas**

The framers of the Constitution based their work on six main ideas:

1. **Popular sovereignty**, or rule by the people. The delegates focused on creating a limited government that would take the form of a representative democracy.
2. **Federalism**. The Constitution was based on the Articles of Confederation, which had given most of the power to the thirteen states. Now the framers saw the need for a stronger federal government.
3. **Separation of powers**. The Constitution established three branches of government and divided power among them. The **legislative** branch, which has the power to make laws, consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives; the **executive** branch, which has the power to carry out the laws, consists of the president, the vice president, and others; the **judicial** branch, which has the power to make decisions regarding laws, consists of the U.S. Supreme Court and lower federal courts. This separation was designed to prevent a single person or group from growing too powerful.

(More about each branch of our government appears later in this book.)

4. **Checks and balances**. The framers had another way to make sure that no branch of government would become too powerful: each of the three branches of government would have some control over the other two. For example, Congress makes laws, but the president can **veto**, or cancel, a law. Then Congress can cancel out the veto if two-thirds of both the Senate and the House of Representatives vote to keep the law. Another example is the right of federal courts to decide that a law passed by Congress is **unconstitutional**, or against what is written in the Constitution. But the power of the court is limited by the right of the president to choose federal judges. And that power is limited by the requirement that the Senate approve the judges appointed by the president.
5. **Judicial review**. One of the rights and duties of the courts is to decide whether any law violates the Constitution. If a law is judged to be unconstitutional, it becomes void. The Supreme Court has the right to make the final decision about any law. Not even the president can change its decisions.
6. **Limited government**. By clearly spelling out the powers the government has and does not have, the Constitution ensures that even the president's powers are not absolute, but are limited by law.

### **The Parts of the Constitution**

For those who would like to read the U.S. Constitution, it is easy to find a copy. (The Preamble and the Bill of Rights appear at the back of this book. Try a textbook or encyclopedia or the Internet for the full text.) The following is a summary of this important document.

The Constitution is organized into three basic parts. Here are the most important ideas in each part.

The **Preamble**, or introduction, summarizes the six goals of the U.S. government: (1) to have the states work together as a single nation; (2) to treat all people fairly and equally; (3) to keep peace; (4) to protect the United States from ene-

mies; (5) to promote the public welfare; (6) to guarantee the basic rights.

The seven **articles**, or sections, of the Constitution address several general topics. Articles I, II, and III explain the structure and roles of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Article IV discusses the powers of the federal government and state governments. Article V notes that, over time, the Constitution may need to be changed, and it gives guidelines on how **amendments**, or changes and additions, can be made. Article VI states that the Constitution and Congress's laws together make up the "supreme Law of the Land." The final article, Article VII, says that at least nine of the thirteen states would have to **ratify**, or approve, the Constitution before it could be formally accepted.

Article V shows that the framers thought ahead to a time when ideas or needs might change. Of course, amending the Constitution is not easy. An amendment cannot even be proposed unless two-thirds of the members of Congress agree with the change or a national convention is called for by two-thirds of the state legislatures. Later, an amendment must be ratified by three-fourths of the states.

The amendments make up the third part of the Constitution. The Constitution, with its seven articles, was ratified in 1788. Because the Anti-Federalists were afraid that the federal government would have too much power over individuals, the first ten amendments, or **Bill of Rights**, were added to the Constitution and ratified in 1791. These amendments all protect individual liberties. The First Amendment, for instance, grants people the freedom to practice any religion they choose, to speak freely, to publish their ideas and opinions in newspapers and magazines, to gather in groups, and to criticize the government.

Since the ten amendments that make up the Bill of Rights were ratified, there have been seventeen more amendments to the Constitution. Some grant individual liberties in addition to those granted by the Bill of Rights. Others cover issues from the number of times a president can be elected to the date on which a president's term of office begins, to salary raises for representatives to Congress. The most recent amendment was ratified not very long ago—in 1992. More details on

the Bill of Rights and other amendments appear in Chapter 2.

## HOW DOES OUR SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT WORK TODAY?

In many ways, our system of government works today much as the framers of the Constitution planned long ago. As our country grows and changes, needs and problems arise that did not exist when the Constitution was first written. Because of the wisdom of the framers, who provided for amendments to be made, the Constitution itself can keep up with those changes. Our Constitution is, for this reason, called a **living constitution**.

The rest of this book describes and analyzes how our government works today.



## Implications

To answer the question, "Why does all this matter?" or "What does it mean?," share the following insights with your child.

- **Many Constitutional amendments focus on voting.** Many of the amendments to the Constitution concern voting rights. Why is this true? Voting is the way in which each citizen's voice reaches the government. A true representative democracy cannot exist unless every citizen is equally guaranteed the right to vote and equally protected against being denied that right. Many people take this idea one step further and say that it is not only the right but the duty of every citizen to vote.
- **The debate about the powers of the individual states and the powers of the federal government began at the Constitutional Convention.** This debate has echoed throughout our country's history. For example, the Civil War began over the question of whether states had the right to reject federal laws against slavery. States' rights were also the issue in the 1950s and 1960s when some states did not want to accept school integration as ordered by the federal government.

On the other hand, it was the Anti-Federalists at the Constitutional Convention who were responsible for the Bill of Rights. Believing that state governments would be better protectors of individual liberties than the federal government, they agreed to the Constitution only after the Bill of Rights was promised to protect individual liberties. The debate still goes on.

- **The word *democracy* comes from Greek words meaning “rule of the people.” But**

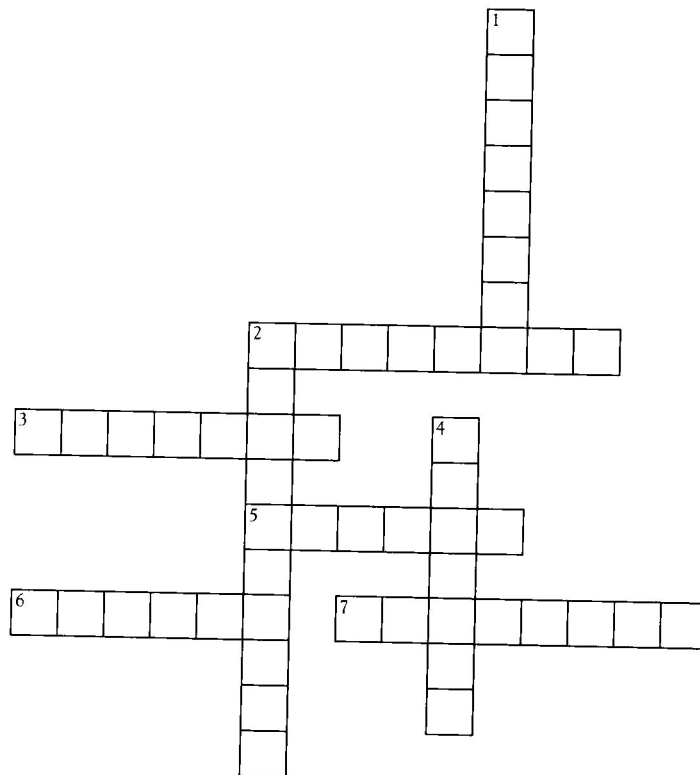
**what happens when people in a democracy disagree about some issue?** We take a vote, of course. And the majority rules. In other words, all citizens live by the decisions of the majority of voters, and legislators make laws according to the majority’s wishes. This is how a democracy works. However, a majority with too much power could destroy the minority. For this reason, a democracy remains healthy only so long as the people in the majority respect the rights of the minority.





## Fact Checker

To check that your child knows or can find the basic facts in this chapter, here is a puzzle.



### Across

- The second part of the Constitution consists of seven \_\_\_\_\_.
- The Magna Carta changed the absolute monarchy in England to a \_\_\_\_\_ monarchy.
- The English Bill of Rights said that the monarch did not rule by \_\_\_\_\_ right.
- Popular sovereignty means government by the \_\_\_\_\_.
- The first part of the Constitution is called the \_\_\_\_\_.

### Down

- The courts determine whether or not a law is constitutional. This is called \_\_\_\_\_ review.
- The Bill of Rights consists of the first ten \_\_\_\_\_ to the Constitution.
- The Magna Carta introduced to England the concept of \_\_\_\_\_ of the governed.

Answers appear in the back, preceding the index.