



We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution

2019 Ohio Middle School State Showcase

Unit 1

What Were the Founders' Basic Ideas about Government?

1. **The Founders were concerned with how to preserve a republican form of government.**
 - According to the Founders, what was republican government?
 - What weaknesses did the Founders think would lead to the failure of republican government?
 - How did the Founders think these weaknesses could be prevented? Do you think the Founders' solutions were correct? Why or why not?

2. **Most nations have a constitution, but they do not all have constitutional governments.**
 - What are the important characteristics of a constitutional government?
 - How might people organize a constitutional government to prevent the abuse of power?
 - Give an example of a nation in today's world that you think is not a constitutional government. Give reasons for your choice.



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Unit 2

What Shaped the Founders' Thinking about Government?

1. **By the late 1780s, many Founders believed that the Articles of Confederation were not working well.**
 - What were some achievements of the Congress under the Articles of Confederation?
 - What shortcomings did many Founders see in the Articles?
 - What arguments could you have made in support of the Articles?

2. **The Declaration of Independence told the world why the Americans wanted to free themselves from British rule. The Declaration stated the Founders' beliefs about government.**
 - Using the Declaration as your source, in your own words, describe the principles of good government.
 - Where did the Founders get these ideas?
 - Do you think these principles are valid today? Why or why not?



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Unit 3

What Happened at the Philadelphia Convention?

1. **The Framers put forth various plans to solve the problem of representation in Congress.**
 - What were the advantages and disadvantages of the Virginia Plan?
 - What were the advantages and disadvantages of the New Jersey Plan?
 - Do you think the Great Compromise was a good solution to the problem of representation? Why or why not?

2. **Articles I, II, and III of the Constitution list the powers of the Congress, president, and the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the national government.**
 - Describe some of the powers the Constitution gives to the Congress. In what ways does the Constitution limit the power of Congress?
 - Describe some of the powers of the president. In what ways does the Constitution limit the power of the president?
 - Describe some of the powers of the judiciary. In what ways does the Constitution limit the power of the US Supreme Court?



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Unit 4

How Was the Constitution Used to Establish Our Government?

1. **One of the enduring contributions of the Framers was the creation of the federal system of government.**
 - What is a federal system of government? Compare it with a unitary or a confederal system of government.
 - How are powers distributed between the states and the national government under our federal system? Give examples.
 - What are the advantages and disadvantages of the federal system? Give some current examples.

2. **Judicial review is an important part of our constitutional system of government.**
 - How did the Supreme Court acquire the power of judicial review?
 - Do you think the Supreme Court should have the power to declare an act of Congress unconstitutional? Why or why not?
 - How should justices determine the meaning of the words of the Constitution?



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Unit 5

How Does the Constitution Protect Our Basic Rights?

- 1. The First Amendment states that laws shall not be passed that abridge freedom of speech.**
 - Why did the Founders think freedom of speech was so important?
 - Do you believe there are times when freedom of expression should be limited? Explain your response.
 - Should a public speaker who calls for violent action be protected by the First Amendment whereas an audience member who performs the action can be sent to prison? Why or why not?

- 2. Due process of law has been called the “primary and indispensable foundation of individual freedom” because it protects the individual from government wrongdoing.**
 - What is the right to due process? Where in the Constitution is due process protected and how is the meaning of due process applied?
 - How does the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment prevent state governments from practicing unfair discrimination?
 - Should young people under the age of eighteen have the same due process rights as adults? Why or why not?



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Unit 6

What Are the Responsibilities of Citizens?

1. **Many people believe that an informed citizenry is essential if democracy is to work.**
 - Should people be required to pass periodic citizenship tests to maintain their citizenship? Why or why not?
 - Would you favor requiring literacy tests, fairly administered, before allowing citizens to vote? Why or why not?
 - What, if any, is the role of government to make sure the citizenry is informed?

2. **Voting is one way a citizen may participate in politics. Many other activities are available.**
 - What activities besides voting are available to citizens?
 - Which of these activities, if any, do you think is most useful? Explain your answer.
 - How should a citizen decide which of these various activities to participate in?