



# **We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution**

## **2020 Ohio Middle School State Showcase**

### **Unit 1**

#### **What Were the Founders' Basic Ideas about Government?**

- 1. John Locke was an English philosopher who thought about why it was necessary to have a government.**
  - What did Locke think would happen without government?
  - What did Locke believe to be the purpose of government?
  - Do you think government might have purposes that Locke did not mention? Explain your answer.
  
- 2. 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?



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### **Unit 2**

#### **What Shaped the Founders' Thinking about Government?**

- 1. 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?
  
- 2. 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?



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### **Unit 3**

#### **What Happened at the Philadelphia Convention?**

- 1. Because of different economic systems, Northern and Southern states had different interests. These conflicting interests led to disagreements at the Philadelphia Convention.**
  - Describe at least two disagreements between Northern and Southern states at the convention.
  - What parts of the Constitution are the result of compromises that settled disagreements between the Northern and Southern states?
  - Do you think the Framers should have made these compromises? Why or why not?
  
- 2. Articles I, II, and III of the Constitution list the powers of the Congress, the 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 U.S. 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 very first amendment, added to the Constitution in 1791, contains guarantees of freedom of religion.**
  - Why did the Founders think freedom of religion was so important?
  - Explain the difference between the establishment and free exercise clauses.
  - Do you think limitations should ever be imposed on the free exercise of one's religious beliefs? Explain your answers.
  
- 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?