

# Unit 1

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

1. How did Enlightenment ideas influence the Founders' beliefs about government?

- Describe the Enlightenment ideas of separation of powers, natural law, and social contract. How did they influence the Founding?
- What did Locke believe to be the purpose of government? What did Locke think would happen without government?
- Evaluate the influence of Montesquieu's and Locke's ideas on the Founding Fathers.

2. What are some of the key characteristics the Founders wanted in government?

- What did the Founders believe was the primary purpose of government?
- Why were the Founders concerned with preventing the concentration of power in any one person or part of government? What is meant by the term limited government?
- Describe some of the important structural and philosophical elements of how our government was designed. Explain why these elements were important to the Founders.

3. Most nations have a constitution, but they do not all have constitutional governments.

- What are the key characteristics of constitutional governments?
- Give examples of constitutional governments today and distinguish their similarities and differences.

## 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.
- What were some of the grievances set forth in the Declaration of Independence?
- Trace the causal relationships between British policies, British responses to colonial grievances, and the writing of the Declaration of Independence.

2. Great Britain had colonies in North America for more than one hundred and fifty years. During that time, the colonists had considerable experience governing themselves.

- Why did American colonists have the rights of Englishmen?
- What ideas did colonists in America use when they formed their own governments?
- How did the British government tighten control over the colonies?

3. By the late 1780s, many Founders believed that the Articles of Confederation were not working well.

- Explain how the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation led to the writing of the U.S. Constitution.
- What shortcomings did many Founders see in the Articles?
- What arguments could you have made in support of the Articles?

## 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 some of the 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 establish the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the national government.

- Describe some of the powers the Constitution gives to 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?

3. 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?

## 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 confederation 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 is the judicial branch different from the other branches of government?

3. Political parties are an important part of our political system today, yet they are not mentioned in the Constitution.

- How did the Framers feel about political parties?
- Why and how did political parties develop?
- Do political parties play a useful role today? Why or why not?

## Unit 5

### How Does the Constitution Protect Our Basic Rights?

1. The very first amendment, added to the Constitution in 1791, contains guarantees of five freedoms.

- What are the five freedoms in the First Amendment?
- Why did the Founders think freedom of religion was so important? Explain the difference between the establishment and free exercise clauses in the First Amendment.
- Do you think limitations should ever be imposed on the free exercise of one's religious beliefs? Explain your answers.

2. The Fourteenth Amendment is not part of the Bill of Rights, but some scholars argue that it is as important or even more important.

- What is the relationship between the Fourteenth Amendment and the Bill of Rights?
- What are the primary clauses in Section One of the Fourteenth Amendment? Explain the importance of each clause.
- What is the right to due process? Differentiate between procedural and substantive due process.

3. The First Amendment states that laws shall not be passed that abridge freedom of speech.

- What is freedom of speech, and why did the Founders think freedom of speech was so important?
- Do you believe there are times when freedom of speech should be limited? Explain your response.
- What forms of expression/speech are not protected by the First Amendment? What circumstances can you identify where government-imposed limitations on individual rights have been enforced? Do you think this was necessary? Why or why not?

## Unit 6

### What Are the Responsibilities of Citizens?

1. Many people believe that an informed citizenry is essential to sustain our form of government. What can be done to improve public understanding of our government and improve public trust in our institutions?

- Should adults be required to pass periodic citizenship tests to maintain their citizenship? Why or why not?
- How critical is voting to sustaining our form of government? Should everyone be required to vote in this country? Why or why not?

2. Voting is one way a citizen may participate in politics. Many other activities are available.

- What other ways can citizens participate in the political process in addition to voting?
- What are the most effective ways that citizens can be involved in our political and governmental processes?
- Apply these different methods of involvement by level of government. Which types of involvement are most effective at each level of government? Be specific.

3. The United States interacts with other nations in a variety of ways.

- How have the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights influenced other countries?
- What is the difference between domestic and foreign policy? Provide examples.
- What are some reasons the United States may be involved in international conflicts? What methods have been used by the United States to deal with international conflicts?