



We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution

2018 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. **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. Great Britain had colonies in North America for more than one hundred 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?
- 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. 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 a 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, 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. Political parties are an important part of our political system today, yet they are not mentioned in the Constitution.**
 - Why did the Framers fear political parties?
 - Why and how did political parties develop?
 - Do political parties play a useful role today? Why or why not?



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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. The 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? Why or why not?



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Unit 6

What Are the Responsibilities of Citizens?

1. **Today, the nations of the world are increasingly dependent on each other.**
 - How have the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights influenced other countries?
 - How have other countries influenced the United States?
 - How do nations of the world interact with each other?

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?