



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?