

Magruder's American Government

CHAPTER 2

Origins of American Government

Origins of American Government

SECTION 1 **Our Political Beginnings**

SECTION 2 **The Coming of Independence**

SECTION 3 **The Critical Period**

SECTION 4 **Creating the Constitution**

SECTION 5 **Ratifying the Constitution**



Our Political Beginnings

- What basic concepts of government were held by American colonists?
- Which important English documents have had the most influence on our government?
- How were the governments of the thirteen colonies organized?



Basic Concepts of Government

The English colonists in America brought with them three main concepts:

- The need for an ordered social system, or government.
- The idea of **limited government**, that is, that government should not be all-powerful.
- The concept of **representative government**—a government that serves the will of the people.



Important English Documents

The way our government works today can be traced to important documents in history:

Foundations of American Rights

1215
Magna Carta

1 2 3

1689
English Bill of Rights

1 2 4 5 6 7

1776
Virginia Bill of Rights

5 8 9 10 11

1200

1400

1600

1800

RIGHTS

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1 Trial by jury | 4 No cruel punishment | 8 No unreasonable searches and seizures |
| 2 Due process | 5 No excessive bail or fines | 9 Freedom of speech |
| 3 Private property | 6 Right to bear arms | 10 Freedom of the press |
| | 7 Right to petition | 11 Freedom of religion |

1791
Bill of Rights

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8 9 10 11

2

3

4

5

The Thirteen Colonies

There were three types of colonies in North America: royal, proprietary, and charter.

- The royal colonies were ruled directly by the English monarchy.
- The King granted land to people in North America, who then formed **proprietary** colonies.
- The charter colonies were mostly self-governed, and their charters were granted to the colonists.



Section 1 Review

1. All of the following are basic concepts of government brought to the colonies by English settlers EXCEPT

- (a) the need for limited government.
- (b) the need for a representative government.
- (c) the need for an autocratic government.
- (d) the need for an ordered social system.

2. Which of the following was not one of the rights granted in the Magna Carta?

- (a) The right to private property.
- (b) The right to a trial by jury.
- (c) The right to freedom of religion.
- (d) The right to undergo due process of the law.

Want to connect to the Magruder's link for this chapter? [Click Here!](#)



The Coming of Independence

- What were Britain's colonial policies and how did the colonists react to them?
- What were the outcomes of the First and Second Continental Congresses?
- How did American independence come about, and what were its effects?



British Colonial Policies

- Until the mid-1700s, the colonies were allowed a great deal of freedom in their governments by the English monarchy.
- In 1760, King George III imposed new taxes and laws on the colonists.
- The colonists started a confederation, proposed an annual congress, and began to rebel.



Growing Colonial Unity

Early Attempts

- In 1643, several New England settlements formed the New England Confederation.
- A **confederation** is a joining of several groups for a common purpose.

The Albany Plan

- In 1754, Benjamin Franklin proposed the **Albany Plan of Union**, in which an annual congress of **delegates** (representatives) from each of the 13 colonies would be formed.

The Stamp Act Congress

- In 1765, a group of colonies sent delegates to the Stamp Act Congress in New York.
- These delegates prepared the Declaration of Rights and Grievances against British policies and sent it to the king.



The Continental Congresses

First Continental Congress

Second Continental Congress

- The colonists sent a Declaration of Rights to King George III.
- The delegates urged each of the colonies to refuse all trade with England until British tax and trade regulations were **repealed**, or recalled.
- In 1775, each of the 13 colonies sent representatives to this gathering in Philadelphia.
- The Second Continental Congress served as the first government of the United States from 1776 to 1781.



American Independence

- On July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress adopted the **Declaration of Independence**.
- Between 1776 and 1777, most of the States adopted **constitutions** instead of charters.



Common Features of State Constitutions

| Common Features of State Constitutions | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Popular Sovereignty | The principle of popular sovereignty was the basis for every new State constitution. That principle says that government can exist and function only with the consent of the governed. The people hold power and the people are sovereign. |
| Limited Government | The concept of limited government was a major feature of each State constitution. The powers delegated to government were granted reluctantly and hedged with many restrictions. |
| Civil Rights and Liberties | In every State it was made clear that the sovereign people held certain rights that the government must respect at all times. Seven of the new constitutions contained a bill of rights, setting out the “unalienable rights” held by the people. |
| Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances | The powers granted to the new State governments were purposely divided among three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial. Each branch was given powers with which to check (restrain the actions of) the other branches of the government. |



Section 2 Review

1. The Declaration of Independence was signed in

- (a) 1765.
- (b) 1776.
- (c) 1781.
- (d) 1787.

2. The Stamp Act of 1765 was a law enacted by the British that

- (a) increased the colonists' taxes.
- (b) was repealed by the Magna Carta.
- (c) the colonists ratified one year later.
- (d) raised the price of postage stamps by two cents.

Want to connect to the Magruder's link for this section? [Click Here!](#)



The Critical Period

- What were the Articles of Confederation?
- Why were the 1780s a critical period in United States history?
- What did America do to create a stronger government in the 1780s?



The Articles of Confederation

The Articles of Confederation established “a firm league of friendship” among the States.

Powers

Congress was given the power to declare war, deal with national finance issues, and settle disputes among the States.

Obligations

The States promised to obey Congress, and to respect the laws of the other States. Most other powers were retained by each State.



Weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation

Weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation

- ◆ One vote for each State, regardless of size.
- ◆ Congress powerless to lay and collect taxes or duties.
- ◆ Congress powerless to regulate foreign and interstate commerce.
- ◆ No executive to enforce acts of Congress.
- ◆ No national court system.
- ◆ Amendment only with consent of all States.
- ◆ A 9/13 majority required to pass laws.
- ◆ Articles only a "firm league of friendship."



A Call for a Stronger Government

- Representatives from Maryland and Virginia met at Mount Vernon, Virginia, in 1785 to discuss trade issues.
- The meeting was so successful that the Virginia General Assembly requested a meeting of all thirteen States, which eventually became the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia.



Section 3 Review

1. The government set up by the Articles of Confederation had

- (a) the power to make treaties and build a navy.
- (b) a bicameral congress.
- (c) separation of powers.
- (d) a President to carry out its laws.

2. Which of the following was a weakness of the Articles of Confederation?

- (a) Congress could not make treaties.
- (b) Congress could not borrow money.
- (c) The States did not agree to obey the Articles.
- (d) Congress could not lay or collect taxes or duties.

Want to connect to the Magruder's link for this section? [Click Here!](#)



Creating the Constitution

- Who were the Framers of the Constitution?
- What were the differences between the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan?
- What were some of the compromises on which the Constitutional Convention agreed?
- What sources did the delegates draw on and how did they react when they completed the Constitution?



Framers of the Constitution

Leaders of the Philadelphia Convention

- James Madison was the co-author of the Articles of Confederation.
- Gouverneur Morris was a lawyer who helped develop the U.S. system of money.
- Alexander Hamilton was a lawyer who favored a strong central government.
- George Washington was the successful leader of the Continental Army.

Some famous leaders who were NOT at the Philadelphia Convention

- Patrick Henry said he “smelt a rat” and refused to attend.
- Samuel Adams and John Hancock were not selected as delegates by their states.
- Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine were in Paris.
- John Adams was on diplomatic missions to England and Holland.



Different Constitutional Plans

The Virginia Plan

- Three branches of government
- Bicameral legislature
- “National Executive” and “National Judiciary”

The New Jersey Plan

- Unicameral Congress
- Equal representation for States of different sizes
- More than one federal executive



Constitutional Compromises

- **The Connecticut Compromise**

- Delegates agreed on a bicameral Congress, one segment with equal representation for States, and the other with representation proportionate to the States' populations.

- The Framers decided to count a slave as three-fifths of a person when determining the population of a State.

- **The Commerce and Slave Trade Compromise**

- Congress was forbidden from taxing exported goods, and was not allowed to act on the slave trade for 20 years.



Influences on and Reactions to the New Constitution

Influences

- The Framers were familiar with the political writings of their time, such as works by Jean Jacques Rousseau and John Locke.
- They also were seasoned, variously, by the Second Continental Congress, the Articles of Confederation and experiences with their own State governments.

Reactions

- When the Constitution was complete, the Framers' opinions of their work varied. Some were disappointed, like George Mason of Virginia, who opposed the Constitution until his death in 1792.
- Most agreed with Ben Franklin's thoughts when he said,
“From such an assembly [of fallible men] can a perfect production be expected? It... astonishes me, Sir, to find this system approaching so near to perfection as it does...”



Section 4 Review

1. The first national government for the United States was

- (a) the First Continental Congress.
- (b) the Second Continental Congress.
- (c) the Articles of Confederation.
- (d) the Constitution of the United States.

2. The Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia involved delegates from each of the following states except

- (a) Maryland.
- (b) Rhode Island.
- (c) New York.

Want to connect to the Magruder's link for this section? [Click Here!](#)



Ratifying the Constitution

- Who were the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists?
- How long did the ratification of the Constitution take?
- What happened after its ratification?



The Federalists and Anti-Federalists

The Constitution was very controversial at first,
with some groups supporting it, and others
attacking it.

- **Federalists** thought that the Articles of Confederation were weak, and argued for the ratification of the Constitution.
- **Anti-Federalists** objected to the Constitution for many reasons, including the strong central government and the lack of a bill of rights.



The Constitution is Ratified

- Nine States ratified the Constitution by June 21, 1788, but the new government needed the ratification of the large States of New York and Virginia.
- Great debates were held in both States, with Virginia ratifying the Constitution June 25, 1788.
- New York's ratification was hard fought. Supporters of the Constitution published a series of essays known as *The Federalist*.

| Ratification of the Constitution | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| State | Date | Vote |
| Delaware | December 7, 1787 | 30–0 |
| Pennsylvania | December 12, 1787 | 46–23 |
| New Jersey | December 18, 1787 | 38–0 |
| Georgia | January 2, 1788 | 26–0 |
| Connecticut | January 9, 1788 | 128–40 |
| Massachusetts | February 6, 1788 | 187–168 |
| Maryland | April 28, 1788 | 63–11 |
| South Carolina | May 23, 1788 | 149–73 |
| New Hampshire | June 21, 1788 | 57–47 |
| Virginia | June 25, 1788 | 89–79 |
| New York | July 26, 1788 | 30–27 |
| North Carolina | November 21, 1789* | 194–77 |
| Rhode Island | May 29, 1790 | 34–32 |

* Second vote; ratification was originally defeated on August 4, 1788, by a vote of 184–84.



Inaugurating the Government

- The new Congress met for the first time on March 4, 1789.
- Congress finally attained a **quorum** (majority) on April 6 and counted the electoral votes. Congress found that George Washington had been unanimously elected President. He was inaugurated on April 30.



Section 5 Review

1. The debate over the ratification of the Constitution was won by the

- (a) Anti-Federalists.
- (b) Whigs.
- (c) Federalists.
- (d) Tories.

2. The temporary capital of the United States where Congress met in 1789 was

- (a) Washington, D.C.
- (b) Philadelphia.
- (c) New York.
- (d) Mount Vernon.

Want to connect to the Magruder's link for this section? [Click Here!](#)

