

The Roots of American Democracy

What ideas gave birth to the world’s first modern democratic nation?

Vocabulary Terms

As you complete the Reading Notes, use these terms in your answers:

representative government	separation of powers
rule of law	popular sovereignty
limited government	constitutionalism
individual rights	majority rule

PREVIEW

Take the Greece, Rome, or Home Challenge. Examine the photographs of buildings from ancient Greece, ancient Rome, and Washington, D.C. In your notebook, identify each as “ancient” or “United States.”

Now answer these questions:

1. What do you notice about the architectural style of the buildings in Washington, D.C.? Can you think of any other buildings that reflect this style?
2. What ideas about government might the ancient Greeks and Romans have contributed to the world?
3. Why do you think so many U.S. government buildings reflect Greek and Roman architecture?
4. From where else do you think the United States got ideas about government?

READING NOTES

Section 1

Tape the illustration of a tree at the top of a page in your notebook. For each root on the tree, identify at least two ideas that shaped colonial views on government. Describe each idea, and explain why it is important.

Section 2

Create a timeline that extends from 1619 to 1776. On your timeline, plot the following events with the correct year:

- Mayflower Compact
- Virginia House of Burgesses
- French and Indian War
- Stamp Act
- Battles at Lexington and Concord
- Declaration of Independence

Write a brief description of each event. Then, explain how each event influenced the development of American government.

Section 3

After reading the section, answer these questions:

1. How did state constitutions lay the groundwork for the U.S. Constitution?
2. What were the main weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation? What did these weaknesses mean for the national government?
3. What were three of the major challenges that the Constitutional Convention delegates faced, and how was each resolved?

Sections 4

Create a T-chart to compare the main arguments of the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists. Identify at least three arguments for each side. Then, answer this question: *How was the debate over the ratification of the Constitution resolved?*

Sections 5

After reading the section, answer these questions:

1. What are some sources of inspiration for the Bill of Rights?
2. Why was it difficult for Madison to get the Bill of Rights approved by Congress?

P R O C E S S I N G

Write three journal entries from the perspective of a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. Date each entry. Address each of these topics in one or more of your entries:

- Which ideas most influenced you in the development of the Constitution? Where did these ideas come from?
- What were the greatest challenges in developing the Constitution? How were these challenges resolved?
- Do you think the states should ratify the Constitution? Why or why not?