

Chapter 1: The Constitution

1. The path to independence accelerated with Britain's difficulty in administering and financing territory gained in the French and Indian War
2. The Articles of Confederation were the nation's first constitution and created a number of problems for the new nation
3. Called to revise the Articles of Confederation, the Constitutional Convention scrapped them and drafted the Constitution, which we live under today
4. There were many talented delegates to the Constitutional Convention, but it was James Madison who most profoundly shaped the Constitution
5. Proponents of the Constitution argued that it provided for a much needed and stronger national government; opponents preferred that state governments remain stronger
6. The Constitution has two amendment processes, which account in large measure for its endurance.

Vocab:

Amendments: Changes in, or additions to the Constitution.

Process: They are proposed by a 2/3 vote of both houses of Congress or by a convention called by Congress at the request of 2/3 of the state legislatures and ratified by approval of 3/4 of the states

Anti Federalists: Opponents of a strong central government who campaigned against the ratification of the Constitution in favor of a confederation of largely independent states

Articles of Confederation: A constitution drafted by the newly independent states in 1777 and ratified in 1781. It created a weak national government that could not levy taxes or regulate commerce. Replaced in 1789 by the Constitution

Confederate System: Power concentrated in political subunits (states) with a weak central government (typically unite for a common goal).

Weaknesses

- "Each states retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence"
- Unicameral Congress: one house with one vote/state
 - Supermajority (9 of 13) to pass a law, (13 of 13) to amend
 - No Executive, no central authority
 - No Federal Judiciary, no central law
 - No control of taxation, commerce between states or with foreign nations, money system

Bicameral Legislature: A lawmaking body made up of two chambers or parts

Bill of Attainder: A law that declares a person, without a trial, to be guilty of a crime. This is forbidden by Article 1 of the Constitution

Bill of Rights: A list of individual rights and liberties (1st 10 amendments)

Checks and Balances: The power of the legislature, executive, and judicial branches of government to block some acts by the other two branches

Coalition: An alliance among different interest groups (factions) or parties to achieve some political goal.

Constitutional Convention: A meeting of delegates in 1787 to revise the Articles of Confederation to form the totally new Constitution

Ex post facto law: Latin term for "after the fact." A law that makes criminal an act that was legal when it committed, etc. This is not allowed by Article 1 in the Constitution

Faction: According to James Madison, a group of people who seek to influence public policy in ways contrary to the public good

Federalism: A political system in which ultimate authority is shared between a central government and state or regional governments. 2 or more governments exercise power and authority over the same people in the same territory

Federalist Papers: A series of 85 essays written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay that were published in New York newspapers to convince New Yorkers to adopt the newly proposed Constitution

Federalist Paper #10

- Madison addresses biggest fear of gov't

- Founding fathers were concerned that our government would be ripped apart

- Madison defends our national Constitution

Anti-Federalist response

- Central gov't would threaten our freedoms

Federalist Paper #51

Federalists: Supports of a stronger central government who advocated the ratification of the Constitution. They founded a political party supporting a strong executive and Alexander Hamilton's economic policies

Great Compromise: One of the Constitutional Convention plans - Connecticut Compromise - a compromise at the convention in 1787 that reconciled the interests of small and large states by allowing the former to predominate in the Senate (2 senators/state) and the latter in the House (representatives based on population).

Judicial Review: The power of the courts to declare acts of the legislature and of the executive to be unconstitutional and hence null and void

Limited Government: Government is not all powerful, and it does only what citizens allow

Line-item Veto: The power of an executive to veto some provisions in an appropriations bill while approving others. The president can't do this but only accept or reject the entire appropriations bill.

New Jersey Plan: One of the Constitutional Convention plans - only amend Articles of Confederation. Each state, irrespective of size, gets one vote

Republic: A form of democracy in which power is vested in representatives selected by means of popular competitive elections

Separation of Powers: A principle of American government whereby constitutional authority is shared by 3 separate branches of government

Shays's Rebellion: A rebellion in 1787 led by Daniel Shays and other

ex-Revolutionary war soldiers to prevent foreclosure so far farms as a result of high interest rates and taxes. The revolt highlighted the weakness of the Confederation.

- Western Massachusetts

Unalienable: Based on nature and Providence rather than the preferences of people

Virginia Plan: One of the Constitutional Convention plans - stronger central government (national legislature). State representation proportionate to size of population

Writ of Habeas Corpus: Latin for "you shall have the body." A court order directing a police officer, sheriff, or warden who has a person in custody to bring the prisoner before a judge and show sufficient cause for his or her detention. Designed to prevent illegal arrests/imprisonments

Chapter 2: Federalism

1. Federalism is the sharing of power between local and national governments
2. Defining the relationship between the national government and state governments has been and continues to be a major issue in the nation's history
3. The cornerstone of federal and state government relations today is the system of grants-in-aid, or funds distributed by Congress to the state and local governments
4. The federal government tells a state government what its activities and policies must be in the form of mandates and conditions of aid

Vocab:

Block Grants: Grants of money from the federal government to states for programs in certain general areas rather than for specific kinds of programs

Categorical grants: Federal grants for specific purposes defined by federal law: to build an airport. Such grants usually require that the state or coalition put up money to "match" some part of the federal grants

City: A municipal corporation that has been chartered by a state to exercise certain defined powers and provide certain specific services

Conditions of aid: Federal rules attached to the grants that states receive and must agree to abide by in order to receive them

Confederation system: A political system in which states or regional governments retain ultimate authority except for those powers that they expressly delegate to a central government

Counties: The largest territorial unit between a city and a town

Devolution: The current effort to scale back the size and activities of the national government and to shift responsibility for a wide range of domestic programs from Washington to the states.

Dillon's rule: A legal principle that holds that the terms of city charters are to be

interpreted narrowly.

Dual federalism: A Constitutional theory that the national government and the state governments each have defined areas of authority, especially over commerce

Federal Regime: A political system in which local units of government have a specially protected existence and can make final decisions over some governmental activities

Federal System: A system in which sovereignty is shared so that on some matters the national government is supreme and on others the state, regional, or provincial governments are supreme. (Powers are divided and/or shared between state and central governments)

General-act charter: A charter that applies to a number of cities that fall within a certain classification, usually based on population

Grants-in-aid: Federal funds provided to states and localities

Home-rule character: A charter that allows the city government to do anything that is not prohibited by the charter or by state law

Initiative: A procedure allowing voters to submit a proposed law to a popular vote by obtaining a required number of signatures

Mandates: Rules imposed by the federal government on the states as conditions for obtaining federal grants or requirements that the states pay the costs of certain nationally defined programs

Municipal Corporation: A legal term for a city

"Necessary and Proper" Clause: The final paragraph of Article I, section 8 of the Constitution, which authorizes Congress to pass all laws "necessary and proper" to carry out the enumerated powers.

Nullification: A theory that the states had the right to "nullify" a federal law that, in the states' opinion, violated the Constitution. No longer allowed

Ordinances: A law passed and enforced by a city government

Police Power: The power of a state to promote health, safety, and morals

Recall: A procedure, in effect in over 20 states, whereby the voters can vote to remove an elected official from office

Referendum: The practice of submitting a law to a popular vote at election time

Revenue Sharing: A law providing for the distribution of a fixed amount or share of federal tax revenues to the states for spending on almost any government purpose.

School districts: A special-district government responsible for administering public schools

Second Order devolution: The flow of power and responsibility from states to local governments

Sovereignty: Supreme or ultimate political authority, government's right to rule

- Popular Sovereignty: power to govern belongs to the people, government based on the consent of governed

Special-act charter: A charter that denies the powers of a certain named city and lists what the city can and cannot do

Special District governments: A local or regional government with responsibility for some single function, like administering schools.

Third Order devolution: The use of nongovernmental organizations to implement public policy

Unitary System: A system in which sovereignty is wholly in the hands of the national government so that subnational political units are dependent on its will. (All power flows from one central government [colonial government])