

> Analyzing Key Concepts

Democracy

Ancient Greece and Rome were strong influences on the framers of the U.S. system of government. Democracy as it is practiced today, however, is different from the Greek and Roman models.

The most famous democracy today is the United States. The type of government the United States uses is called a federal republic. "Federal" means power is divided between the national and state governments. In a republic, the people vote for their representatives. Two key components of democracy in the United States are the Constitution and voting.

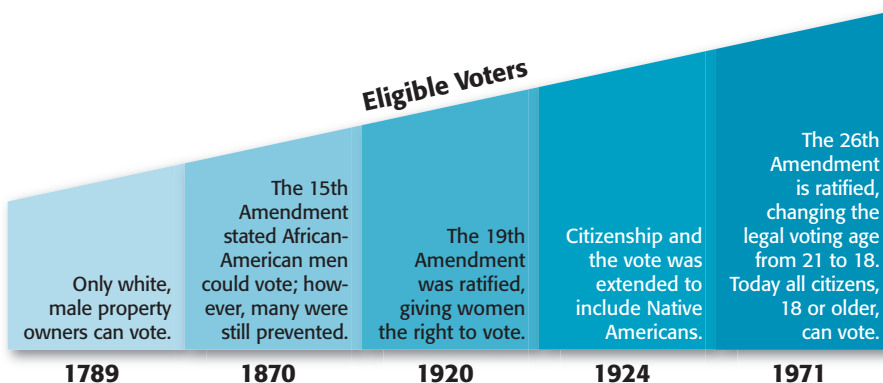
Enlightenment Ideas and the U.S. Constitution

Many of the ideas contained in the Constitution are built on the ideas of Enlightenment thinkers.

Enlightenment Idea	U.S. Constitution
Locke A government's power comes from the consent of the people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preamble begins "We the people of the United States" to establish legitimacy. • Creates representative government. • Limits government powers.
Montesquieu Separation of powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal system of government. • Powers divided among three branches. • System of checks and balances.
Rousseau Direct democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public election of president and Congress.
Voltaire Free speech, religious toleration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill of Rights provides for freedom of speech and religion.
Beccaria Accused have rights, no torture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill of Rights protects rights of accused and prohibits cruel and unusual punishment.

Who Votes?

Voting is an essential part of democracy. Universal suffrage means that all adult citizens can vote. Universal suffrage is part of democracy in the United States today, but that was not always the case. This chart shows how the United States gradually moved toward giving all citizens the right to vote.



INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH LINKS For more on democracy, go to classzone.com

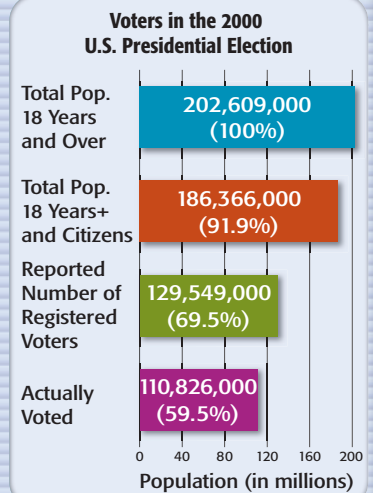
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U.S. Constitution

- There have been 27 amendments to the Constitution since its creation.
- The U.S. Constitution has been used by many other countries as a model for their constitutions.
- In 2002, over 120 established and emerging democracies met to discuss their common issues.

Voting

- In the 2000 U.S. presidential election, only 36.1 percent of people between 18 and 24 years old voted.
- Some countries, such as Australia, fine citizens for not voting. Australia's voter turnout has been over 90 percent since 1925.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2000.

Connect to Today

- Synthesizing** If so much of the U.S. Constitution can be found in European ideas, why were the framers of the U.S. Constitution so important? See Skillbuilder Handbook, Page R21.
- Hypothesizing** Why is it important that every citizen has, and exercises, his or her right to vote?

Global Impact

The French Revolution

The American Revolution inspired the growing number of French people who sought reform in their own country. They saw the new government of the United States as the fulfillment of Enlightenment ideals, and longed for such a government in France.

The Declaration of Independence was widely circulated and admired in France. French officers like the Marquis de Lafayette (shown here), who fought for American independence, captivated his fellow citizens with accounts of the war. One Frenchman remarked about this time period, "We talked of nothing but America." Less than a decade after the American Revolution ended, an armed struggle to topple the government would begin in France.



Americans Create a Republic

Shortly after declaring their independence, the 13 individual states recognized the need for a national government. As victory became certain, all 13 states ratified a constitution in 1781. This plan of government was known as the Articles of Confederation. The Articles established the United States as a republic, a government in which citizens rule through elected representatives.

A Weak National Government To protect their authority, the 13 states created a loose confederation in which they held most of the power. Thus, the Articles of Confederation deliberately created a weak national government. There were no executive or judicial branches. Instead, the Articles established only one body of government, the Congress. Each state, regardless of size, had one vote in Congress. Congress could declare war, enter into treaties, and coin money. It had no power, however, to collect taxes or regulate trade. Passing new laws was difficult because laws needed the approval of 9 of the 13 states.

These limits on the national government soon produced many problems. Although the new national government needed money to operate, it could only request contributions from the states. Angry Revolutionary War veterans bitterly complained that Congress still owed them back pay for their services. Meanwhile, several states issued their own money. Some states even put tariffs on goods from neighboring states. **B**

A New Constitution Colonial leaders eventually recognized the need for a strong national government. In February 1787, Congress approved a Constitutional Convention to revise the Articles of Confederation. The Constitutional Convention held its first session on May 25, 1787. The 55 delegates were experienced statesmen who were familiar with the political theories of Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau.

Although the delegates shared basic ideas on government, they sometimes disagreed on how to put them into practice. For almost four months the delegates argued over important questions. Who should be represented in Congress? How many representatives should each state have? The delegates' deliberations produced not only compromises but also new approaches to governing. Using the political ideas of the Enlightenment, the delegates created a new system of government.

The Federal System Like Montesquieu, the delegates distrusted a powerful central government controlled by one person or group. They therefore established

MAIN IDEA

Making Inferences

B What was the main cause of the nation's problems under the Articles?

three separate branches—legislative, executive, and judicial. This setup provided a built-in system of **checks and balances**, with each branch checking the actions of the other two. For example, the president received the power to veto legislation passed by Congress. However, the Congress could override a presidential veto with the approval of two-thirds of its members.

Although the Constitution created a strong central government, it did not eliminate local governments. Instead, the Constitution set up a **federal system** in which power was divided between national and state governments.

The Bill of Rights The delegates signed the new Constitution on September 17, 1787. In order to become law, however, the Constitution required approval by conventions in at least 9 of the 13 states. These conventions were marked by sharp debate. Supporters of the Constitution were called Federalists. They argued in their famous work, the *Federalist Papers*, that the new government would provide a better balance between national and state powers. Their opponents, the Antifederalists, feared that the Constitution gave the central government too much power. They also wanted a bill of rights to protect the rights of individual citizens. **C**

In order to gain support, the Federalists promised to add a bill of rights to the Constitution. This promise cleared the way for approval. Congress formally added to the Constitution the ten amendments known as the **Bill of Rights**. These amendments protected such basic rights as freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religion. Many of these rights had been advocated by Voltaire, Rousseau, and Locke.

The Constitution and Bill of Rights marked a turning point in people’s ideas about government. Both documents put Enlightenment ideas into practice. They expressed an optimistic view that reason and reform could prevail and that progress was inevitable. Such optimism swept across the Atlantic. However, the monarchies and the privileged classes didn’t give up power and position easily. As Chapter 23 explains, the struggle to attain the principles of the Enlightenment led to violent revolution in France.

▼ Early copy of the U.S. Constitution



MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Issues

C What were the opposing views regarding ratification of the Constitution?

SECTION 4 ASSESSMENT

TERMS & NAMES 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Declaration of Independence
- Thomas Jefferson
- checks and balances
- federal system
- Bill of Rights

USING YOUR NOTES

2. Which of the solutions that you recorded represented a compromise?

Problem	Solution
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

MAIN IDEAS

3. Why did the colonists criticize the Stamp Act as “taxation without representation”?
4. How did John Locke’s notion of the social contract influence the American colonists?
5. Why were the colonists able to achieve victory in the American Revolution?

CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING

6. **MAKING INFERENCES** Why might it be important to have a Bill of Rights that guarantees basic rights of citizens?
7. **FORMING AND SUPPORTING OPINIONS** Do you think the American Revolution would have happened if there had not been an Age of Enlightenment?
8. **ANALYZING CAUSES** Why do you think the colonists at first created such a weak central government?
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** **REVOLUTION** Summarize in several paragraphs the ideas from the American Revolution concerning separation of powers, basic rights of freedom, and popular sovereignty.

CONNECT TO TODAY CELEBRATING AMERICA’S BIRTHDAY

Create a **birthday poster** to present to the United States this July 4th. The poster should include images or quotes that demonstrate the ideals upon which the nation was founded.