

Unit 1 Outline: Constitutional Foundations

Unit Chapters

- 1: Introducing Government in America
- 2: The Constitution
- 3: Federalism

Unit Essential Questions

1. Why does government matter to society? Why does government matter to individuals?
2. Who wields power in government?
3. What causes people to form governments?
4. What form should government take?
5. Who should make and enforce the rules (laws) in society?

Chapter 1 Notes

Key Terms:

Government	Politics	Pluralism	Elitism
Political Issue	Policymaking	Political Participation	Policymaking System
Majority Rule/Minority Rights	Institutions	Public Policy	Democracy
Hyperpluralism	Linkage Institutions	Representation	Policy Gridlock
Policy Agenda	Political Culture		

Focus Questions:

1. (a) Define the generation gap of political interest between young and old Americans. (b) Explain briefly three statistical pieces of evidence that illustrate this trend (in addition to the text, refer to Figures 1.1 – 1.3 for help). (c) Describe one reason why older Americans are more politically involved and one reason why young people tend not to be. (d) How might new media technologies and social networking help close this gap?
2. If someone asked you, “What is the government?” How would you answer this question in a descriptive way? List the two fundamental questions that serve as themes for this book and briefly define what they mean.
3. Politics has been succinctly defined as, “Who gets what, when, and how?” Explain what this question means by defining the who, the what, and the how of this question.
4. Summarize how the policymaking system works from how political issues get on the policy agenda, to policymakers making policy, and finally how policy impacts people.
5. Public policy comes in many forms. What are some examples of setting public policy from different parts of government/society?
6. Analyze and critique Robert Dahl’s five principles of traditional democratic theory. How does our democratic process fulfill each? How does our democratic process not fulfill them? Evidence?
7. Concisely compare and contrast pluralist, elite, and hyperpluralist theories from each other. Do these three theories take a negative or positive perspective on government?

8. List each and summarize how the four challenges to democracy impede effective government today.

Chapter 2 Notes

Key Terms:

Constitution	Natural Rights	Federalist Papers	Separation of Powers
Republic	Writ of Habeas Corpus	Limited Government	Bill of Rights
Declaration of Independence	Anti-Federalists	Judicial Review	Articles of Confederation
Factions	Consent of the Governed	Federalists	Checks and Balances
Madisonian System			

Focus Questions:

1. What are some of John Locke's major philosophical contributions to the Founding Fathers' political ideology?
2. How can the Revolution be described as "conservative" despite revolution usually being associated with non-conservative ideas?
3. Discuss the all of the major failings of the Articles of Confederation.
4. Explain the significance of Shay's Rebellion. Why do we remember Daniel Shay's relatively minor actions today?
5. Considering the Founders' philosophical beliefs about human nature, political conflict, the purpose of government, and the nature of government, how could you argue these beliefs are an expression of elite theory as explained in Chapter 1?
6. How could you argue that the small states have disproportionately more power relative to the large states under the Constitution?
7. How did the issues of slavery and universal manhood suffrage challenge the ideas of human equality and individual rights as expressed in the Constitution?
8. Explain what the term "tyranny of the majority" means. How did the Madisonian System work (originally) to thwart a tyranny of the majority from occurring? See also Figure 2.3.
9. Explain the difference between the concepts of separation of powers and checks and balances. How do these two concepts work together to check the power of any one branch from usurping too much/all power in the national government? See also Figure 2.4.
10. What were the main ideological (system of political beliefs) differences between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists?
11. What compromise was reached to persuade (or attempt to persuade) some anti-federalists to support the ratification of the Constitution?
12. In the formal amending process make note of the two ways an amendment can be proposed and the two ways it can be ratified?
13. Summarize the ways in which judicial interpretation, changing political practice, technology, and increase demands for new policies have contributed to informal Constitutional change outside the formal amending process.

14. How have decisions by the Supreme Court lead to constitutional change?

Key Supreme Court Case: For all cases, research and take notes on what happened in the case to bring it to the Supreme Court (the facts), the constitutional question before the Court, the decision and reasoning of the Court, and the significance of the case as legal precedent.

-*Marbury v. Madison (1803)*

Chapter 3 Notes

Key Terms:

Federalism	Fiscal Federalism	Privileges and Immunities	Tenth Amendment
Elastic Clause	Supremacy Clause	Block Grants	Enumerated Powers
Devolution	Extradition	Dual Federalism (Layer Cake)	Cooperative Federalism (Marble Cake)
Intergovernmental Relations	Categorical Grants	Mandates	Implied Powers
Full Faith and Credit			

Focus Questions:

1. Compare and contrast a federal organizational form of government with unitary and confederate forms. Explain how each exists in our current system or has done so in our past (i.e., confederation).
2. How do states' rights advocates use the Tenth Amendment to protect their power in relation to the federal government? How has the Court curtailed potential abuse by states of this power in relation to the federal government?
3. Describe how the Court in *McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)* established the supremacy of the federal government over the states as well as its implied powers that go beyond those specifically listed (enumerated) in the Constitution.
4. Explain how Congress used the **commerce clause** over time to expand federal regulation of the economy. Nevertheless, explain how in recent years the Court has checked that power in various ways.
5. Why is reciprocity in policy between the states as mandated in the full faith and credit clause so essential to the nation? Describe how this reciprocity can occasionally divide the states, too.
6. Describe how marble cake federalism has come to dominate intergovernmental relations over time, especially since the 1930s. What were the economic and social realities of the time period that led to this reality? Why has it continued?
7. How do shared costs, federal guidelines, and shared administration link the states and national government together?
8. Describe ways in which the federal government uses "strings attached" to categorical grants to indirectly order that states follow certain policy objectives. Examples?
9. Explain the challenges states face with unfunded (or insufficiently funded) mandates imposed by the federal government. Examples?

10. Two advantages of a federal system are that it decentralizes our politics and it decentralizes our policies. Describe how this occurs in our system. It may help you to define what decentralize means in a government powers context. Address the process of politics and policies separately in your description.

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-*McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)*

-*Gibbons v. Ogden (1824)*

-*United States v. Lopez (1995)*