Introduction

• What ideas and traditions influenced government in the English Colonies?
  – English customs and ideas about government, including:
    • The idea of ordered government
    • The principle of limited government
    • The principle of representative government
  – English historical documents, including:
    • The Magna Carta
    • The Petition of Right
    • The English Bill of Rights
• The English colonists brought with them political ideas that had developed over centuries in England.

  – Some ideas, such as the rule of law, had roots in early Asian and African civilizations.

  – Other influences came from the ancient Romans, who occupied England.

  – Many key political ideas were written into landmark English documents.
Key Political Concepts

• **Ordered government**
  – Local governments should be divided into units and ruled by officers according to law.

• **Limited government**
  – Individual citizens have basic rights
  – There are limits on government power

• **Representative government**
  – Government should serve the will of the people. In other words, people should have a say in what the government does or does not do.
The Magna Carta

- Signed by King John in 1215
- Created by English barons to put limits on the once absolute power of the King.
  - Guaranteed certain fundamental rights for the privileged, such as trial by jury and due process of law. Over time, these rights were extended to all English people.
The Petition of Right

- The Petition of Right was signed by King Charles I in 1628.
  - Banned the king from imprisoning or punishing people without first following the laws of the land.
  - Kept the king from declaring military rule in times of peace or making people house soldiers.
  - Required the consent of Parliament for taxation.
Check your understanding: What were the limitations set by the English Bill of Rights?

- The English Bill of Rights was drawn up by Parliament in 1689 to prevent the abuse of power by all future monarchs.
  - Required the consent of Parliament for taxation and suspension of laws.
  - Promised the right to a fair trial, and to petition the monarchy to correct injustices.
American Rights

- This chart compares the rights guaranteed by the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights with the freedoms listed in the Virginia Bill of Rights and the Bill of Rights in the U.S. Constitution.
The Thirteen Colonies

- The colonies were established over a span of 125 years.
  - Virginia was the first colony, founded in 1607.
  - Georgia was the last, formed in 1733.

- The similarities among the colonies ultimately outweighed their differences.

- Each colony was established on the basis of a charter granted by the king.
  - These charters granted some governing authority to the colonies and kept some for the king.
Three Types of Colonies

- Royal colonies were directly controlled by the king.

- Proprietary colonies were run by a proprietor chosen by the king.

- Charter colonies were run mainly by elected legislatures and were the most independent.
Royal Colonies

- The governor was appointed by the king.

- The upper house of the colonial legislature was also appointed by the king and served as the colony’s highest court.

- The lower house was elected by colonists who owned enough property to vote.

- The governor had to approve all laws.
Proprietary Colonies

• The proprietor appointed the governor.

• These colonies were run much like royal colonies.

• Of the proprietary colonies, Pennsylvania had an unusually democratic government with a unicameral legislature.
Charter Colonies

- Governors in charter colony were elected by property-owning colonists and lacked veto power.

- The elected bicameral legislature could pass laws without the approval of the king.

- Judges were appointed by the legislature.

- Virginia and Massachusetts each had their charters revoked, becoming royal colonies.

- Charter colonies enjoyed the most freedoms.
British Colonial Policies

• The colonies became used to a large degree of self-rule for many years.
  – Distance made it hard for Parliament to manage colonial affairs or enforce trade laws.
  – Colonial legislatures took on broader powers
  – Taxation was low and interference with colonial affairs was minimal.
British Policies Change

- Parliament expanded and enforced laws to control colonial trade.
- Parliament passed new taxes to pay for British troops stationed in North America.
  - Colonists had no say in these policies and protested “taxation without representation.”
  - British leaders ignored these complaints.
Early Efforts at Unity

• Early efforts to unite the colonies failed.
  – Benjamin Franklin’s proposed Albany Plan of Union in 1754 would have created a colonial congress, but was rejected by the colonies.

• In 1765, Britain passed the **Stamp Act**.
  – This law required a stamp to be bought for all legal documents and newspapers.
Tensions Grow

- New laws continued to anger colonists.
  - They responded with boycotts and violence

- Events like the **Boston Massacre** and **Boston Tea Party** raised tensions.
First Continental Congress

• Met in Philadelphia in 1774 in response to the Intolerable Acts
  – Sent a Declaration of Rights to King George that protested Britain’s colonial policies.
  – Urged colonists to boycott trade with England
  – Gained the support of all 13 colonial legislatures and called for a second Congress to meet the following May.
Second Continental Congress

- Met in Philadelphia in 1775

- The Battles of Lexington and Concord had already been fought and the Revolutionary War begun.

- A continental army was created and George Washington was made commander-in-chief.
• This Congress became America’s first national government, from 1776-1781.
  – It had legislative and executive powers.
  – During the war, it raised a military, printed and borrowed money, and made foreign treaties.
Breaking from Britain

- Congress resolved to break away from Britain in 1776.
  - Thomas Jefferson were named to write a proclamation of independence.
  - The delegates declared independence on July 2, 1776 and adopted the Declaration on July 4.
– The Declaration severed ties with Great Britain and created a unique nation
  • No political system had ever been formed on the principles of equality, human rights, and representative government that derived its authority from the will of the people.
The Road to Independence

- English colonists brought with them the ideas of the Enlightenment and limited government.
• In time, these ideas began to shape the ideal of American government and the actions of the colonists.
State Constitutions

• The Congress urged colonies to write their own constitutions.

  – A constitution sets out the principles, structures, and processes of government.

  – Most states adopted constitutions in 1776 and 1777.

    • The Massachusetts constitution of 1780 is the oldest of the current state constitutions.
State Constitutions, cont.

- **Popular sovereignty** - government must have the consent of the governed
- **Limited government** - government has only the powers granted by the people in the constitution
- **Civil rights and liberties** - seven state constitutions included a bill of rights defining basic freedoms
- **Separation of powers** - power divided among legislative, executive, and judicial branches
- **Checks and balances** - each branch could limit the power of the other branches
- State constitutions gave most of the power to the legislature, set short terms of office, and limited the right to vote.
Articles of Confederation

• The Second Continental Congress had to create an official national government.

• The Articles created a single unit of government, the Congress.
  – Congress was unicameral in structure, with each state electing its delegates each year.
  – Each state delegation had one vote in Congress.
Federal Government

• The national government had no executive or judicial branch.
Congress

– Make war and peace
– Make treaties
– Borrow money and set up a money system
– Build a navy and raise an army
– Set standards of weights and measures
– Settle disputes between the states
States Under the Articles

• The states promised to:
  – Obey the Articles
  – Provide funds and troops
  – Treat citizens of other states fairly
  – Respect the laws and court rulings of other states
  – Allow open travel and trade among states
  – Submit interstate disputes to Congress
  – Turn over fugitives from other states

• The states kept all powers not given to Congress.
Weaknesses of the Articles

- Only a "firm league of friendship" among States
- **Only one vote** for each State, regardless of size
- Congress **powerless to levy taxes** or duties
- Congress **powerless to regulate commerce**
- **No executive power** to enforce acts of Congress
- **No national court system**
- Amendments required **the consent of all States**
- A **9/13 majority** required to pass laws.
Problems with the Articles

- After the end of the Revolutionary War, states stopped cooperating with each other and the national government.
  - They refused to supply troops or money.
  - Some made their own treaties with other nations.
  - Most raised their own military forces.
  - They taxed goods from other states and banned trade with some states.
  - They printed their own money.
• The economies of many states struggled as a result of all the bickering and poor planning.
  – Much of the newly printed money was worth very little. Prices soared and loans became hard to get.
  – Many people fell into debt.

• The economic crisis led to Shays’ Rebellion in Massachusetts.
  – Indebted farmers and other small property owners lost land and possessions when they could not pay their debts or their state taxes.
Shays’ Rebellion

- In 1768, former revolutionary officer, Daniel Shays led an armed uprising of farmers.

- State troops finally ended the rebellion after rebels attacked state courts and a federal arsenal. Shays fled to Vermont.
• The call went out for a stronger, more effective central government.
  – These delegates called for another meeting, this one in Philadelphia in 1787. Congress eventually gave its support for this meeting.
• The Philadelphia meeting, held in 1787 to revise the Articles of Confederation, turned into the Constitutional Convention. Instead of revising the Articles, it would replace them with something new.
The Framers

- The Constitutional Convention began on May 25, 1787, with 55 delegates.

  - These individuals, called the Framers, came from many backgrounds:
    - Many had fought in the Revolutionary War.
    - Eight had signed the Declaration of Independence.
    - 34 had attended college at a time when it was a rare achievement.
    - Two would become President, one a Vice President, nineteen a U.S. Senator, and thirteen a member of the House of Representatives.
The Framers elected George Washington as president of the convention and set up procedural rules.

- A majority of state delegations would need to be present to conduct business.
- Each delegation would have one vote.
- A majority vote would carry a proposal.
Then, on May 30th, the Framers made their biggest decision: to replace the Articles of Confederation rather than amend them.

– James Madison (right) was a major figure in the movement to replace the Constitution.
The Virginia Plan

• This plan called for a government with a legislative, executive, and judicial branch.

  – Congress would have two houses, with representation based on state population or the money given to the central government.
  – Congress would have more power than it had under the Articles.
    • It would be able to force states to obey federal law.
  – The members of Congress would elect a national executive and judiciary.
    • These two branches would form a council that could veto acts passed by Congress.
The New Jersey Plan

- This plan proposed a much different organization of the three branches.
  - Congress would have a single house with equal representation for each state.
    - This Congress would have more limited powers than under the Virginia Plan.
  - There would be an executive committee of several people, chosen by Congress.
    - At the request of a majority of state governors, Congress could remove members of this committee.
  - The executive committee would appoint a supreme tribunal to be the federal judiciary.
Connecticut Compromise

– Small states feared that larger states would dominate them under the Virginia Plan.
– The Connecticut Compromise, also called the Great Compromise, solved this dispute.
  • In the House of Representatives, each state would be represented according to its population.
  • In the Senate, each state would have equal representation.
Additional Compromises

• Southern states wanted to count slaves as part of the state population. Northern states did not.

  – The Three-Fifths Compromise counted each slave as three-fifths of a person when figuring representation in Congress.
Additional Compromises, cont.

- Southern states wanted to protect their agricultural exports and the slave trade from regulation by Congress.
  - Under the Commerce and Slave Trade Compromise, Congress could not tax state exports or interfere with the slave trade until 1808.
The Issue of Slavery

• Disputes over slavery during the Convention arose because slavery was far more common in the agricultural South than in the more industrial North.

• However, slavery was legal in every state except Massachusetts.
A Bundle of Compromises

– The Framers had to resolve disputes involving such issues as:
  • The exact structure of the new government
  • Regional differences among the states
  • The method of choosing the President
  • How to amend the Constitution
  • The limits on federal powers

– The Constitution they approved on September 17, 1787, has thus been called a “bundle of compromises.”
A New Government

• The Articles of Confederation could only be amended by a unanimous vote of all 13 states.

• But the delegates at the Constitutional Convention decided to require only 9 of 13 states to ratify the Constitution.
  – They felt that a unanimous vote would be too difficult to achieve, and that the Articles were being replaced rather than amended.

• Copies of the new Constitution were sent to the states on September 18, 1787.
Federalists

- Supporters of ratification were called Federalists.
  
  - They argued that the **Articles of Confederation were weak** and needed to be replaced.
  
  - Alexander Hamilton was a leader among the Federalists.
Anti-Federalists

• Opponents of ratification were called Anti-Federalists.

  – They **opposed** the new ratification process.

  – They thought the new central government would be **too strong**.

  – Most of all, they argued that the Constitution **needed a Bill of Rights** to protect the people.
At first, Federalists said a Bill of Rights was not needed because:

- The state constitutions already protected individual rights and freedoms.
- The separation of powers among the three branches would keep the new national government from abusing its authority.

But Anti-Federalists opposition was so strong that Federalists eventually promised to add a Bill of Rights once the Constitution was ratified.
The Federalist Papers influenced many Americans to support the Constitution

- These were written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, all using the pen name, Publius.

- They consisted of 85 political essays, written between 1787 and 1788, and were soon published across the nation.

- These essays are still read widely today for their insights into the Constitution, the federal government, and the nature of representative democracy.
Anti-Federalist Writings

- Anti-Federalists also wrote many essays, pamphlets, and letters
  - The essays by “Brutus” were most likely written by Robert Yates. They were first published in New York.
  - Richard Henry Lee of Virginia wrote a number of pamphlets and letters using the name “The Federal Farmer.”

- Around the country, debate over ratification was fed by these various written works expressing strong views on both sides.
Ratification Debate

- Ratification was swift in some states and bitterly contested in others.

- Approval of the Constitution required ratification by nine states.

- On June 21, 1788, New Hampshire became the ninth ratifying state.
Trouble with Ratification

• Even though 9 states had ratified the Constitution, without the support of the key states of New York and Virginia, the Constitution would fail.

  – In Virginia, James Madison, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson supported the Federalists against Anti-Federalists led by Patrick Henry, James Monroe, and George Mason.

  – New York was deadlocked until Alexander Hamilton helped turn the tide for the Federalists.
Success

- When Virginia and New York ratified the Constitution by narrow votes, success was finally ensured.

- Eventually all 13 states ratified the Constitution.
Inauguration

- The Confederation Congress chose New York City as the temporary capital of the United States.

- The **new U.S. Congress** first met on March 4, 1789, at Federal Hall in New York City.
Inauguration, cont.

• George Washington was chosen as the first President by a unanimous vote of electors.

• He took office on April 30th. John Adams was vice president.