



**U.S. HISTORY & GOVERNMENT QUARTER I STUDY GUIDE**  
***Constitutional Foundations through The Federal Government***

***THE THIRTEEN COLONIES***

1. People came to the New World for political, religious and economic reasons. New England colonies had small farms and ship building; Middle colonies had some farming and later on factories; Southern colonies were agricultural with large plantations, originally producing tobacco but later on growing cotton.
2. Slaves were brought from Africa to work on the plantations in the South.
3. The **Triangular Trade** was between Africa (slaves), the Caribbean (sugar) and the Colonies (rum). The **Middle Passage** was the voyage slaves made between Africa and the Colonies. It was a brutal trip where many slaves died from poor conditions.
4. **Indentured Servants** worked to pay off the cost of their passage to the New World.
5. Each colony developed its own type of government. Early examples of attempts at **self-government** and law included the **Mayflower Compact, The House of Burgesses, and the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut.**

***THE ROAD TO REVOLUTION***

1. **Mercantilism**- economic policy where the mother country benefits. (Raw materials from colonies are traded to mother country for manufactured goods. Trade with other countries is prohibited)
2. England, because of the cost of protecting and controlling the colonies (and debt from the **French and Indian War**) levied taxes on the colonies.
3. The Colonists felt "**taxation without representation**" was unfair.
4. England's need to tax the colonies created problems because the colonies had been left alone for so long. (**salutary neglect**)
5. The Sugar Act put a tax on sugar, rum and coffee. The Stamp Act put a tax on printed materials such as papers and legal documents.
6. The Quartering Act allowed British soldiers the right to take over and sleep in American homes.
7. The "Boston Massacre" happened when British troops fired on an American crowd of protesters killing three. This helped raise the anger of Americans against the British.
8. The "Boston Tea Party" was led by Sam Adams. Americans dressed as Indians threw tea into Boston harbor to protest a tea tax. This enraged the King and increased tension between the colonies and England.

## REVOLUTION

1. Lexington was the first battle where the Americans and British faced each other. This was the start of the Revolution.
2. **Thomas Paine** wrote **Common Sense** which explained to the colonists why the colonies should revolt against England.
3. The **Declaration of Independence** was issued on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1776. It had three parts; the Enlightenment ideas of John Locke saying why people should be free and announcing the principles of government, a list of grievances against the King and the actual declaration stating that we were separating from England.
4. The war at first went very well for the British but with the help of **France**, the colonies won.

## CRITICAL PERIOD 1781-1786

1. After the colonies became independent, a federal government was formed under the **Articles of Confederation**. It was weak and didn't work because the power stayed with the states. There was no president or judiciary, and no taxation power. The different colonies each had their own militia. The only good part that was kept: **The Northwest Ordinance of 1787** provided a process for admission of new states to the Union.
2. **Shay's Rebellion** showed the weakness of the government
3. **The Articles of Confederation** didn't work because of their weaknesses, so a constitutional convention was held to set up the new government.

## THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

1. The concepts behind the constitution came from **Enlightenment** thinkers.
2. John **Locke** wrote that people should have the right of "life, liberty and property" (**natural rights**). He also said that if the government in power does not give people the rights they deserve, they have the right to change it.
3. Montesquieu believed in "**Separation of Power**". This stopped one part of the government from having too much control.
4. British history and documents such as the **Magna Carta, Petition of Rights, and the English Bill of Rights** contributed to the ideals of American democracy. They took power from the king and protected the rights of the people.

## THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, 1787

1. **The Constitutional Convention met** and decided to abandon the Articles and write a new constitution (document outlining the basic structure and rules of government)
2. The **Great Compromise** set up a bicameral (two-house) legislature (Congress). The Senate would have 2 representatives from each state. The

House of Representatives would be based on the population of each state. This gave the smaller states protection against the larger ones.

3. The **Three-Fifths Compromise** said that for every 5 slaves in a state's population, they would be counted as 3 citizens (even though they had no rights). This gave the South more representation in the House of Representatives.
4. Those who favored ratification of the Constitution were called **Federalists**". Those who were against it were known as **Anti-Federalists.**"
5. The **Federalist Papers** were essays in favor of the Constitution which helped get it ratified. (Hamilton, Jay, and Madison)
6. The **Bill of Rights** was added to limit the power of the federal government and to protect the people's rights to life, liberty, property, fair trials. Free speech...

### **BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE US CONSTITUTION**

1. The Constitution is based on the ideal of **popular sovereignty** where the power of the government comes from the people. ("We the people" Preamble)
2. **Federalism** is a system where power is divided between the national and state governments- **Delegated Powers** are powers given only to the federal government (declaring war); **Implied Powers** are powers not written in the Constitution but needed to carry out federal powers (Elastic Clause); **Denied Powers** are those powers specifically not given to either the national government, state governments of both; **Concurrent Powers** are shared by both the federal and state governments (right to tax); **Reserved Powers** belong only to the states (divorce laws).
3. **Separation of Powers**- national power is separated into three branches- legislative, executive, and judicial
4. **Limited Government**- the state and federal government's powers are regulated and limited by the Constitution
5. **Checks and balances** give each branch of the government control over the other branches and curbs excessive power.
6. **Flexibility**- the Constitution is able to adapt to change through the amending process and elastic clause. The **"Elastic Clause"** states that Congress can pass laws that allow the principles of the Constitution to be carried out. (necessary and proper clause). **Amendments** are changes to the Constitution and required passage by Congress and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the states.
7. The **Unwritten Constitution** - practices of the government that are based on custom and tradition: the cabinet; political parties; lobbying; judicial review

### **THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT: ITS STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS**

1. **The Legislative Branch** includes the Senate (2 members from each state) and the House of Representatives (based on state populations). In addition to drafting and passing laws, the Senate ratifies treaties and approves presidential appointments.

2. **The Executive branch** includes the President and Vice-President. The President is commander-in-chief, chief executive, chief legislator. He controls the armed forces. He signs or vetoes laws and he recommends new laws to Congress. The president is elected by the **Electoral College** (in order to stop direct election of a president). Each state has a certain number of members passed on their population as taken by the census.
3. **The Judicial Branch** includes all the different level of courts with the Supreme Court being the ultimate interpreter of a law's constitutionality. **Judicial review** is the power the court gave itself in *Marbury v Madison*, to declare a law or presidential act unconstitutional.
7. The first ten amendments to the Constitution are the **Bill of Rights**, which limit the power of the national government to pass laws restricting basic freedoms:
  - 1<sup>st</sup>- freedom of speech, religion, press, assembly
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>- right to bear arms
  - 3<sup>rd</sup>- no quartering of soldiers
  - 4<sup>th</sup>- no unreasonable search and seizure
  - 5<sup>th</sup>- due process, double jeopardy, self-incrimination
  - 6<sup>th</sup>-speedy trial , counsel, call witnesses
  - 7<sup>th</sup>- jury trial
  - 8<sup>th</sup>- prohibits excessive bail and cruel and unusual punishment
  - 9<sup>th</sup>- statement of these rights doesn't mean any not listed don't exist
  - 10<sup>th</sup>- all rights not delegated to federal government are reserved for the states and the people