



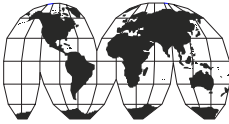



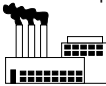



Section CE 2: Fundamental Principles and Documents

<i>Fastrack Civics</i>		
Second Edition		
		
		
		
	An interactive guide to the Virginia Civics SOL exam by David Burns	

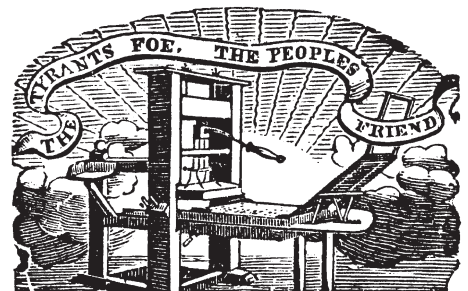


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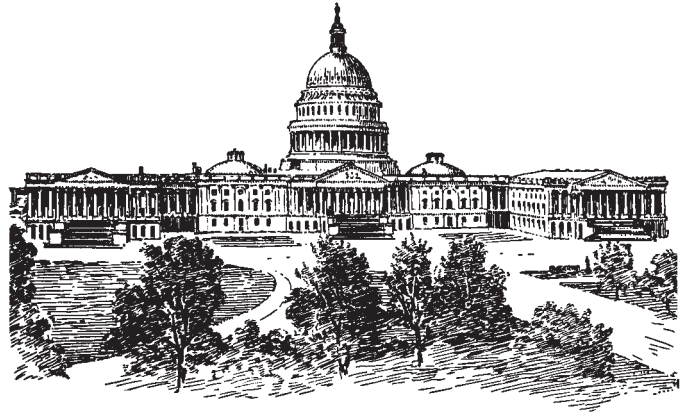
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CE 2

Fundamental Principles and Documents

This unit will focus on these big questions:



- What are the basic principles of government Americans live by?
- How did the idea of democracy get started?
- What documents helped establish freedom and democracy in our country?
- Why was the Constitution of the United States written?

Vocabulary:

We the People
insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, and our Posterity, We ordain and establish this Constitution for

amendment	Declaration of Independence	representative government
anti-Federalist	democracy	republic
Articles of Confederation	Federalist	rule of law
Bill of Rights	General Assembly	statute
Charters of the Virginia Company of London	government	tranquility
Congress	limited government	unalienable (or individual) rights
consent of the governed	Magna Carta	Virginia Declaration of Rights
Constitution of the U.S.	majority rule	Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom
Constitution of Virginia	Parliament	
convention	Preamble	
	ratify / ratification	

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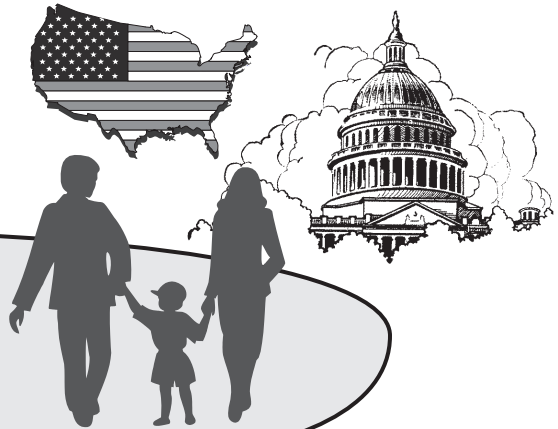
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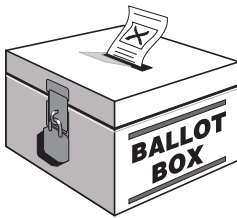
America's Fundamental Political Principles

Complete this page with your teacher to review and summarize the topic.

The American political system is built on certain basic principles. You can think of them as the foundation for the American way of life!



Here are six key principles that have shaped government in the U.S.:



A government in which the people rule.

Citizens elect public officeholders who make the laws on their behalf.



The people are the source of any and all government power.

The government and its leaders must follow the law.

All human beings have certain basic rights.

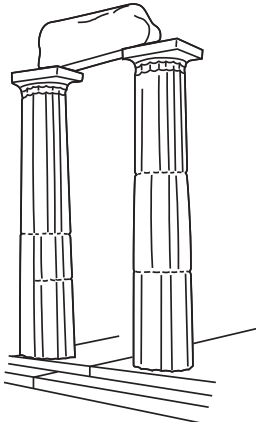
The government is not all-powerful.

These fundamental political principles have a long history in our civilization.

The full story of these fundamental principles stretches back more than two thousand years, to the time of the Greeks, the Romans, the Egyptians, and the Hebrews.

The term "Western civilization" is often used to describe the history that leads from those early cultures to our ideas about freedom, government, and human nature itself.

Which of the fundamental principles is most important? That's a question that philosophers, political leaders, reformers, and ordinary people have long debated.



What is your judgement?

Now it is your turn. Consider the list of fundamental principles that Americans embrace. Which do you consider the most important? Explain your choice below.

A large rectangular box containing ten horizontal lines for writing.

The First Democracies

Complete these pages with your teacher to review and summarize the topic.

Our word democracy actually comes from two ancient Greek words:

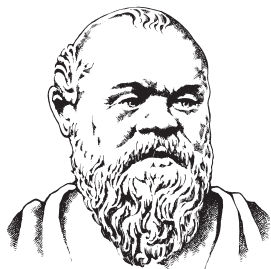
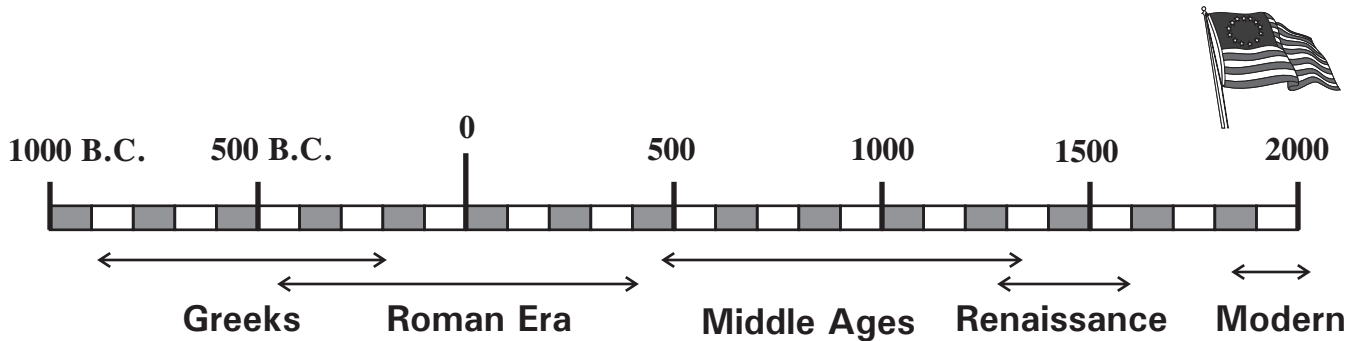


DEMOS = _____

KRATIA = _____



So the word democracy means "a government in which the people rule." This system first appeared in the Greek city-state of Athens in 508 B.C.



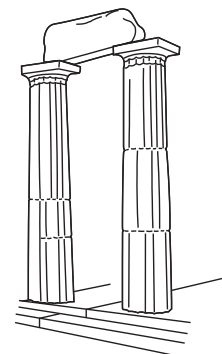
The system of government used by the ancient Greeks in Athens is called direct democracy, because the citizens met as a group, discussed issues, and then voted directly on proposed laws.

Citizens voted for or against a proposal by dropping either a white or a black stone into a vase.



About 500 B.C. the Romans began developing another form of democracy. It is called indirect democracy, or more commonly, representative government. In this system, citizens elect public officials who make laws on their behalf. The officials serve for a certain time period, but must seek re-election to stay in office.

A nation with a representative government is called a republic. It comes from the Latin phrase "res publica," which means "thing of the people."



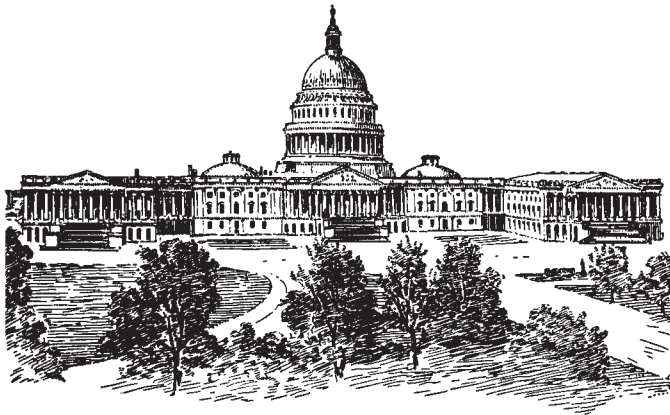
Mark the map with color pencils to show where democracy began!



Rome (Italy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Athens (Greece)	<input type="checkbox"/>
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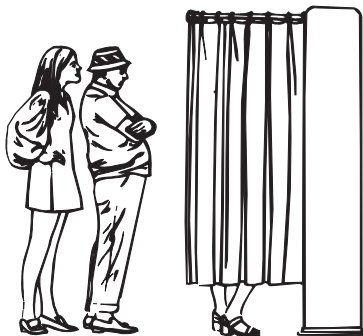
In time, those early democracies faded from history. Many centuries passed before a full-fledged democracy grew up in a new land: America!

Now, what kind of democracy are we?



The United States is called a republic because it is based on a system of representative government, as was the ancient Roman Republic. The citizens elect officeholders who make the laws on behalf of all the people.

In fact, many of the words we use in our government - like senator and governor - come directly from similar terms used in ancient Rome.



In America today we only rarely use the system of direct democracy, and ask citizens to vote on a law or action. Most often we participate in government by electing representatives who make laws and decide policies. Either way, however, it is democracy - the people's choice!



The Growing Rights of Englishmen

Complete these pages with your teacher to review and summarize the topic.

Long after the fall of the Roman civilization, England played a vital role in the re-birth of liberty and representative government.



As early as the year 1215, England developed the idea that the power of kings should be limited. That was the year of the Magna Carta.

The document called the Magna Carta - or Great Charter - is an early example of limits on the power of the English king.

In 1215, King John was forced to sign the document by his barons. They had become increasingly resentful of King John's disregard for what they considered their rights as noblemen.

In the Magna Carta, King John agreed to certain limits on his power, and agreed to follow English laws himself.

Today we call those two ideas the fundamental political principles of:





The city of London shall enjoy all its ancient liberties and free customs, both by land and by water. We also will and grant that all other cities, boroughs, towns, and ports shall enjoy all their liberties and free customs.

No man shall be seized or put in prison, or stripped of his rights or possessions, nor will we proceed with force against him, except by the lawful judgement of his equals or by the law of the land.

To no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice.

All Merchants may enter or leave England unharmed and without fear, and may stay or travel within it, by land or water, for purposes of trade, free from all illegal fees or payments, in accordance with ancient and lawful customs.

- from the Magna Carta

Mark the map with color pencils to show the location of England.



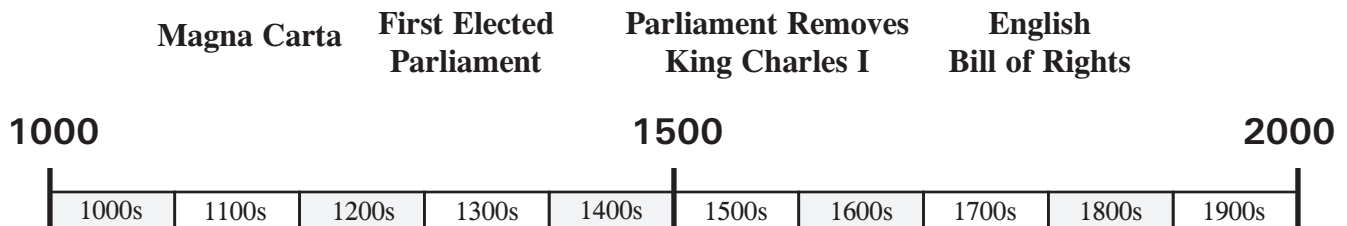
England



(Dot shows the location of London)



Over time, England also developed an elected Parliament that had a voice in the making of English laws.



Parliament eventually gained enough power to challenge English kings who abused royal power.

In fact, after King Charles I tried to rule without Parliament in the 1600s, a civil war erupted in England. Parliament's supporters won, and Parliament removed the king from the throne (1649).

Later, Parliament adopted a Bill of Rights (1689). That document declared that the rights of Englishmen included the right to elect members of Parliament and the right of Parliament to approve all tax laws.

The right to a jury trial and the right to

fair treatment when accused of a crime were also recognized. Cruel punishments were forbidden. The right of the people to bear arms for defense was recognized.

As the 1700s began, however, England was not yet a true democracy. The nobility - not the common people - actually controlled Parliament well into the 1800s.

Still, the key principles needed for a democratic government were established and steadily growing stronger. The English people had won a far greater degree of freedom and self-government than any other nation in Europe.

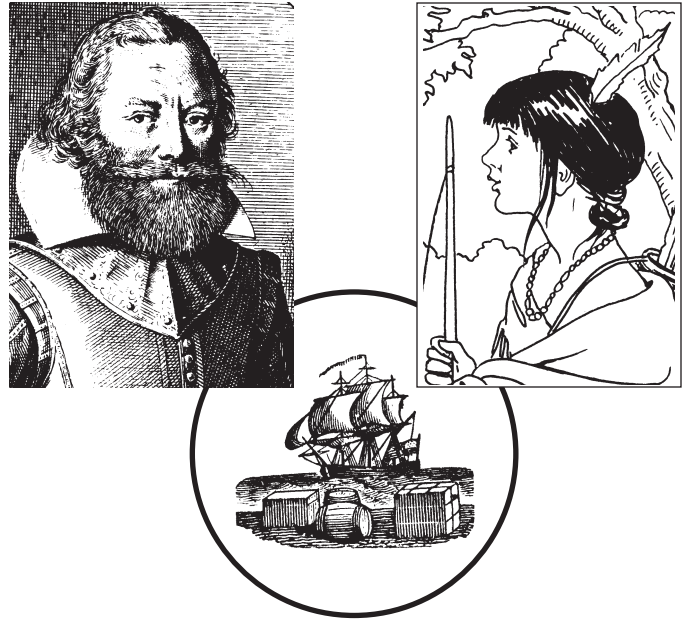
The Charters of the Virginia Company of London

Complete these pages with your teacher to review and summarize the topic.

In 1607, a group of Englishmen landed in Virginia and created Jamestown. It was a first step toward a new society that eventually became the U.S.A.!

The story of Capt. John Smith and the Indian princess Pocahontas is well known. Less well known is the story of the document signed by the English king, James I, that allowed the settlement in the first place.

The document is dated 1606, and is known as the Charter of the Virginia Company of London. It was given by the king to the English merchants who organized the company. They needed the charter because of the legal guarantees it gave to the company's investors and to the settlers.



The Charter of the Virginia Company of London gave important guarantees to the settlers who came to Jamestown and other settlements that followed.

The original charter and two later revised versions guaranteed that:

- Colonists could own property (land) in the New World.
- Colonists could organize a council to help make their own laws.
- Colonists and their children would keep the same rights as people in England.

The guarantee that colonists would keep all the rights of Englishmen became critical as the colonists moved toward independence in the 1770s.

All and every the persons ... and every of their children which shall happen to be born within the limits of the said several Colonies and plantations, shall have and enjoy all liberties ... as if they had been abiding and born within this our realm of England.

- King James I

Mark the map with color pencils to show England and the route of the first Jamestown settlers.

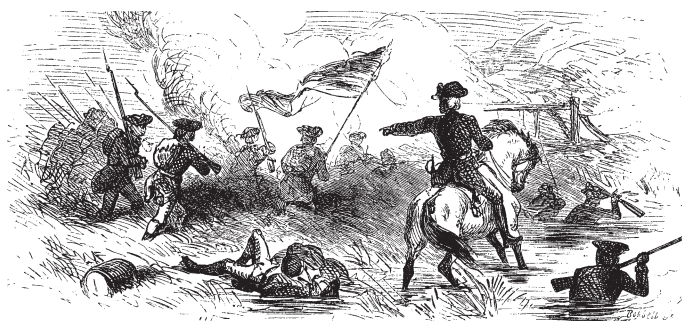


Jamestown Voyage England

In 1765 Virginians and other colonists in America became angry when it appeared that the old charter's guarantees were being ignored.

1765 was the year when the Stamp Act was passed in England. It placed a tax on the colonists without any vote of approval by the colonists' own elected assemblies.

To people like Virginia's Patrick Henry, it was proof that the colonists in America no longer had the same rights as the people in England.



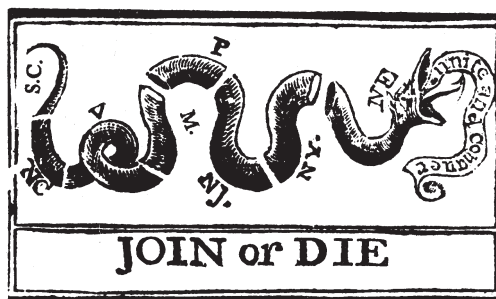
In the 1770s the colonists rebelled against English policies. They pointed to the Charter of the Virginia Company of London as proof of their claim to the full rights of Englishmen. To protect their rights, they met in Philadelphia and declared independence in 1776. The United States of America was born!

Map - The 13 English Colonies in 1775

Label the 13 colonies and finish coloring the map on the next page.

As the 13 colonies began to break with England, the colonists began to come together as something new: Americans!

Before the American Revolution, the original 13 colonies often had closer connections with England than with each other. A few attempts had been made to create stronger ties among the colonies, but those efforts brought little success.

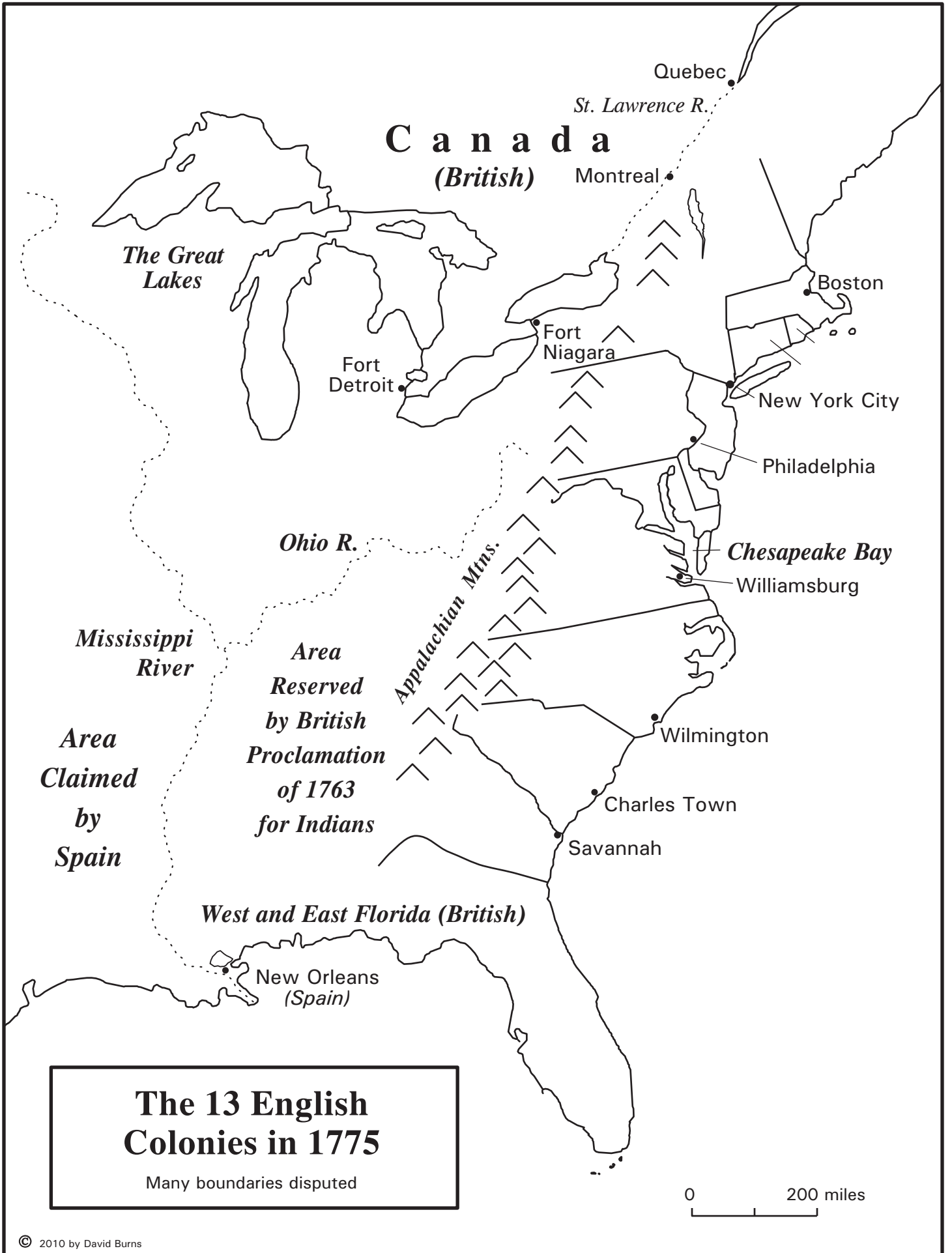


In the 1760s and 1770s, however, the colonies began drawing closer together. This was mainly a result of the conflict with England over the Stamp Act and other laws passed by Parliament. One famous example came after the Boston Tea Party (1773). England ordered Boston harbor closed as punishment for the destruction of the tea. The other colonies immediately sent wagons of supplies and money to help the residents of the city survive.

Philadelphia was a natural location for meetings of the Continental Congress, first called in 1774. That is where the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the U.S. Constitution were written.

In Virginia, Williamsburg was the colonial capital, where the elected assembly called the House of Burgesses met. It was there that the Virginia Declaration of Rights was adopted.

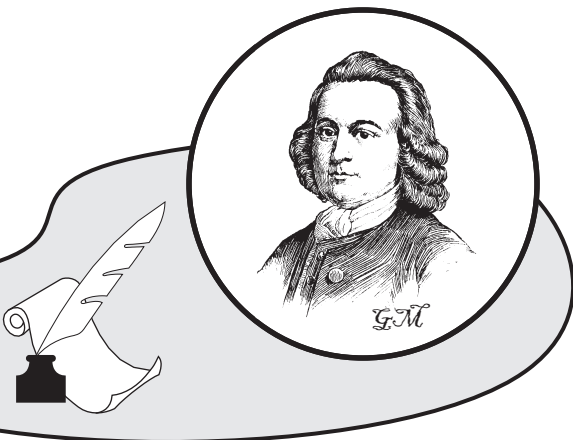




The Virginia Declaration of Rights

Complete these pages with your teacher to review and summarize the topic.

The Virginia Declaration of Rights became one of the key documents of the independence movement as the American Revolution began.



The declaration was prepared by George Mason in 1776 as Virginia broke away from English rule and began forming its own new government.

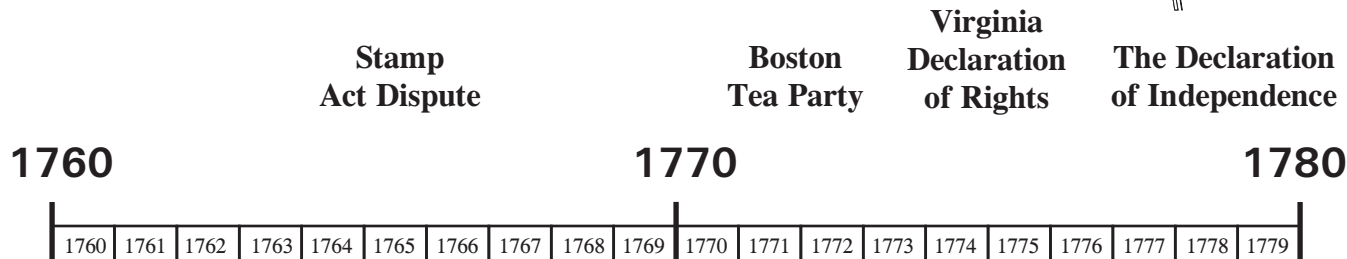
The Virginia Declaration of Rights was a bold statement about the purpose of government and the rights of citizens. Its author, George Mason, was a plantation owner who lived just a bit south of George Washington's home by the Potomac River.

Mason was considered one of Virginia's best political leaders and thinkers. He prepared the document in the spring of 1776 as he and other Virginians began meeting and discussing ways to organize a new government.

All men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights ... namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property.

- from the Virginia Declaration of Rights

The Virginia Declaration of Rights was adopted at a meeting of leaders in Williamsburg in June of 1776.

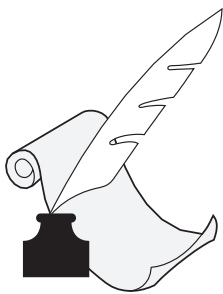


Identify the five most famous Virginia leaders from the Revolutionary era who lived at the locations shown on the map.



The Virginia Declaration of Rights had a great influence, and became a model for the Bill of Rights that was added to the U.S. Constitution.

Thomas Jefferson most likely had a copy of the Virginia document as he wrote the Declaration of Independence in June of 1776. Jefferson knew George Mason well, and several key ideas and phrases can be found in both documents.



The words of the Virginia Declaration of Rights also inspired similar listings of basic rights in other state constitutions.

The greatest and most lasting influence of the Virginia Declaration of Rights came after the fighting of the Revolution was over.

When the U.S. Constitution was written in 1787, it did not contain a list of the rights of citizens. Many leaders, however, wanted such a list added as soon as possible.

The Bill of Rights was the result, modeled after the Virginia Declaration of Rights. It became part of the Constitution in 1791.

Key Rights & Principles in The Virginia Declaration of Rights

All men are created equally free with certain inherent rights.

The right to life, liberty, and property is held by all men.

Citizens have a right to change their government by a majority decision.

Special hereditary privileges are not permitted. (No nobility)

The right to a jury trial.

The right to due process.

No unreasonable searches.

No cruel punishments.

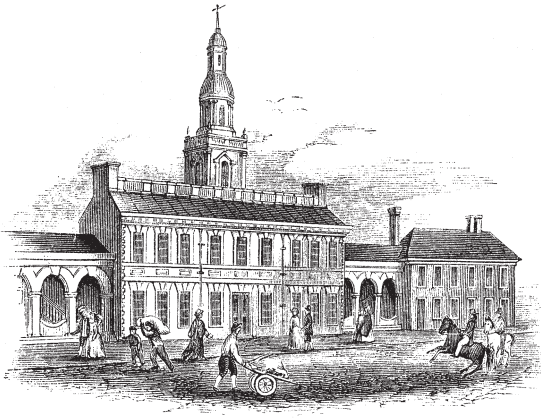
No excessive bail or fines.

Freedom of the press.

Freedom of religion.

The Declaration of Independence

Complete this page with your teacher to review and summarize the topic.



The Declaration of Independence was adopted on July 4, 1776, in the city of Philadelphia. Here are some of the key points in this famous document.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.



That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.



That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it.



The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States ...



For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world.



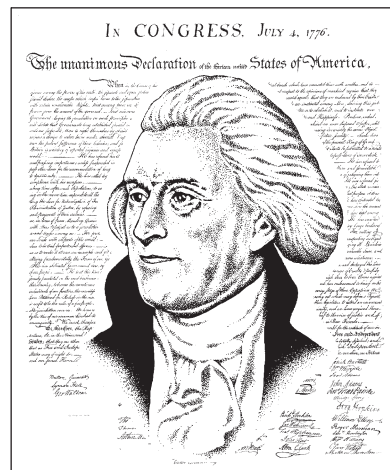
For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent.

For depriving us in many cases of the benefits of Trial by Jury.

King George III



We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by the authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States.

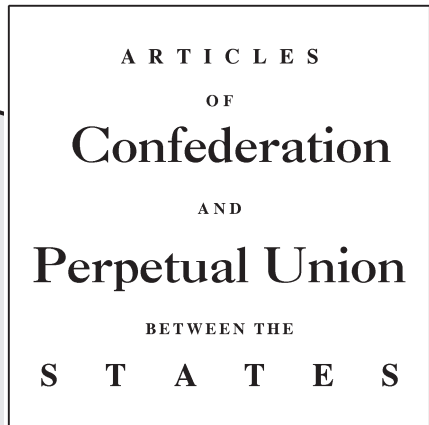


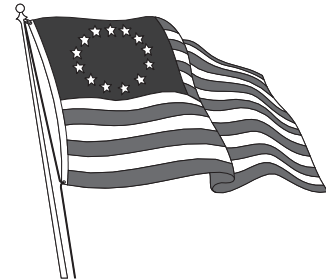
Thomas Jefferson was the main author of the Declaration of Independence.

The Articles of Confederation

Complete this page with your teacher to review and summarize the topic.

The Articles of Confederation was the first attempt by the 13 original states to create a national government. It was adopted during the Revolution. Here are some highlights of the plan.





- Massachusetts
- Virginia Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island New Hampshire
- Maryland Georgia New York
- North Carolina New Jersey
- Connecticut South Carolina
- Delaware

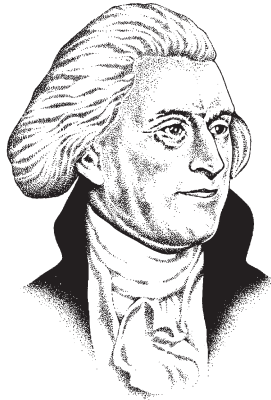


The problems under this first form of government led to the writing of the U.S. Constitution, which replaced the Articles of Confederation in 1788.

The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom

Complete this page with your teacher to review and summarize the topic.

In 1786 the Virginia General Assembly passed an important new law written by Thomas Jefferson. One part of the law said:



statute = law

Be it enacted by the General Assembly, that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever ... all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinion in matters of religion.

- from the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom

The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom -

The Virginia statute made a clear separation of government and religion. It declared as a matter of state law that no one had to believe in or support any particular religion. It also stated that no one would be penalized or harmed because of their beliefs.

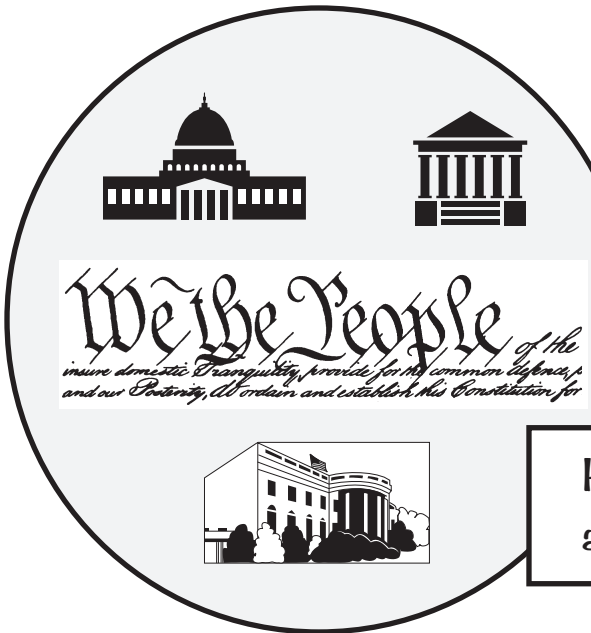
This Virginia law had an important influence on the writing of the First Amendment. The amendment is in the Bill of Rights, which was adopted as part of the U. S. Constitution in 1791.

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The Constitution of the United States

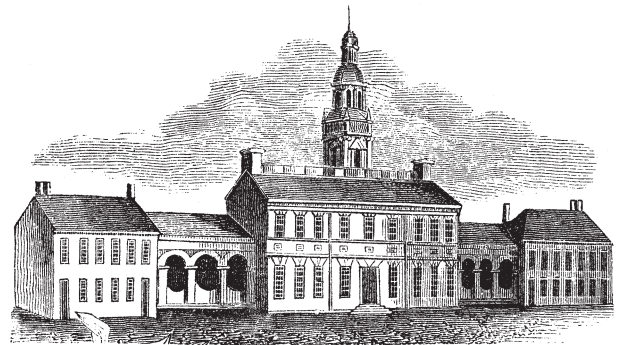
Complete these pages with your teacher to review and summarize the topic.



The Constitution was written in 1787 to replace the Articles of Confederation. It remains today as the basic design for government in the United States.

Here are some key points to understand about this famous document of liberty:

Problems of government under the Articles of Confederation system led a group of leaders to call for a special meeting in Philadelphia in 1787. The delegates sent to the meeting from the states decided to write an entirely new document, the U.S. Constitution.



The Constitution greatly expanded the powers of the national level of American government. For example, the old system only had a Congress, but the new plan called for a Congress, a President, and a Supreme Court.



Congress - Makes laws at the national level.



President - A leader and manager of the national level government.

The proposed Constitution was hotly debated in each of the states. People who favored the new design were called Federalists. Those who opposed it were called anti-Federalists. In 1788, votes in the states ratified (approved) the new document.



Supreme Court - Hears cases involving citizens' rights and disputes between states.

The U.S. Constitution did not have a Bill of Rights at first. But one was quickly added a few years later, in 1791.

The Bill of Rights added to the U.S. Constitution was based mainly on the Virginia Declaration of Rights. Like that earlier document, it guarantees many of the basic individual rights, such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion. It also lists the rights of people accused of a crime, such as the right to a jury trial.

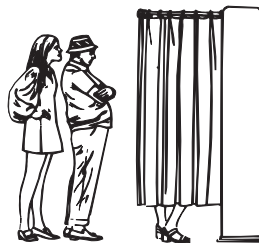
The Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776)

The U.S. Bill of Rights (1791)

Taken as a whole, the Constitution (with the Bill of Rights) forms a solid foundation for liberty in America because it:

Elections

Majority Rule



Congress

President

Freedom of the Press

Freedom of Assembly



Freedom of Speech



Freedom of Religion

No titles of nobility



Jury Trials

Supreme Court

The Preamble to the Constitution

Complete this page with your teacher to review and summarize the topic.

The Preamble is the first paragraph of the Constitution. It tells the purpose or goals of the Constitution.

We the People of the
insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense,
and our Posterity, All ordain and establish this Constitution for

We the People of the
United States, in Order to
form a more perfect Union,
establish Justice, ensure
domestic Tranquility, provide
for the common defense,
promote the general Welfare,
and secure the Blessings of
Liberty to ourselves and
our Posterity, do ordain and
establish this Constitution for
the United States of America.

Amending the Constitution

Complete this page with your teacher to review and summarize the topic.

The Constitution can be changed with amendments. The process is described in the Constitution itself, and is fairly complex.

We the People
of the
insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common Defense,
and our Posterity, We ordain and establish this Constitution for

There are two main steps involved in amending the Constitution:

Step One: _____

An amendment must first be proposed either by Congress, or by a special national convention called by the states.

In either case, it takes a 2/3 majority vote of approval to move the proposed amendment to the next step.



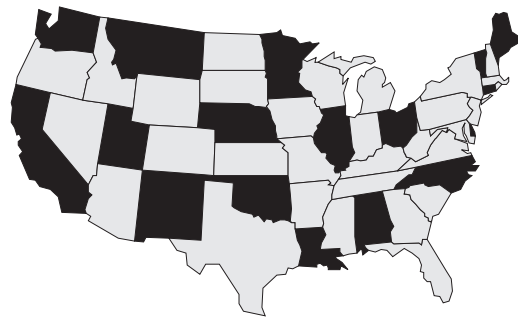
Congress or convention to propose...

Step Two: _____

To ratify a proposed amendment, 3/4 of the states must give their approval.

This approval can come either from the state legislatures, or from special state conventions.

So regardless of how an amendment is proposed, at least 3/4 of the states must approve of the change for it to take effect.



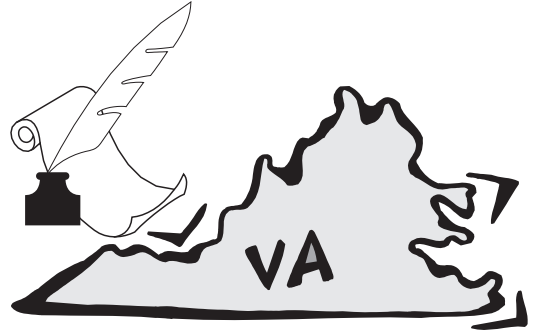
...3/4 of the states to ratify!

There are currently amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

Amending the Virginia Constitution

Complete this page with your teacher to review and summarize the topic.

Virginia, like all other states, has its own state constitution. The Constitution of Virginia can also be changed with amendments.



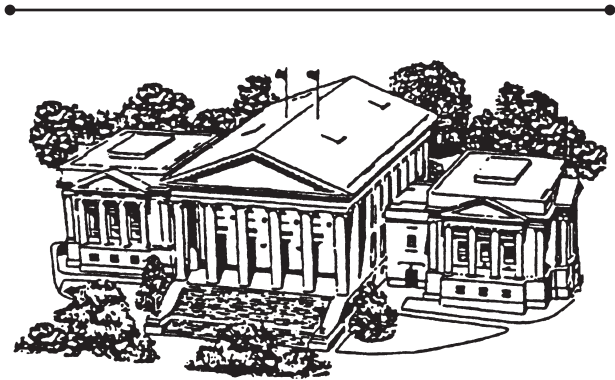
The process of amending the Constitution of Virginia is similar, but not identical, to the process of changing the U.S. Constitution.

An amendment to the Constitution of Virginia can be proposed by either:

- The General Assembly.
- A special convention of citizens.

An amendment to the Constitution of Virginia can only be ratified by the voters of Virginia.

The Virginia constitution has actually been rewritten several times in the past 200 years. All of the changes required ratification by the voters of Virginia.



The General Assembly is the elected body that makes laws for Virginia. It meets in the State Capitol building in Richmond, shown above.

Key Point: _____

We will learn more about the
Constitution of Virginia in a later unit!

amendment - a change in, or a statement added to, a legal document.

anti-Federalist - people who opposed adoption of the U.S. Constitution, because they opposed the Constitution's plan for a stronger national level of government.

Articles of Confederation - the document that established the first form of national government for the United States. It was adopted during the Revolution, and was later replaced by the U.S. Constitution.

Bill of Rights - the first ten Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. This listing of basic rights was added to the Constitution in 1791, and includes guarantees of freedom of religion, press, and speech.

Charters of the Virginia Company of London - the documents issued by King James giving a London business group permission to establish a settlement in Virginia. The company established Jamestown in 1607. The charters guaranteed that the settlers would always keep the normal rights of Englishmen.

Congress - the elected body that makes laws for the United States. It meets in Washington, D.C.

consent of the governed - the fundamental principle that the people are the only legitimate source of a government's power. ("Consent" means permission.)

Constitution of the United States - the document adopted in 1788 that establishes the structure and basic rules of the U.S. government.

Constitution of Virginia - the document that establishes the structure and basic rules for the government of Virginia. The earliest version of it dates to 1776.

convention - a meeting called for a special purpose.

Declaration of Independence - the document adopted in Philadelphia July 4, 1776, that declared the American colonies independent of Great Britain. Thomas Jefferson, from Virginia, was the main author.

democracy - a system of government in which the people hold the ultimate power to make the laws.

Federalist - a person who supported the adoption of the Constitution, and favored the Constitution's plan for creation of a stronger national government.

General Assembly - the elected body that makes state laws in Virginia. It meets in Richmond each year.

government - the ruling authority in a country.

limited government - the fundamental principle that says the government should not have absolute power.

Magna Carta - the famous document signed by England's King John in 1215 A.D. that helped establish the rule of law and limited government in England.

majority rule - the principle of democratic government that says the side with the most votes wins.

Parliament - the elected lawmaking body in England, similar in some ways to our Congress.

Preamble - the first paragraph of the Constitution, which states its goals or purposes.

ratify / ratification - to officially approve an official document or proposal.

representative government - a government in which the people elect representatives who make laws on their behalf. It is also called "indirect democracy."

republic - a nation that uses the system of representative government, such as the United States.

rule of law - the fundamental principle that says the government must obey the laws, just as the people do. No one is above the law.

statute - a law passed by an elected legislature, such as Congress or the Virginia General Assembly.

tranquility - peace, calm, and good order.

unalienable (or individual) rights - basic individual rights that cannot be separated from a human being. (Sometimes it is spelled "inalienable.")

Virginia Declaration of Rights - a document adopted by Virginia in 1776 that listed the basic rights of all people. George Mason was the author. It later served as a model for the U.S. Bill of Rights, adopted in 1791.

Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom - a law adopted by Virginia in 1786 which declared freedom of religion and set a clear separation of church and state.