

Government & Politics

Government	the institution through which a society makes and enforces its public policies
Politics	the activities associated with the governance of a country or other area, especially the debate or conflict among individuals or parties having or hoping to achieve power

Every Government has

Legislative Power	the power to make law and to frame public policy
Executive Power	the power to execute, enforce, and administer law
Judicial Power	the power to interpret laws, determine their meaning, and to settle disputes that arise within the society
State	a body of people, living in a defined territory, organized politically

The Four Characteristics of a State

Population	a state must have people, the number of which does not directly relate to its existence
Territory	a state must be comprised of land—territory with known and recognized boundaries
Sovereignty	supreme & absolute power within its own territory
Government	politically organized

The Four Origin Theories of a State

- Force
- Evolutionary
- Divine right
- Social contract

Constitutional Influences

<i>Two Treatises of Government (Locke)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Right to overthrow an unjust government •Religious freedom •Natural rights
<i>The Leviathan (Hobbes)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Right to not incriminate oneself •Social contract •Inalienable rights •Right to have a militia
<i>The Social Contract (Rousseau)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •People are born in their natural state of freedom •Popular sovereignty •Agreement between rules & rulers
<i>The Spirit of the Laws (Montesquieu)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Checks and balances •Constitutional government •Three branches

Articles of the Constitution

0. Preamble: We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, 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.
1. Legislative Branch: The U.S. Congress makes the laws for the United States. Congress has two parts, called "Houses," the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Articles of the Constitution (cont)

2. Executive Branch: The President, Vice-President, Cabinet, and Departments under the Cabinet Secretaries carry out the laws made by Congress.
3. Judicial Branch: The Supreme Court decides court cases according to the US Constitution. The courts under the Supreme Court decide criminal and civil court cases according to the correct federal, state, and local laws.
4. States' Power: States have the power to make and carry out their own laws. State laws are related to the people and problems of their area. States respect other states' laws and work together with other states to fix regional problems.
5. Amendments: The Constitution can be changed. New amendments can be added to the US Constitution with approval by a two-thirds vote in each house of Congress (67, 281) and three-fourths vote by the states (38).
6. Federal Powers: The Constitution and federal laws are higher than state and local laws. All laws must agree with the US Constitution.



Articles of the Constitution (cont)

7. The Constitution was presented to George Washington and the men at the Constitutional Convention on September 17, 1787, Representatives from twelve out of the thirteen original states signed the Constitution. From September 1787 to July 1788, the states met, talked about, and finally voted to approve the Constitution.

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