**Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy**

Brief Narrative:

The U.S. Constitution arose out of important historical and philosophical ideas and preferences regarding popular sovereignty and limited government. Compromises were made during the Constitutional Convention and ratification debates, and these compromises have frequently been the source of conflict in U.S. politics over the proper balance between individual freedom, social order, and equality of opportunity.

The first semblance of a national government created after independence was a state-centered, decentralized system that reflected a fear of a powerful central government. Yet, the lack of powers held by the weak national Congress, coupled with each state’s independent and often conflicting actions, raised concerns with such key actors as James Madison and Alexander Hamilton as to whether the Articles of Confederation were able to protect the new nation. The weaknesses led to a call for change and a decision to host a convention to revise the Articles. The convention itself was a triumph of negotiation, collaboration, and compromise, extending beyond the delegates’ original mandate. It led to the creation of a new constitution that granted more centralized authority, while dispersing powers among three branches in the national government, and reserving powers and authority to the states to govern within their borders.

The group that favored the new federal Constitution, the Federalists, argued that the constitutional separation of powers and checks and balances would protect people from governmental tyranny and unify the nation. The Federalists also argued that although the Constitution lacked a specific listing of rights, it protected civil liberties in general by limiting the national government to powers that were enumerated. By contrast, the Anti-Federalists argued against the new federal system, claiming that the new Constitution would erode the sovereignty of the states, the prominence of local self-government, and their inherited liberties, as it lacked a specific listing of rights needed to protect the people from the national government. The Federalists, after James Madison’s eventual concurrence, promised the Anti- Federalists that they would support the addition of a bill of rights once the Constitution was ratified. The Constitution was ratified in 1788 although the last state, Rhode Island, did not ratify it until 1790. The Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, was ratified in 1791.

More than 200 years later, the compromises that were necessary for the Constitution’s ratification, and in some instances led to ambiguity, continue to fuel debate and sometimes even conflict over how best to protect liberty, equality, order, and private property.

Essential Questions:

* How did the founders of the U.S. Constitution attempt to protect individual liberty, while also promoting public order and safety?
* How have theory, debate, and compromise influenced the U.S. Constitutional system?
* How does the development and interpretation of the Constitution influence policies that impact citizens and residents of the U.S.?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Key Vocab (Due on Test Day)**   * Government * Political Apathy * Politics * Political Participation * Single-Issue Groups * Policymaking System * Linkage Institutions * Policy Agenda * Political Issue * Policymaking Institutions * Public Policy * Policy Impacts * Democracy * Majority Rule * Minority Rights * Representation * Pluralism * Hyperpluralism * Policy Gridlock * Political Culture * Gross Domestic Product * Constitution * Declaration of Independence * Natural Rights * Consent of the Governed * Limited Government * Articles of Confederation * Shays’ Rebellion * Factions * New Jersey Plan * Virginia Plan * Writ of Habeas Corpus * Separation of Powers * Checks and Balances * Republic * Federalists (and Fed Papers) * Anti-Federalists * Bill of Rights * Judicial Review * Federalism * Unitary Government * Intergovernmental Relations * Supremacy Clause * Tenth Amendment * Enumerated Powers * Implied Powers * Elastic Clause * Full Faith and Credit * Extradition * Privileges and Immunities * Dual Federalism * Cooperative Federalism * Devolution * Fiscal Federalism * Categorical Grants * Project Grants * Formula Grants * Block Grants | **SCOTUS Cases for Case Briefs**   * Marbury v. Madison (1803) * McCulloch v. Maryland (1819) * Gibbons v. Ogden (1824) * *United States v. Lopez (1995):* * *Fletcher v. Peck* (1810) * *Barron v. Baltimore* (1833) * *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015)   **Essential Documents for Document Analysis**  Thomas Paine ‘Common Sense’  John Adams ‘Thoughts on Government’  Declaration of Independence  Articles of Confederation  Federalist No. 10  Brutus No. 1  Federalist No. 51  The Constitution of the United States  Federalist No. 70  Federalist No. 78  **Legislation for Legislative Analysis**  Judiciary Act of 1789  Judiciary Act of 1801  Equal Rights Amendment  Civil Rights Act of 1965  Voting Rights Act of 1966  **Big Ideas to KNOW**  Why does government exist?  How do the people impact public policy? How does public policy impact people?  What are the key principles of democracy?  What are the different theories of how to apply democracy?  How did the ideas behind the American Revolution shape the creation of the Constitution?  What were the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation?  What were the key issues at the Constitutional Convention and how did they get solved?  Explain how the Constitution can be formally amended and how it changes informally?  What is federalism and how does it contrast with other ways nations are organized?  What is the constitutional basis for the division of power between national and state governments, the establishment of national supremacy, and states’ obligations to each other?  What are the consequences of federalism for diversity in public policies among the states? |