



We the People High School Regional Questions - 2023

Unit 1: What Are the Philosophical and Historical Foundations of the American Political System?

(Question 1)

How did both classical republicans and the natural rights philosophers influence the Founders' views about government?

- What are the essential differences between classical republicanism and natural rights philosophy?
- Why do both classical republicans and natural rights philosophers stress the need for education and preparation for citizenship?

(Question 3)

What effect did colonial experiences have on the Founders' views about rights and government?

- In what ways were eighteenth-century American and British societies similar or dissimilar in terms of the rights of individual liberty, equality of opportunity, and property?
- How did early state constitutions reflect colonial experiences as well as the ideas of classical republicanism and the natural rights philosophy?



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Unit 2: How Did the Framers Create the Constitution?

(Question 1)

How does the Constitution limit government power to protect individual rights while promoting the common good?

- Why did the Federalists and Anti-Federalists disagree on whether the Constitution sufficiently protected individual rights and promoted the common good?
- What responsibilities, if any, do citizens have for seeing that individual rights are protected and the common good is promoted?

(Question 2)

What were the major conflicts at the Philadelphia Convention and how were they resolved?

- What arguments can you make for and against giving each state the right to send the same number of members to the Senate?
- What arguments can you make for and against including the three-fifths clause and the fugitive slave clause in the Constitution?



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Unit 3: How Has the Constitution Been Changed to Further the Ideals Contained in the Declaration of Independence?

(Question 1)

What are the basic purposes of the Fourteenth Amendment?

- How are questions left unresolved at the Philadelphia Convention addressed in the Fourteenth Amendment?
- How are the due process and equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment related to principles of limited government?

(Question 3)

What are the major arguments for and against judicial review?

- Alexander Hamilton claimed in Federalist 78 that “the interpretation of the laws in the proper and peculiar province of the courts.” Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of an appointed, life-tenured branch of government overturning laws passed by a democratically elected body of government?



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Unit 4: How Have the Values and Principles Embodied in the Constitution Shaped American Institutions and Practices?

(Question 2)

How and why has presidential power expanded since the ratification of the Constitution?

- How have wars, emergencies, and the media contributed to the expansion of presidential powers?
- How have the other branches of government responded to the expansion of presidential power? DO you think they have done so adequately? Explain.

(Question 3)

How and why did the Founders create American's system of federalism?

- How does federalism limit the power of both the national government and the states?
- How does federalism expand opportunities for citizen participation?



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Unit 5: What Rights Does the Bill of Rights Protect?

(Question 2)

How are individual rights protected in the body of the Constitution?

- Given the protection of rights in the body of the Constitution, would you have agreed or disagreed with the Anti-Federalists' argument for the addition of a bill of rights? Why?
- What additional rights, if any, do you think should be added to the Constitution? Why?

(Question 3)

What fundamental American values are embodied in the Fourth Amendment?

- Why have Fourth Amendment issues been a persistent concern from colonial times until today?
- How and why does modern technology raise new concerns about the Fourth Amendment?



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**Unit 6: What Challenges Might Face American Constitutional Democracy in the
Twenty-First Century?**

(Question 1)

Why does the United States' commitment to the rule of law appeal to other peoples?

- How would you explain the meaning of the rule of law?
- How do America's founding documents express the nation's commitment to the rule of law?

(Question 3)

What do you think are the best ways to achieve constitutional change?

- Thomas Jefferson argued that the Constitution should be revised every generation. The Founders provided instead for an amendment process to take place only if and when revisions may be deemed necessary. Which method do you think is better? Why?
- In what ways, if any, have constitutional amendments helped the United States become "a more perfect union"? Explain.