



Daily Warm-Ups

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

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Level II

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Daily Warm-Ups: American Government

Why Government?

One of the defining features of a civilization is that it has a government. In the space below, write a few sentences in which you explain what a government is and what it does.



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Enlightenment Authors

The documents listed below are among the most important in political history. They all explain essential philosophical principles on which our government is based. Write the letter of the correct author from the box on the line before each document.

- a. John Locke
- b. Baron de Montesquieu
- c. Jean Jacques Rousseau

- ___ 1. *The Spirit of the Laws*
- ___ 2. *The Social Contract*
- ___ 3. *Two Treatises of Government*





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The Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence is one of the most important documents in American history. Decide if each statement below about the Declaration is true (T) or false (F). Write the appropriate letter on the line before each statement. Rewrite any false statements to make them true.

- ___ 1. The Declaration uses language that was designed both to appeal to the English people and to inspire the American people.
- ___ 2. The Declaration explains that when a government is headed by a king, it should be abolished.
- ___ 3. The Declaration avoids the issue of slavery.
- ___ 4. The Declaration states that governments obtain their just powers from the consent of the people who are governed.
- ___ 5. The Declaration contains the Bill of Rights.



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Inalienable Rights

The English Enlightenment philosopher John Locke believed that all people are born with natural rights. He focused on the rights to life, liberty, and property. In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote that people are born with inalienable rights. Jefferson focused on the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.



Write one or two sentences to answer each question below.

1. Define the term *inalienable*. _____

2. Why do you suppose Thomas Jefferson focused on the right to “pursuit of happiness” instead of the right to “property”?





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Democracy Versus Republic

The government of the United States is a democratic republic. It includes principles of both a democracy and a republic. In a pure democracy, citizens have a direct say in decisions of government. In a republic, citizens elect representatives to make decisions for them. Think about the strengths and weaknesses of each of these systems. In the table below, list at least one strength and one weakness for each system.

	Pure Democracy	Republic
Strength		
Weakness		



The Articles of Confederation and the Constitution

The statements below describe problems in the U.S. government under the Articles of Confederation. Below each statement, explain how the U.S. Constitution solved the stated problem.

1. Congress could not call on individuals for the purpose of forming a standing army. The federal government required the states to provide military troops when needed.
2. The federal government relied on the states to contribute money for federal government use. The federal government had no means to make money.
3. Individual states often taxed goods imported from other states and foreign countries. This created competition and bad feelings between states.
4. Each state issued its own paper money. As a result, money was not uniform in value. It was difficult to determine the value of goods.



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Characteristics of Early State Constitutions

The early state constitutions shared a number of traits with the U.S. Constitution. On the lines provided, write a short explanation of each concept below.

1. popular sovereignty _____

2. limited government _____

3. civil liberties and rights _____

4. separation of powers _____

5. checks and balances _____



The Philadelphia Convention

The U.S. Constitution was developed in 1787 at the Philadelphia Convention. Decide if each statement about the Convention below is true (T) or false (F). Write the appropriate letter on the line before each statement. Rewrite any false statements to make them true.

- ___ 1. Delegates from all thirteen states attended the Philadelphia Convention.
- ___ 2. Thomas Jefferson was the primary writer of the Constitution.
- ___ 3. The Three-Fifths Compromise dealt with the question of how to count slaves for taxation and representation.
- ___ 4. The New Jersey plan proposed that representation in a national legislature should be based on population.
- ___ 5. Most delegates to the Convention were wealthy male landowners.
- ___ 6. The discussions of the Philadelphia Convention were kept secret from the public.
- ___ 7. Most delegates to the Convention had little political experience.



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