

# CP US Government

## Chapters 1-4 Study Guide

Written by Maria Ma, who thinks that high school level books are shit.

### People and the Government

#### I. American Government

##### A. Foundations of American Government

1. Aristotle
  - a. Natural law- the idea that people should be governed by ethical principles.
  - b. Governments should respect the individual citizens
2. The Enlightenment thinkers
  - a. Popular consent
  - b. Locke and Hobbes came up with the social contract theory, which is the idea that the people give consent to the government to govern.

##### B. Types of Governments

1. Monarchy
  - a. A hereditary rules wield absolute power
2. Oligarchy
  - a. A body of upper class individuals hold power
  - b. An earned status
3. Aristocracy
  - a. Ruled by the social elite- the privileged few.
4. Democracy
  - a. Ruled by the people
  - b. Two types, direct and indirect
    - i. Direct democracy is where everyone participates in the lawmaking process
    - ii. Indirect democracy is where the people elect representatives who work for them

##### C. Characteristics of American Governments

1. Popular Consent
  - a. Government exists only because the people let them
2. Popular sovereignty
  - a. The right the people have to govern themselves
3. Majority Rule
4. Inalienable Rights
  - a. Rights that cannot be taken away
5. Equality/Equal power
6. Personal Liberty

##### D. The State

1. "State" defines a political community, and can be used interchangeably with "nation"
2. To be considered a state, a nation must have population, territory, sovereignty and government.

##### E. Purposes of the Government

1. Maintain social order, provide public services, to provide for national security and a common defense, and to provide for and control the economic system

#### II. Formation of the US Government

##### A. Pre-Constitution

1. Declaration of Independence
2. Articles of Confederation-1781
  - a. First form of government adopted by the US.
  - b. Stressed states rights over a strong central government
  - c. Had virtually no power. It was more like a league of friendship between states
  - d. To remedy this lack of power, the Constitutional Convention was held.
3. Constitutional Convention
  - a. Virginia Plan
    - i. power from the people, stronger central government
  - b. New Jersey Plan
    - i. loose union of states, a modified form of the Articles.
  - c. The Great Compromise
    - i. Dealt with unequal representation in the legislative branch
    - ii. Fixed with the creation of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

- iii. Slaves were counted as  $\frac{3}{5}$  of a person
- d. Ratifying the Constitution
  - i. Anti-Federalists were against the Constitution because they feared that a strong central government meant an abuse of power. If the government became too strong, the people would suffer.
  - ii. Federalists wanted the new Constitution because they felt the Articles were too weak and they wouldn't be taken seriously as a country.
  - iii. In the end, the Federalists won out, after agreeing to include a Bill of Rights as an amendment to the Constitution, to protect the rights of the people.

### III. Structure of the US Government

#### A. Major Principles of the Constitution

1. Popular Sovereignty
2. Federalism
  - a. Power is divided between national and state governments
3. Separation of Powers
4. Checks and Balances
  - a. One branch of government is held in check by the other two to prevent one from becoming too powerful.
5. Judicial Review
  - a. Courts have power to declare laws and actions unconstitutional
    - i. First enacted by *Marbury vs Madison*
6. Limited Government

#### B. Amendments to the Constitution

1. Amendments can be proposed and ratified in 2 ways
  - a. Amendment is proposed by  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote in Congress, or by a constitutional convention called by Congress on petition of  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the states
  - b. Amendment is ratified by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the state legislatures or by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of special conventions called by the states.
2. Formal Amendments vs informal amendments
  - a. A formal amendment is an actual change to the wording of the Constitution
  - b. Informal changes are based off of the interpretation of the constitution

### IV. The Federal System

#### A. Power is divided between the national and state governments.

1. National powers are collectively called the delegated powers.
  - a. Expressed powers are directly stated in the Constitution
  - b. Implied powers are derived from the expressed powers.
  - c. Inherent powers are the powers the government has because it is a government, such as international relations
2. Powers held by the states are reserved powers
  - a. Interstate relations is a part of this
    - i. "Full faith and credit" to the laws, etc of other states
      - Each state must recognize the laws of other states, such as car registration and marriage licenses. This is only for civil laws.
    - ii. Privileges and immunities clause
      - One state cannot unreasonably discriminate against the citizens of another state.
    - iii. Extradition
      - A criminal from one state is not free in another
    - iv. Interstate compacts
      - Agreements between states used to settle differences without force
3. Concurrent powers are powers that both the national and state governments have.

#### B. Cooperative Federalism

1. Where the states, and national government work together.
2. The federal government may assist states by giving them money in the form of block grants or grant in aids.
  - a. Block grant is where there are only general provisions as to where the money is to be spent, ie "on education" or "health care reform"
  - b. Grant in aid is money given where the federal government oversees how the money is spent. They usually have specific purposes, ie, reform this aspect of that government office.