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US History & Government Unit 2 Constitutional Foundations Study Guide

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| **Causes of the Revolutionary War** |
| * French & Indian War resulted in debt for England so they taxed the colonists
* Colonial beliefs in natural rights and self-government (Enlightenment beliefs)
* Boston Massacre and Lexington & Concord – England spilled colonial blood
* No taxation without representation – Patrick Henry argued the colonists could not be taxed because they were not represented in the British government
 | * Stamp Act (1765) – direct tax on all paper products in the colonies
* Intolerable/Coercive Acts – closed the port of Boston, ended town meetings, quartering of British troops
* Colonial attempts at reconciliation (like the Olive Branch Petition) were ignored by England
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| **Major Revolutionary War Battles** |
| * Lexington & Concord – first fighting between the British and the colonists; pushed the colonists to move towards independence
* Bunker Hill – first major battle; British tactical victory, but American morale victory
* Saratoga – **Turning Point!** American victory convinced France to join the war and support the American cause
* Yorktown – Final major battle of the war; British General Cornwallis surrendered, effectively ending the war in favor of the Americans
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| **Key Documents** |
| **Declaration of Independence** | * Officially separated the American colonists from England and created the United States of America (the “break up letter”)
* Listed the grievances (complaints) against King George III and the reasons for the American Revolution
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| **Articles of Confederation** | * The first government of the United States
* Limited the power of the national government; gave more power to the states
* National government could not tax or enforce U.S. laws
* Shays’ Rebellion showed the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation
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| **U.S. Constitution** | * The official “law of the land” in the United States since 1789 (the blueprint for the U.S. government)
* Divides the government into three branches (legislative, executive, and judicial)
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| **The Constitutional Convention – Writing the Constitution** |
| **Great Compromise**  | * Divided the government into three branches (separation of powers and checks & balances to prevent any one branch from getting too powerful)
* Created a bicameral Congress (House of Representatives – states are represented according to population; Senate – every state has 2 representatives)
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| **3/5 Compromise** | * Determined that slaves would be counted as 3/5 a person for the purposes of representation
* Maintained the balance of power between northern and southern states in Congress in terms of representation
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| **Federalism** | * A system that divides power between a central/national government and separate state governments
* The national government has certain powers (military, coining money, etc.) while certain powers are reserved to the states (education, etc.)
* Federalism prevents the national government from getting too powerful
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| **Federalists** | **Anti-Federalists** |
| * Believed in a strong national government
* Loose Constructionists – the Constitution gives the national government “implied powers”
* Believed the **elastic clause** gave the national government the power to do what was “necessary and proper” to help the country
* Important figures: Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, John Adams
* Hamilton created an economic plan that gave the national government more power (Assumed state debts, tariffs, National Bank)
 | * Feared a national government with too much power (remember King George!)
* Strict Constructionists – the Constitution should be read as it is written (if the national government isn’t given a specific power in the Constitution, then it does not have that power!)
* Wanted a Bill of Rights added before ratifying the Constitution to protect individual freedoms
* Important figures: Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry
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| **Examples of Checks & Balances** |
| * The President can veto a bill passed by Congress (Executive branch checks Legislative branch)
* Congress can override a veto with a 2/3 vote (Legislative branch checks Executive branch)
* Supreme Court can use judicial review to deem a law unconstitutional (Judicial branch checks Legislative branch)
* President appoints Supreme Court Justices (Executive branch checks Judicial branch)
* Congress can impeach the President (Legislative branch checks the Executive branch)
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| **The Supreme Court** |
| **Judicial Review** | * The Supreme Court can review a law to determine if it follows the Constitution
* Result of the Supreme Court Case *Marbury v. Madison*
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| ***McCulloch v. Maryland*** | * Supreme Court Case that strengthened national power by stating a state could not tax the national government
* Stated that the national government is superior to a state government
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| **George Washington’s Presidency** |
| * Declared neutrality during the war between England and France (Jay’s Treaty)
* Ended the Whiskey Rebellion, showing the U.S. government had the power to enforce its laws under the new Constitution
* Retired after 2 terms of 4 years each
* In his Farewell Address, he warned the United States of America:
	+ Follow the Constitution’s separation of powers
	+ Stay united – avoid political parties
	+ Stay out of foreign affairs
	+ Don’t make permanent alliances with other nations
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| **John Adams’ Presidency** |
| * XYZ Affair – France took advantage of an American envoy that Adams sent to talk to the French government
* Alien Act – Gave the President the power to deport non-citizens
* Sedition Act – Made it illegal to publically say anything opposed to the government
* The Alien & Sedition Acts strengthened the power of the national government (gave the President more power), but arguably violated the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights (freedom of speech)
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