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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 |
| **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 |
| **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) |
| **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 |
| **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* |
| ***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) |