LESSON 1: MODERN AND HISTORICAL GOVERNMENTS

This lesson covers the following information:

- The different government systems in the world
- Political ideologies

Highlights include the following:

- Every nation has a different type of government and these governments must work closely together.
- They often work together through the United Nations. The mission of the UN includes:
  - keeping peace throughout the world
  - developing relations among nations
  - helping nations improve the lives of poor people through conquering hunger and encouraging respect for all nations rights
- A direct democracy has citizens who are eligible to vote and make laws without having a direct representative.
- A representative democracy is founded on the principle of elected people representing a group of people and can be either a republic or parliamentary form of government.
- A presidential democracy is a democratic system of government where an executive branch is led by a president who serves as both head of state and head of government.
  - Some say that a presidential type government can lead to totalitarianism or a dictatorship. Too much power in the hands of one person can cause a country to be controlled unfairly.
- A constitutional monarchy is usually a ruler who has ceremonial power only and does not make laws. They can suggest ideas for laws, but the government resides in the hands of a parliament or legislature.
- An elective monarchy is the head of state with the power to create laws and deliver punishment elected by a specific group for life or a pre-determined time period.
- In an absolute monarchy, the monarch rules with absolute power over the state and government.
- Governments can be classified by the amount of power they have over their citizens.
  - A limited government has control over the power of the people in authority and protects the rights of the individual.
  - An unlimited government is one in which people do not have effective controls over the power of the people in authority. If people in authority misuse their power, they cannot be easily removed from office.
- Constitutional governments have a written document that tell the citizens of a country what the laws are, what their rights and responsibilities as citizens are, and what powers the leaders of the country do and do not have.
- In addition to having limited government and a written constitution, the U.S. Government is a federal system of government. It is divided into three branches: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial.

Reflection

There are many different types of governments throughout the world. Each government is set up differently. One way they work together is through the United Nations. The different types of governments include:

- Communism
- Constitutional Democracy
- Democracy
- Dictatorships
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- Direct Democracy
- Imperialism
- Monarchy
- Parliamentary Democracy
- Presidential Democracy
- Representative Democracy
- Republic
- Theocracy
- Totalitarianism

Notes:
Word Search

Find all the words in the list. Words can be found in any direction.

COMMUNISM  DEMOCRACY
DICTATORSHIP  DIRECT DEMOCRACY
MONARCHY  REPUBLIC
THEOCRACY  TOTALITARIANISM

Y E R L C H O C R P O A C O V
C E S R C I X A Y I T S I G X
A A H A E A H C M H O L L B Z
R A R T U G A E O S D L B F J
C A R N C R C C N R R M U O H
O L I N C C Z A A O O A P Y C
M T I O R B T R R T T C E W B
E R E S N F J A C A I U R A Q
D H O S D Y Q N H T C N R Y E
T T O L P W R A Y C T M M C E
T O T A L I T A R I A N I S M
D O T L D K E R I D N A M K T
E A C O M V E R I A N D H O R
D I R E C T D E M O C R A C Y
E M S I N U M M O C S P A I M
LESSON 2: AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY

This lesson covers the following information:
- Key points that shaped the American Constitutional Democracy
- The creation of the American government.

Highlights include the following:
- The philosophies that guided the creation of the American government include popular sovereignty, limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances, judicial review, federalism, and constitutionalism.
  - Constitutionalism prescribes a system of government in which the government's powers are limited.
- Popular sovereignty is the principle that it is the people themselves who have given the Constitution its authority to create the U.S. government.
  - An example of popular sovereignty is the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. The act created new territories in both Kansas and Nebraska and allowed settlers to vote if they would either be a free or a slave state.
  - One result of the Kansas-Nebraska Act was that both pro and anti-slavery groups attempted to vote, leading to a border war that lasted from 1854-1861.
- The natural rights and majority rule philosophies that men are naturally free and equal have significantly impacted the development of the American Constitution.
  - Natural philosophy also states that men have a basic right to life, liberty, and property.
- It was also determined to create a government where the majority ruled, meaning the government’s rules are approved by the majority of people.
- A limited government helps give voice to all people and ensures that there is a balance that will always give the power of government to the majority while protecting the rights of the minority.
- The Constitution is made up of three parts: (1) the preamble, (2) the articles and (3) the amendments. There are seven articles.
- The writers of the Constitution developed a system of government based upon a separation of power that will prevent the concentration and abuse of power by any elected official.
- Checks and balances in the American Constitutional Government identify the limitations placed on a branch of government by giving the other branches some control over its powers.
- The first five Articles of the Constitution develop the responsibility and role of the three branches of government: the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial. Each branch of the government can "check" (restrain) the powers of the other two branches.
- Judicial Review, established with Marbury v. Madison, is a power that allows the Supreme Court to decide whether acts and laws are unconstitutional.
- Federalism is the idea that the central government does not control all the power in the nation. States also have powers reserved to them.
- The ability to amend the Constitution has allowed the government to meet new needs and challenges.
  - There are two ways to propose an amendment:
    - A vote in Congress
    - A national convention that is called by Congress at the request of at least 2/3 of the state legislatures (This method has never been used.)
  - There are two ways to ratify (approve) an amendment to the Constitution.
Reflection
The United States Constitution is the law of the land and was written to provide a system of checks and balances so that one branch of the government does not become too powerful. The Constitution provides the citizens of the United States a structure to operate. Beyond creating a separation of power with the three branches of government, the Constitution also divides power between a central authority, and units at the regional, state, and local level.

Notes:
Unscramble the phrase by dropping the letters into the squares below.
LESSON 3: STRUCTURE AND DESIGN OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

This lesson covers the following information:

- How the federal, state, and local governments function
- The structure of the United States Government

Highlights include the following:

- A balance of power between the national government and state government was created in conjunction with a system of checks and balances.
- The federal government is divided into three branches, with each branch having defined powers.
- State governments were given powers to lead their individual states.
- Members of the Senate serve for six years.
  - Run by the Vice President of the United States, the Senate has the ability to approve or reject a President's nomination to the United States Supreme Court. It is also up to the Senate to reject or accept Presidential treaties.
- Members of the House of Representatives serve for two years, and the Speaker of the House leads the House of Representatives.
  - The House of Representatives start any appropriation bills - bills that involve spending the taxpayer's money.
- The Legislative Branch of the government, a bicameral legislature, consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives and is able to override presidential vetoes with a 2/3 majority vote.
- The number of Representatives each state is allowed to have is based on the population of the state.
- Important government positions may be elected, appointed, or filled for other reasons. Not all of these positions are official and many are functions of the political parties.
  - Speaker of the House - The most powerful member and the presiding officer of the House of Representatives.
  - Senate majority leader - The most powerful position in the Senate, elected by the majority's party caucus.
  - Floor leader - Elected member of the majority or minority party who helps manage the actions and strategy of the party in the House of Representatives.
  - Whips - Elected members of the majority or minority party who encourage fellow party members to vote as the party leadership wants.
  - President pro tempore - The person who presides over the Senate in the absence of the president of the Senate.
  - Chief of staff - The person who manages the White House Office.
- The Constitution of the United States established only one court, the Supreme Court of the United States,
- Judicial review gives federal judges the power to declare the laws passed by Congress unconstitutional (with good reason).
- Each state has a constitution that explains the structure and function of the different parts of its government.
- State government
  - Has a constitution that sets up the structure of the government (includes a bill of rights)
  - Has three branches
  - Maintains law and order
  - Protects property rights
Regulates business
Supervises public education
Provides public welfare programs
Regulates the use of state-owned land
Has authority over all local governments
Oversees elections and voting
Has the power to take actions that do not conflict with the U.S. Constitution, federal laws, or treaties (10th amendment)

- Local Government refers to any government that is smaller than a state government.
  - Is always under the authority of the state government
  - Must work closely with the state and federal government in the areas of finance, education, and welfare

Reflection
To carry out executive orders, laws passed by Congress, and to maintain a general welfare, specific agencies and offices have been established that deal with these matters. Congress and the President can't possibly carry out day-to-day operations and enforce laws and acts personally. Therefore these agencies fulfill those day-to-day matters. Government agencies carry out essential functions that keep things running smoothly.

Notes:
Crossword Puzzle

Use the clues to fill in the spaces.

Across
1. To accuse a public official of wrongdoing while he or she is in office
5. Trade
6. Government by the people
8. Bill involving use of taxpayers' money

Down
2. A decision that serves as an example to be followed in future cases
3. Divided into two houses
4. Something that is not stated but taken for granted to be true
7. To take a case to a higher court for re-hearing
LESSON 4: POLITICAL PARTIES, CAMPAIGNS, ELECTIONS, ELECTORAL PROCESS AND CONTEMPORARY POLICY

This lesson covers the following information:

• The similarities and differences between political parties in the United States
• The impact of interest groups and lobbyists in contemporary public policy

Highlights include the following:

• There are five basic positions in political thinking.
  ▪ Radical- one who advocates sweeping changes in laws and methods of government with little delay.
  ▪ Liberal - one who advocates change, especially social improvement through governmental action.
  ▪ Conservative - one who advocates maintaining the existing social order and believes that change, if any, should be gradual.
  ▪ Reactionary - one who resists change and usually advocates a return to an earlier social order or policy.

• There are two main political parties: the Democrats and the Republicans.
  ▪ In general, the Democratic Party favors a strong federal government at the expense of the taxpayers. They advocate strong government regulation of big business; endorse labor unions; and champion the rights of the disadvantaged and minorities.
  ▪ In general, the Republican Party favors stronger state and local authority at the expense of the federal government. They advocate free enterprise, support checks on labor unions, and believe in maintaining the status quo (keeping things as they are).

• An interest group, or advocacy group, is an association of people who hold similar views or goals and try to influence public policy and the public agenda to achieve them.
  ▪ They organize people who share common concerns, provide members with a means of participating in government and politics, and supply information to the public and to policy makers.

• Many interest groups also have political action committees (PACs) that support candidates for political office who agree with the group's position on the issues.

• Interest groups function in several ways that influence government and policy.
  ▪ They endorse candidates for certain political positions -These endorsements help get candidates votes from the interest groups constituents.
  ▪ They lobby, or try to persuade a candidate to support their views.
  ▪ They spread their position to constituents.

• Public policies are the choices the government makes and the actions it takes in response to an issue or problem.

• A political campaign is an attempt by a candidate to win an elected office, often backed by a political party at the state and federal levels.

• When first discussing how the President of the United States would be selected, the writers of the Constitution found themselves once again in disagreement. Some believed that the president should be selected by popular vote, while others thought that Congress should choose the president. The Electoral College was the compromise.
• Voters do not cast their votes directly for the president and vice president. Instead, the popular votes (votes cast by the general public) are cast for slates of electors who are pledged to the candidates for whom people wish to vote.
• Candidates who receive a plurality (or most) of the popular votes receive all of that state's electoral votes.

Reflection
Elected officials contemplate policy related questions and each political party has an ideology about how the implementation, limits, and uses of policy. Within each of these major concerns, there is often a special interest group or lobbyist who work to influence politicians.

Elections are an important part of the American political system. From school board members, mayors of small towns and big cities to the President of the United States.

Notes:
Word Search

Find all the words in the list. Words can be found in any direction.

MODERATE
INTEREST GROUPS
IDEOLOGY
REPUBLICAN PARTY
GREEN PARTY

LOBBYIST
CONSERVATIVE
DEMOCRATIC PARTY
CAUCUS
LIBERAL

E L O B B Y I S T I N I
E S Y G O L O E D I N N
E U O E T A R E D O M T
O C L R I Y T R A P S E
R U A L A R E B I L E R
N A C I L B U P E R S E
E C A I O P A R T Y L S
B E C R O T P N R N L T
I E C I T A R C O M E D
S A R I R G R E E N Y I
E V I T A V R E S N O C
A V Y G R O U P S T C C