

# AP Government Study Guide

## **Unit One: Constitutional Underpinnings**

### Fundamental Principles of Democracy

- **Direct Democracy** - citizens meet and vote directly on government decisions
- **Representative Democracy (Republic)** - citizens choose officials who make decisions on government policy
- **Magna Carta (1215)** - the first ever attempt to limit the power of the British King, guaranteed all people certain rights
- Enlightenment Philosophers - **Locke** and **Rousseau**
  - **Social Contract Theory** - principle that people enter into a social contract with the government and allow to be ruled
  - **Consent of the Governed** - principle that there are no supreme rulers, all rulers depend on the approval of the people, when governments fail to protect rights the people have the right to change the government
  - **Natural Rights** - principle that all people are born with certain rights: life, liberty, and property (Jefferson changes property into pursuit of happiness)
- **Declaration of Independence** - Thomas Jefferson's document built on principles of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" consent of the governed, and social contract theory. It also justified American revolution against England
- **Common Good** - Belief in doing what's best for the nation overall
- Popular Sovereignty - Belief that the ultimate authority rests with the people
- Majority Rule - Belief that government is run based on the will of the majority

### The First Government - Articles of Confederation

- Weak association of states (states very independent)
- No central executive power
- No federal power to tax citizens directly
- Federal government could raise an army, (but not pay for it), print money, declare war, and run the post office
- 9 out of 13 states were required to vote to pass a law
- With no strong central government supervision, states could get away with taxing and printing money, and making foreign treaties,
- **Shays' Rebellion** - Farmer rebellion in Massachusetts 1786-1787 protesting mortgage foreclosures and terrible economy. Rebellion represented how weak the central government was, and terrified many Americans

### Constitutional Debate

# Ap Government Unit 1 Test Study Guide

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