

Early Government Vocabulary

1. Civics – the study of what it means to be an American citizen and it comes from the Latin word for citizen.
2. *Citizen - a native or naturalized member of a state or nation who owes allegiance to its government and is entitled to its protection, their rights have changed over time and they are different for every nation.
3. *Government - the governing body of a nation, state, or community
4. Representative - a person chosen or appointed to act or speak for another or others, in particular
5. Dictatorship - is a government that is controlled by a small group or a single leader
6. *Democracy - a government in which the citizens are able to rule and they can make laws. Also, in most democracies the leader is a citizen that is voted by the citizens.
7. *Representative democracy - A representative democracy is like the U.S. government, when the leader is elected by the citizens and is a citizen that does the work for the government. Also, the citizens are the final source of authority.
8. Direct democracy - when every adult male citizen participates in the government and they would all meet to debate topics. This type of democracy was used by the ancient Athenians.
9. *Magna Carta - the Great Charter in which the kings' power over the nobles was limited-agreed to by King John I
10. Parliament - the highest legislature, consisting of the sovereign, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons
11. *Legislature – the person that makes laws for a country or state
12. *Precedent - an earlier event or action that is regarded as an example or guide to be considered in a similar circumstance another time.
13. Common law - the part of English law that is derived from custom and judicial precedent rather than statutes.
14. *Glorious Revolution - the revolution against James II; there was little armed resistance to William and Mary in England although battles were fought in Scotland and Ireland
15. Colony - a country or area under the full or partial political control of another country, typically a distant one, and occupied by settlers from that country.
16. Colonist - a settler in or inhabitant of a colony.
17. Compact - closely and neatly packed together;
18. Town meeting – is when residents of the town meet to talk about issues and vote.
19. *House of Burgesses – the first official assembly of lawmakers was held there and it was located in the colony of Virginia in the 1600's.
20. Mayflower compact – was the first governing document of the Plymouth colony. It was signed in November of 1620 near Cape Cod.
21. Stamp Act – An act of the British Parliament in 1756 that exacted revenue from the American colonies by imposing a stamp duty on newspapers and legal and commercial documents. Colonial opposition led to the act's repeal in 1766 and helped encourage the revolutionary movement against the British Crown.

22. 1st Continental Congress - a body of representatives appointed by the legislatures of twelve North American colonies of the Kingdom of Great Britain in 1774 created to petition the British government for a redress of grievances. It was held in Philadelphia in 1774, with 55 members representing all American colonies except Georgia.
23. 2nd Continental Congress – Started in 1775 and ended in 1789 where the Declaration of Independence was approved.
24. Declaration of Independence - a document declaring the U.S. to be independent of the British Crown, signed on July 4, 1776, by the congressional representatives of the Thirteen Colonies, including Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams. It also said that each colony was a separate and independent state.
25. Articles of Confederation - the original constitution of the U.S., ratified in 1781, which was replaced by the U.S. Constitution in 1789.
26. Shay's Rebellion - An uprising led by a former militia officer, Daniel Shays, which broke out in western Massachusetts in 1786. Shay's followers protested the foreclosures of farms for debt and briefly succeeded in shutting down the court system. Although the rebellion was easily overcome, it persuaded conservatives of the need for a strong national government and contributed to the movement to draft the Constitution.
27. League of the Iroquois - group of First Nations/Native Americans that originally consisted of five nations: the Mohawk, the Oneida, the Onondaga, the Cayuga, and the Seneca. A sixth tribe, the Tuscarora, joined after the original five nations were formed. Although frequently referred to as the Iroquois, the Nations refer to themselves collectively as Haudenosaunee.