

# 7 Principles of the Constitution

## Important Question: What are the 7 Principles of the Constitution and how are they used?

### Popular Sovereignty

The principle of **popular sovereignty** is the idea that the **people rule**. This concept is shown in the **Constitution** with the first three words of the document which say “**We the People**”. Many people were worried about **tyranny**, the idea of a **corrupt government** and wanted to make sure that the power of government would always remain with the people.

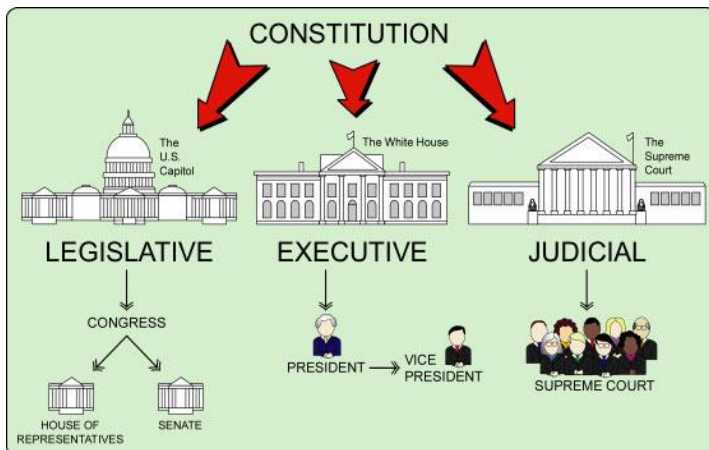


### Republicanism

The principle of **Republicanism** is that the people show their power in government by **voting**. The people vote for **representatives**, people who represent their interests in the government. Over the course of the history of the United States, different groups have gained the right to vote, also known as **suffrage**.

### Limited Government

In the United States, **no person** or group of people is **above the law**; this is the principle of Limited Government. **The law** is the **Constitution** of the United States. Even a President can be arrested for breaking the law if it violates the Constitution. This was done to ensure that no person or group could ever control the government.

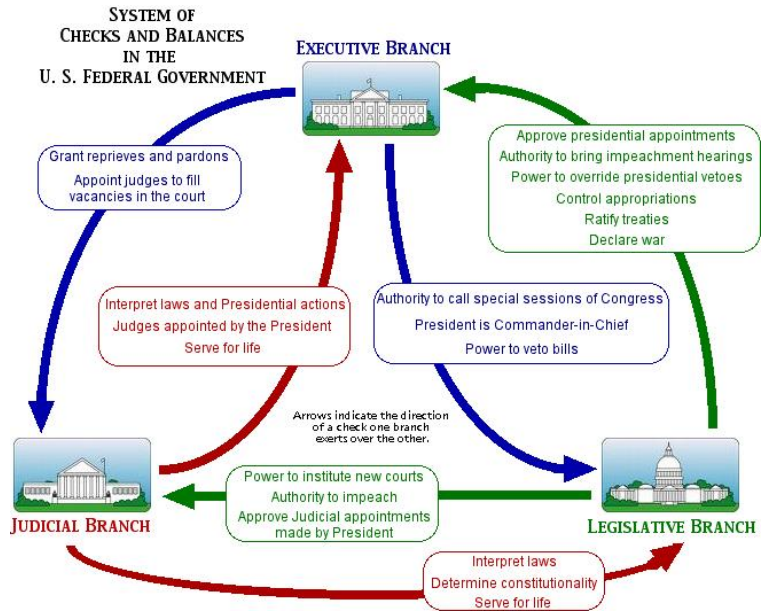


### Separation of Powers

The federal government is **divided into 3 branches** which shows the principle of **separation of powers**. The **legislative branch (Congress)** of government is responsible for **writing the laws**. The **executive branch (President)** is responsible for **enforcing the law**. The **judicial branch (Supreme Court)** is tasked with **interpreting the law**.

## Checks and Balances

Each of the 3 branches of government is able to limit or check the power of the other two. The **executive branch (President)** can **veto** any bill that is created by Congress. The **legislative branch (Congress)** can **impeach (bring charges against)** the President or any member of the Supreme Court. The **Supreme Court** can strike down any law by declaring it **unconstitutional**.



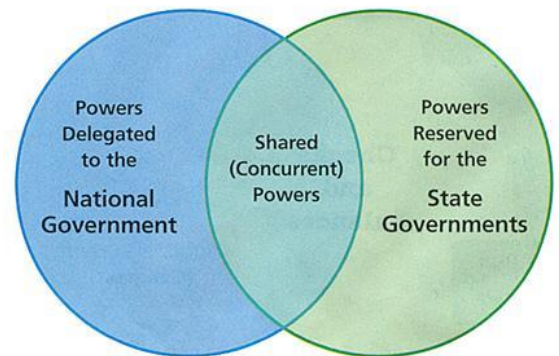
## Individual Rights

When the Constitution was created, many people worried about the government taking away people's **individual rights**, or **freedoms** that are given to the people. The **Bill of Rights** was added to the **Constitution** listing citizens' rights to make sure that they would be protected.

## Federalism

To make sure that the federal government would not have too much power, **federalism**, the idea that **power is shared between federal and state governments** was a key principle to the Constitution. The **10<sup>th</sup> Amendment** says that any **power not given to federal government is given to the states**. The **federal government** has the power to **declare war**. The **state governments** have the power to **create schools**. The federal and state government **share** the ability to **levy taxes**.

### Federalism



The overlapping spheres of power bind the American people together.