

# Civics and Economics

## CE.2a-d Study Guide

### STANDARD CE.2A -- FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Foundations of American constitutional government-

- a) Fundamental principles:
- consent of the governed\
  - limited government
  - rule of law
  - democracy
  - representative government

**Fundamental political principles** define and shape American constitutional government.

*What are the fundamental political principles that have shaped government in the United States?*

- **Consent of the governed:** The **people** are the source of any and all governmental power.
- **Limited government:** Government is **not all-powerful** and may do only those things the people have given it the power to do.
- **Rule of law:** The government and those who govern are **bound by the law**, as are those who are governed.
- **Democracy:** In a democratic system of government, the **people rule**.
- **Representative government:** In a representative system of government, **the people elect public officeholders** to make laws and conduct government on the people's behalf.

### STANDARD CE.2B -- EARLIER DOCUMENTS

Foundations of American constitutional government-

- b) Significance of earlier documents:
- Charters of the Virginia Company of London
  - Virginia Declaration of Rights
  - Declaration of Independence
  - Articles of Confederation
  - Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom
  - the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights.

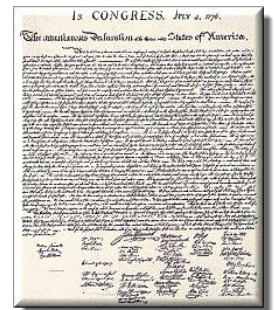
American constitutional government is founded on concepts articulated in **earlier documents**, including those listed above

**Influence of earlier documents** on the Constitution of the United States of America



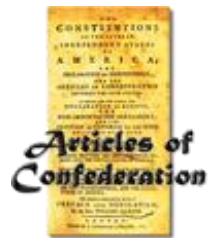
- The **charters of the Virginia Company of London** guaranteed the rights of Englishmen to the colonists.
- The **Virginia Declaration of Rights** served as a **model for the Bill of Rights** of the Constitution of the United States of America.

- The **Declaration of Independence**
  - stated grievances **against the king** of Great Britain
  - declared the colonies' **independence** from Great Britain
  - affirmed "**certain unalienable rights**" (life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness) established the idea that all people are **equal under the law**.



**Declaration of Independence**

- The **Articles of Confederation**
  - established the first form of **national government** for the independent states
  - maintained that major **powers** resided with **individual states**
  - created **weak central government** (e.g., no power to tax or enforce laws); led to the writing of the **Constitution** of the United States of America.
- The **Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom** stated freedom of religious beliefs and opinions.



The **Constitution** of the United States of America, including the **Bill of Rights**,

- established the **structure** of the United States government
- guaranteed **equality** under the law **with majority rule** and the rights of the **minority protected**
- affirmed individual **worth and dignity** of all people
- protected the **fundamental freedoms** of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition.



## STANDARD CE.2C

### -- PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION

Foundations of American constitutional government-

c) Purposes for the Constitution of the United States as stated in its Preamble.



The **Preamble** of a constitution sets forth the **goals and purposes** to be served by the government.

*What are the purposes identified in the Preamble?*

The **Preamble** expresses the **reasons** the constitution was written.

#### Purposes of United States government

- To form a more **perfect union**
- To establish **justice**
- To ensure **domestic tranquility**
- To provide for the **common defense**
- To promote the general **welfare**
- To secure the blessings of **liberty**

The Preamble begins, "**We the People**," thereby establishing that the power of **government comes from the people**.

## STANDARD CE.2D

### -- AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

Foundations of American constitutional government-

d) Procedures for amending the Constitution of Virginia and the Constitution of the United States.

The **constitutions** of Virginia and the United States can be **amended** through processes **outlined in the constitutions**.

The Virginia constitution has been **rewritten several times**.

*How can the Constitution of the United States be amended?*

#### Constitution of the United States

- The amendment process is **complex**.
- To date, there are **27 amendments** to the Constitution of the United States.

#### Amendment process:

- Proposal: **action by Congress or convention**
- **Ratification:** by the states

*How can the Constitution of Virginia be amended?*

#### Constitution of Virginia

- Amendment process:
  - **Proposal:** action by **General Assembly or convention**
  - **Ratification:** by voters of Virginia