

### **1st Amendment**

This opening passage of the Bill of Rights prohibits Congress from establishing a religion and ensures freedom of expression, religion, press, assembly, and petition.

### **2nd Amendment**

The part of the Bill of Rights that guarantees the right to bear arms.

### **3rd Amendment**

The part of the Bill of Rights that prohibits the housing of soldiers in private homes, during times of peace, without the consent of the owner.

### **4th Amendment**

The part of the Bill of Rights that prohibits "unreasonable" searches and seizures.

### **5th Amendment**

The part of the Bill of Rights that provides equal protection under the law and imposes restrictions on the national government with respect to the rights of persons accused of crime. It also prohibits the taking of property without just compensation.

### **6th Amendment**

The part of the Bill of Rights that stipulates the basic requirements of due process in federal criminal trials, including: a speedy and public trial, an impartial jury, trial in the area where the crime was committed, notice of the charges, the right to confront witnesses, and the right to counsel.

### **7th Amendment**

The part of the Bill of Rights that guarantees the right to a jury trial in a federal suit at common law.

### **8th Amendment**

The part of the Bill of Rights that prohibits excessive bail, excessive fines, or cruel and unusual punishment.

### **9th Amendment**

The part of the Bill of Rights that states that the listing of certain rights in the Constitution is not to be taken to mean that all other rights are denied to the people.

### **10th Amendment**

The final part of the Bill of Rights that declares "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people."

### **11th Amendment**

The amendment (1798) that provides that federal courts do not have authority to hear cases brought against a state by an individual citizen of another state or of a foreign state.

### **12th Amendment**

The amendment (1804) that calls for separate ballots to be used by the electoral college when voting for president and vice president. Before that, the president was the candidate who received the most votes, and the vice president the candidate who received the second most. Also, in cases when no candidate receives a majority of electoral college votes, this amendment specifies that the House of Representatives is to choose from the candidates with the three highest vote totals. This had been the five highest before.

### **13th Amendment**

The amendment (1865) that prohibits slavery.

### **14th Amendment**

The post-civil war amendment (1868) that forbids a *state* to deprive any persons of life, liberty or property without due process of law, or deny any person equal protection of the law. It made African Americans citizens with full rights.

### **15th Amendment**

The amendment (1870) that forbids a state to deny a person the right to vote because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

### **16th Amendment**

The amendment (1913) that grants Congress the power to levy taxes on incomes without apportioning them among the states according to population.

### **17th Amendment**

The amendment (1913) that provides for the direct election of US senators by the voters of each state.

### **18th Amendment**

The amendment (1919) that imposed Prohibition, which banned the sale of intoxicating beverages in the US.

### **19th Amendment**

The amendment (1920) that forbids a state to deny a person the right to vote because of their sex.

### **20th Amendment**

The amendment (1933) that changed when a newly elected Congress would convene.

**21st Amendment**

The amendment (1933) allowing the sale of intoxicating beverages in the US. It repealed the 18th Amendment.

**22nd Amendment**

The amendment (1951) limiting the president to two terms in office.

**23rd Amendment**

The amendment (1961) that enables the people of the District of Columbia to participate in the election of the president.

**24th Amendment**

The amendment (1964) that forbids the levying of a poll tax in primary and general elections for national officials.

**25th Amendment**

The amendment (1967) that establishes guidelines for filling the offices of president and vice president if they become vacant and makes provisions for situations when the president is disabled. This amendment was created on the heels of events including the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the serious illnesses of Dwight D. Eisenhower, and the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

**26th Amendment**

The amendment (1971) that lowers the legal voting age to 18 for all national, state, and local elections.

**27th Amendment**

The amendment (1992) that prohibits members of Congress from granting themselves mid-term pay raises.

**AARP**

American Association of Retired Persons, a non-profit interest group concerned with the welfare of retired Americans. In 1998 the AARP had more than 30 million members (about 45 percent of Americans aged 50 or over).

**ACLU**

American Civil Liberties Union, a non-profit interest group with 275,000 members (in 1998) dedicated to preserving the liberties guaranteed in the Bill of Rights.

**acquisitive model**

A model of bureaucracy in which top-level bureaucrats seek to expand their budgets and staff to gain greater power and influence in the public sector.

**actual malice**

Intent to have another suffer by one's actions. In libel cases, actual malice generally

consists of intentionally publishing a statement that's injurious to the character of another, knowing that the statement is false or acting with reckless disregard of the truth.

**administrative agency**

An agency that is part of the executive branch, an independent agency, or an independent regulatory agency (for example, the Federal Trade Commission, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Federal Communications Commission). State and local governments also have administrative agencies.

**advice and consent**

Power the Constitution (Article II, Section 2) grants the U.S. Senate to give its advice and consent to treaties and presidential appointment of federal judges, ambassadors, and cabinet members.

**affirm**

In an appellate court, to reach a decision that agrees with the decision reached in a lower court.

**affirmative action**

A policy in hiring that gives consideration or compensatory treatment to traditionally disadvantaged groups in an effort to overcome the present effects of past discrimination.

**age discrimination**

Action taken based solely or primarily on a person's age, without regard to actual qualifications or abilities. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act protects persons age 40 and over from employment discrimination based on age.

**agency imperialism**

A common problem with governmental bureaucracies (and other bureaucracies as well), in which the agencies grow with no limit and without an eye to the benefits they're intended to provide.

See Also:

bureaucratic pathologies

**agenda setting**

Determining the public policy questions to be debated or considered by Congress.

**agents of socialization**

Institutions through which people learn the core values of their society and political culture. They include family, educational institutions, peers, media, gender, and religion.

**aggregate opinion**

Opinion shared by group of people.

**Aid To Families With Dependent Children (AFDC)**

A state-administered program providing financial assistance to families in which dependent children do not have the financial support of the father, owing to the father's desertion, disability, or death. The program is financed in part by federal grants.

**Albright, Madeleine**

Secretary of State under President Clinton. The first woman to be appointed to this Cabinet-level position.

**Alien and Sedition Acts (1798)**

These acts authorized the president to deport "undesirable aliens" and made it a crime to criticize the government or its officials.

**amendment process**

The means spelled out in Article V by which formal changes in, or additions to, the Constitution are made.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)**

An act providing protection against discrimination in employment, public service, transportation, and telecommunications for disabled people.

**amicus curiae brief**

A brief is a document filed with a court containing a legal argument supporting a desired outcome in a particular case. An amicus curiae brief is filed by a party not directly involved in the litigation but with an interest in the outcome of the case. Amicus curiae is Latin for "friend of the court."

**anti-federalist**

A person opposed to the adoption of the Constitution because of its centralist tendencies and who attacked the Constitution's framers for failing to include a Bill of Rights.

**appellate court**

A court that hears appeals on points of law decided by trial courts.

**appellate jurisdiction**

Authority of a court to review legal decisions by a lower court.

**appointment power**

The president's authority to fill a government office or position. Positions filled by presidential appointment include those in the executive branch, the federal judiciary, commissioned officers in the armed forces, and members of independent regulatory commissions.

**apportionment**

Granting political representation to a group of people. The apportionment of members of the House of Representatives between states is done through a complicated statistical

method. The apportionment of representatives to districts within a state is done by the majority party of the state legislature and sometimes leads to gerrymandering.

**appropriation**

Congressional passage of a spending bill, specifying the amount of funds previously authorized that will actually be allocated for an agency's use.

**Appropriations Committee**

A standing committee in the House of Representative that recommends how much money to provide to federal agencies.

**Articles of Confederation**

The compact made among the 13 original states to form the basis of their government. Officially adopted in 1781.

**attack ad**

Political advertising that denounces a candidate's opponent by name.

**attentive public**

The part of the general public that pays attention to policy issues.

**Australian ballot**

A secret ballot prepared, distributed, and tabulated by government officials at public expense. First used in 1888, all states now use the Australian ballot rather than an open, public ballot.

**authority**

The power to enforce laws, command, or judge, usually because of ascribed legitimacy. For most societies, government is the ultimate authority.

**authorization**

A legislative action establishing or continuing a certain amount of funding for an agency. Some authorizations terminate in a year; others are automatically renewed without further action.

**bad-tendency rule**

A rule stating that speech or other 1st Amendment rights may be limited if there is a possibility that the speech or other exercise of a right might lead to some "evil."

**Barron v. Baltimore**

A court case (1833) holding that the Bill of Rights limits only the federal government not state governments.

**"beauty contest"**

A presidential primary in which candidates compete for popular votes, but the results have little or no effect on the selection of delegates to the national convention, which is

made by the party elite.

**"beyond the beltway"**

The part of the U.S. outside of Washington DC. The "beltway" is a highway circling Washington DC.

**bicameral legislature**

A legislature made up of two parts. The U.S. Congress, composed of the House of Representatives and the Senate, is a bicameral legislature.

**bill**

The draft of a proposed law presented to a legislative body for approval; the law enacted from such a draft.

**Bill of Rights**

The first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution. They contain a listing of the freedoms that a person enjoys and that cannot be infringed on by the government, such as the freedoms of speech, press, and religion.

**block grant**

Federal funding to state and local governments for general functional areas, such as criminal justice or mental-health programs, rather than for specific programs.

**Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (1993)**

An act requiring a five-day waiting period before a person can buy a handgun. Named after James Brady, who was injured during John Hinckley's assassination attempt on Ronald Reagan, the "Brady Act" required law enforcement agencies to run background checks on people applying for handguns.

**Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas**

The U.S. Supreme Court decision establishing that segregation of the races in public schools violates the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment of the Constitution.

**bundling**

The practice of adding together maximum individual campaign contributions to increase their effect.

**bureaucracy**

An administrative system that executes policies and carries out specific functions by using standardized procedures in a hierarchical structure.

**bureaucracy problem**

A collection of incentives and constraints facing those working to make government more efficient. They include accountability, equity, responsiveness, efficiency, and fiscal integrity.

**bureaucratic pathologies**

Problems shared by all or most federal bureaus or agencies. They include bureaucratic red tape, mission conflict, mission duplication, agency imperialism, and bureaucratic waste.

**bureaucratic red tape**

Probably the most common complaint about bureaucracies, red tape refers collectively to the complex rules and procedures that cause delays and sometimes make it difficult to get something done.

**bureaucratic reform**

The effort to make bureaucracies operate more efficiently.

**bureaucratic waste**

Unnecessary bureaucratic spending of money without providing real benefits.

**busing**

Transportation of public school students from areas where they live to schools in other areas, with the goal of eliminating de facto school segregation based on residential patterns.

**Cabinet**

The president's core advisory group. The Cabinet presently numbers 14 department secretaries (State, Treasury, Defense, Justice, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Education, Energy, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs) and the attorney general. Depending on the president, the Cabinet may be highly influential or relatively insignificant in its advisory role.

**calendar**

An agenda, or list, that contains the names of bills or resolutions to be considered before committees or in either chamber of a legislature.

**capital punishment**

See Also:

death penalty (capital punishment)

**capitalism**

An economic system based on individual and corporate ownership of the means of production and a supply-demand market economy.

**capture**

The act of gaining direct or indirect control over a regulatory agency's personnel and decision-makers by the industry that is being regulated.

**casework**

Personal work done for constituents by members of Congress.

**categorical grant-in-aid**

Federal funding for states or local governments that is for very specific programs or projects.

**caucus**

A closed meeting of party leaders or members to select party candidates or to decide on policy.

**census**

The counting, every ten years, of the population of the United States, conducted by the Bureau of the Census.

**Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)**

An agency that functions under the National Security Council to coordinate intelligence activities in the interests of national security.

**checks and balances**

A major principle of the U.S. governmental system whereby each branch of government exercises a limiting power on the actions of the others and in which powers are distributed among the three branches in a manner designed to prevent tyranny.

**chief diplomat**

The president's role in recognizing foreign governments, making treaties, and making executive agreements.

**chief executive**

The president's role as head of the executive branch of the government.

**chief legislator**

The president's role in influencing the making of laws.

**chief of public opinion**

Presidential role as chief communicator for the nation and nation's symbolic leader.

**Chief of Staff**

The assistant to the president who directs the White House Office and advises the president.

**chief of state**

The president's role as ceremonial head of the government.

**civil disobedience**

Refusal to obey a law, usually on the ground that the law is morally reprehensible. Civil

disobedience is often used as a protest tactic to call attention to questionable laws.

**civil law**

The law regulating conduct and allowing for the settlement of disputes between private persons over non-criminal matters such as contracts, domestic relations, and business relations.

**civil liberties**

Those personal freedoms possessed by all individuals and protected from arbitrary interference by government. They include the protection of persons, opinions, and property.

**civil rights**

Those powers or privileges guaranteed to individuals or protected groups by government, which are protected from arbitrary removal by government or by private individuals. In the U.S., they include the right to vote, equal treatment before the law, and equal access to and benefits from public facilities.

**Civil Rights Act of 1964**

An act that forbids discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, and sex.

**Civil Rights Act of 1991**

An act that reaffirmed and expanded protection against discrimination in employment. civil rights movement. A citizen's action movement during the 1950s and 1960s led mainly by African American religious leaders in support of equal rights and the end of racial discrimination and segregation.

**civil service**

A collective term for the employees working for the government. Generally, civil service is understood to apply to all those who gain government employment through a merit system.

**Civil Service Commission**

The central personnel agency of the national government, created in 1883. The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 abolished the Civil Service Commission. The Office of Personnel Management assumed most of its functions at that time, except for its quasi-judicial functions, which the Merit System Protection Board assumed.

**Civil Service Reform Act (1978)**

An act that reformed the federal bureaucracy. It established the Office of Personnel Management and the Merit Systems Protection Board.

**Civil War**

The war between the southern and northern states, the Union and the Confederacy, from 1861 to 1865.

**class-action suit**

A lawsuit filed by an individual seeking damages for himself or herself and for "all persons similarly situated."

**Clayton Anti-Trust Act**

A major antitrust act aimed at increasing competition in business.

**Clean Air Act**

Environmental legislation that set standards limiting the amount of pollutants generated by automotive and industrial emissions.

**clear and present danger test**

The test proposed by Justice Holmes for determining under what circumstances government may restrict free speech. Under this test, restrictions are permissible when speech provokes a "clear and present danger" to the public order.

**closed primary**

The selection of party candidates in an election limited to party members.

**cloture**

A parliamentary technique to end debate and to bring the matter under consideration to a vote in the Senate.

**coattail effect**

The influence of a popular or unpopular candidate or elected official on the electoral success or failure of candidates on the same party ticket.

**coerced confessions**

A confession brought about by force, threats, or promise of leniency.

**Cold War**

The ideological, political, and economic impasse between the United States and the Soviet Union following World War II.

**collective good**

Something enjoyed by all members of a society or community, such as clean air.

**collective security**

A worldwide security system by which all or most nations agree in advance to take collective action against any state or states that break the peace.

**commander in chief**

The president's role as supreme commander of the military forces of the United States and of the state National Guard units when they are called into federal service. This power is granted by Article II, section 2 of the Constitution.

**commerce clause**

The section of the Constitution giving Congress the power to regulate trade among the states, with foreign countries, and with the Native American tribes.

**commercial speech**

Statements made in advertising. These have increasingly been given 1st Amendment protection.

**committee chair**

The congressional member who heads a particular committee.

**common law**

A system of law originating in England in which judges made decisions according to prevailing customs. Decisions were applied to similar situations and thus gradually became common to the nation. Common law forms the basis of legal procedures in the United States.

**Communications Decency Act (1996)**

An act that makes the spread of "indecent" materials on the Internet to anyone under the age of 18 a crime.

**communism**

A political, economic, and social theory based on the collective ownership of land and capital and in which political power lies in the hands of workers.

**Communist**

One who believes in and supports a communist system of government.

**Community of Memory**

Refers to a community's history and the steps taken to remember and learn from its past. Such communities seek to honor the men and women exemplifying the meaning of the community through the retelling of its story.

**comparable worth**

The concept that compensation for work performed should be based on the worth of the job to an employer, and that unrelated factors, such as the sex of the employee, should not affect compensation.

**concurrent powers**

Authority held jointly by the national and state governments.

**concurring opinion**

A separate statement, prepared by a judge who supports the decision of the majority of the court, but who wants to make or clarify a particular point or to voice disapproval of the grounds on which the decision was made.

**confederal system of government**

A system of government consisting of a league of independent states, each having sovereign powers. The central government created by such a league has only limited and delegated powers over the states.

**confederation**

A political system in which states or regional governments have ultimate authority except for those powers expressly delegated to a central government. Member governments voluntarily agree to limited restraints on their actions.

**conference committee**

A special joint committee composed of members of the House and of the Senate and appointed to reconcile differences when bills pass the two chambers of Congress in different forms.

**congressional campaign committee**

Committee of members of the House and Senate that organize and help finance election campaigns.

**congressional oversight functions**

Congressional responsibility to determine if the laws they've passed are being enacted and enforced in the way Congress intended them to be.

**congressional reapportionment**

The reallocation of legislative seats, based on population.

**consensus**

General agreement on an issue.

**consent of the governed**

The idea that governments and laws derive their legitimacy from the approval and acceptance (consent) of the people (the governed).

**conservatism**

A term for a set of beliefs that includes a limited role for the national government in helping individuals, support for traditional values and lifestyles, and a cautious response to change.

**conservative**

One who believes in and supports the values of conservatism, typically traditional values, and who resists change in the status quo.

**constituent**

A member of a group or a person living in an area represented by an elected official.

**constitutional law**

Law that involves the interpretation and application of the Constitution.

**Consumer Product Safety Act (1972)**

This act created the Consumer Product Safety Commission, which is responsible for protecting consumers from injury caused by products sold to them.

**containment**

A diplomatic policy adopted by the Truman administration to "build situations of strength" around the globe to contain Communist power within its existing boundaries.

**continuing resolution**

A temporary law that Congress passes when an appropriations bill has not been decided by the beginning of the new fiscal year (October 1).

**contracting out**

Replacing services provided by the government with services provided by private firms, through contractual agreements with the government.

**contributory welfare**

Welfare programs that provide benefits to individuals who have also contributed to the programs. Examples include social security and Medicare.

**cooperative federalism**

The theory that the states and the national government cooperate in solving problems.

**cost-plus contracting**

An agreement with the Department of Defense in which the DOD guarantees to the private company repayment of all costs involved in producing the hardware or service, plus an agreed upon amount or percentage of costs as profit.

**Council of Economic Advisers (CEA)**

A staff agency, established in 1946, that advises the president on measures to maintain stability in the nation's economy.

**credentials committee**

A committee used by political parties at their national conventions. The committee inspects the claim of each prospective delegate to determine whether he or she is a legitimate representative of his or her state and can participate in the convention.

**criminal law**

The collection of laws defining crimes and establishing punishment for violations. The government prosecutes criminal cases because crimes are against the public order.

**critical election**

An election that establishes the dominance of a particular political party that lasts for a

period of time.

**crossover voting**

The ability to cast a vote in a primary for a candidate from any party. Voters can do this in open primary states.

**cruel and unusual punishment**

Any torture, wanton infliction of pain, mutilation, or degrading treatment, or any sentence too severe for the offense committed. This is prohibited by the 8th Amendment to the Constitution.

**data**

Factual information about political behavior and political decision making, organized to provide a basis for testing hypotheses.

**de facto segregation**

Segregation that occurs not because of a deliberate governmental intent to separate groups, but because of past social and economic conditions and residential patterns. De facto means "by fact." De facto segregation most often refers to racial segregation, but can equally apply to other forms, for example segregation by ethnicity.

**de jure segregation**

Racial or other forms of segregation that occurs because of laws or administrative decisions by public agencies. De jure means "by law."

**death penalty (capital punishment)**

A sentence of punishment by execution, generally now limited to the crime of murder.

**defamation of character**

Wrongfully harming a person's good reputation. The law imposes a general duty to refrain from making false defamatory statements about others.

**defendant**

The party against which a criminal legal action is being brought.

**Defense Department (DOD)**

The federal department responsible for formulating military policies and maintaining the armed US armed forces.

**delegate**

A person authorized to act as a representative for another.

**delegate to ratifying convention**

Representatives from each of the 13 original states who attended their state conventions to ratify the Constitution. These delegates were chosen by special elections. Nine of the 13 states had to vote to ratify for the Constitution to become the law of the land.

**democracy**

A system of government placing the ultimate political authority in the people. Derived from the Greek words demos (the people) and kratos (authority).

**Democratic party (Democrats)**

A major American political party that evolved from the Democratic-Republican group supporting Thomas Jefferson.

**Democratic-Republican**

The political party founded by Thomas Jefferson in 1792. It was dissolved in 1828.

**demographics**

The characteristics of human populations and population segments.

**deregulation**

The elimination of government controls, especially over private companies.

**deserving and undeserving poor**

Categorization of poor by many Americans into poor who deserve welfare help because they can't help themselves and those who don't deserve welfare help because it's assumed they can help themselves but choose not to.

**diplomacy**

Political relations among and between nations; settling conflicts among nations by peaceful means.

**direct democracy**

A system of government in which the people, rather than elected representatives, directly make political decisions. This system is probably possible only in small political communities.

**direct primary**

An election within a single party in which voters select the candidates who will run on the party's ticket in the subsequent general election.

**direct regulation**

Government regulation targeted at a specific firm or industry, as opposed to a regulation that's not targeted at a specific firm or industry but affects them anyway, as is the case with some environmental regulations.

**direct technique**

Direct interaction with government officials that is used by interest groups to further their goals.

**discharge petition**

A procedure used by the House of Representatives to force one of its committees to discharge (release) a bill that the committee has refused to report for consideration by the House. The discharge petition must be signed by an absolute majority (218) of representatives and is used only on rare occasions.

**dissenting opinion**

A separate opinion in which a judge explains his or her own views about a case, in dissent from (disagreeing with) the majority opinion or conclusion reached by the majority of the court.

**distributive benefits**

Programs, such as military contracts, that legislators try to secure for their constituents, who gain much by receiving them.

**distributive policy**

A policy that distributes political benefits to organized interest groups.

**divided government**

In American government, a system in which presidential administrations of one party are opposed by Congressional majorities of the opposing party. The term is used to describe the persistence of such election results over time, with either party controlling the presidency.

**division of labor**

Method of splitting the responsibilities associated with a job amongst different workers. Division of labor is used in bureaucracies.

**division of power (horizontal and vertical)**

Granting some powers to one government and some to another. A horizontal division of power separates power between executive, legislative, and judicial branches. A vertical division of power separates power between national and state governments (federalism).

**domestic policy**

Those public plans or courses of action that concern issues of national importance, such as poverty, crime, and the environment, in contrast to foreign policies.

**double security**

A reference made by Madison, in Federalist No. 51, to the security measures built into our systems of federalism and checks and balances that would divide power between state and national governments, and then further subdivide it into separate departments. Madison contended these systems would safeguard the rights of the people by allowing

the different governments to control each other, while at the same time allowing each to control itself.

***Dred Scott v. Sandford***

A case (1857) that held that African Americans could not be considered persons under the

Constitution nor were they entitled to the rights and privileges of citizenship.

**dual federalism**

A system of government in which the states and the national government have coequal sovereign powers. Under dual federalism acts of states within their reserved powers could be legitimate limitations on the powers of the national government.

**due process rights**

Protection against arbitrary deprivation of life, liberty, or property.

**détente**

The term used to describe U.S.-Soviet policy under President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Under détente the US had direct cooperative dealings with Cold War rivals without relaxing its ideological stand. The term is derived from the French word for the relaxation of tension.

**economic aid**

A form of assistance to other nations; generally economic aid consists of grants, loans, or credits to buy the assisting nation's products.

**economic chief**

The presidential role involving management of the national economy. In this role, the president is responsible for smoothing out the rough edges of the capitalist business cycle by taking action to curb inflation, lower unemployment, and adjust the international trade balance.

**economic interest group**

Interest groups that work to gain economic benefits for their members. Examples include the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO).

**elastic clause**

The final paragraph (clause 18) of Article I, section 8 of the Constitution, which grants Congress the power to choose whatever means are necessary to execute its specifically delegated powers. Officially known as the "necessary and proper" clause.

**elector**

A person on the partisan slate, selected according to state laws and the applicable political party apparatus, who casts ballots for president and vice president. The number of electors in each state is equal to that state's number of representatives in both houses of Congress. The 23rd Amendment to the Constitution permits Washington, D.C., to have as many electors as a state of comparable population. Electors are selected early in the presidential election year.

electoral college

The group of electors selected by the voters in each state and Washington, D.C. This group officially elects the president and vice president of the United States.

electronic media

Radio and television broadcasting media. The term derives from their method of transmission, in contrast to print media.

eligible voter

A voter who meets the legal requirements for the right to vote.

elite groups

Groups of people who exercise a major influence on or control the making of political, economic, and social decisions. They gain their power positions through wealth, family status, caste systems, or intellectual superiority.

elite theory

A political view that society is ruled by a small number of people who exercise power in their self-interest.

Emancipation Proclamation

The announcement issued by President Lincoln freeing the slaves.

emergency power

An inherent presidential power exercised during a period of national crisis, particularly in foreign affairs.

Engle v. Vitale

A Supreme Court case (1962) in which the Court struck down the use of nondenominational prayer in the schools.

entitlement

A benefit provided by the government to which recipients have a legally enforceable right.

entrepreneurial government

New model of government advocated as a replacement for our current bureaucratic

government system. Promotes competition among service providers, empowerment of citizens, focusing on outcomes, reaching goals and missions, redefining clients as customers, preventing problems before they surface, earning money, decentralizing authority, use of market mechanisms, and serving as a catalyst to promote action in the public, private, and voluntary sectors of communities.

enumerated powers

Powers specifically granted to the national government by the Constitution. The first seventeen clauses of Article 1, Section 8, specify most of Congress' enumerated powers.

environmental impact statement (EIS)

A report, mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act, that must show the costs and benefits of major federal actions that could significantly affect the quality of the environment.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

An independent agency, established in 1970, to administer federal programs aimed at controlling pollution and protecting the environment.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

A federal commission established by the 1964 Civil Rights Act that 1) sets regulations, investigates, mediates, and brings suit against private employers, unions, or community organizations to end employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, and age, and 2) promotes voluntary action to foster equal job opportunities.

Equal Pay Act (1963)

This act requires equal pay for men and women doing similar work.

equal protection clause

A provision of the 14th Amendment, which says that states may not arbitrarily discriminate against persons.

Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

The amendment proposed in 1972 to establish the equal rights of men and women. The amendment failed to be ratified by the required 38 states.

establishment clause

The part of the 1st Amendment that states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." It has been interpreted to mean that government cannot take official action to support any religion. The clause has been used to restrict government efforts to aid religious organizations and schools, require prayers in public schools, or require teaching fundamentalist theories of creation in public school.

exclusionary rule

A restriction imposed at trial that disallows admission by the government (prosecutor) of evidence it seized illegally.

executive agreement

A binding international agreement between chiefs of state. Unlike treaties, these do require the consent of the Senate.

executive budget

The budget prepared and submitted by the president to Congress.

Executive Office of the President (EOP)

Established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt by executive order under the Reorganization Act of 1939, the EOP now consists of nine staff agencies that assist the president in carrying out major duties.

executive order

A rule or regulation issued by the president that has the effect of law. Executive orders can implement and give effect to provisions in the Constitution, to treaties, and to statutes.

Executive Order 12291

Order made by President Ronald Reagan requiring the review, by the Office of Management and Budget, of all proposals for new executive branch regulations.

executive privilege

The right of officials in the executive branch to refuse to appear before, or to withhold information from, a legislative committee or judicial proceeding. Executive privilege is enjoyed by the president and by those executive officials accorded that right by the president.

expanding electorate

A factor contributing to low-voter turnout. Since voter turnout rates are based on statistics counting all potential or eligible voters, rather than registered voters, an expanding electorate negatively impacts the overall voter turnout rate.

expansion of the franchise

Granting of voting rights to more and more members of society.

expressed powers

Presidential powers expressly written into the Constitution or congressional statute.

faction

A group in a legislature or party acting in pursuit of some special interest or position.

fairness doctrine

An FCC regulation affecting broadcasting media. The doctrine requires that broadcast media give to legitimate opposing political groups or individuals fair or equal opportunity to broadcast their views.

fall review

The time every year when the Office of Management and Budget reviews formal federal agency requests for funding for the next fiscal year, makes changes, and submits its recommendations to the president.

Fascism

A political system of the extreme right, which incorporates the principles of a dictatorial leader, one-party state, totalitarian regimentation of economic and social activity, and arbitrary exercise of absolute power by the regime.

Fascist

One who practices or supports fascism.

federal budget

The estimate of the income and expenditures need by the federal government to carry out its program in some future period, usually a fiscal year.

federal circuit court of appeal

A special court established by Congress in 1982 to be on the same footing as the existing twelve Courts of Appeals but with nationwide jurisdiction based on subject matter rather than geographic area. It covers, in particular, business, trade, and civil service.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

An independent regulatory commission that controls interstate and foreign electronic communications.

federal court system

The federal government's court system that's divided into three levels. The bottom level is made up of 94 federal district courts. At the next level are 13 federal circuit courts of appeal. The top level is the Supreme Court.

Federal Election Campaign Act

An act passed in 1972 that controls the raising and spending of funds for political campaigns. A second act passed in 1974 imposed additional reforms, including creation of the Federal Election Commission; providing public financing for presidential primaries and general elections; limiting presidential campaign spending; limiting contributions by citizens and groups; and requiring disclosure of contributions.

federal mandate

Federal rules requiring compliance by states and municipalities in order to obtain federal grant money, or rules requiring states to pay the costs of specific nationally-defined programs.

Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC)

The FOMC decides how monetary policy should be carried out by the Federal Reserve and is the most important body within the Federal Reserve System.

Federal Register

A publication of the executive orders, rules, and regulations of the executive branch of the U.S. government, as well as bureaucratic rules.

Federal Regulation of Lobbying Act (1946)

An act that sought to regulate the lobbying activities of pressure groups.

Federal Reserve Bank (the Fed)

America's central banking system that establishes monetary policies, regulates the amount of currency in circulation, and determines the price of money (through interest rates). Its 7-member board of governors works with 12 regional banks and thousands of member banks to implement its policies.

federal system of government

A system of government that divides power between a central government and divisional or regional governments. Each level must have some domain in which its policies are dominant and some genuine political or constitutional guarantee of its authority.

federalism

A system of government in which power is divided between a central government and regional or subdivisional governments.

federalist

A person who supported the adoption of the new Constitution and the creation of the federal union. As a group, federalists formed the first American political party, which was led by Alexander Hamilton and John Adams.

Federalist No. 10

A Federalist Paper written by James Madison that discusses factions (or single interest groups) that seek to dominate the political process.

Federalist No. 51

A Federalist Paper written by James Madison that discusses the structural features of American government, including separation of powers and federalism.

#### Federalist Papers

A group of 85 essays published in several New York newspapers in 1787 to persuade people in New York to adopt the Constitution, which had recently been drafted in Philadelphia. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay wrote the Federalist Papers under the name Publius.

#### feeding frenzy

A process through which members of the media attack politicians or candidates whose performance or character has been called into question. Through such activity, journalists have become news makers as much as news reporters, propelling some politicians to power, while helping to eliminate others. The term refers to the behavior of hungry animals that encounter a food source.

#### fighting words

Words uttered by a public speaker that could provoke the average listener to immediate acts of violence. The words are usually derogatory or offensive to someone's race, religion, or ethnicity. These utterances are not protected by the 1st Amendment.

#### filibuster

Unlimited speech-making in the Senate, designed to stall the legislative process and halt action on a particular bill.

#### finance committee

A standing committee in the Senate, in charge in taxes.

#### fireside chat

One of the informal talks by Franklin D. Roosevelt via the radio.

#### first budget resolution

A resolution passed by Congress in May that sets overall revenue and spending goals and, therefore, the size of the deficit for the following fiscal year.

#### fiscal policy

Government's use of its powers to tax and spend in order to influence the nation's economy.

#### fiscal year (FY)

A twelve-month period the government uses for bookkeeping or accounting purposes. The fiscal year is usually not the same as the calendar year. Traditionally, the fiscal year of the U.S. government ran from July 1 to June 30. In 1974 Congress changed the fiscal year to run from October 1 to September 30.

fluidity

The changing of public opinion as time passes.

focus group

A small group of people in a moderator-led discussion that gathers feelings, opinions, and responses to specific candidates and political or economic issues.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

A national agency charged with safeguarding consumers from impure food and medications.

food stamps

A federal government welfare program that issues coupons to low-income individuals. The recipients can use the coupons to purchase food.

foreign policy

A nation's goals in its interactions with other nations, and the techniques and strategies used to achieve them. These goals are decided and acted on in the "foreign policy process."

Foreign Relations Committee

A standing committee in the Senate charged with monitoring foreign relations.

formal presidential roles

Chief diplomat, chief executive, chief legislator, chief of party, chief of state, commander in chief.

fourth branch of government

A term referring to the federal bureaucracy.

framers

The authors of the Constitution.

franking

A policy that allows Congressional members to substitute their facsimile signature (frank) for postage when sending materials through the mail.

free exercise clause

The 1st Amendment provision guaranteeing freedom of worship and religious practice.

free-rider problem

The problem that interest groups face when people can benefit from their activities

without actually joining or participating in the interest group.

freedom of religion

The freedom to worship and practice the religion of one's choice. Guaranteed by the 1st and 14th Amendments.

freedom of speech

The right to speak without prior restraint, subject to penalties for abuse of the right through such actions as obscenity, slander, incitement to crime, contempt of court, and sedition. Guaranteed by the 1st and 14th Amendments.

freedom of the press

The right to publish and disseminate information without prior restraint, subject to penalties for abuse of the right through such actions as obscenity, libel, incitement to crime, contempt of court, and sedition. Guaranteed by the 1st and 14th Amendments.

freedom ride

Civil rights demonstrations in the early 1960s in which interracial activists rode buses together through parts of the southern states to protest racial segregation and discrimination.

Freedom to Farm Act (1996)

Act that phased out price supports for American farmers and left agricultural prices to be determined by market forces.

front runner

The presidential candidate considered to have the lead at any given time in an election.

front-loading

The practice of scheduling presidential primary elections during early parts of election campaign to increase the amount of influence that certain states or regions exert on the nomination.

full faith and credit clause

A section of the Constitution (Article IV, Section 1) requiring states to recognize the laws and court decisions of other states. Due to this clause, deeds, wills, contracts, and other civil matters in one state must be honored by all states.

Furman v. Georgia (1972)

A case that resulted in the death penalty being declared cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the 8th Amendment.

gag order

A judge-issued order that restricts publication of news about either a trial in progress or a pretrial hearing. The intent is to preserve the right to a fair trial for the accused.

garbage can model

Bureaucratic model that views bureaucracies as directionless, with little formal organization. According to this model, bureaucracies make decisions without the benefit of forethought and rational policy planning, relying instead on trial and error.

gatekeeper function

The power of national media to control the public agenda by deciding what the public will learn about. It gains this power by choosing which topics to report on.

gender discrimination

Discrimination in employment, education, or delivery of social services that denies a person or group of people their right to equal treatment on the basis of their gender. Usually directed toward women.

gender gap

A phrase frequently used to describe the different voting patterns of men and women. It was widely used to explain the different percentage of votes received by candidates in the 1980 presidential election.

general election

A statewide election usually held shortly after a primary election to fill state and national offices.

General Service (GS) system

Basic pay system for the federal government's white collar employees.

generational effect

The effect that events have on the political opinions, thoughts, and preferences of people from a single generation.

gerrymandering

The practice of drawing legislative district boundaries with an eye toward creating a political advantage for a particular party or faction. The shape of a gerrymandered district has been manipulated by the state legislature's dominant party to increase their electoral strength.

Gibbons v. Ogden (1824)

This case determined that Congressional control over interstate commerce includes

navigation. The result was to broaden the definition of interstate commerce to include all commercial exchanges.

#### Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)

This ruling determined that state courts are required by the due process clause of the 14th Amendment to provide counsel to indigent defendants in criminal cases.

#### Gitlow v. New York (1925)

This case established that the freedoms of speech and press are protected against state impairment by the due process clause of the 14th Amendment.

#### glass ceiling

The invisible barriers in businesses and government departments that prevent women and minorities from being promoted into top management positions.

#### good faith exception

A 1984 Supreme Court decision stating that if a police officer thought he or she was operating under a legal warrant, the evidence obtained could be kept even if it later turned out that the warrant wasn't completely legal.

#### government

The institution, composed of decision makers, that develops, enforces, and interprets the laws of a nation. There are several types of governments, including ones in which decisions are made by the majority (democracy), a small elite (oligarchy), or an individual (dictatorship). Governments usually operate under the terms of a constitution.

#### government agenda

A list of issues the government chooses to address, as distinct from the public agenda, the list of items the public would like the government to address.

#### government corporation

A government agency that runs a business enterprise. Its activities are mainly commercial and produce revenue for continued existence. Government corporations have more freedom of action than do regular departments of government. Examples include the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and the U.S. Postal Service.

#### Government in the Sunshine Act

Law passed in 1977 requiring all multi-headed federal agencies to perform their duties in open sessions. Closed meetings are permitted for only specific subjects, such as national defense, but participants must keep minutes of those meetings. The act was a reaction to

governmental secrecy and expanded the public's "right to know."

grand jury

A jury of twelve to twenty-three people called to weigh evidence and determine if there is

enough evidence to warrant a trial against someone suspected of committing a serious crime. Grand juries meet in private. If a majority (not a unanimous vote) believe there's enough evidence, the grand jury presents a "true bill" and the suspect is indicted and held for trial. If they don't believe there's enough evidence, the suspect is freed. The 5th Amendment requires that grand juries be held for crimes that call for death or imprisonment as punishment.

grandfather clause

In the south, states created taxes and literacy laws with the intent of keeping African Americans from voting. These laws had the unintended effect of preventing some Whites

from voting, too. The grandfather clause restricted the right to vote to those who could prove their grandfathers had voted before 1867, allowing the disenfranchised Whites to vote again while preventing Blacks from doing so.

Great Compromise

The compromise reached during the Constitutional Convention of 1787 between the New

Jersey and Virginia plans, creating a bicameral government with states represented equally in the senate and by population in the House of Representatives. Also called the Connecticut Compromise, the Great Compromise gave disproportionate influence to states with small populations by granting them equal representation in the Senate.

Greenspan, Allen

Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors.

See Also:

Federal Reserve Bank (the Fed)

Gregg v. Georgia (1976)

The Court upheld the death penalty, declaring that capital punishment was not inherently cruel and unusual punishment.

gridlock

See Also:

legislative gridlock

Gun-Free Zones Act (1990)

An act that banned the possession of handguns within one thousand feet of any school. In 1995, the Supreme Court ruled that Congress exceeded their authority in passing this

law.

Hamilton, Alexander (1755-1804)

The first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury. He established the National Bank and public credit system.

Harris v. Forklift Systems, Inc. (1993)

A court ruling that helped establish guidelines for sexual discrimination cases. The ruling stated that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits sexual discrimination even when promotions are not an issue and that employees deserved to work in an environment free of hostility.

Hatch Act (Political Activities Act of 1939)

A law passed in 1939 that limited contributions to political parties and spending by political parties. Most importantly, the Hatch Act made it illegal for individuals and companies under contract with the federal government to contribute to political candidates or to political parties. This was due to concerns over federal employees being pressured to donate to political campaigns through threats to their job security or chances for promotion.

Hearst, William Randolph (1863-1951)

American newspaper and magazine publisher. He eventually had the world's largest publishing empire.

hecklers' veto

Loud and unruly behavior intended to disrupt a public speaker and therefore "veto" his or her right to speak.

hierarchy

A principle of organization in which each person or office is under control of and responsible to the next highest level.

horizontal federalism

Relationships among states that are either constitutionally mandated or voluntary. The phrase distinguishes state-state relations from state-federal relations. The Constitution imposes the following requirements on states: to give "full faith and credit" to other states' public acts, records, and judicial activities; to allow the citizens of other states to enjoy the same privileges and immunities that citizens of their own state enjoy; and to return fugitives from justice.

horse race coverage

Media coverage of presidential primaries with an emphasis on who's leading, who's behind, and who's dropped out.

### House of Representatives

The lower house of the bicameral Congress, in which representation is based on population.

### hyperpluralism

Extremely pluralistic government that's very decentralized. Its authority is so fragmented and pressures from competing interest groups are so diverse that it gets very little done.

### ideology

A person's or group of people's political or economic beliefs, ideas, values, concerns, and goals. People use ideology to justify the way their institutions and nation are set up and run, or to present a vision of how institutions and nations should be set up and run.

### impeachment

A formal accusation by the House of Representatives, accusing the president, vice president, or any civil officer of the United States of "treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors." The Senate must then try the impeachment. Impeachment is authorized by Article I of the Constitution. Military officers and members of Congress cannot be impeached.

### implied powers

Authority possessed by the national government by inference from those powers delegated to it in the Constitution.

### in-kind subsidy

A good or service the government provides to lower-income groups, such as food stamps, housing, or medical care.

### inalienable rights

Rights that the writers of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution thought all people held as a consequence of natural law. These rights didn't come from the government, and the government could not infringe upon them. The Declaration of Independence listed these rights as "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Though the writers claimed all people held these rights, in fact they were withheld from groups such as women, African Americans, Native Americans, and non-property owners.

### income transfer

The practice of taking income from some (usually the wealthy) and giving it to others (usually the poor). Usually performed by the government, this is a "transfer" because the recipients of the income render no current services.

incorporation theory

The process by which the provisions of the Bill of Rights were applied as limitations on state government action. This process was accomplished through the due process clause of the 14th Amendment (1868).

incrementalism

A doctrine that holds that change in a political system occurs only by small steps, each of which should be carefully considered before proceeding to the next one.

incumbent

A person who holds an office or an official position.

independent

Voter or candidate not affiliated with a political party.

independent executive agency

A federal agency that reports to the president but isn't part of a Cabinet-level department, including the Small Business Administration and the Office of Personnel Management. These agencies' officials often have terms that overlap those of presidents to avoid undue control by the president.

independent regulatory agency

A multi-headed agency outside the major executive departments and responsible for making and implementing rules and regulations to protect the public interest. They include

the Federal Trade Commission, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Federal

Reserve Board. These agencies can establish rules for the industries they regulate and prosecute those who break the rules. Members are appointed by the president, subject to the Senate's consent.

indictment

The formal accusation, drawn up by the prosecutor and brought by a grand jury, charging a person with the commission of a crime.

indirect democracy

Democracy in which people do not directly govern or directly vote for their representatives. For example, citizens vote for the electoral college, which elects the president.

indirect election

An election in which voters do not vote to fill the office but vote for the people who will cast the votes to fill the office. For example, citizens vote for the electoral college, which

then elects the president.

indirect regulation

Regulation that's not written to target a specific firm or industry but affects them anyway.

indirect technique

The use by interest groups of third parties to influence government officials and their decisions.

individualism

The political, economic, and social concept that places primary emphasis on the worth, freedom, and well-being of the individual rather than on the group, society, or nation.

inevitable discovery exception

The result of a 1984 Supreme Court decision that allowed police to use illegally obtained evidence in court if they could prove they would have eventually found the evidence through legal means anyway.

informal presidential roles

Roles not assigned by the Constitution that the president fills along with the formal roles that come with the position, including party chief, economic chief, and chief of public opinion.

inherent power

Authority and power held by the national government but not specifically granted to it by the Constitution. These powers most commonly relate to foreign affairs and international relations. The powers of the federal government are delegated powers, meaning they must be directly or implicitly granted. In foreign affairs, however, it's presumed that the federal government has the same powers as other nations.

inner Cabinet

Refers to the oldest and most important Cabinet departments, which play roles in day-to-day government decision making. They include the Departments of State, Treasury, Justice, and Defense.

institution

An established organization that performs a role within society, especially one related to education, public service, or culture. Also, customs, relations, and behaviors that play a significant role in a community.

instructed delegate

Legislator who votes directly according to the views of the voters who elected him or her,  
no matter what the legislator's personal views are.

intelligence community

The collection of government agencies that gather information about the desires, intentions, and capabilities of foreign governments or businesses, or work to further U.S. foreign policy aims.

intensity

The strength with which one feels for or against a public policy or issue. Intensity is often very important in generating public actions, and intensely held minority views often defeat less intensely-held views held by majorities.

interest group

A group of organized individuals who share common goals and try to influence government decision makers on issues that directly or indirectly affect the members of the group. Interest groups may differ in goals, financial power, size, and political power and influence, but their methods are generally the same: lobbying and producing and disseminating propaganda. They are also called a pressure group or lobby.

interstate commerce

The buying and selling of commodities, transportation, and other commercial dealings across state lines. It also includes radio, television, telephone, and telegraphic transmissions.

Interstate Commerce Act (1887)

The act that established the Interstate Commerce Commission and regulations over business operations, services, and rates of interstate carriers.

Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC)

An independent regulatory commission that regulates business operations, services, and rates of interstate carriers. The ICC was created by the Interstate Commerce Act of 1877.

interstate compact

Agreement between two or more states. The Constitution requires that these agreements receive Congressional consent, but in actuality only those that increase the power of the contracting states relative to other states or the national government are considered for Congressional consent. Agreements on minor matters go without Congressional consent. Today's interstate compacts mainly aid in solving regional problems.

interventionism

A broad term used to describe any foreign policy initiative in which the United States uses its power, in the form of sanctions, treaties, or even military force, to pursue its goals.

intrastate commerce

The buying and selling of commodities, transportation, and other commercial dealings entirely within a single state.

investigative journalism

Journalism in which writers actively seek to uncover detailed descriptions of wrongdoings.

See Also:

muckraker

Iowa caucus

The first caucus of the presidential campaign season, which is closely watched and strongly contested.

Iran-Contra affair

A series of events that took place in 1987 involving White House staff members who sold sophisticated weapons to Iran in exchange for the release of American hostages. The funds from this transaction were placed in a secret Swiss bank account and used to support the Nicaraguan contra rebels in violation of the Boland Amendments.

Iron Curtain

The phrase used to describe the division of eastern and western Europe after W.W.II. Winston Churchill popularized the phrase in a speech about Europe's division between the West and the Soviet Union.

iron triangle

A three-way alliance between political organizations or agents. It's generally thought that iron triangles hinder the political process by putting their own interests ahead of national interests. A well-known iron triangle involves the Pentagon, defense contractors, and the Congressional committees in charge of defense spending.

isolationism

See Also:

isolationist foreign policy

isolationist foreign policy

The policy of remaining uninvolved in international affairs and free from entangling

alliances. This characterized U.S. foreign policy toward Europe during most of the nineteenth and part of the twentieth centuries and characterized our role at the beginning of W.W.I and W.W.II.

issue ad

Political advertisement focusing on a specific issue rather than on a particular candidate.

issue voting

Casting a vote for a candidate primarily due to his or her stand on a particular issue of importance to the voter.

Joint Chiefs of Staff

The principle military advisory group to the president, including the Chiefs of Staff of the

Army and Airforce, the Chief of Naval Operations, and the Chief of Staff to the Secretary of Defense.

joint committee

A legislative committee including members of both the House and Senate. Committee members are usually split evenly between the House and Senate, and each member has one vote. Joint committees are usually established for specific purposes, mainly for investigations. There are some permanent committees, such as the Joint Committee on the Economic Report.

judicial activism

A doctrine holding that judges should take an active role in making decisions that lead to socially desirable ends, primarily by exercising the power of judicial review. Others feel judges should show restraint and allow the legislative and executive branches to do this, since judges are not elected officials accountable to the voters.

judicial implementation

How court decisions are turned into actions.

judicial restraint

A doctrine holding that judges should not take an active role in making decisions that lead to socially desirable ends. Instead, judges should restrain their own opinions and desires and defer policy decisions to legislators and the executive branch—elected officials who are accountable to voters.

judicial review

The power of courts to judge legislative or executive acts unconstitutional. All national and state courts hold this power, though the highest state or federal court usually makes

the final decision. Judicial review is not mentioned in the Constitution. The Supreme Court claimed this power in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803). Judicial review is based on the following assumptions: the Constitution is the law of the land, acts that violate the Constitution are void, and the judicial branch is best suited to protect and interpret the Constitution.

Judiciary Act of 1791

This act ended the "circuit riding" by Supreme Court justices and established the courts of appeal.

jurisdiction

Court's authority to decide certain cases. Not all courts have the authority to decide all cases. The location of the case's origin and its subject matter are two factors that decide what court has jurisdiction for that case.

justiciable dispute

A question or dispute that's appropriate for settling in the judicial branch of government. Some disputes may be ruled "political," and therefore more appropriate for consideration by the legislative or executive branches.

Kennedy-Nixon debates

The 1960 presidential election debates between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. The debates were both televised as well as broadcast on radio. Kennedy wore a dark suit that contrasted with the background, while Nixon's lighter suit blended into the background and gave him a washed-out appearance. Most of those who watched the debates on television felt Kennedy won, while most who listened on the radio felt Nixon won. These debates were a turning point in the identification of the power of television as a political medium.

Keynesian economics

Economic theory named after English economist John Maynard Keynes and based on his ideas. Keynes claimed the free market would not always produce the best economic conditions and that government should try to influence the economy by increasing or cutting spending, taxes, and interest rates, among other actions.

Kissinger, Henry

National Security advisor (1969-1975) and Secretary of State (1973-1977) under Presidents Nixon and Ford.

kitchen Cabinet

Informal advisers to the president. The phrase originated during the presidency of

Andrew Jackson, who frequently met with friends and trusted advisors in the White House kitchen to discuss policy. The kitchen Cabinet may include members of the official

Cabinet. This does not mean that the kitchen Cabinet will give the president the same advice as the official Cabinet. In fact, presidents often follow the advice of their kitchen Cabinets instead of the advice of their official Cabinets.

labor movement

Generally speaking, the concerns and expressions of the working class regarding the economy and politics. In a political sense, the organization of working-class groups to further their economic and political interests. Unions are the interest groups formed to address the concerns of these laborers.

laboratories of democracy

A concept that advocates allowing states the freedom to approach and try to solve problems in whatever way seems right to them. Each state then acts as one of 50 "experiments," and all the rest of the states, as well as the federal government, are able to learn from the resulting mistakes and good ideas.

latency

The degree to which an opinion is held but not expressed.

latent public opinion

Political opinions that citizens hold but don't express or act on. These latent opinions have the potential to become widely expressed and acted on within the political arena.

lawmaking

Process of developing the rules that govern a society. Created by governments, laws may

deal with a wide spectrum of activities, from minor affairs to sweeping policies of national concern.

"leader of the free world"

The belief that the United States, and in particular the president, is responsible for safeguarding the freedom and liberty of all nations. This belief grew from hostilities between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. during the Cold War.

League of Nations

The first general international organization, established in 1919 to preserve peace and security and to promote cooperation among nations in economic and social fields. The League voted itself out of existence in 1946 and transferred its assets to the United Nations.

legislative gridlock

A complete lack of movement or progress in the passage of legislation, typically resulting from conflicts between political parties or between the Congress and president.

legislative veto

A provision in a bill reserving to Congress or to a congressional committee the power to reject an act or regulation. This required a vote by a Congressional majority and was included in about 200 Congressional acts. Most of these dealt with regulatory agencies, but also included are the War Powers Act of 1973 and the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Act of 1974. The Supreme Court declared this unconstitutional in the 1983

court case *Immigration and Naturalization Service v. Chadha*.

legislature

A government body responsible for making laws. In the U.S.A., the legislature includes both houses of Congress, the Senate and the House of Representatives. The legislative branch is one of three branches of the U.S. government, the other two being the executive branch and the judicial branch. Ideally, the legislative branch makes laws, the executive branch enforces laws, and the judicial branch interprets laws.

legitimacy

The acceptance of a government's right to rule by the people the government rules. It rises from a shared belief that the government is operating as it should, that is, making decisions by following correct decision-making policies and using power appropriately within a justly defined Constitutional role. By granting legitimacy to a government, people regard the government as valuable, its decisions and actions as valid and binding, and worthy of a certain level of obedience and compliance.

libel

Written defamation of a person's character, which may expose the person to hatred or ridicule, damage the person's reputation through criminal accusations, or harm the person within his or her profession. Libel is usually dealt with in civil courts, though sometimes cases go to criminal courts. The truth of a statement is generally considered a suitable defense against charges of libel. The 1st Amendment gives the press a limited amount of freedom from libel actions.

liberal

A person slightly to the left of the center of the political spectrum who believes change is both progress and good. Today's liberals tend to believe that the government has a role to play in preserving person freedoms and equality and in solving social and economic problems.

liberal democracy

The democratic model, which accepts the basic principles of democracy, such as representation, majority rule, and the rule of law as the means by which the system functions.

liberalism

The belief that people are rational beings who can use their intelligence to create a better world, overcoming social and natural obstacles. Liberalism developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as influential thinkers said that people could reach their full potential if freed from the restrictions of government.

liberty

The right and power to act, believe, or express oneself in a manner of one's own choosing.

lifetime appointment

A length of term in office granted to most federal judges as required by Constitution. Once appointed, these judges can stay in office as long as they wish. Judges are granted lifetime appointments in order to free them from partisan battles and the possibility that the fear of losing their jobs will influence their legal decisions.

limited government

A form of government in which the people grant the government the right to rule. The government's powers are clearly limited, usually in a written document, like the Constitution, or in some other publicly understood form. Limited governments have checks and balances to prevent the government and those who govern from putting their own interests ahead of the public interest.

line organization

A government or corporate unit responsible for providing services or products to the public, in contrast to a staff agency, which serves other agencies.

line-item veto

Executive power to veto specific items included in a piece of legislation without vetoing the entire piece of legislation.

linkage institutions

Institutions, such as political parties, that provide a link between citizens and the government.

literacy test

A reading or "understanding" test that a voter had to pass before voting. Literacy tests were frequently used to prevent African Americans from voting. Literacy tests were banned by the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which was expanded in 1970, 1975, and 1982.

litigant

A party engaged in a lawsuit.

litigate

To take part in a legal action or attempt to settle dispute in a court of law.

lobbying

Efforts by individuals or organizations to pass, defeat, change, or influence the crafting of laws and the decisions, policies, and actions of the government.

logrolling

When two or more members of a legislature agree in advance to vote for each other's bills. This usually results in a arrangement in which all legislators involved vote for bills that aid each other's home districts. There are no established penalties for logrolling, leaving only the threat of voter disapproval if the logrolling is discovered.

loophole

A legal means through which individuals and businesses reduce the taxes they owe to the government.

low voter turnout

A situation in which only a small percentage of eligible voters actually cast their votes in an election. This is seen as a problem in the American political system.

Madison, James (1751-1836)

Fourth President of the US (1809-1817). A member of the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention, he wrote many of the Federalist Papers, including Federalist No. 10 and Federalist No. 51.

Madisonian model

The political philosophy proposed by James Madison that espoused a system of checks and balances and harmony among differing interests. Madison's assumptions were that the primary dangers of a republican government were factions and the possibility of tyranny if power became too concentrated. To counter these dangers, he argued for a powerful, three-branched national government that could hold state governments in check and prevent the national government, or its branches, from exercising too much power. The Constitution produced during the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 owes much to this model.

majority floor leader

The chief spokesperson of the majority party in the House of Representatives or Senate, the floor leader is very influential. In the House he or she is considered second in influence to the Speaker. In the Senate the floor leader is the most powerful senator in

the party. Floor leaders direct the legislative program and the party's political strategy. Party caucuses select floor leaders, who are aided by party whips. Their counterparts in the minority party are known as minority floor leaders.

majority leader of the House

The chief spokesperson of the majority party in the House of Representatives, he or she is considered second in influence to the Speaker and directs the legislative program and the party's political strategy. Party caucuses select the leader of the house, who is aided by party whips. The counterpart in the minority party is known as the minority leader.

majority method

See Also:

majority rule

majority opinion

A written statement, prepared by an appellate court, that states the opinion of the majority of the judges who heard the case. A majority opinion explains the rules of law that relate to the case, advises lower courts on how to proceed, and justifies the ruling to the public. The majority opinion may be accompanied by a dissenting opinion, which disagrees with the ruling. This is especially true for the U.S. Supreme Court. A concurring

opinion may also come with a majority opinion, in which a justice agrees with the court's

decision but offers another reason for the validity of the decision.

majority rule

A principle of democracy asserting that a simple majority, defined as 50 percent plus one in most cases, should select public officials and determine the policies and actions of their government. In certain cases special majorities are needed, such as the two-thirds majority within the Senate that the Constitution requires to approve a treaty.

See Also:

super majorities

majority whip

An assistant to the floor leader for the majority party.

managed news-

News the government produces that's designed more to make the government and its interests, policies, and action look good (or less bad, as the case may be) than to deliver complete, truthful, and accurate information to the public.

mandatory set-aside-

An aspect of affirmative action programs in which a specific number of construction contracts are allocated to minority-owned businesses. Ruled illegal in 1989.

Mapp v. Ohio (1961)-

The case in which it was declared that a state may not use illegally seized evidence in criminal trials.

Marbury v. Madison (1803)-

This case that struck down for the first time in US history an act of Congress as unconstitutional. It declared the Constitution to be the supreme law of the USA, and that it is "the duty of the justice department to say what the law is."

mark up (session)-

Joint action by a committee of House and Senate members in which a bill is approved or revised on a section-by section basis.

market economy

An economy in which buyers and sellers interact without government interference, and exchange money for goods and services. The United States does not have a pure market economy, but one based on the concept. Market economies were most fully and clearly developed in the writings of Adam Smith.

marketplace of ideas

The concept that government has no role in managing or controlling the flow of ideas, arguments, or opinions that occur naturally in a society, and that this flow, if left unhindered, will eventually result in the best ideas rising to the top. This is one of the main justifications of the freedom of the press. The concept was most thoroughly developed by John Stuart Mill.

matching fund

An agreement between two levels of government in which each level agrees to contribute funds to a specific project. These agreements can be between federal and state governments, federal and local governments, or state and local governments. The "match" usually isn't dollar for dollar. In some cases the smaller government contributes as little as 10 percent.

material incentive

An economic motivation for doing something.

McCleskey v. Kemp (1987)

A case in which the Court ruled that in the absence of clear proof of purposeful discrimination, the death penalty is valid.

McCulloch v. Maryland(1819)

A case in which the Court upheld the power of the national government to establish a bank and denied the state of Maryland the power to tax a branch of that bank.

means-tested programs

Programs such as AFDC and Medicaid in which those who receive benefits must prove a need for them.

media consultant

A professional paid by a party, candidate, or government official to help present news stories in ways that reflect positively on a candidate or government official.

See Also:

spin doctor

media event

A time when government officials or politicians arrange for television and newspaper reporters to see some dramatic evidence of government achievements or decision making.

Medicaid

A federally supported state health insurance program, established in 1960 to provide medical care to impoverished people.

Medicare

A national health insurance program, enacted in 1965 as an amendment to the Social Security Act, that provides medical care for the elderly.

megabill

A bill with many provisions attached, with the aim of appealing to many legislators.

merit principle

The principle that in employment individuals should be selected, retained, and promoted based solely on their ability, knowledge, and skills.

merit system

A system for selecting employees through competitive testing, and retaining and promoting them based on their abilities, knowledge, and skills.

Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson (1986)

This case held that sexual harassment can be considered a form of sex discrimination.

military-industrial complex

An informal alliance of key decision makers within the military, government, and defense

industry that tries to implement policy that's beneficial for all three.

See Also:

iron triangle

Miller test

Also known as the Roth-Miller test, this list of requirements is used to determine if material is obscene. Under the test, material is obscene if an average person, applying contemporary community standards, finds that it appeals, as a whole, to a prurient interest in sex, portrays sexual conduct in a patently offensive way, and lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.

Miller v. California (1973)

A case that established a major reformulation of the legal test for determining obscenity.

See Also:

Miller test

minority

A racial, religious, political, national, or other group regarded as different from the larger group of which it is a part.

minority floor leader

The leader of the minority party in the Senate or House of Representatives. The minority

leader directs his or her party's policies and political strategies.

minority leader of the House

The leader of the minority party in the House of Representatives. The minority leader directs his or her party's policies and political strategies.

minority whip

An assistant to the floor leader for the minority party.

Miranda v. Arizona (1966)

A ruling on criminal procedures to secure the privilege against self-incrimination. It held

that criminal suspects must be informed of their rights.

Miranda warning

The warning given to criminal suspects prior to questioning, in which they're informed that

they have the right to remain silent, that any statement they make may be used against them, and that they have the right to the presence of an attorney.

mischiefs of faction

Madison's reference, in Federalist No. 10, to his concern about the dangers posed by "factions," or groups, who might attempt to dominate the political process. He warned such dangers could take place if political parties misused their freedom and created conflict by pitting their interests against one another. While factions will always exist, Madison argued, a republican (or representative) system could control them.

mission conflict

A bureaucratic pathology in which the roles of different agencies within the bureaucracy interfere with one another.

mission duplication

A bureaucratic pathology in which the roles of different agencies within the bureaucracy are the same, or overlap.

moderate

Opposed to extreme or radical views or measures.

monetary policy

Policy in which the government attempts to influence the economy through its control over the amount of money in circulation and the availability of credit. The Federal Reserve directs our nation's monetary policy. In order to restrict inflation, the Fed will try to reduce the amount of money in circulation and raise interest rates. To avoid or get out of recession, the Fed will increase the amount of money in circulation and decrease interest rates.

monopolistic model

A bureaucratic model that compares bureaucracies to monopolistic businesses. Without competition, the bureaucracy results in inefficiency and higher costs. And since there's no penalty for its inefficiency, the bureaucracy has no incentive to reduce its costs or use its resources more efficiently.

monopoly

Exclusive control by one group of the means of producing or selling a commodity or service.

Monroe Doctrine (1823)

An American foreign policy originally developed by President James Monroe in his 1823 annual message to Congress. The doctrine set out three principles: European nations were not to establish new colonies in the Western Hemisphere, they were not to interfere in the affairs of independent nations in the Western Hemisphere, and, in exchange, the United States would not become involved in the affairs of European nations. Monroe announced his doctrine to stop the Holy Alliance from helping Spain regain its former Latin American colonies, which had recently become independent. In effect, with the Monroe Doctrine, the United States claimed the Western Hemisphere as its own zone of influence.

Motor Voter Law (1993)

A law that requires state to make voter registration procedures easier and more

accessible to citizens. Two means of doing this are to offer voter registration at state driver's license offices and registration by mail.

muckraker

A journalist or writer who investigates and exposes wrongdoings and excesses of corporations and the government.

multi-member electoral districts

Electoral districts in which voters choose multiple officials to represent them, instead of just one.

narrowcasting

Broadcasting whose content and presentation is directed to a small sector of the population.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

An organization formed in 1909 to ensure the political, educational, social and economic

equality of African Americans and other minority group citizens of the United States.

It's

the oldest, largest, and strongest civil rights organization in the United States.

national committee

A national political party's standing committee that directs and coordinates the party's activities during the period between national party conventions.

national convention

The meeting held every four years by each major party to select presidential and vice presidential candidates, to write a platform, to choose a national committee, and to conduct party business. In theory, the national convention is at the top of a hierarchy of party conventions (the local and state conventions are below it) that consider candidates and issues. Parties have selected presidential candidates in every election since 1832.

The delegates are selected in one of several ways: presidential primaries, party conventions, or party committees. Delegates are apportioned on the basis of state representation; bonuses are given to states that showed a voting majority for that party in the previous election.

national debt

See Also:

public debt

National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)

An independent regulatory commission established in 1935 by the National Labor Relations Act (officially, the Wagner Act). It regulates unfair labor practices and labor-management relations, and guarantees labor's right to organize and bargain

collectively through representatives of their choosing.

national newspaper chain

A collection of newspapers owned by one individual or company that are distributed to many cities nationally. In theory a chain allows wider distribution of political news and ideas. They have also given increased power to those publishers aiming to influence politics.

National Partnership for Reinventing Government

A plan for bureaucratic reform launched under President Clinton and headed by Vice President Al Gore. It's commonly known as "the plan to reinvent government."

national party convention

See Also:

national convention

National School Lunch Act (1946)

An act passed in 1946 that provided lunch for school children who couldn't afford their own.

National Security Advisor

The head of the National Security Council, who advises the president on immediate foreign policy and military problems.

National Security Council (NSC)

A staff agency in the Executive Office of the President that advises the president on matters relating to national security, both domestic and foreign. The NSC is made up of the president, vice president, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense. The director of the CIA and the Joint Chiefs of Staff are statutory advisors; others may serve at the president's request.

National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act

An act that established safety standards for motor vehicles and tires. This act came into existence mainly through the persistent efforts of consumer advocate Ralph Nader.

natural rights

The doctrine that humans have certain inalienable rights in a "state of nature" and that government's role is to protect these rights. American political culture claims that all people hold these rights and a government can't infringe on them. John Locke claimed natural law was superior to human law and specified the rights of "life, liberty, and property." The writers of the Declaration of Independence changed these to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Near v. Minnesota (1931)

A court case that defined freedom of the press to mean that the press is to be free from

prior restraint or censorship. A state cannot permanently prevent a newspaper from being published.

necessary and proper clause

The final paragraph of Article I, section 8 of the Constitution, which delegates legislative powers to the Congress. Also known as the elastic clause.

neutrality

The legal status of a nation that does not participate in a war between other states.

New Deal

The programs and policies introduced during the 1930 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, designed to promote economic recovery and social reform.

New Deal coalition

A collection of groups who joined together to support Franklin D. Roosevelt and his New Deal, including Catholics, Jews, union members, Southerners, people of lower income, middle-class urban liberals, and African Americans.

new federalism

A plan designed to limit the federal government's regulatory power by returning power to state governments. It gives states greater ability to decide for themselves how government revenues should be spent.

New Hampshire primary

The first primary of the presidential election season. It is watched closely and contested strongly.

New York Times v. Sullivan (1964)

The case that held that a public official could not recover civil libel damages for criticism of his or her official conduct by a newspaper or other persons.

NLRB v. Jones and Laughlin Steel Corp.

The case that upheld the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, which guarantees labor the right to organize and bargain collectively and established the NLRB to regulate labor-management relations.

non-contributory welfare

Welfare programs that don't require a contribution to receive a benefit. Examples include AFDC and Medicaid.

non-violent protest tactics

Peaceful or passive actions to gain political or social ends.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

An organization established in 1949 to create a single, unified defense force to protect the North Atlantic area. Members include 16 Western European nations and the USA.

nuclear deterrence

A U.S. military policy that calls for hundreds and even thousands of nuclear missiles ready

to be launched at a moment's notice with the intent of discouraging other nations (particularly the U.S.S.R during the Cold War) from using nuclear weapons or otherwise

attacking the U.S. or its allies.

nullification

Declaring something null or void. Before the Civil War, states' rights advocates in the South claimed a state had the right to nullify a national law. They argued that ultimate power rested with the state governments.

Occupational Safety and Health Act (1970) (OSHA)

A comprehensive industrial safety program that requires employers engaged in interstate commerce to furnish a workplace free from hazards to life or health.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

A division of the Executive Office of the President charged with running the government

efficiently and economically, helping to prepare the annual budget as well as clear and coordinate the budgets of all departmental agencies, and helping to create fiscal policy.

The OMB was created by executive order in 1970, replacing the Bureau of the Budget. The

OMB includes the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs and the Council on Competitiveness, a secret body established by President George Bush in 1989 and headed by Vice President Dan Quayle.

Office of Personnel Management

The federal agency that administers civil service employment.

Omnibus Crime Bill (1997)

A bill with what appeared to be a wide-ranging ban on assault weapons that, under close inspection, was ineffective due to numerous loopholes.

open primary

A voting system that permits voters to choose the party primary of their choice without disclosing party affiliation.

#### opinion leader

A person who can influence other people's opinions through position, experience, knowledge, sheer force of personality, or some combination of these. Opinion leaders help to form public opinion.

#### opinion poll

Questioning a selected sample of people that are considered representative of a population (the entire U.S. or a smaller group, for example) on a given topic or topics. Politicians, government officials, businesses, scholars, and the public use or study these polls to find information about populations. Advances in polling techniques over the years have led many to believe that data from polls is reasonably accurate.

#### oral argument

The verbal arguments presented in person by attorneys to an appellate court. Each attorney presents reasons to the court why the court should rule in his or her client's favor.

#### original jurisdiction

The authority of a court to hear a case in the first instance. Usually courts of original jurisdiction are minor courts or trial courts.

#### outer Cabinet

The outer Cabinet refers to Cabinet departments that are less important to the day-to-day functioning of the government and were created to look after the needs of various constituencies. It includes the Departments of Agriculture, Labor, and Veteran's Affairs.

#### oversight

See Also:

congressional oversight functions

#### pardon

Power to release a person from the punishment or legal consequences resulting from a crime. The president and governors of 30 states have the right to grant pardons within their respective areas of authority. In the other states, governors share the power with special pardon boards. An "absolute pardon" fully restores the person to his or her position before conviction. A "conditional pardon" sets conditions that the person must meet before the pardon is granted.

#### party caucus

A meeting of party members in one of the houses of a legislature to make decisions on selection of party leaders and on legislative business.

party dealignment

The term refers to a time characterized by the absence of a dominant political party.

party identification

The practice of aligning oneself with one political party, including their beliefs, values, and agenda.

party organization

A political party's structure and leadership. It includes election committees; executives at local, state, and national levels; and staff.

party platform

A document prepared by a political party, outlining its policies and objectives and used to win voter support during a political campaign. Candidates do not feel obligated to fulfill the items laid out in a platform if elected to office.

party-in-electorate

Citizens who identify with a specific political party or have a preference for one party over another.

party-in-government

All the elected and appointed political officials who identify with a particular political party.

patronage

Appointing government jobs and contracts to faithful party workers as a reward for their contributions. Unrestricted patronage came about with Andrew Jackson's spoils system and began to lose influence with the Civil Service Act of 1883.

patronage system

A system in which elected officials make appointments to office or to confer contracts or other special favors based on party affiliation.

See Also:

spoils system

peer group

A group whose members share common relevant social characteristics. These groups play an important part in the socialization process, helping to shape attitudes and beliefs.

Pendleton Act (Civil Service Reform Act)

A law that made national government employment dependent on open, competitive exams. Passed in 1883, the Pendleton Act brought the patronage, or spoils, system developed by Andrew Jackson to an end. The Pendleton Act was passed as a direct result

of the assassination of President James Garfield at the hands of someone who had wanted but had not received a government job. The act created the Civil Service Commission to handle the national government's personnel. Though it originally applied to only ten percent of national government employees, it has been expanded so that now more than ninety percent of government positions are included.

Pentagon

The US military establishment. The term comes from the shape of the military headquarters building.

permanent committee

See Also:

standing committee

personal attack rule

A Federal Communications Commission rule that allows individuals or groups airtime to reply to negative statements that were previously broadcast.

plaintiff

The party that initiates a suit in court.

platform

A statement of principles and objectives held by a party or candidate. It's used during a campaign to win support from voters.

platform plank

One of the articles, or statements, in a party platform.

plea bargain

To make an agreement in which a defendant pleads guilty to a lesser charge and the prosecutor in return drops more serious charges, or agrees to a reduced sentence.

plebiscitary presidency

A model of presidentially centered government in which a president seeks to govern through direct support of the people. Under this theory, presidential power and legitimacy

emanate from citizen support, as measured in public opinion polls; presidents directly link to citizens through television; and presidents find themselves unable to deliver on

promises made to citizens due to structural barriers inherent in our governmental system.

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)

The case that upheld a state law requiring segregation of the races in public transportation. The Court ruled that a state could provide separate but equal facilities for African Americans.

pluralist theory (model)

A theory holding that policy is the product of group conflict and that the public interest tends to emerge out of the welter of competing individual and group claims as these groups bargain and compromise to make decisions.

plurality

More votes than any other candidate but less than fifty percent. It's possible to win an election with a plurality (and not a majority) of votes in most national, state, and local elections.

plurality method

A method of determining the winner in nearly all elections in the USA, in which the candidate who receives more votes (a plurality) than any other candidate wins. A

plurality

is not necessarily a majority, so a candidate can win an election even if more than 50 percent of the voters vote against that candidate.

plurality runoff method

A method used in some Southern states. If no candidate receives a majority vote, a second, runoff election is held between the two highest vote-getters.

pocket veto

The chief executive's special veto power exercised after the legislative body adjourns.

By

not signing a passed bill within a specific time, the chief executive in effect "vetoes" the bill. If the legislature wishes to have the bill passed, it must reconsider the bill again in

its

next session.

police power

The power and authority to promote and safeguard the people's health, morals, safety, and welfare. In the American government, the federal government does not have police power. This is reserved for the states. Police power is the most vital power granted to the

states by the Constitution, and broadly increases their power over individuals.

policy

A plan or course of action designed to influence and determine decisions, actions, and

other matters.

policy adoption

The third stage of the policy cycle, in which public officials select a specific strategy to achieve their policy goals. This is usually in the form of legislation, regulations, or court orders.

policy agenda

Issues, arising from the aggregate public opinion, that politicians have decided to pay attention to and act in response to. Items on the policy agenda have a good chance of becoming law.

policy cycle

Stages through which policy passes, including, in order : agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, and policy evaluation.

policy evaluation

The fifth stage of the policy cycle, in which the results of the implemented policy are studied by public officials and private organizations.

policy formulation

The second stage of the policy cycle, in which government officials consider various policy proposals and attempt to respond to the concerns of interest groups and other segments of the public.

policy implementation

The fourth stage of the policy cycle, in which a law or regulation is put into effect with the goal of obtaining public compliance. Implementation takes place through a variety of government channels, such as the bureaucracy, courts, and police.

political action committee (PAC)

An interest group that gives money collected from members to political candidates or parties. The Committee on Political Education from the 1940s began the movement toward PACs. The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1974 authorized PACs for interest groups, corporations, labor unions, and others. Under the 1974 law, PACs could give as much as \$5,000 dollars to as many as five candidates in a federal election, as long as the money was freely donated by at least fifty donors. PACs have revolutionized campaign finance.

political advertising

Advertising a political candidate via mass media. Political advertising is a very influential, controversial, sophisticated, and lucrative industry.

political agenda

A list of issues on which a variety of political agents, such as interest groups, political parties, social movements, and elected officials, want to see the government take action. An item can be on the political agenda and not on the policy agenda.

political appointments

Presidential granting of federal jobs to reward friends and supporters.

See Also:

patronage

spoils system

political consultant

A paid professional whom a political candidate, party, or campaign hires to develop a campaign strategy and manage the campaign's activities and efforts. The political consultant's primary concern is the image of the politician, party, or campaign.

political culture

Political beliefs and attitudes concerning government and political process held by a group of people, such as a community or nation.

political ideology

The collectively held ideas and beliefs concerning the nature of the ideal political system, economic order, social goals, and moral values.

political party

A group of people who hold similar political beliefs and goals and organize to win political elections, set political policy, and take power over the machinery of government. There are many political parties in the United States. The two main parties are, and have long been, the Democrats and the Republicans. There is no formal membership requirement to participate in either of these parties.

political party chief (chief of party)

The role of the president as the nation's partisan political leader.

political question

A question that a court feels is more appropriately dealt with by the executive or legislative branch of government and is inappropriate for judicial consideration. This is generally invoked when a decision would place the courts in conflict with other governmental branches or in a political controversy, or when a decision would lead to enforcement problems. Examples include the power of the president to recognize foreign

governments and the power of Congress to determine if a Constitutional amendment was passed in timely fashion. If a question is appropriate for judicial consideration, it's a justiciable question.

political science  
The formal, scientific study of the processes, principles, and structure of government and political institutions. Political science differs from descriptive studies of politics in that it relies on data to test theoretically derived hypotheses.

political socialization  
The method through which people learn and develop their political attitudes and opinions. Socializing forces within American culture include the family, schools, media, religious organizations, friends, organizations, and institutions. Most people learn and adapt a set of social and political beliefs when they're young and keep them throughout their life, but change is possible.

political spectrum  
The range of political ideas and beliefs.

political ward  
The division of a city for purposes of electing members to the city council.

politico  
The legislative role combining concepts of instructed delegate and trustee concepts. The legislator switches roles according to the issue being considered; sometimes also used as a derogatory term for a politician.

politics  
The method in which decisions are made, either by or for a society, to allocate resources, distribute benefits, and impose costs. Politics is a difficult term to define and has been summed up in many ways, including: "the art of the possible," the "authoritative allocation of values," "who gets what, when, and how" in a society, and "the competition among individuals and groups over the allocation of values or rewards."

poll tax  
A tax a person must pay in order to vote. The 24th Amendment to the Constitution outlawed poll taxes in national elections. A 1966 Supreme Court ruling declared poll taxes illegal in all elections.

polls

Places where votes are cast and registered.

popular sovereignty

A principle originating in natural rights philosophy that claims political authority rests with

the people and not the government. People have the right to create, change, or revolt against their government. In practice, people usually choose representatives to exercise their political authority.

pork barrel (or pork)

Appropriations made by a legislative body providing public money for local projects not critically needed.

position taking, credit claiming, and advertising

Three activities that political scientist David Mayhew claims legislators engage in to satisfy

their main goal: reelection. The legislator introduces legislation (position claiming), takes

credit for the legislation (credit claiming), and advertises his or her success and hard work

in the reelection campaign.

power

Ability to make other people change their behavior and do what the person exercising power wants them to do. People can exert power through many means friendship, persuasion, propaganda, threats, and more. Power can be divided into political, social, economic, and military categories.

power elite

Theoretical group of corporate, political, and military leaders who together form an interlocking, highly centralized, decision-making structure.

power of the purse

The traditional power of democratic legislative bodies to control the finances of government.

power to persuade

Presidential ability to bargain with political actors and get them to fall into line with the president's agenda. It was claimed by political scientist Richard Neustadt to be the most important of the president's powers, in his 1960 book *Presidential Power*.

precedent

A previous court ruling that bears on a later court decision in a similar or related case.

Lawyers try to persuade judges that certain precedents should be considered in deciding

a case. It is the judge's role to determine which precedent applies most directly. Courts are free, however, to overrule a precedent and establish a new one.

precinct

The basic unit in the USA in the election process and for party organization. Cities and counties are divided into precinct polling districts.

president pro tem (or pro tempore)

The presiding officer of the Senate when the vice president is absent. The president pro tempore is nominated by the leading party of the Senate and is elected by the Senate. The president pro tempore is fourth in line for the presidency in the event that the president, vice president, and Speaker of the House have all died or are unable to fill the office. The position usually goes to the majority party's senior member.

presidential debate

Series of televised debates generally held once the two major parties (or sometimes three, as has happened recently) select their candidates for president.

presidential primary

A statewide election in which a party votes for delegates to their national convention as part of the process of determining a presidential nominee. The delegates may be pledged to a particular candidate or they may be unpledged.

press secretary

The person who represents the White House to the media. The press secretary writes news releases, sets up press conferences, and acts as an intermediary between the White House and the nation (through the press) in the dissemination of information from the White House.

pressure system

A theory of American politics in which organized special interest groups dominate government. It tends to have a business or upper-class bias.

price fixing

The unlawful agreement between manufacturers or dealers to set and maintain specified prices on typically competing goods.

price support

A process in which government buys surplus goods from producers to keep prices stable.

Most price supports occur in the agriculture industry. Price supports have been used since 1933 and are used together with production controls to try to manage farm production. Price supports may be in the form of an outright purchase or in the form of a loan, with

the farmer's stored crops serving as collateral. The farmer can, in effect, turn the loan into

a purchase by not paying it off and giving up the crops. However, if prices are high enough to make selling the crops and paying off the loan attractive, the farmer can do that.

primary election

A preliminary election in which voters narrow the field of candidates for specific offices.

prior restraint

Preventing an action before it even happens. Prior restraint relies on censorship instead of subsequent punishment.

private interest group

An interest group working in the interests of a small group of people, as opposed to a public interest group.

privileges and immunities

Rights and exceptions provided by law. The Constitution provides privileges and immunities in two places: Article IV, Section 2 and the 14th Amendment. According to Article IV, Section 2, states can't discriminate against the citizens of other states and must grant visitors from other states the same privileges and immunities that their citizens enjoy (legal protection, access to courts, travel and property rights, and so on). The 14th Amendment was intended to preserve civil liberties, but its meaning is ambiguous. The courts have defined it narrowly, and it has not had the great influence its

writers intended for it.

probable cause

Reasonable grounds for belief that an accused person may be subject to a search or arrest.

professional interest group

Type of private interest group that represents the interests of professionals. Examples include the American Bar Association (for lawyers) and the American Medical Association (for doctors).

Progressive Period

Movement that began after the Civil War and peaked during the early 20th century. Most

progressives wanted to remove corruption and partisanship from politics. The progressives can be seen as a reaction against the Jacksonian model.

progressive tax

Any tax in which the tax rates increase as the tax base (the amount subject to taxation) increases. The federal income tax is an example.

proportional voting system (proportional representation)

An electoral system that allocates seats in the legislature to each party or group approximately equal to its popular voting strength.

public agenda

Issues members of a political community consider worthy of public attention and governmental action. The media has a great deal of influence on the public agenda.

public debt

Total debt owed by the federal government, including interest that has accumulated on the debt. If revenues are more than expenditures in a year, the surplus can be used to lower the national debt. If spending is more than revenue, however, that year's deficit is added to the public debt.

public debt financing

When the national government spends more than it brings in, and pays for the difference by issuing U.S. Treasury bonds, which increase the debt.

public employee interest group

A type of private interest group that works to further the interests of government employees.

public figures

People who are known to the general public through their activities, including movie stars, musicians, television personalities, public officials, and others.

public interest

To the benefit of the members of a community. Generally, something in the public interest

is in contrast with something that's in the best interests of a private person, group, or organization.

public interest group

A category of interest group that work on issues that affect broad segments of the populations. Public interest groups often form as social movements mature.

public opinion

The collected attitudes and beliefs of some group of individuals. There is no single "public opinion," since the U.S. is made up of a variety of people with different beliefs. Instead, there are a number of public opinions held by different groups of people. In a democracy,

a key issue is how responsive legislators should be to public opinion.

Publius

The name used by the three authors—Hamilton, Madison, and Jay—of the Federalist Papers.

purposive incentive

A motivation that's dependent on ethical beliefs, values, or ideological principles.

quorum

The minimum number of legislative members who must be present in order to transact business.

quota system

A system sometimes created in response to affirmative action legislation, in which a certain number of educational or employment positions are reserved for minority group members.

racial equality

The equal treatment of all persons regardless of their race.

racial segregation

The separation of the races in public and private facilities.

radical left

Extremist political groups who advocate substantial or fundamental political, social, and economic changes. They often have a Marxist or socialist orientation. On the radical right, are ultraconservative groups.

rage for paper money

Madison's reference, in Federalist No. 10, to the decision by some state governments to print currency that was not backed by gold. This meant the money was essentially worthless, yet it would allow farmers and other debtors to pay off their debts. This action was perceived as a threat by creditors and other members of the propertied class, of which Madison was one.

random sample

A sampling method in which each member of the population being surveyed has an equal chance of being selected for the sample.

ratification

The formal approval, as of a law or Constitutional amendment.

rational ignorance effect

When people decide that the influence their single vote will have on an outcome is too small to justify the amount of work necessary to gather information and reason through it

in order to cast an intelligent, informed vote. This is a rational consideration of the benefits and cost associated with gathering and processing information needed to cast an informed vote.

reactionary

A person who advocates substantial political, social or economic changes, favoring a return to an earlier, more conservative system.

Reagan coalition

A coalition that came together to elect Ronald Reagan President in 1980 and 1984. It included people from middle class suburbs, social and religious conservatives, white Southerners, business people and professionals, and blue-collar workers who had once been Democrats. George Bush was elected president with many of the "Reagan Coalition"

votes in 1988, but the coalition fell apart by 1992.

realignment

The shifting of public sentiment that puts one party ahead of a previously dominant other party.

reapportionment

The re-allocation of seats in the House of Representatives. Reapportionment can only take place after a census, though it may not. For reallocation to occur, population changes within states must be significant enough to justify the change. This is determined through a mathematical formula that considers the nation's total population and the 435 seats the Constitution allows the House. After the seats are reapportioned between states, the affected states redraw their district boundaries to match their new allotment of representatives. This is done by the majority party of the state legislature and often leads to gerrymandering, the drawing of districts intended to increase the party's political power.

Reconstruction period (1865-1877)

The period following the Civil War during which the states of the Confederacy were controlled by the federal government before being readmitted to the Union.

red scare

The fear that the U.S. was being infiltrated by communists in the 1940s and 1950s. The most notorious red-scare propagandist was Senator Joseph McCarthy from Wisconsin, who led a congressional investigation into alleged communist infiltration of the government and entertainment industry, but he wasn't alone. For example, in 1951 the Supreme Court held it illegal to be a member of the Communist party.

redistributive policy

Government policy designed to shift government burdens and benefits from one group to another.

redistricting

The redrawing of district boundaries within each state. Redistricting is performed in states

allotted a new number of representatives after the census. The majority party in the state legislature redraws the districts. This often leads to gerrymandering, in which districts are redrawn with an eye toward increasing the political power of that party.

Regents of the University of California v. Bakke

The case that held invalid a state medical school admissions program based on a specific racial quota, but upheld the use of race as a factor in admissions decisions.

registered voter

See Also:

registration

registration

Listing the names of eligible voters. Registration helps determine that people meet certain legal requirements before voting, such as age, citizenship, and residency.

registration requirements

Legal barriers enforced on all potential voters. See registration.

regressive tax

Taxes in which rates go down as income goes up. Regressive taxes are mainly used by state and local government, though the national government uses them to levy payroll taxes. Perhaps the most common example is the sales tax, which takes a higher percentage of total income from poor people than it does from wealthier people. The opposite of a regressive tax is a progressive tax.

regulatory policy

Policy designed to regulate certain activities, such as environmental pollution, financial transactions, and automobile safety.

Rehnquist Court

The period (1986 to present) during which William H. Rehnquist has served as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

reinventing government

A bureaucratic reform effort instituted by President Clinton and headed by Vice President

Gore. It's driven by four guiding principles: 1) increase customer satisfaction, 2) institute less centralized management, 3) empower front-line employees, and 4) cut government services back to basics.

relevance

The degree of importance that an issue is considered to have at a particular time. Issues become relevant when the public believes they're a direct or important concern. The media plays a large role in the public's perception of an issue's relevance.

remand

Sending a legal case back to the court that heard it previously.

representation

The responsibility that Congressional members have as elected officials to represent the views of their constituents. Just exactly how congressional members must represent their constituents is debated. Some feel members of Congress should vote exactly as their constituents wish them to, while others feel that citizens elect representatives to exercise the representatives own best judgment. Other difficulties come with determining exactly what citizens want and how much they know about issues. Ultimately, elected officials are accountable to citizens in the next election, and this influences the amount of attention they give to citizen concerns.

representative democracy

Form of government in which citizens vote for officials to represent them.

reprieve

The delay of the execution of a court's legal sentence. Reprieves are usually granted for humanitarian reasons, or to await the collection and presentation of new evidence. The power to grant reprieves is held by the president and most state governors.

republic

A government in which ultimate sovereignty belongs to the people, and the people elect officials to represent them in government decisions.

Republican party (Republicans)

One of the two major American political parties at the moment, along with the Democrats.

The Republican party emerged in the 1850s as a party opposed to slavery. It succeeded two former parties, the Federalists and the Whigs. Presently the Republican party is generally conservative in nature. Voter support for Republicans tend to increase with increased levels of income, education, and property ownership.

### Republican Revolution

Refers to the 1994 Congressional election in which Republicans turned around the 1992 Democratic gains, gaining 52 seats in the House and 8 seats in the Senate.

### reserved powers

Powers belonging to the state governments under the U.S. federal system; all powers not delegated to the national government, or prohibited to the states, as stated in the 10th Amendment.

### resolutions

A measure that one chamber of Congress adopts. Resolutions do not have to be adopted by the president or the other chamber of Congress.

### reverse

To nullify or invalidate a legal judgment.

### reverse discrimination

Discrimination against those who do not have minority status within a community. Reverse discrimination may result from affirmative action programs that require preferential treatment for minority members of society.

### right to counsel

The 6th Amendment's guarantee that a defendant in a criminal case will have the assistance of an attorney. The accused must be permitted to confer with counsel prior to interrogation by the police and at other critical stages in the proceedings against him or her, such as a preliminary hearing, lineup, or appeal.

### rights of the accused

A term referring to the civil liberties guaranteed to persons accused of committing crimes.

Supreme Court rulings have fluctuated over the years as they've sought the proper balance between supporting individual's due process rights and favoring society's need to maintain order and control crime.

### Romer v. Evans (1996)

A Supreme Court ruling benefitting gay and lesbian rights. In this case, the Court struck down a Colorado constitutional amendment that denied protection from discrimination to homosexuals. The Court held that the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment didn't make homosexuals "unequal to everyone else."

### Roth v. United States (1957)

A court case that excluded obscenity from the area of constitutionally protected speech and press.

rule of four

A procedure that requires four votes in favoring of hearing a case before the entire U.S. Supreme Court.

Rules Committee

A fifteen-person standing committee within the House of Representatives. The Rules Committee specifies special rules, or conditions, under which the House can debate, amend, or consider certain bills. The Rules Committee is intended to function as a traffic-cop for bills moving through the House, since there are so many. However, this role

allows them a great deal of power to influence the eventual outcome of the bill, either positively or negatively. The Rules Committee is made up of ten members of the majority party and five members of the minority party.

safe district

Districts that almost automatically reelect House of Representative incumbents.

safe seat

A voting district that returns an incumbent legislator with at least 55 percent of the vote.

safety net

A guarantee, as of professional, physical, or financial security.

sampling error

The estimated difference between the results of a poll using a sample of the population and the true results that would have been found if the entire population had been polled.

Schenck v. United States

The case that upheld a conviction against Schenck, who circulated materials urging men to resist the call to military service during World War I. This infringement on the freedoms of speech and press was declared justified because it was a wartime emergency.

school desegregation

The elimination of the separation of races in public schools; racial integration.

secession

A formal withdrawal from membership within an alliance. More narrowly, a state's withdrawal from the Union. The southern states claimed a right to withdrawal from the Union. Abraham Lincoln used his emergency powers to prevent them from doing so.

second budget resolution

A resolution passed by Congress in September of every year, setting binding limits on taxes and spending for the next fiscal year, beginning October 1.

### Secretary of State

The leading Cabinet officer, who heads the Department of State and is responsible for formulating policies and conducting relations with foreign states.

### sedition

Actions that incite rebellion or discontent against a duly established government, including espionage, sabotage, or attempts to overthrow the government.

### select committee

A temporary legislative committee established by either branch of Congress for a limited period and a particular purpose. Select committees are generally established to handle issues that don't fall within a standing committee's jurisdiction, or to handle issues that standing committees would prefer not to handle. Most select committees deal with investigations, though others deal with supervision, housekeeping, and coordination.

### selective incentive

Material benefits available to members of an interest group. These are given to avoid the "free-rider" problem.

### **selective incorporation**

The process in which Supreme Court **selectively applies** provisions of the **Bill of Rights** to the **states** through the **14th Amendment**. (Gitlow v. New York 1925)

### self-incrimination

Testimony by a person that reveals facts that may result in a criminal prosecution against him or her.

### Senate

The upper house of the U.S. bicameral Congress, in which representation is based on the principle of state equality.

### senatorial courtesy

A senate tradition under which the Senate will almost always reject a presidential nominee for a federal office within a state if the senator from that state and of the president's party objects. This means that the president must consult a state's senator or senators from his party before appointing someone to fill a federal office within that state.

In fact, most appointments are actually recommended by the senators, and the president usually follows their recommendation. If neither senators from the state are of the president's party, the president usually consults the party leaders of that state.

### Senior Executive Service

An elite group of governmental managers outside the regular merit system, established by the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978.

seniority system

A custom that both Congressional chambers follow that gives preference to members with the longest terms of continuous service when selecting committee chairpersons and holders of other significant posts.

separate but equal doctrine

In 1896, the United States Supreme Court held that racial segregation, or "Jim Crow" laws, were constitutional under the "separate-but-equal-doctrine." This doctrine held it was all right to segregate the races as long as both races had access to equal services and facilities. This led to segregation in schools, transportation, housing, and elsewhere. In practice, few of the services or facilities were actually equal—those for African Americans were generally inferior. The separate-but-equal doctrine began to weaken in the 1940s, when the Supreme Court began to insist on true equality. This eventually led to the Court's 1954 decision striking down the doctrine entirely.

separation of powers

The principle that divides American government among three branches, the executive, legislative, and judicial. The officials of each branch come into power in different ways, have different terms, operate independently from one another, have different responsibilities, and have a series of checks and balances over the other branches. The system is devised to prevent any one branch from gaining too much power and to prevent the same agents from making, enforcing, and interpreting the laws.

sexual harassment

Unwelcome physical or verbal behavior or abuse of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment interferes with the receiver's job performance, creates a hostile environment, or is accompanied by a direct or indirect threat to the person's continued employment or opportunity for promotion.

Shays' Rebellion

An armed revolt by farmers in Massachusetts in 1786-1787, seeking relief from debts and possible foreclosure of mortgages. It's credited with being a major factor in the demand for revision of the Articles of Confederation.

Sherman Anti-Trust Act (1890)

The basic federal antimonopoly law that prohibits monopolies in trade, or commerce.

single-issue group

Interest group concerned with a single issue, such as today's National Rifle Association.

single-issue party

Political parties that focus on one issue, such as today's Right to Life party.

single-member district

An electoral district from which a single legislator is chosen, usually by a plurality vote, in contrast to proportional representation or at-large systems.

sit-in

An organized protest demonstration in which participants seat themselves and refuse to move.

slander

Public, false pronouncement that harms a person's character, which may expose the person to hatred or ridicule, damage the person's reputation through criminal accusations, or harm the person within their profession. A slanderous statement must be made to, or heard by, someone other than the one being slandered. Libel is the same thing, but written instead of spoken. Libel is traditionally considered more serious than slander because the written word is considered more enduring. Both libel and slander are

usually dealt with in civil courts, though sometimes cases go to criminal courts. The truth

of a statement is generally considered a suitable defense against charges of libel or slander.

slavery

The practice of owning people as property.

social movement

Activation of a segment of the public for political, economic, or social change.

social security

A government program that provides economic assistance to persons faced with unemployment, disability, or age, financed by assessment of taxes on employers and employees.

socioeconomic status

A group of people within a society who share similar income levels and similar types of employment.

soft money

Campaign contributions that get around laws setting maximum campaign contributions because they're given to political parties and party committees to fund general party activities, instead of to a specific candidate. The party can then use this money in a way that helps its candidates.

solidary incentive

Motivation based on shared associations, hobbies, or interests.

sound bite

A short, catchy, memorable statement that news broadcasters can easily fit into their coverage of political events.

Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)

Organization co-founded by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and dedicated to using nonviolent means to fight racial inequality and discrimination.

Speaker of the House

The House of Representatives' presiding officer. The Speaker always belongs to the majority party, is nominated by the majority party caucus, and is elected by members of the House. The election is a formality; the majority party caucus makes the real decision.

The Speaker has more power and influence than anyone else in the House, and is third in

line for the presidency behind the president and vice president. The Speaker recognizes speakers, interprets and applies the rules of the House, and handles matters regarding order. The Speaker can use these powers to exert a great amount of influence over legislation in the House. Many state legislatures have a Speaker of the House, also.

specialization

See Also:

division of labor

spin

Public-relations campaign interpretation of events or election results that are intended to help a candidate or elected official.

spin doctor

An adviser to a political campaign who tries to persuade journalists of a particular interpretation of events that puts a candidate, politician, or party in a favorable light, or the opposing candidates, politicians, or parties in a negative one.

spin-off party

A new party created when a faction within an earlier party becomes dissatisfied with that

party and forms their own. Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose party, which spun off from the Republican party, is an example.

splinter party

A party composed largely of people who have broken away from one of the major parties.

Also called a third, or secessionist, party.

split-ticket voting

See Also:

ticket splitting

spoils system

A system of awarding government jobs to political supporters and friends. Also known as

patronage, the spoils system is generally associated with President Andrew Jackson. Jackson felt that government work was so simple anyone could do it and that bringing new people into government employ kept the government vital. This system began to lose influence with the Civil Service Act of 1883. The term is based on the saying "to the

winner go the spoils."

spot ad

A type of political advertising that generally promotes a candidate, in a positive fashion, by name.

spring review

The time every year when the Office of Management and Budget requires federal agencies to review their programs, activities, and goals and submit their requests for funding for the next fiscal year.

stability

A gauge for determining the consistency of public opinion on a certain issue over time. If

public opinion stays very consistent on an issue over time, stability is high. If public opinion changes frequently or widely, stability is low.

standard operating procedures

Established methods routinely followed for the performance of specific operations or in specific situations.

standing committee

A permanent committee within the House or Senate charged with considering bills within

certain, specific subject areas. While the committees themselves are permanent, their memberships change over time.

stare decisis

Court policy to follow precedents established in past cases; to stand on decided cases.

state

A political community with a specific territory, organized government, and internal and

external sovereignty. Sovereignty often hinges on the state's recognition by other states, which allows it to enter into international agreements. The term state is also used to refer to smaller sub-units within a federal government system, as is the case in the United States.

state court

Each of the 50 states have their own courts with jurisdiction over all cases that arise under their own laws. Their organization may parallel that of the federal court system.

State Department

The agency primarily responsible for making and executing U.S. foreign policy.

State of the Union message

The constitutionally required message to Congress in which the president lays out a legislative program. The Constitution requires the message be given "from time to time,"

but it has become customary for the president to deliver it every January, at the beginning of the legislative term. The State of the Union message was not originally a very dramatic event early presidents sent the message in the form of a letter. Radio and television greatly increased the importance of the State of the Union address by making it

a media event and providing the president an audience with the American people and the rest of the world.

statute

A law enacted by Congress or by a state legislature.

statutory law

Law passed by a legislative body.

statutory power

Power created by laws that Congress establishes. These powers may be given to the president or to other political actors such as bureaucratic agencies.

stereotype

A standardized notion held in common by members of a group . It typically represents an

oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment.

Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT 1)

A treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union to reduce the nuclear arms competition the two countries were engaged in. The SALT I talks began in 1969 and were

signed May 26, 1972.

strict scrutiny

A test used by the Supreme Court for issues such as affirmative action. Legislation in these areas is highly suspect and will be closely watched and allowed to stand only if it's "narrowly tailored" and serves a "compelling government interest."

subcommittee

Congressional committees formed as a means of easing the legislative workload and dispersing some of the power amassed by long-serving committee chairs.

Subcommittees

hold hearings on bills, take testimony from interest group representatives and other concerned individuals, and "mark up" or make changes to the text of proposed legislation.

subgovernment

See Also:

iron triangle

subpoena

An order that requires a person's attendance. Courts, grand juries, legislative bodies and committees, or any authorized administrative agency can issue a subpoena. The power to

subpoena allows public agencies to perform their functions. People called by subpoena have the right to refuse to offer testimony or reveal documents that may incriminate themselves. Subpoenas are especially important within judicial proceedings, and both sides of a legal case have the right to subpoena witnesses. An agency can only submit a subpoena if the subject falls under their jurisdiction and if the subpoena is relevant to the issue at hand.

subsidy

Financial aid the government gives to individuals, business firms, groups, or other levels of government. Subsidies can be direct (money is given directly to the other party) or indirect, as is the case when tariffs are levied against a company's foreign competitors.

suffrage

The right to vote, also called the franchise. To allow a person to vote is to enfranchise them. Throughout its history, the United States has enfranchised more and more of its population.

sunset legislation

A law with provisions that call for the law's expiration after a certain period of time. After that time, the law can be renewed after consideration by a legislative body. If the law isn't renewed, the law is no longer valid or provisions set forth under the law for what to do if it's not renewed go into effect.

super majorities

Defined voting blocks of greater than 51 percent needed to approve a proposal. For example, a two-thirds vote is required for proposing a constitutional amendment.

Super Tuesday

A Tuesday in March in which a large number of presidential primaries, including those of most southern states, are held. The number of primaries held on Super Tuesday can change with each election.

super-delegate

A party leader or election official who's granted the right to vote at a party's national convention due to the leader's political position, not due to an election at state level.

supremacy clause

The provision in the Constitution (Article VI) that makes the Constitution, federal government, and federal laws superior to state and local laws that contradict them. The supremacy clause does not give the federal government absolute power in all arenas and over all issues, but only on issues over which the federal government has a constitutionally granted authority.

sustaining election

An election in which voters reaffirm their support for the party in power and its policies.

swing voters

The term refers to those voters who are uncommitted to a particular party or candidate up until election time. Political advertising is often used to try and capture the allegiances of these undecided voters.

symbolic politics

A cause of incrementalism, whereby politicians give the appearance of taking decisive action, in order to please the voting public, while they're actually avoiding making substantive policy changes in order to please specific interest groups.

symbolic speech

An expression of beliefs through means other than speech, such as picketing or wearing items that signify protest. The courts have given a large amount of protection to symbolic speech.

Taft-Hartley Act (Labor-Management Relations Act)

A major revision of the Wagner Act of 1935 that sought to equalized the power of employers and labor unions. It placed limitations on labor union practices and strengthened the position of the individual worker.

tariff

A tax placed on imported items. It's designed to protect a nation's businesses and workers from international competition or to increase revenue.

telescoping effect

The occurrence, in a winner-take-all system, of a presidential candidate winning in a state

by just a few popular votes yet receiving all of that state's electoral college votes. His or her opponent may have almost as many popular votes, yet will receive none of the state's electoral college votes.

term limits

Refers to the movement at the state and federal levels to limit the number of terms in office that elected officials can hold.

Texas v. Johnson (1989)

The court case that held that a conviction for burning the American flag during a political protest rally violated the 1st Amendment.

The Federalist Papers

See Also:

Federalist Papers

theory

A supposition about how or why events occur. Political scientists test theories of political

behavior and relationships through observation and data analysis.

third party

A political party other than the two main parties in a two-party system. Third parties are usually made up of independent voters and dissatisfied members of one or both major parties. They are larger, have more influence, and have more effect on election results than minor parties. Third parties in American history include the 1856 Republican party, which took power from the Whigs, Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose party, which split the

Republican vote, the 1948 Dixiecrat party, which had little influence outside the deep south, John Anderson's 1980 campaign, and Ross Perot's 1992 campaign.

three branches of government

Executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The U.S. government is separated into three

branches to keep any one group from gaining too much power.

ticket splitting

Voting for a candidate from one party for one office and a candidate (or candidates) from another party for another office(s).

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964)

The provision that allows the federal government to cut off funds to state and local programs that discriminate against women or minorities.

tracking poll

A poll taken on a nearly daily basis for a candidate as election day nears.

treaty

A formal agreement entered into between two or more countries.

trial

The examination of a civil or criminal action in accordance with the law of the land before a judge who has jurisdiction.

trial court

The court in which most cases usually begin and in which questions of fact are examined.

Truman Doctrine

The doctrine announced by President Harry Truman in 1947 to aid countries facing communist threats. The Truman Doctrine was formulated as a specific response to crises in Turkey and Greece, but applied to the world at large and marked the beginning of containment as the U.S. foreign policy regarding communist expansion.

trustee

A legislator who acts according to his or her conscience and the broad interests of the entire society, as opposed to the specific agenda of his or her constituents or another narrow interest.

Tuesday-Thursday Club

The term refers to the House members who go home to their districts for long weekends. These members have typically been criticized for spending time in their districts, as the work done there was seen as less important than the "real" work taking place in Washington, D.C.

two-party system

A political system with only two parties that have realistic chances of winning. While other parties exist, their political power is small.

tyranny

A government in which a single ruler is vested with absolute power; absolute power, especially when exercised unjustly or cruelly.

tyranny of the majority

Abuse of the minority by the majority through excessive use of power. Fear of tyranny of the majority led to the incorporation of certain basic principles in the Constitution, such as separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, and the rule of law.

U.S. Supreme Court

The court of last resort in the federal system. Most states also have courts of last resort.

U.S. Treasury bond

Certificate of debt issued by the U.S. federal government. U.S. Treasury bonds are like corporate bonds (by issuing of corporate bonds a business borrows money and agrees to pay the amount back later with interest), but the government is the one borrowing the money.

unanimous opinion

A legal opinion or determination that all the judges agree with.

underground economy

The sector of the economy that doesn't pay taxes and isn't directly measured by the government. Also known as the subterranean or unreported economy.

Unfunded Mandate Reform Act

A 1995 act passed by Congress requiring federal agencies to consult with state and local governments before imposing a mandate.

unicameral legislature

A legislature made up of only one legislative body, as distinct from the bicameral, or two house, legislature used by the U.S. Congress. Nebraska is the only unicameral state legislature, though many local governments use this form.

unitary system of government

A centralized system of government in which smaller, subordinate governing units can exercise only those powers granted them by the larger, central government.

United Automobile Workers v. Johnson Controls, Inc.

A Supreme Court decision stating that employers could not base hiring decisions on pregnancy or the possibility of pregnancy.

United Nations

An international organization composed of most of the countries of the world. Founded in 1945 to promote peace, security, and economic development.

United States v. Leon (1984)

The court case that allowed the use of evidence taken without a warrant if the police acted with "objective and good faith."

United States v. Lopez (1995)

The Supreme Court ruling stating that Congress exceeded its authority under the commerce clause of the Constitution when it passed the Gun-Free School Zones Act in 1990, which banned the possession of handguns within one thousand feet of any school.

United States v. Virginia (1996)

A Supreme Court ruling holding that a state-supported school could not exclude women.

universal suffrage

The right of all people to vote.

veto

A legislative power of the chief executive to return a bill unsigned to the legislative body.

veto message

A presidential explanation to Congress detailing reasons for vetoing a piece of legislation.

vice president

The second highest executive officer of the USA, who is also the presiding officer of the Senate.

voter turnout

The percentage of citizens who participate in an election by casting votes.

Voting Rights Act (1965)

The act that eliminated restrictions on voting that had been used to discriminate against African Americans and other minority groups.

wage discrimination

Paying different people different wages for the same or similar job based on their sex, race, or other discriminatory factors.

Wagner Act (National Labor Relations Act)

See Also:

National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)

### War Powers Act (1973)

A law specifying certain conditions the president must meet to commit U.S. troops without the approval of Congress. The War Powers Act attempted to close a loophole by which presidents were able to get around the constitutional requirement that only Congress can declare war.

### Warren Court

The Supreme Court when Earl Warren was Chief Justice. The Warren Court was known to believe in and practice judicial activism.

### Washington community

People who play a regular role in Washington, D.C.'s political scene.

### Washington County, Oregon v. Gunther

A Supreme Court ruling that stated women employees could sue their employers under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for wage discrimination, even if they weren't performing the same jobs as men.

### watchdog function

The duty to oversee the administration of the law.

### Ways and Means Committee

The House committee that deals with all tax measures.

### Weberian model

German sociologist Max Weber developed the Weberian model of bureaucracy, which holds that bureaucracies are hierarchical organizations run along rational lines that direct power from top to bottom and make decisions by analyzing data and reasoning logically.

### Welfare Reform Act (1996)

The act that eliminated the federal AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) program and replaced it with block grants to the states so they could administer their own welfare programs as they saw fit.

### Whig party (Whigs)

One of most influential and important U.S. political organizations during the first half of the 19th century. The Whig party was formed in 1836 and was dominated by the forces opposed to Andrew Jackson (the same forces that organized the National Republican faction of the Democratic (Jeffersonian) Republicans). The Whigs fell apart as a party in the early 1850s because they were not as effective at capturing anti-slavery sentiments as the Republicans were.

whip

A congressperson who functions as an assistant and helps the majority or minority leader of the house, or the Senate majority or minority leader.

whistleblower

An employee who publicizes illegal, inefficient, or unethical actions in a government department or contractor working for the government.

White flight

Movement of large numbers of White people from cities to suburbs. This movement was precipitated by the desegregation of public facilities.

**White House Office**

The group of advisors set up by the President without Congressional ratification who tend to president's political needs, help advise the president, and act as the president's intermediaries with the press and Congress. They include the Chief of Staff.

**White House press corps**

Reporters from various news organizations with the full-time assignment of covering and reporting on the presidency.

**White primary**

A state primary with voting rights granted only to Whites. The Supreme Court outlawed White primaries in 1944.

**winner-take-all**

A voting system in which the candidate who receives a plurality of the votes wins. Only one candidate can win each election.

**"with all deliberate speed"**

Reference made in the Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* about undertaking racial integration of schools quickly. The term "deliberate" was used as a loophole by some officials who wanted to delay desegregation.

**women's suffrage**

Women's right to vote.

**writ of certiorari (cert)**

A request from a higher court to a lower court to send up a case's record so that the higher court can review it. Most cases come to the Supreme Court in this manner instead

of through an appeal. A party must petition a court to issue a writ of certiorari, and fewer than five percent of the petitions are granted.

**writ of habeas corpus**

Habeas corpus literally means "you have the body." It's a court order that requires a jailer to bring a person to a court or judge and explain the charges on which the person is being held. If sufficient cause for imprisonment is not produced, the prisoner must be released. This is considered the most important guarantee of liberty because it protects citizens against arbitrary imprisonment. The right to habeas corpus is guaranteed in the Constitution, though Congress can suspend it in cases of rebellion or invasion. President Lincoln suspended the writ on his own during the Civil War, though Congress later affirmed his doing so.

**writ of mandamus**

An order issued by a court to compel performance of an act.

**yellow journalism**

Sensationalistic and irresponsible journalism, often associated with William Randolph Hearst, but seen widely throughout the press. The term is thought to have originated from the phrase "Yellow Kid journalism," which was itself an allusion to the old New York World cartoon "The Yellow Kid." The New York World, owned by Joseph Pulitzer, was a particularly sensationalistic newspaper.