

The origins of american government assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

All terms mentioned in this text that are known to be trademarks or service marks have been appropriately capitalized. Use of a term in this text should not be regarded as affecting the validity of any trademark or service mark. Copyright 2003 by Education Direct, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of the material protected by this copyright may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the copyright owners a registered trademark used herein under license.

Requests for permission to make copies of any part of the work should be mailed to Copyright Permissions, Education Direct, 925 Oak Street, Scranton, Pennsylvania 1851 5. Printed in the United States of America In the final part of this unit, you'll learn that Americans thought of themselves as British subjects for a long time. When America was born in 1776, British settlers had been here since 1607. That's 169 years. Over that period, the colonists had developed their own customs and ways of thinking about things. For example, think of the way that he British and the Americans use the English language.

They both speak English, but there's a difference. In a way, the colonists were developing their identity as Americans long before 1776. Then, in the years leading up to 1776, Americans began to feel hemmed in by Parliament and the English king. People began to whisper to each other about independence. When the British made the colonies pay unfair taxes, that whispering became shouting. American patriots formed a Continental

Congress and openly challenged King George III of England. Preview You'll begin this unit by thinking about the nature of government in general.

Although this course is about American government, you'll first look at ideas about government across time. You'll see how governments began. You'll see what the basic purposes of government are now and what they've always been. You'll see how modern governments differ from one another. With all of these things in mind, you'll then begin the study of American government. Well, almost. You see, America's form of government owes much to English history. You'll come to understand how English ideas of representative government were brought to American shores. You'll see that England and America were-?? and still are-?? political cousins.

When you complete this study unit, you'll be able to Describe the different types of government and give examples of each Outline the way in which English government affected the government in America Identify and explain the different types of government in the early American colonies Describe the events that caused unrest in the American colonies Explain the events of the First and Second Continental Congress Summarize the provisions of the Articles of Confederation Define government and explain its purpose Briefly outline the major events and battles of the American Revolution What Is Government?

Simply put, government is one or more people who exercise control over a society. A society is a group of people who live and work in a particular area, such as a state or nation. The people in the society may or may not have a say in how the government operates. Human societies have existed for many

thousands of years. The earliest societies were small bands, or groups. They had no government as we know it today. Even so, a form of governing did exist. Groups of elders would gather to consider the needs of the band and make decisions on important matters.

For example, the elders would decide where the people should travel next in search of food. Later, in tribal societies, government became more formal. Most often, councils of elders gathered under the guidance of chiefs. Before Europeans arrived in America, tribal chiefs usually served different purposes. Some would act as authorities on settling disputes. Others would plan for war or organize religious ceremonies. As societies became larger and more complex, so did their governments. About 7, 000 years ago, people in the Middle East and Africa began systematic farming.

This type of development is called an agricultural revolution. Before this, people simply raised vegetables in local gardens. Now, this new kind of farming produced surpluses of grains like wheat, rice, and oats, which could be stored for future use. That's important. Before the agricultural revolution, people were always in danger of running out of food if a crop failed or if game was scarce. An agricultural revolution occurs whenever there are significant discoveries, technologies, or inventions that change agricultural production. A surplus is the amount left over after a need is satisfied.

With organized farming, however, came the need for organized government. In fact, most historians agree that the agricultural revolution brought about organized governments and civilizations. A social class is a group of people with similar positions in society. Artisans are people who make things that

people need, like pots, weapons, and bricks for building. As civilizations rose and fell, societies changed. Harvest surpluses allowed for larger populations. As populations grew, people were divided into social classes (Figure 1).

Farmers made up the largest social class.

But there were also rulers and priests, who were usually the only people who could read and write. Other social classes included traders, soldiers, and artisans. As societies became larger and more complex, they began to need written laws. The first written laws were developed in Mesopotamia, which is now Iraq. The earliest roots of modern European government came from two great civilizations-?? Greece and Rome. At first, Greece was the dominant civilization of Europe and the Mediterranean area. During this time, something extraordinary happened. We call it democracy. About 350 B. C. Athens was the greatest city in a region called Attica. It was in Athens that democracy was invented, and that's why our word democracy comes from Greek. The first part of the word, demos, means " the people. " Democracy is government that draws its power from the people. Of course, in Athens, rule wasn't by all the people. Only male citizens who owned property could gather to make public policy and pass laws. Slaves, women, and children weren't considered citizens. FIGURE I-?? As populations grew, people were divided into social classes. This diagram illustrates the approximate size and rank of some of these classes.

High Priest Military Leader Priests and Scribes Officers Artisans Soldiers
Rulers Slaves 2 All of the major Greek philosophers thought democracy was a bad form of government. Two of these philosophers were Aristotle and Plato. Aristotle claimed that the com- Plato, in his critique of democracy,
<https://assignbuster.com/the-origins-of-american-government-assignment/>

petting interests in a democracy called The Republic, claimed that made for chaos rather than democracy allowed people to purposive and deliberated follow all their passions and action. Drives without order or control. As the power of Rome grew stronger, the power of Greece grew weaker. Yet, the Greek and Roman ideas about government were mixed.

In fact, historians speak of this early period as the Greece-Roman period. They do so to remind us that both societies shared ideas about citizenship and government. The Roman Empire in the western part of Europe ended around 476 A. D. In the eastern part of Europe, it lasted until about 1100 A. D. But, to this day, the foundations of Roman roads exist in England and all over Europe. Some modern roads have been built over them. Those old roads serve as reminders that European civilization was built on Roman foundations. European and American ideas about law, citizenship, and representative government came from Roman times.

All governments have three basic purposes: 1 . To decide how food and other resources are to be distributed 2. To settle disputes among people in an effort to maintain order 3. To organize the work of the people to meet common goals Let's look more closely at each of these purposes. Distributing Resources In tribal societies, harvested food was often brought to a chief. The chief would then see that the food was distributed. Everyone received a share of the maize (a kind of corn), fish, and other kinds of food. Today, our way of getting the things we need is much more complicated.

People are paid for their work in money, which they use to ay what they need. Distributing resources in our society requires many laws and

regulations-?? laws for printing and distributing money to banks, laws and regulations for all the kinds of businesses and occupations, and so on. All types of governments are based on two factors: first, who has power to make decisions and second, the way in which people make a living. When people think of government, they often think of the power factor. But the main way in which people make a living is what determines the way that power is used.

The main way people make a living indicates what kind of economy a society has. The economy and the use of power go together. For example, in ancient Egypt most people were farmers. The pharaoh (supreme ruler) appointed ministers to take a portion of the farmers' harvests. You can think of these portions as " harvest taxes. " Other officials had to keep track of who owned parcels of land. To do this, they had to develop a form of writing. So, as you can see, Egyptian pharaohs had to use their power to regulate harvests and the storage of food surpluses. In modern societies, people have many different kinds of jobs.

Only a few people are farmers. Others work in factories. Others mine coal or run power plants to supply electricity. Lots of people work to provide telephone service. Still others work in banks or grocery stores. Some people are dentists, doctors, and lawyers. You could add many more occupations to this list. 4 Because of the great variety of jobs, modern society is said to have a complex division of labor. That is, people make their living in all kinds of different ways. But, most important, all of the jobs you can think of are connected to other people's jobs. Mechanics are needed because other people make automobiles.

Banks are needed to lend money to people who want to buy new automobiles. You can probably think of many more examples of this sort of thing. Because our economy is complicated, government must serve many purposes. It must regulate buying and selling. It must make sure that banks have enough money to make loans. It must pass laws about how people use automobiles. You're probably getting a good idea now of why the economy and the use of power go together. Settling Disputes Tribal societies had customs but no written laws. After the agricultural revolution, some civilizations needed written laws to organize work and settle disputes.

Where there are laws, there must be government. And where there's government, there must be people who make laws and enforce laws.

Because people often disagree about many different things, government must have ways to manage conflict. As you might guess, this means that governments must establish courts of law and police forces. Later in this course, you'll learn how laws and the courts are set up in America.

Organizing Work to Meet Common Goals In tribal societies, elders or chiefs organized people for hunting buffalo or for defending the tribe against an enemy. In modern societies, life isn't quite so simple.

Most work that people do is regulated by organizations like corporations and small businesses and like the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which collects taxes. 5 On the other hand, the government in America regulates the economy. For example, it tries to make sure food is safe for people to eat. It also regulates the economy by controlling the money supply. But individuals themselves decide how to make their living. The government doesn't establish private work organizations. The people are basically free to farm

the land, start businesses, go to school to learn to fix amputees, or do whatever else they would like.

So how do modern governments organize the work of the people to meet common goals? They do so in a variety of ways. Let's look at just two of them. The common defense. One of the main goals of governments is to provide for the common defense. This means that the government is responsible for protecting and defending the people who live within the area controlled by that government. In the United States, the federal government is responsible for maintaining the armed forces, which in turn provide for the common defense. The army, navy, marines, air force, ND coast guard are under the control of the United States government.

National Guard units, on the other hand, are maintained by the state governments. However, in time of need, the National Guard can be federalism-?? that is, brought under the control of the federal government. When that happens, National Guard units become part of the overall armed forces as long as they're needed. Gathering intelligence about other countries is also vital to modern defense. For that reason, the U. S. Government has established intelligence agencies. The largest and best known of these is the Central Intelligence Agency Police and emergency services.