

Vocabulary for Units #1-4 from 1st Semester

Democracy – A government in which the citizens hold the political power.

Monarchy – Government with a ruler who inherits the position (or divine right), may rule for life & holds powers varying from very limited to total rule.

Dictatorship – A system of government in which a single person or group exercises supreme power based on its control of the military and police.

Direct democracy – Where everyone votes on all issues in a community

Totalitarianism – A system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires COMPLETE subservience to the state.

Communism – A system of government in which a group of people will control Government and businesses. The economic & political system in which the gov't owns the means of Production & decides what will be produced.

Rule of law – The legal principle that every group and person, including the government must obey the law. No one is above the law, no one is below the law.

Popular sovereignty – People are the only source of power for the gov't. Power resides not with government or its leaders but with the people. Framers know that making the people it's source of power is the best assurance that government will act in the people's interest.

Checks and Balances – A system in which each branch of gov't can limit the power of the other branches. No one branch can have more power than the other (Legislative, Judicial, Executive). No one branch can have too much power and each one "checks" the other. A system in which each branch of government is able to check, or restrain, the power of the others

Federalism – Idea that the national government shares power with the state gov't. The Sharing of power between federal & state gov't

Federalists – Favored a strong national government that shared power with the states. Supporters of the Constitution who believe a strong national gov't is needed to keep the country united. Americans that supported the Constitution.

Due Process – People have the right to fair and reasonable laws (all people). The principle that no person can be deprived of life, liberty or property without fair legal procedures and safeguards

Eminent Domain – The power of the gov't to take private property for public use (for fair price?) The 5th Amendment requires the payment of just compensation to the Owner.

Double Jeopardy – Cannot be tried for the same crime twice. The act of putting a person through a 2nd trial for an offense for which he/she has already been prosecuted or convicted.

Autocracy – Government in which one person has all the power. Type of gov't where one person has unlimited power.

Oligarchy – A small group of people has all the power – means rule by a few Ex: one political party, one social class, or one race, some noble families have all power

Representative democracy – Citizens elect leaders to operate the government and represent their rights and interests in government. Citizens hold the ultimate.

Limited government – The power of gov't is limited by the Constitution and each Branch is limited in what it can do. Gov't doesn't control everything. Gov't can do only what the people allow it to do.

Representative government – Power is exercised by elected leaders who work in the interest of the citizens.

Republic A nation in which the Supreme power rests with the citizens and is exercised by their representatives.

Great Compromise – The plan for representation by Roger Sherman of Connecticut that settled the divide between the big states and the small states. The legislative was divided into a Senate where all states have 2 representatives and a House of Representatives where membership is based on each states population.

Constituents – A person who lives in an electoral district and is represented by an Elected official. A person from a legislator's district.

3/5 Compromise – A plan that only allowed 3/5ths of slave populations to be counted toward a state's population for the purpose of determining congressional representation. This prevented slave states from gaining extra representatives in the House while denying the most basic rights to slaves.

Anti-Federalists – Opposed the ratification of the Constitution because they favored the Articles of Confederation which kept the federal government weak and strong state's rights. Agreed to the Constitution once a Bill of Rights was promised.

Impeachment – To bring charges against a gov't official for a crime. The first step in removing an elected official from office.

Civil Law - Group of laws that refer to disputes among people or organizations

Due Process – The gov't has to follow rules & established procedures in everything it does.

Elite – A small group of people within a larger group who have more power, wealth, or talent than the others.

Parliamentary democracy – A system of democratic government in which the legislative majority selects from within it's ranks, the chief executive for the nation.

Unitary system of government – A system of government where power is centralized almost exclusively at the National/Federal/Central level.

Federal system of government – A system of with two levels of government; the lower state/local level and the upper federal or central level of government.

Confederal system of government – A system of government where the power rests at the state/local level and the power of the federal/central government is intentionally weak.

Socialism – Economic system where working people own & control the means of production & distribution through democratically-controlled public agencies, cooperatives or other collective groups. There are many varieties.

Natural law – A universal set of moral principles believed to come from human's basic sense of right and wrong that can be applied to any culture or system of justice.

Charter - a document issued by a government that gives rights to a person or group
English Monarchs granted a written Document which granted land for colonial gov'ts
To those wanting to come into the U.S.

Individual rights – Rights & liberties that can be claimed by individuals by virtue of Being human also can be called Natural or Human Rights

Natural Rights – Rights that all people have by virtue of being human.
John Lockes idea included life, liberty and property. He though some people would give up some rights for protection.

Social contract – Agreement between gov't and people to take care of one another. Is an agreement between the people in society.

Tyranny – Cruel and oppressive gov't or rule.

Separation of powers – Powers of gov't are divided among 3 branches of gov't, to prevent any 1 person or group from gaining too much power.
Legislative, Executive & Judicial.

Popular sovereignty – The ides that the power of gov't lies with the people

Militias – A reserve army made up of civilians who are trained to fight & can serve full time in an emergency.

Ratification – Formal approval of an agreement, treaty or constitution.

Constitutionalism – The belief that gov't should operate according to an agreed set of principals, which are usually spelled out in a written constitution.

Majority rule – Idea that decisions approved by more than ½ of the people in a group

or society will be accepted and observed by all of the people

Bicameral – Made up of 2 houses as in a bicameral legislature

Unicameral – Made up of 1 house, as in a unicameral legislature

Electoral College – A body of electors from each state who cast votes to elect the president
And vice president.

Habeas corpus – Court order that requires the gov't to bring a prisoner to court & explain why he or she is being held.

Civil case - A legal case that does not involve criminal conduct, such as a lawsuit.

Impeachment – First step in the formal process to remove an elected official from office. At the federal level, charges must be presented in the House of Representatives & then the trial is in the Senate.

Republican government – A representative political system in which authority comes from the people and its exercised by elective officials.

Enumerated powers – Powers of the federal government, specifically given by the U.S. Constitution These include: coining money, regulating trade, making immigration law, declaring war and funding & regulating armed forces.

Implied powers – Powers of the national government that are not specifically listed in the Constitution, but which Congress can reasonably claim as part of their responsibilities.

Necessary and Proper Clause – Gives Congress the powers to make all laws necessary
And proper to carry out powers specifically delegated to them by the Constitution.

Elastic Clause – Also called the Necessary and Proper Clause.

Supremacy Clause – Article 4, states that it (the Constitution) is the “Supreme Law of the Land”, this means that when state and federal law are in conflict, the Constitution supersedes all state and local laws.

The Bill of Rights – First 10 Amendments to the U.S. Constitution – details specific freedoms that belong to each American citizen.

Veto power – The power of the president to reject a Bill and send it back to Congress.

Delegated powers – Powers that are clearly spelled out in the Constitution for the federal gov't
SEE Enumerated powers.

Reserved powers – Powers granted to the states. These include marriage laws, driving laws, traffic regulations, maintaining education systems, conducting elections.

Concurrent powers – Powers shared by the federal and state gov'ts under the U.S. Constitution.

Commerce Clause – The power of Congress to regulate all foreign trade.

Independent judiciary – A system of judges and courts that is separate from other branches of gov't.

Original intent – What the framers of the U.S. Constitution meant or were trying

Precedent – A decision by a court that serves as an example or guide for future decisions.

Civil liberties – Basic freedoms that are considered to be the birthright of all individuals. This includes Freedom of speech, religion, assembly.

Civil rights – Guarantees of equal rights & equal treatment under the law, such as trial by jury & voting rights.

Equal Protection Clause – 4 Amendment – It is unlawful for a state to deny “equal protection under the laws” to any person within that state.

Incorporation – The process by which the Supreme Court applies the Bill of Rights to the states through the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment

Secular – Not religious or spiritual in nature

Libel – A written statement that is known to be untrue and intended to cause damage.

Slander – Speech that is known to be untrue and is intended to cause damage.

Obscenity – Speech or other forms of expression considered offensive to conventional Standards or decency.

Symbolic speech – Conduct (like burning a flag) that conveys a message without spoken words

Prior restraint – A gov't attempt to prevent the publication or broadcast of material considered harmful.

Warrant – A document issued by a judge that authorizes law enforcement officers to carry out a search, seizure of evidence or arrest.

Probable cause – Reasonable suspicion of criminal behavior.

Self-incrimination – Statements, usually made under oath, suggesting that the person speaking is guilty of a crime

Takings Clause – 5th Amendment, Prohibits the gov't from taking private property for public use “without just compensation”.

Bail – Money given over to a court in exchange for a criminal suspect's release from jail until his/her trial.

Capital punishment – The imposition of the death penalty on a person by the state.

Consent of the governed – A principle that the only real or legitimate government is one where the authority of a government is based on the **consent** of the people, as expressed by votes in elections.

Legislative Branch – Branch of the gov't that makes the Laws –The House of Representatives & Senate.

Executive Branch – The branch of gov't that carries out the laws and daily operation of the government. It is headed by a president & vice president.

Judicial Branch - The branch of government that interprets laws. These judges interpret the Constitution and sees that laws are constitutional and are fairly applied.

Reserved powers – Powers kept by the states under the U.S. Constitution.

Representative – A person elected to act on behalf of other citizens.

Departments – One of the major parts of a company, organization, gov't or school. Functional or territorial division as a major administrative division of a government.

Regulations – An official rule or law that says how something should be done. A rule or order issued by an executive authority or regulatory agency of a gov't & having the force of law.

Economy – The process or system by which goods & services are produced, sold & bought in a Country or region. Includes the factors of production and their system of money.

Market economy – Economic system that relies mainly on markets to determine what goods & services to produce & how to produce them.

Command economy – An economics system that relies mainly on the central gov't to determine what goods and services to produce & how to produce them.

Mixed economy – Economic system that combines market forces with elements of a command Economy.

Incentive – Something that encourages a person to do something or to work harder.

Competition – Actions that are done by people, companies, etc. that are competing against each other. A company selling similar products, or a politician running for the same office.

Innovation - The introduction of something new, such as a method, product or technology. Most often, the innovation will replace the previous version, making it outdated or obsolete.

Supply – The amount of products or resources available to purchase.

Demand – The amount of products or resources wanted at a specified price & time.

Opportunity cost – The value of the next best alternative that is given up when making a choice; a measure of what you must give up to get what you want.

Scarcity – The condition that exists because people have limited resources, but unlimited wants.

Tariffs – A tax on goods coming into or leaving a country.

Budget – A spending plan indicating income and expenses during a given time.

Mandatory spending – Assigned spending. Expenditures required by law to be allocated in specified ways.

Discretionary spending – Spending that is not fixed and can be raised or lowered by the legislative body.

Debt – Money on loan that is owed to a person, bank, company, etc....

Currency – The money that a country uses: A specific kind of money

Deposit – To put money in a bank account, or provide a form of down payment.

Loan – A transaction in which a lender gives money in exchange for future repayment.

Interest – A charge for borrowed money generally a percentage of the amount borrowed.

Inflation- A continual increase in the overall price of goods & services in an economy.

Reserve – A required portion of deposits that must be kept on hand by a financial institution.

Investment – The outlay of money usually for the intention of financial gain.

Credit reporting – A record of having borrowed & repaid money in the past.

Civics Vocabulary Terms for Units 5 to 8

Criminal law –The branch of law that regulates conduct and behavior of individuals, defines crimes and provides punishment for criminal actions.

Civil law – The branch of law that concerns the relationships between private parties.

Military law - Governs the behavior of men and women in the United States military.

Constitutional law – The area of law concerning the Constitution and Supreme Court decisions interpreting the Constitution

Burden of proof – The obligation in a legal case to prove allegations by presenting strong supporting evidence: in a criminal case this burden rests on the prosecution, in a civil case it rest on the plaintiff.

Defendant – Person or party in a criminal trial who is charged with committing a crime, or the person or party being sued in a civil case.

Prosecution – Attorneys representing the government and the people in a criminal case.

Plaintiff – The person or party who brings a lawsuit or legal action against another party in a Civil case

Writ of certiorari – An order from the Supreme Court to lower court to provide the records Of a case the Court has decided to review.

Legal brief – Written document drawn up by an attorney that presents the facts and points of law in a legal case.

Marbury v. Madison A landmark Supreme Court decision that established the US Supreme Courts right of judicial review. (deciding whether laws passed by Congress are constitutional). Supreme Court case in which a man was asking the court to force the executive branch to give him a job which the former president had appointed him to. The Supreme Court decided that they could not force the government to do this, but they do have judicial review.

Plessy v. Ferguson – A landmark Supreme Court decision that supported "Separate, but equal" was constitutional. Upholds state laws requiring segregation of rail cars. The Supreme Court decided that blacks and whites can be separated if the separate facilities are equal.

Brown v. Board of Education – A landmark Supreme Court decision that overturned Plessy v. Ferguson and declared “Separate but Equal” to be unconstitutional. This Supreme Court case dealt with racial segregation in schools. The Supreme Court decided that separating blacks and whites is not constitutional because separate is never equal.

Gideon v. Wainwright – A landmark Supreme Court decision (Florida) that declares all criminal defendants have the right to an attorney even if they cannot afford to hire one. Also a speedy trial. Previously, only capital offense defendants were given a free attorney.

Miranda v. Arizona – A landmark Supreme Court decision in which the court ruled that all persons suspected of a crime must be told they have the right to remain silent before police question them. Supreme Court case in which a poor Mexican immigrant was arrested and interrogated but did not know he had a right to remain silent, so he confessed to the crimes he was accused of committing. As a result, people are read the Miranda Warning, before questioning.

Tinker v. Des Moines – A landmark Supreme Court decision regarding public school students' constitutional rights while at school. This case was about black armbands worn to school to protest the war in Vietnam. The Supreme Court decided that schools must respect the first amendment rights of students, but that free speech and expression cannot disrupt the education system.

Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier – A Supreme Court decision regarding students “Freedom of Speech” on campus. Students wanted to publish a school newspaper that included subject matter the school administration felt was inappropriate. The Supreme Court ruled that schools have the right to limit students' first amendment rights of expression when it involves school activities.

United States v. Nixon – A Landmark Supreme Court decision regarding “Executive Privilege” of the President and executive branch. The president was under investigation for possible criminal conduct. The court ruled that President Richard Nixon was required to turn over secret tapes of White House conversations. The court felt that the Due process of law more important than "executive privilege" right.

Bush v. Gore - After issues with voters' ballots in the 2000 presidential election in Florida, the FL Supreme Court issued a recount. The US Supreme Court then ruled the action to be unconstitutional, since in essence the FL Supreme Court was creating a new election law (something they cannot do). The recount was stopped and George Bush declared the winner in Florida. The Florida victory gave Bush the electoral votes needed for a national win. The Supreme Court decided that Gore did not have the right to a recount, and so Bush won the election.

Citizenship – The status of being a United States Citizen. This can come by birth in America, or to American parents. This can also come through naturalization, the legal process a non-citizen can follow to become a citizen.

Jim Crow laws – Laws created after the civil war that enforced segregation & denied legal equality to African Americans.

Lawful permanent residents – An immigrant who is legally authorized to live & work in the U.S. Citizen; also known as a resident alien or legal resident

Undocumented immigrant – A person who has come to the United States to live & work without going through the legal process required to attain legal papers and status.

Naturalization – A legal process through which a person who is not born a US citizen can become a citizen of that country.

Resident aliens – An immigrant who has legal status in the United States, a lawful permanent Resident.

Green card – The documentation given to a lawful permanent as proof that he can reside and work in the United States.

Political culture – A society framework of shared values, beliefs & attitudes concerning politics & gov't.

Ideology – A basic set of political beliefs about the roles of gov't & the individual in society.

Liberalism – An political ideology that favors a large government providing limitless services in efforts to solve society's problems

Conservatism – A political ideology favoring a small government and private sector agencies and churches to solve society's problems.

Libertarianism – (Libertarian) Their ideology is to want the absolute least amount of government possible.

Environmentalism – An ideology that emphasizes conservation and protection of the environment.

Democratic socialism – An ideology that supports socialism as a basis for the economy & democracy as a governing principle.

Centrism – An ideology at the middle of the political spectrum that combines elements of both liberal & conservative thought.

Social capital – The attitude, spirit & willingness of people to engage together in civic Activities; the connections & bonds that people can draw on to solve common problems.

Foreign policy – A course of action developed by a country's leaders to pursue the nation's vital interests in its dealings with other countries.

Nationalization – A legal process through which a person not granted citizenship by birth can become a citizen of that country.

Embargo – A ban on trade with another country.

Visa – An official document issued by a country's gov't allowing a foreigner to enter & travel in that country.

Mediate – To attempt to solve a dispute by working with both sides to reach an agreement.

Globalization – The trend toward more open or less restricted & free travel, trade & Communication among nations & their peoples.

Patents – A grant from the gov't that gives an inventor the exclusive right to make or sell an Invention.

Copyright – The legal right granted to creators of original works – such as books, music, art & software – to control the production, sale or distribution of those works.

Counterfeiting – The illegal copying & sale of items protected by patents; also the forging of money.

Piracy- The illegal use of copyrighted intellectual property, such as movies or software.

Diplomacy – The art & practice of managing communication & relationships between nations.

Ambassador – A diplomatic official of the highest rank sent by one country as it's long-term representative to another country or to an international organization.

Embassy – The official headquarters of an ambassador & his or her staff.

Diplomatic immunity – International law that protects diplomats & their families from being arrested or tried in countries other than their own.

Diplomatic recognition – Official acceptance of a regime as the legitimate gov't of its country.

Summits – A gathering of heads of state or other high-ranking officials to discuss matters of great importance to their countries.

Bilateral – Foreign policy or action having to do with 2 countries

Multilateral – Foreign policy or action having to do with 3 or more countries.

Most-favored-nation clause – A clause in a U.S. trade agreement that grants trade advantages to a foreign country doing business with the U.S.

Sanctions – A measure taken by 1 or more nations to pressure another country into changing its policies or complying with international.

Intelligence – Information about the activities & intentions of other countries.

Covert actions – A secret operation that supports a country's foreign policy.

Boycott – A refusal to buy a country's goods or to take part in an international event involving that country as a protest against the country's policies.

Ethnic cleansing – The mass removal & murder of an ethnic group in a particular area.

Isolationism – The foreign policy view that the U. S. should withdraw from world affairs.

Containment – The foreign policy view that the U.S. should contain or control, aggressive nations that threaten world peace.

Disengagement – The foreign policy view that the U.S. should avoid military actions in other parts of the world

Antiterrorism – The proactive defense against individual terrorist and terror groups.

Weapons of mass destruction – Weapons that can produce widespread death & destruction, such as nuclear or chemical weapons.

Comparative - The way in which a good or service can be delivered in relation to how another company can deliver the good or service.

Advantages – So as to give a favorable impression.

Entrepreneurship – A person who is willing to risk the loss of his own capital in order to make money.

Career – The long-term occupation or profession of a person.

Job – A position (duty or function) at which one regularly works for pay.

Resume' – A document that chronicles the history of a person's work experience, most often used when trying to get a job.

Goals – Something that you are trying to do or achieve.

Employment – The job a person currently hold, the status of having a job.