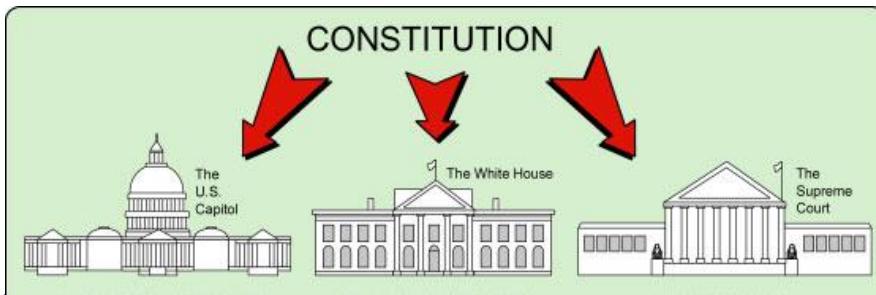


US Government and Politics – Background Knowledge Crib Sheet

Fundamentals



The constitution established three branches of Government. Explain the powers that each is granted by the constitution.

The **Four Pillars** of American democracy are:

1. Social Contract Theory
2. Representative Democracy
3. Federalism
4. Separation of Powers

Explain each of these.



Judicial Interpretation: Loose / Strict Constructionism

Explain the difference between these two concepts, with examples of court cases and justices.



JEFFERSON VS. HAMILTON

This was the big constitutional battle between the founding fathers. Can you answer the following questions:

- Why did the framers desire limited government?
- What was the concept of popular sovereignty?
- What was the disagreement at the Philadelphia convention over?
- What was the Connecticut Compromise?
- What evidence is there for the view that Alexander Hamilton was an anti-federalist who wanted to increase the power of the government?
- What evidence is there for the view that Thomas Jefferson was a federalist in favour of state power?

THE US CONSTITUTION:

The constitution is comprised of seven articles and 27 amendments

- In what way did Montesqieu influence the framers?
- In what way did John Locke influence the framers?
- In what way did Thomas Paine influence the framers?
- Briefly explain what each article outlines.
- The US has **constitutional sovereignty** – what does this mean and why is it so crucial to American politics?
- What were the federalist papers and what did they seek to explain?
- Why is the bill of rights so important?
- How can the constitution be amended?
- How did judicial review come about in the US?
- Richard Neustadt claimed that, in reality, the US constitution creates 'sharing of powers, rather than separation of powers. What evidence is there to support his view?



Synopticity

The most difficult skill you will face in Politics is the making of synoptic links between systems and ideas. There are **three approaches** to analysing politics that will help. Explain each of the following:

1. The structural approach
2. The rational approach
3. The cultural approach