



Federal Government: SS.7.CG.1.9
Limits on Government Power
VIDEO SCRIPT THREE



1. As a reminder, constitutional government is based on a written set of laws that all citizens agree to, and that written set of laws is called a constitution. The US Constitution includes the principle of limited government. Limited government is the idea that the government can do only what the people allow it to do. Checks and Balances, Separation of Powers, Individual Rights, Rule of Law and Due Process of Law are all ways in which the power of government is limited.
2. After watching this video, you will be able to:
 - explain the concept of limited government in the U.S. Constitution.
 - recognize the influence of the U.S. Constitution on the development of other governments.
3. Remember, a constitution is a written set of laws that all citizens agree to, and a constitutional government is based on that set of laws. The Founding Fathers set a precedent around the globe by drafting the U.S. Constitution. It was a landmark event in the history of governments, and reinforced the idea that governments should be ruled through the consent of the governed instead of monarchs or elites. The will of the people would be stronger than a tyrannical government.
4. This concept of a republican government inspired European colonies such as Mexico and the Philippines, and dynasties in China to reform the oppressive governments they lived under. They cited works such as Rights of Man by Thomas Paine, separation of powers, and the idea of developing their own freely elected governments with more limited power.
5. The United States was the first nation to create a federal level of government with an elected head of state called “President” that is constitutionally created. Modern countries such as France, Liberia Australia, Canada, Germany, and Switzerland have referenced the U.S. Constitution when creating their governments.
6. One important feature that is evident in most constitutions, is the creation of a Bill of Rights, or a list of personal freedoms for the people that are protected by that constitution. The Founding Fathers knew that there could not be a supreme and fundamental law without a separate document listing individual rights. The authority of a government cannot be based on good intentions alone, as mentioned by James Madison (1788) in essay No.51 of the Federalist Papers.

7. **“If Men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and the next place, oblige it to control itself.”**

8. Perhaps the most important places we see the influence of the US Constitution on other governments, though, is own our country, and that is at the level of the individual states!

9. Each state in the Union is guaranteed, by our Constitution in Article IV, Section 4, a republican form of government. Each state in the United States has a state constitution and structure very similar to that of our federal or national government. This includes limits on government powers through three branches of government with separation of powers and checks and balances. The state constitutions provisions for due process and the rule of law and also contain a bill of rights of some kind to protect individual rights.

10. Let's check in. Try to answer the following in your own words. How did the US Constitution influence the development of other governments outside of the United States?

ANSWER

11. How did the U.S. Constitution influence the development of state governments?

ANSWER

12. Let's recap what we learned in this video. The US Constitution influenced the development of governments outside of the United States through the creation of a federal system, the protection of individual rights, and limiting government power. The US Constitution also served as a model for state governments in developing their own constitutions.

13. So our US Constitution, the longest active written constitution in the world today, serves not only as an example of good government for us, but for other nations and for our states. It is important then we work to understand and protect the rights, liberties, and responsibilities that that documents offers!

14. Be sure to check out the other videos on limited government to learn more about our Constitution and more principles of limited government.