

AP U.S. Government and Politics

TOPICAL REVIEW

CONSTITUTIONAL UNDERPINNINGS

- I.) **Origins of the Constitution**
- a. American Revolution
 - i. colonists had been forced to pay off the debt from the French & Indian War
 - ii. tax had been imposed without the consent of the colonists
 - iii. Declaration of Independence a polemic w/ underlying ideals of the Enlightenment
 - b. The English Political Heritage
 - i. all colonies had either a charter or a constitution
 - ii. Magna Carta, Petition of Right, English Bill of Rights= limited power of the king & guaranteed the rights of people
 - c. The Enlightenment
 - i. writings of Locke, Montesqueiu, Rousseau, and Beccaria, *Voltaire*
 - ii. natural rights, consent of the governed, limited government, separation of powers
 - iii. life, liberty, and property
 - iv. if not provided, people CAN rebel
 - d. Articles of Confederation
 - i. a complete failure
 - ii. established a government dominated by the states
 - iii. federal government possessed little power (could not tax)
 - iv. increased power of farmers- took power from traditionally strong upper classes: Shay's Rebellion
- II.) **The Convention**
- a. 55 delegates all agreed on:
 - i. human nature- the role of government was to contain natural self- interest
 - ii. political conflict- unequal distribution of wealth was the main cause of conflict
 - iii. object of government- preservation of property
 - iv. nature of government- limited government w/ checks and balances
 - b. Representation
 - i. New Jersey Plan- equal representation
 - ii. Virginia Plan- proportional representation
 - iii. Great Compromise
 - iv. 3/5s Compromise- population AND taxation
 - v. suffrage to states
 - c. Economy
 - i. wanted to centralize economic power under federal government
 - ii. taxation, national debt, currency
 - d. Rights
 - i. cannot suspend habeas corpus
 - ii. prohibits bills of attainder
 - iii. prohibits ex post facto punishment