

Key Principles in the U.S. Constitution

Directions: Using the text of the U.S. Constitution (including amendments), record evidence/examples of how the Constitution and government of the United States reflects and upholds these principles.

Principle	What It Means	What It Looks Like
checks and balances	a principle of government that allows each branch of government to limit the power of the other branches	
consent of the governed	the idea that government gains its power/authority from the people	
democracy	a form of government in which political power is held by the people; can be direct (each individual person makes decisions) or indirect (people elect representatives to make decisions)	
due process of law	the right of people accused of crimes to have laws that treat them fairly, so that they cannot lose their life or freedom without having their legal rights protected	
federalism	a system of government in which power is divided and shared between national, state, and local governments	

individual rights	rights guaranteed or belonging to a person	
limited government	a government that has been limited in power, such as by a constitution, or written agreement	
representative government	a type of government that allows people to vote and elect government officials to represent their beliefs and make decisions on their behalf	
republicanism	the political belief that the best form of government is one where citizens choose their representatives and leaders and actively participate in civic life for the common good of the nation/community	
rule of law	those who govern must follow the laws; no one is above the law	
separation of powers	a structure of government that sets up different branches with their own distinct powers and responsibilities	

