

A low-angle photograph of the Georgia State Capitol dome, showing the golden dome and the statue of Liberty atop the spire against a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Georgia Studies

Unit 4 –Government

Lesson 1 – Foundations of Government

Study Presentation

Lesson 1 - Foundations of Government

- **ESSENTIAL QUESTION**

- How does the structure of Georgia's government ensure that its citizens are fairly represented?
- How do political parties serve the purpose of voters with different opinions?

Government

- **Democracy** – Government where the power is held by the people (who vote for their leaders).
- **Government** - Social institution set up to promote and protect society through formal rules and services.
- Three main levels of government:
 - **Federal** – Government for the country (i.e. U.S.).
 - **State** – Government that rules over an individual state (i.e. Georgia).
 - Local – County of city (municipal) governments.

U.S. Constitution

- Adopted on September 17, 1787, by the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. Later ratified by conventions in each state.
- The Constitution consists of a **preamble** (opening paragraph), seven original articles, and twenty-seven **amendments** (the first ten of which are known as the **Bill of Rights**).
- **Amendments** – Changes or additions to a constitution.
- The seven original articles of the Constitution discuss the three branches (Legislative, Executive, and Judicial), amendment procedures, and powers given to the state and federal governments.

GA State Constitution

- **Constitution** – A set of laws for a nation or state. The US Constitution established the Federal Government for the United States. The Georgia Constitution established the government for the state of Georgia.
- **Georgia's Constitution**, like the US Constitution, contains a preamble (introduction) and a Bill of Rights (a section containing a list of rights and government limits).
- The Georgia Constitution created a government similar to the US Federal Government. Both have three branches (Legislative, Executive, and Judicial) and contain the systems of Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances.

GA State Constitution

- **Separation of Powers** – Each of the three branches of government have different jobs:
 - **Legislative** – Makes the rules or laws that people must obey.
 - **Executive** – Head, or leader, of the government. Enforces the laws.
 - **Judicial** – Interprets, or judges, the laws.
- **Checks and Balances** – System created to ensure that none of the three branches of government become too powerful, or more powerful than any of the other branches.
- General Elections are held in November of even numbered years to elect members of our government.

Rights and Responsibilities

- **Rights** – Standard or law that ensures that governments and other institutions protect people's freedom and treat people equally in society and politics.
- **Responsibility** – Knowledge that actions have consequences, and that these consequences effect other people.
- People living in the US and in GA have certain rights guaranteed to them in the Federal and State Bill of Rights. If people break laws and violate other people's rights they will face consequences (arrests and court hearings).

Voting Requirements

- Article II of GA's Constitution lists **voting requirements**.
- To register to vote in GA, people must be 18 years old, be a citizen of the United States, and live in the county of GA where they wish to vote.
- People who have been convicted of certain crimes or who have certain mental disabilities may not be allowed to vote.
- Every two years Georgians vote for members of the state's General Assembly. Every four years there are elections to choose the governor and lieutenant governor of the state.
- Voters registered to vote in GA also vote in national elections for the president, vice president, and members of the US Congress (House of Representatives and Senate).

Political Parties

- **Political Party** – Political organizations that attempt to gain and maintain power by participating in electoral elections.
- The United States is a two-party system (Democrats and Republicans). In a two-party system two political parties dominate to such an extent that electoral success under the banner of any other party is extremely difficult.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Georgia Flag

"I pledge allegiance to the Georgia flag and to the principles for which it stands; Wisdom, Justice, and Moderation."

- Approved: March 28, 1935
- **Wisdom** – good sense; a wise attitude, belief, or course of action
- **Justice** - the quality of being just, impartial, or fair; the quality of conforming to law
- **Moderation** – avoiding extremes of behavior or expression : observing reasonable limits

Georgia State Seal and the Georgia Flag

Georgia State Seal



Georgia State Flag



- The current Georgia state flag (adopted in 2004) features the state seal, surrounded by thirteen stars, which represent the original American colonies, placed on the first national flag of the Confederacy.