**Popular Sovereignty**

- The power to rule comes from the **people**.
- *“Consent of the Governed”*
- The Constitution established popular sovereignty in the preamble:
  
  “We the People... establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

**Republicanism**

- **Republicanism** is based on the belief that people exercise their power by voting for their political representatives.
- Article 4, Section 4, of the Constitution also calls for every state to have a "republican form of government.”
- A republic is a form of government in which the supreme power rests in the body of citizens entitled to vote and is exercised by representatives chosen directly or indirectly by them.
- In a republic, people elect others to represent them in the government.

**Federalism**

- **Federalism** is a system of government in which the states and national government share powers.
  - The **Framers** used federalism to structure the Constitution.
  - The Constitution assigns certain powers to the national government. These are **delegated powers**.
  - Powers kept by the states are **reserved powers**.
    - **Reserve Clause**: Amendment 10 states: “The powers not delegated to the United States...are reserved to the states...”
  - Powers shared or exercised by national and state governments are known as **concurrent powers**.
Separation of Powers

- Established in order to avoid having too much power fall into the hands of a single group.
- This principle creates the division of basic government roles into 3 branches. No one branch is given all the power.
- Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the Constitution detail how powers are split among the three branches.

Checks and Balances

- Based on the philosophy of Baron de Montesquieu, an 18th-century French thinker, “Power should be a check to power.”
- Each branch of government can exercise checks, or controls, over the other branches. Though the branches of government are separate, they rely on one another to perform the work of government.
- This ensures that the branches work together fairly.
- Each of the first 3 articles outlines the powers of the branches and their checks and balances power.

Limited Government

- Everyone, citizens and powerful leaders alike, must obey the law. Individuals or groups cannot twist or bypass the law to serve their own interests.
- Article I, Section 9 of the Constitution lists the powers denied to Congress. Article I, Section 10, forbids the states to take certain actions.
- Amendments 1-6 and 8 limit government power to protect the rights of American citizens.
- 9th Amendment
  - The enumerated (listed) rights of the people.
- 10th Amendment
  - The delegated powers of the federal government versus the reserved powers.

Individual Rights

- The first ten amendments to the Constitution shield people from an overly powerful government. These amendments are called the Bill of Rights.
- The Bill of Rights guarantees certain individual rights, or personal liberties and privileges.
Principles of the Constitution

The Constitution and laws define the limits of those in power so they cannot take advantage of their elected or appointed positions. Everyone, including all authority figures, must obey the laws (rule of law). Government is restricted in what it may do.

The distribution of power between a federal government and the states within a union. In the Constitution, certain powers are delegated (given) to only states, others only to the federal government, and others are shared powers.

The concept that political power rests with the people who can create, alter, and abolish government. People express themselves through voting and free participation in government.
Dividing government power between the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch.

The system in the Constitution that allows each branch the ability to limit the powers of the other two. This keeps one branch of government from becoming too powerful.

A philosophy of limited government with elected representatives serving at the will of the people; government is based on the consent of the governed.

The rights of citizens are protected in the Bill of Rights that was added to the Constitution in 1791 as the first ten amendments. They include economic rights related to property, political rights related to freedom of speech and press, and personal rights related to bearing arms and maintaining private residences.