American Government and Politics in the Information Age Version 3 0 3rd edition Paletz Solutions Manual

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Chapter 2

The Constitution and the Structure of Government Power

1.The First American Political System

- What was the Stamp Act Congress?
- What was the Continental Congress?
- What are the principles contained in the Declaration of Independence?
- What were the Articles of Confederation?

Section Outline

- By the mid-eighteenth century, Britain's thirteen colonies stretched across the east coast, each represented by an appointed governor and an elected legislature. The colonial assemblies, standing for the colonialists' right of self-government, clashed with the royal governors over issues of power and policies.
- To recoup expenses borne defending the colonies, the British instituted the first ever direct internal taxes in North America. The most famous, the Stamp Act, required the use of paper embossed with the royal seal to prove that taxes had been paid.
- The Stamp Act Congress met in 1765 and successfully convinced the British to annul the taxes on newspapers and pamphlets.
- The Continental Congress met, after the British awarded exclusive sales rights of tea to the East India Company, to convince the British to reverse this policy. Their petitions were rebuffed.
- The **Declaration of Independence**, issued on July 4, 1776, announced that the thirteen colonies were independent of Britain. Its point-by-point charges against British rule give equal weight to how the king damaged America's economic interests and how he ignored principles of self-government.
- Principles contained in the Declaration of Independence include democracy and self –government.
- The **Articles of Confederation** were the first political constitution for the government of the United States, which codified the Continental Congress's practices and powers: to make war and peace, send and receive ambassadors, enter treaties and alliances, coin money, regulate Indian affairs, and run a post office. It restricted the national government.

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Key Takeaways

- The first American political system, expressed in the Articles of Confederation, reflected a distrust of a national government.
- The national government's powers were deliberately limited in order to allow Americans to govern themselves in their cities and states.

Exercises

1. What was it about the Stamp Act and the decision to award a monopoly on the sale of tea to the East India Company that helped bring the American colonies together? What were the motivations for forming the first Congresses?
2. In what way is the Declaration of Independence's idea that "all men are created equal" a democratic principle? In what sense are people equal if, in practice, they are all different from one another?
3. What were the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation? Do you think the American government would be able to function if it were still a confederation? Why or why not?

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2. Creating and Ratifying the Constitution

- What was Shay's Rebellion?
- What was the Constitutional Convention?
- What were the three cross-cutting divides at the Constitutional Convention?
- What were the main compromises at the Constitutional Convention?
- Who were the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists?
- What factors explain ratification of the constitution?

Section Outline

- An armed insurrection by debt-ridden farmers to prevent county courts from foreclosing mortgages on their farms took place in Massachusetts in 1786-1787, known as Shays's Rebellion. The Continental Congress voted unanimously to raise an army to put down the rebellion but could not get the states to provide the funds, so the army never assembled. This rebellion, and other issues resulting from the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation, convinced political leaders that change was needed.
- The **Constitutional Convention** convened in 1787 to propose limited reforms to the Articles of Confederation. A new national government instead replaced the Articles. Delegates, not representative of the American people and excluding Rhode Island, were selected and the process was conducted in secrecy.
- There were three cross-cutting divides at the Constitutional Convention: large versus small states, cosmopolitan versus parochial, and slave versus free states.
- There were many compromises at the Constitutional Convention regarding issues such as representation, slavery, and state's rights.
- The Constitutional Convention responded to ideas, not just interests. Delegates sought to replace democracy with a republic, in which officials would be chosen to act on the people's behalf. Federalist No. 10 makes the case, expressing concern over the threat of **factions.**
- Ratification of the Constitution was urged by The Federalist Papers, written by Hamilton, Jay, and Madison. However, ratification was not easy to win. In most states, property qualifications for voting had broadened from landholding to taxpaying, thereby including most white men.
- Newspapers boosted the Federalist cause. Anti-Federalist arguments were rarely printed and even less often copied by other newspapers.
- Not all states were eager to ratify the Constitution, especially since it did not specify what the federal government could not do and did not include a **Bill of Rights**. Once nine states had ratified it, Madison was elected to the first Congress and proposed a Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the Constitution.

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Key Takeaways

- The Constitution was a political document, drafted for political purposes, by skillful politicians who deployed shrewd media strategies.
- At the Constitutional Convention, they reconciled different ideas and base self-interests. Through savvy compromises, they resolved cross-cutting divisions and achieved agreement on such difficult issues as slavery and electing the executive.
- In obtaining ratification of the Constitution, they adroitly outmaneuvered or placated their opponents. The eighteenth-century press was crucial to the Constitution's success by keeping its proceedings secret and supporting ratification.

Exercises

1. From what James Madison says in Federalist No. 10, what economic interests was the Constitution designed to protect? Do you agree that the liberty to accumulate wealth is an essential part of liberty?
2. What did James Madison mean by "factions," and what danger did they pose? How did he hope to avoid the problems factions could cause?
3. Why were the Constitutional Convention's deliberations kept secret? Do you think it was a good idea to keep them secret? Why or why not?
4. What were the main divisions that cut across the Constitutional Convention? What compromises bridged each of these divisions?

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3. Constitutional Principles and Provisions

- What is the separation of powers?
- What are checks and balances?
- What is bicameralism?
- What are the Articles of the Constitution?
- What is the Bill of Rights?

Section Outline

- The **separation of powers** and the distinct powers of each branch of government was a crucial and major time-consuming aspect of the convention.
- The **checks and balances** that were placed throughout the document were considered necessary to prevent too strong a central government. This system allows each branch the ability to respond, and if necessary, block the actions of the other branches.
- **Bicameralism** is a system in which there are two separate chambers within the legislature, such as the House of Representatives and the Senate. One chamber was supposed to provide a close link to the people, the other to add wisdom.
- The US political system is designed to prevent quick agreement within the legislature and between the branches. Accomplishing any goal requires navigating a complex obstacle course. Exceptions occur in response to dire situations such as a financial crisis or external attack.
- There are only seven sections or "articles" of the Constitution, after the preamble, which deal with the formation and workings of a new government.
- The Articles of the Constitution include the formation of the branches, the obligations of the states and between the states and national government, how to amend the constitution, the supremacy clause, and the ratification of the new Constitution.
- The Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments ratified by the states in 1791, define civil liberties to which individuals are entitled.
- The Constitution is sometimes silent or vague, making it flexible and adaptable to new circumstances. Interpretations of constitutional provisions by the three branches of government have resulted in changes in political organization and practice.
- The Supreme Court is today at center stage in interpreting the Constitution.
- Specific sections of the Constitution have evolved greatly through new practices.
- The Constitution is silent about various **intermediary institutions**—political parties, interest groups, and the media—that link the government with the people and bridge gaps caused by a separation-of-powers system.

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Key Takeaways

- The Constitution established a national government distinguished by federalism, separation of powers, checks and balances, and bicameralism.
- Power was divided and conflicting institutions were created—between three branches of government, across two chambers of the legislature, and between national and state levels.
- While the structure The Constitution created remains the same, the Constitution has been changed by amendments, interpretation, new practices, and intermediary institutions. Thus, the Constitution operates in a system that is democratic far beyond the founders' expectations.

Exercises

1. Why was conflict between the different branches of government built into the Constitution? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a system of checks and balances?
2. How is the Constitution different from the Articles of Confederation? How did the authors of the Constitution address the concerns of those who worried that the new federal government would be too strong?
3. What do you think is missing from the Constitution? Are there any constitutional amendments you would propose?

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4. The Constitution in the Information Age

- How does the media portray the Constitution?
- How does the media depict the politicians charged with fulfulling the Constitution's vision of public life?
- What are the effects of the media's depiction of the Constitution?

Section Outline

- The Constitution is considered a **sacred document** by many in the media and elsewhere. The media rarely show the Constitution or the structure of the political system as a cause of political problems.
- The Constitution is usually presented in a favorable light by most media outlets since the system has worked well since its inception and the media have been given many freedoms not allowed to the press in other countries.
- It is the essential framework for the work of reporters as well as politicians. Reporters rely on order and regularity to perform their job day in, day out. It also gives the media an easy symbol with which they can display their idealism.
- However, media depictions of the politicians charged with fulfilling the Constitution's vision in public life are far less positive.
- Reporters and the mass media often criticize American politicians for "squabbling" and "bickering." But the separation of powers, as the founder designed it, is supposed to encourage conflict within the legislature and between the three branches.
- This positive media portrayal of the Constitution encourages reverence for the political system, even when there is criticism of the officials.
- Americans rarely question the Constitution itself, but they often disagree and debate over how its principles should be applied. Rather than criticizing the institutions the public is highly critical of how officials are handling their jobs.

Key Takeaways

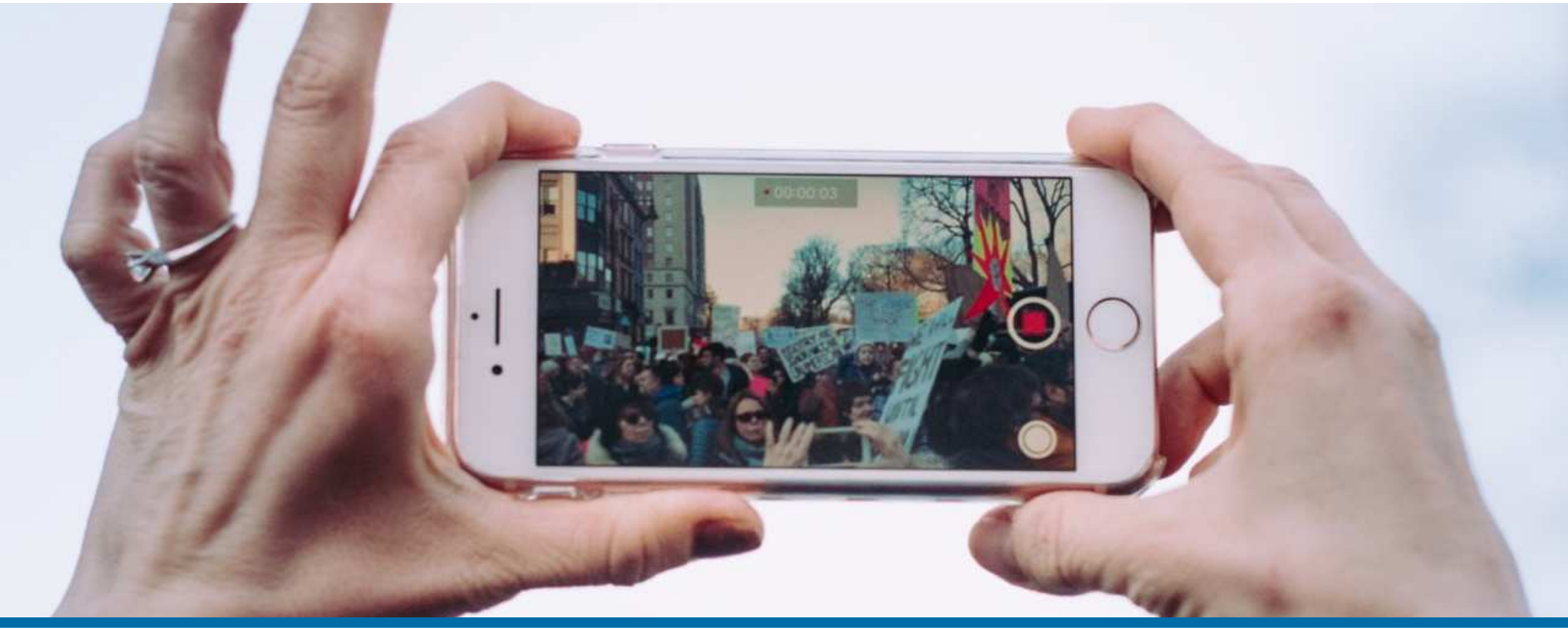
- The media usually portray the Constitution and most of the institutions it established favorably and above politics.
- Yet, the Constitution was—and remains—a political document created and developed in political ways for political purposes.
- In part because of the media's presentation, the public finds little to criticize in the Constitution, even as it is quick to disparage public officials. Nonetheless, the Constitution continues to be the object of political engagement in the twenty-first century.

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Exercises

1. Think about the movies you've seen. Do any of them present the Constitution in a negative light? What do they see as the source of problems with the American political system, if not the Constitution?
2. Why do you think Americans tend to idealize the Constitution? Do you think there are disadvantages to having an idealized view of the Constitution?

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CHAPTER 2
The Constitution and the Structure of Government Power

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The First American Political System

Learning Objectives

- What was the Stamp Act Congress?
- What was the Continental Congress?
- What are the principles contained in the Declaration of Independence?
- What were the Articles of Confederation?

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The First American Political System

- By the mid-eighteenth century, Britain's thirteen colonies on North America's east coast stretched from Georgia to New Hampshire.
  - Each colony, and the newspapers published therein, dealt with the colonial power in London and largely ignored other colonies.
    - The **Stamp Act** required paper embossed with royal seal to prove taxes had been paid.
- Repressive policies were kept in place by the British
  - Delegates from various colonies met in, what is now called, the **Continental Congress** to address the difficulties with Britain but their petitions were rebuffed.
    - This resulted in the Continental Congress' boycott of British products and the initiation of the Revolutionary War.
  - The **Declaration of Independence**, issued on July 4, 1776, announced that the thirteen colonies were independent of Britain.
  - Drafted in 1777, the **Articles of Confederation** were the first political constitution for the government of the United States.

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Creating and Ratifying the Constitution

Learning Objectives

- What was Shays' Rebellion?
- What was the Constitutional Convention?
- What were the three cross-cutting divides at the Constitutional Convention?
- What were the main compromises at the Constitutional Convention?
- Who were the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists?
- What factors explain ratification of the Constitution?

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Creating and Ratifying the Constitution

- The Constitution was a reaction against the limitations of the Articles of Confederation and the democratic experiments begun by the Revolution as well as the Declaration of Independence.
- Shays's Rebellion occurred in Massachusetts in 1786-1787.
  - This and other issues, which resulted from the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation, convinced political leaders that change was needed.
- The **Constitutional Convention** was convened in 1787 to propose limited reforms to the Articles of Confederation.
  - The Continental Congress agreed to draft a new **Constitution** from scratch in order to create a national government superior to and independent of the states.
  - The Federalist papers, written by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, defended the political system the Constitutional Convention had crafted.

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Creating and Ratifying the Constitution

- The Constitution emerged, not so much from principled deliberations between its founders, but from a deeply political process and the necessity for compromise between competing state interests.
- Three cross-cutting divides existed among the states:
  - Large states versus small states.
  - Cosmopolitan, centrally located states (Connecticut to Virginia) versus parochial states on the northern and southern borders.
  - Southern states, reliant on slavery in their economies, versus Northern states, which were not reliant on slavery in their economies.
- The powers and structures of the Constitution resulted from a series of compromises designed to bridge these three divides.

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Creating and Ratifying the Constitution

- Popular opinion for and against ratification was evenly split. Despite obstacles, the campaign was successful in all thirteen states.
  - The advocates of the national political system created by the Constitutional Convention called themselves **Federalists**.
  - Opponents to the Constitution were called **Anti-Federalists**, though they were actually the champions of a federation of independent states.
- The US newspaper system boosted the Federalists' cause.



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Constitutional Principles and Provisions

Learning Objectives

- What is the separation of powers?
- What are checks and balances?
- What is bicameralism?
- What are the Articles of the Constitution?
- What is the Bill of Rights?

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Constitutional Principles and Provisions

- The Constitution established a national government that did not rely on the support of the states, but limited the federal government's powers by listing ("enumerating") them.
- Three key principles are the crux of the Constitution:
  - **Separation of powers.**
  - **Checks and balances.**
  - **Bicameralism.**

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Constitutional Principles and Provisions

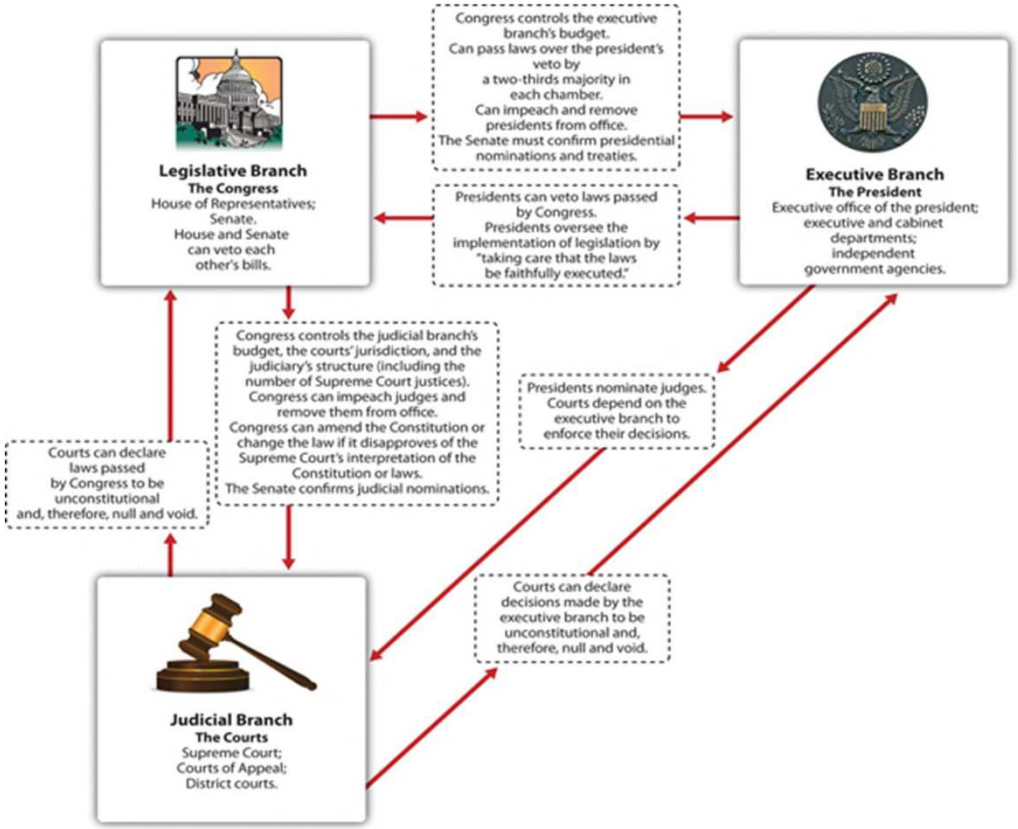
Table 2.1 The Separation of Powers and Bicameralism as Originally Established in the Constitution

Branch of Government	Term	How Selected	Distinct Powers
Legislative			
House of Representatives	2 years	Popular vote	Initiate revenue legislation; bring articles of impeachment
Senate	6 years; 3 classes staggered	Election by state legislatures	Confirm executive appointments; confirm treaties; try impeachments
Executive			
President	4 years	Electoral College	Commander-in-chief; nominate executive officers and Supreme Court justices; veto; convene both houses of Congress; issue reprieves and pardons
Judicial			
Supreme Court	Life (during good behavior)	Presidential appointment and Senate confirmation (stated more or less directly in Federalist No. 78)	Judicial review (implicitly in Constitution but stated more or less directly in Federalist No. 78)

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Constitutional Principles and Provisions

- Most governmental powers are shared among the various branches in a system of checks and balances, whereby each branch has ways to respond to, and if necessary, block the actions of the others.



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Constitutional Principles and Provisions

- Government is made yet more complex by splitting the legislature into two separate and distinct chambers—the House of Representatives and the Senate.
  - This is called **bicameralism**.
- The US political system is designed to prevent quick agreement within the legislature and between the branches.
- The text of the Constitution consists of a preamble and seven sections known as “articles”:
  - The first three articles set up the branches of government.
  - The rest of the articles deal with matters such as states’ rights versus federal rights as well as constitutional amendments.

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Constitutional Principles and Provisions

- Many crucial clauses of the Constitution today are in the amendments.
  - **The Bill of Rights**, the first ten amendments ratified by the states in 1791, defines civil liberties which individuals are entitled to.
- The Constitution is sometimes silent or vague, making it flexible and adaptable to new circumstances.
- Interpretations of constitutional provisions by the three branches of the government have resulted in changes in the political organizations and practices.
  - Today, the Supreme Court is at the center stage in interpreting the Constitution.
  - Specific sections of the Constitution have evolved greatly through new practices.

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The Constitution in the Information Age

Learning Objectives

- How does the media portray the Constitution?
- How does the media depict the politicians charged with fulfilling the Constitution's vision of public life?
- What are the effects of the media's depiction of the Constitution?

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The Constitution in the Information Age

- The official presentation of the Constitution in public buildings show it as a **sacred document**.
- The media rarely show the Constitution or the structure of the political system as a cause of political problems
  - Instead politicians are depicted as the problem.
- After the Bill of Rights was added in 1791, opposition to the Constitution collapsed and the media has treated it with reverence ever since.
  - Yet many of the media's indictments against politicians are for behaviors encouraged by the Constitution.
- This positive media portrayal of the Constitution encourages reverence for the political system even when there is criticism of the officials in that system.

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Key Terms

- **Declaration of Independence**
- **Articles of Confederation**
- **confederation**
- **Constitutional Convention**
- **factions**
- **constitution**
- **Virginia Plan**
- **New Jersey Plan**
- **Connecticut Compromise (also known as the Great Compromise)**
- **three-fifths clause**
- **Electoral College**

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Key Terms

- **Bill of Rights**
- **Federalists**
- **Anti-Federalists**
- **Federalist papers**
- **separation of powers**
- **checks and balances**
- **judicial review**
- **bicameralism**
- **supremacy clause**
- **intermediary institutions**
- **sacred document**

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