

# ROOTS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY (5)



**US DEMOCRACY  
FOUNDED ON**



**COLONIAL SELF  
GOVERNMENT**

- Charters from King
- The structure of most colonies
- Benign neglect
- Stamp Act to pay for French-Indian war--->

**RELIGIOUS ROOTS**

**Christianity**

- Equality in the eyes of God
- Natural law

**Judaism**

- Justice
- rule of law

**Judeo-Christian**

- The individual conscience answers to God

**CLASSICAL  
ROOTS**

**Greek**

- Directed democracy
- Freedom to vote

**Roman**

- Senate
- Representative government
- Civic virtue

**ENLIGHTENMENT**

**British**

- Thomas Hobbes
- John Locke

**French**

- Montesquieu
- Rousseau

**WRITTEN  
DOCUMENTS**

**Magna Carta**

- King John (1215)
- Rule of Law

**Petition of  
Rights**

- King Charles (1628)
- Limited government-->

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## English Bill of Rights

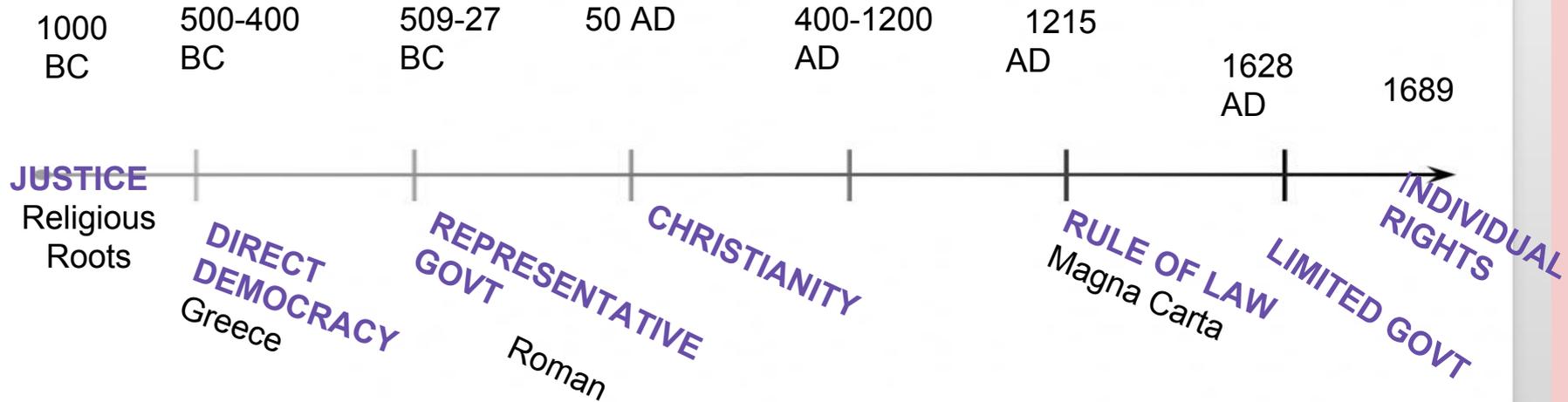
- King James 1689
- Individual Rights
- The right to petition the King
- The right to bear arms
- Freedom from cruel and unusual punishment
- Right to trial by jury
- Established the Parliaments

- The Continental Congress
- Declaration of Independence

# Foundational Concepts of American Democracy Timeline

NUMBER LINE TIMELINE TEMPLATE

TIMELINE TITLE:



## **The Roman Republic 509 BC - 27 BC**

Rome was ruled by a representative government in which citizens voted for their  
— — —  
representatives.

## **Direct Democracy in Athens 508 BC - 404 BC**

Direct democracy was established in Athens whereby every citizen voted directly for laws. They owed their loyalty to a lord, who in turn owed their allegiance to a higher lord or king. The king's power was limited by his obligations to his lords.

# Feudalism 400 - 1200 AD

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Most Europeans were bound by feudal loyalties. Peasants owed their loyalty to a lord, who in turn owed their allegiance to a higher lord or king. The king's power was limited by his obligations to his lords.

## **The Magna Carta (1215 AD)**

The King of England was forced to sign the “Great Charter” resulting in limiting his monarchical power. The King now had to consult his nobles before implementing taxes and going to war.

## **Parliament (1295)**

The King summoned his nobles, knights, bishops, and two citizens from each town in England. This established a precedent for electing representatives to form Parliament, the legislature that made laws in England.

## **Louis XIV 1661 - 1715**

Establishes an absolute monarchy and controlled all aspects of government, from the military to the treasury.

## **The Glorious Revolution 1688**

Established a limited monarchy in England in which the power of the monarchy was severely limited by the laws and traditions established by Parliament.

## **The Enlightenment 1715-1789**

The Age of Enlightenment period of the Modern era of philosophy corresponds roughly to the 18th Century. In general terms, the Enlightenment was an intellectual movement, developed mainly in France, Britain and Germany, which advocated freedom, democracy and reason as the primary values of society.

## **The US Constitution 1789**

Established a representative democracy whereby citizens vote for representatives to make laws and a president to execute the laws.

# I Roots of American Democracy

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## A. English Political Heritage

1. 1607- **Jamestown, VA** was the first permanent English settlement in North America
2. Jamestown was the birthplace of **American Democracy**
3. Settlers brought with them a political heritage built on ideas of
  - a) **Limited government**
  - b) **Representative government**
  - c) **Individual rights**

## B. Representative Government

1. The colonists elected a representative body modeled after the **English Parliament**
2. It was known as VA **House of Burgesses** and ultimately shaped the US government
3. English Parliament was first established to **advise the king** in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and it had two chambers (**House of Lords, House of Commons**)
4. As a representative assembly Parliament worked to **limit the power of the English monarchs**

## C. Limited Government

1. One of the earliest efforts to limit government was 1215  
--- when King John signed the Magna Carta (Great Charter)
2. The nobles force King John to sign this because he was taxing them
3. This was a significant move from rule of man to rule of law
4. King John conceded that kings/queens had to obey the law
5. Two important things came out of the Magna Carta:
  - a) No longer able to levy taxes without approval
  - b) People accused of crimes had the right to a trial by jury

## D. Individual Rights

1. 1628 England's legislature made King Charles I sign the Petition of Right, which required monarchs to obtain Parliament's approval before:
  - a) Levying taxes
  - b) Unlawfully imprison people
  - c) Force citizens to house soldiers
  - d) Establish military rule during times of peace
2. 1685 James II (Charles brother) took the throne. He was Catholic and the English Crown and Parliament were Protestant. This caused conflict.

3. Parliament launched a rebellion (**Glorious Revolution**) rallying behind James's daughter **Mary and her husband William** (**Protestant**)

4. 1689 the **English Bill of Rights** was signed so that monarchs could no longer:

a) **Enact laws, raise taxes, keep an army without Parliaments consent**

b) **Parliament gave privilege of free speech**

c) **All people had protection from cruel and unusual punishment**

5. Ultimate result of the Glorious revolution was the establishment of a **constitutional monarchy**

E. Colonial Experiments in early governance

1. 1620 **Mayflower Compact** agreed to form a society governed by **majority rule** and based on the consent of the people
2. 1639 **Fundamental Orders of Connecticut** **limited the power of government** and gave all free men the **right to choose people to serve as judges**
3. Each of the 13 colonies was established by a **charter** from the king guaranteeing colonists the **rights** of Englishmen

## F. Types of Colonies

1. **Proprietary**-based on a grant of land by the English monarch to a proprietor, an individual or group who financed the start of a colony
2. **Royal** –directly controlled by the king through an appointed governor
3. **Charter**- operated under charters agreed to by the colony and the king. Charter colonies enjoyed the **most independence from the Crown.**

## G. Intellectual Influences

1. **Republicanism**- refers to a broad set of ideas about representative government that can be traced back to ancient **Greece and Rome**. It highly values citizen participation, the public good, and civic virtue
2. **Republicanism was popular among the framers of the US Constitution**
3. The framers also looked at the work of Renaissance scholars:
  - a) **Niccolo Machiavelli**- In his book (1513) *Discourses on Livy*, his theory stated that the republic had to represent the three levels of society
    - **Monarch (the one)**
    - **Aristocracy (the few)**
    - **The people (the many)**
  - b) **Charles de Montesquieu**- in his works (1748) *Spirit of the Laws*, he said that government power had to be divided between the **legislative, executive, and judicial** branches of government. He called this the **separation of powers**.

## H. Enlightenment Thinkers

1. The Enlightenment was an intellectual movement that  
— — — took place in Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> C
2. It was concerned with the natural rights of life, liberty, and property
3. It was also about economic and civil liberties
4. Social contract theory, is the view that persons' moral and/or political obligations are dependent upon a contract or agreement among them to form the society in which they live.

5. Some of these intellectual thinkers were:

- \_\_a) **John Locke**- his writings (1690) *the Second Treatise on Government* was a theory on social contract where men are by nature free and equal against claims that God made all people naturally subject to a monarch
- b) **Thomas Hobbs**- believed in absolute monarchy. In (1651) he wrote *Leviathan*, which stated that people lived in a state of nature without government laws and they enjoyed complete personal freedom, but were also driven by self-interest and were constantly at war with one another.

**Locke** has been the most influential in shaping modern politics, our view of human nature, the nature of individual rights and the shape of popular constitutions that exist today; on the other hand, **Hobbes** has influenced to some degree what can be done to change a government by the people.

c) (baron de) Montesquieu- felt that no branch of the government could threaten the freedom of the people. His ideas about separation of powers became the basis for the United States Constitution. According to Montesquieu, there were three types of government: a monarchy (ruled by a king or queen), a republic (ruled by an elected leader), and a despotism (ruled by a dictator).

Despite Montesquieu's belief in the principles of a democracy, he did not feel that all people were equal.

d) **Jean-Jacques Rousseau** (1762) also wrote a *Social Contract* theory. The central claim of the work is that human beings are basically good by nature, but were corrupted by the complex historical events that resulted in present day civil society. **Rousseau** concluded that the social contract was not a willing agreement, as **Hobbes**, **Locke**, and **Montesquieu** had believed, but a fraud against the people committed by the rich.