

American History Vocabulary Terms

Unit 4 – More Perfect Union/American Government

1. **Bicameral** two house legislature
2. **Unicameral** single house legislature
3. **Republic** a government in which citizens rule through elected representatives
4. **Petition** a formal requests
5. **Depreciate** a fall in value
6. **Depression** a period of low economic activity and wide-spread unemployment
7. **Enlightenment** movement during the 1700s that spread the idea that knowledge, reason, and science could improve society
8. **Federalism** a system in which power is divided between the national and state governments
9. **Article** one of seven main divisions of the body of the Constitution
10. **Legislative branch** the branch of government that makes the nation's laws
11. **Executive branch** the branch of government that enforces the nation's laws and policies
12. **Judicial branch** the branch of government that interprets the nation's laws
13. **Electoral College** a special group of voters selected by their state legislatures to vote for the president and vice president
14. **checks and balances** system where each branch of government exercises some control over the others
15. **Federalist** supporters of the Constitution
16. **Antifederalist** opposed to the Constitution
17. **Amendment** a change in the Constitution
18. **Jurisdiction** the authority of a court to rule on certain cases
19. **separation of powers** division of power among the three branches of government
20. **veto** rejection of a bill
21. **judicial review** the power of the Supreme Court to declare laws and actions of local, state, or national governments unconstitutional
22. **supremacy clause** establishes that the Constitution, laws passed by Congress, and treaties of the United States "shall by the supreme Law of the Land"
23. **popular sovereignty** rule by the people
24. **elastic clause** gives Congress the right to make all laws "necessary and proper" to carry out the power expressed in the other clauses of Article I
25. **judicial restraint** the philosophy that the Supreme Court should avoid taking the initiative on social and political questions
26. **judicial activism** the philosophy that the Supreme Court should play an active role in shaping national policies by addressing social and political issues
27. **search warrant** order signed by a judge describing a specific place to be searched for specific items
28. **eminent domain** the power of the government to take private property for public use
29. **lame duck** an outgoing official serving out the remainder of a term
30. **probable cause** a reasonable basis to believe a person or premises is linked to a crime