

Chapter 2: Origins of American Government

Section 1

Lecture Notes

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

PEARSON

► Objectives

1. Identify the three concepts of government that influenced the American colonies.
2. Explain the influence of three landmark English documents.
3. Describe the three types of colonies that the English established in the American colonies.

▶ Key Terms

- **limited government:** the idea that government is restricted in what it may do and that every individual has certain rights that government cannot remove
- **representative government:** the idea that government should both serve and be guided by the will of the people
- **Magna Carta:** the Great Charter signed in 1215 that limited the powers of the English king and guaranteed certain fundamental rights

▶ Key Terms, cont.

- **due process:** protection against the unjust taking of life, liberty, or property
- **Petition of Right:** a document signed in 1628 that required the English king to obey the law of the land and increased the influence of Parliament
- **English Bill of Rights:** a document signed in 1689 that required free elections and guaranteed many basic rights, such as due process and trial by jury, to all English citizens

▶ Key Terms, cont.

- **charter:** a written grant of authority from the king
- **bicameral:** having two houses, as in a two-house legislature
- **proprietary:** the name given to colonies organized and governed according to the will of a proprietor, a person granted land and authority by the king
- **unicameral:** having only one house, as in a one house legislature

- What ideas and traditions influenced government in the English Colonies?
 - English customs and ideas about government, including:
 - The idea of ordered government
 - The principle of limited government
 - The principle of representative government
 - English historical documents, including:
 - The Magna Carta
 - The Petition of Right
 - The English Bill of Rights

▶ Concepts of Government

- The English colonists brought with them political ideas that had developed over centuries in England.
 - Some ideas, such as the rule of law, had roots in early Asian and African civilizations.
 - Other influences came from the ancient Romans, who occupied England.
 - Many key political ideas were written into landmark English documents.

▶ Key Political Concepts

- **Ordered government**
 - Local governments should be divided into units and ruled by officers according to law.
- **Limited government**
 - Individual citizens have basic rights
 - There are limits on government power
- **Representative government**
 - Government should serve the will of the people. In other words, people should have a say in what the government does or does not do.

▶ The Magna Carta

- Signed by King John in 1215
- Created by English barons to put limits on the once absolute power of the King.
 - Guaranteed certain fundamental rights for the privileged, such as trial by jury and due process of law. Over time, these rights were extended to all English people.



▶ The Petition of Right

- The Petition of Right was signed by King Charles I in 1628.
 - Banned the king from imprisoning or punishing people without first following the laws of the land.
 - Kept the king from declaring military rule in times of peace or making people house soldiers.
 - Required the consent of Parliament for taxation.



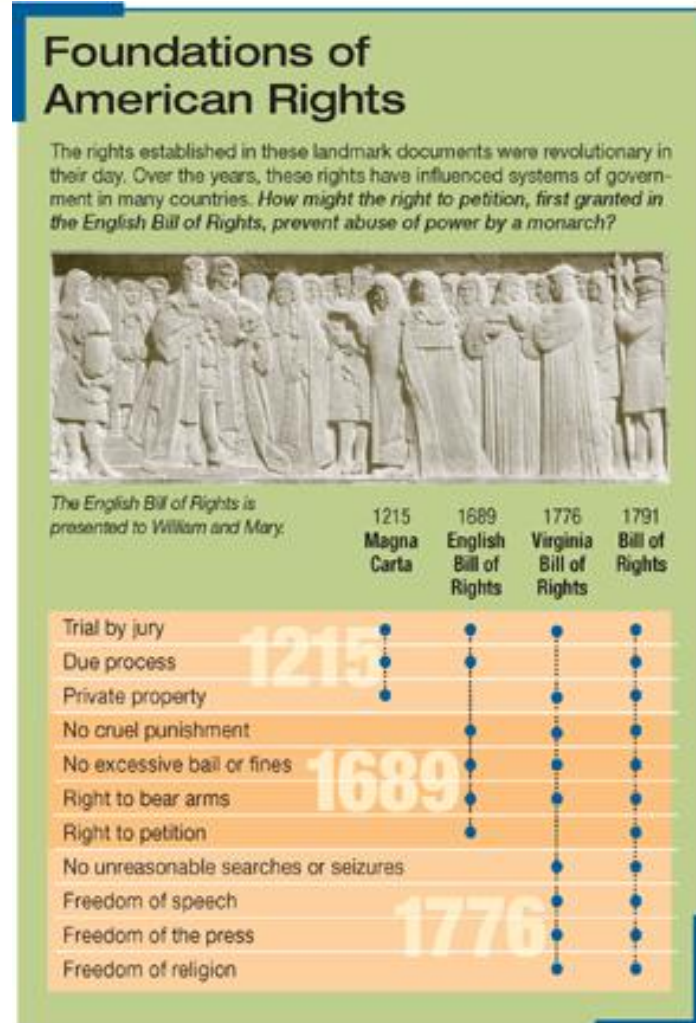
Commemorative coin from the reign of Charles I

▶ The English Bill of Rights

- Checkpoint: What were the limitations set by the English Bill of Rights?
 - The English Bill of Rights was drawn up by Parliament in 1689 to prevent the abuse of power by all future monarchs.
 - Required the consent of Parliament for taxation and suspension of laws.
 - Promised the right to a fair trial, and to petition the monarchy to correct injustices.

▶ American Rights

- This chart compares the rights guaranteed by the **Magna Carta** and the **English Bill of Rights** with the freedoms listed in the **Virginia Bill of Rights** and the **Bill of Rights** in the **U.S. Constitution**.



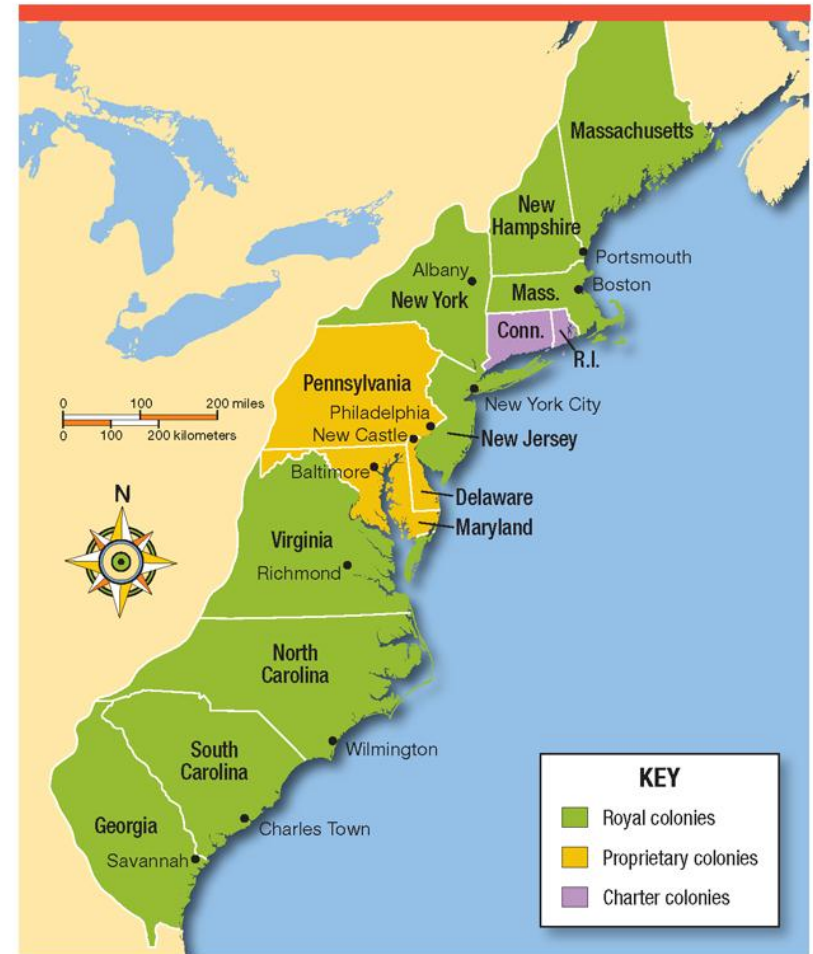
▶ The Thirteen Colonies

- The colonies were established over a span of 125 years.
 - Virginia was the first colony, founded in 1607.
 - Georgia was the last, formed in 1733.
- The similarities among the colonies ultimately outweighed their differences.
- Each colony was established on the basis of a charter granted by the king.
 - These charters granted some governing authority to the colonies and kept some for the king.

▶ Three Types of Colonies

- Royal colonies were directly controlled by the king.
- Proprietary colonies were run by a proprietor chosen by the king.
- Charter colonies were run mainly by elected legislatures and were the most independent.
 - How many royal colonies were left at this time? How were royal colonies and charter colonies different?

The Thirteen Colonies, 1775



▶ Royal Colonies

- The governor was appointed by the king.
- The upper house of the colonial legislature was also appointed by the king and served as the colony's highest court.
- The lower house was elected by colonists who owned enough property to vote.
- The governor had to approve all laws.

▶ Proprietary Colonies

- The proprietor appointed the governor.
- These colonies were run much like royal colonies.
- Of the proprietary colonies, Pennsylvania had an unusually democratic government with a unicameral legislature.

▶ Charter Colonies

- Checkpoint: What is the difference between a proprietary colony and a charter colony?
 - Governors in charter colony were elected by property-owning colonists and lacked veto power.
 - The elected bicameral legislature could pass laws without the approval of the king.
 - Judges were appointed by the legislature.
 - Virginia and Massachusetts each had their charters revoked, becoming royal colonies.
 - Charter colonies enjoyed the most freedoms.

► Review

- Now that you have learned what ideas and traditions influenced government in the English Colonies, go back and answer the Chapter Essential Question.
 - How does the Constitution reflect the times in which it was written?