

### FROM KING TO CONSTITUTION: "GET OFF OUR BACKS!"

<b>GOAL</b>	Students will learn how the American colonists became used to governing themselves and ultimately declared independence from Britain in order to establish their own government. As a foundation for understanding why the new Americans chose the structure contained in our Constitution, students explore other types of government the colonists could have chosen. This lesson feeds into the lesson "Wanted: A 'Just Right' Government," but may be taught independently.
<b>TIME</b>	One class period
<b>NUTSHELL</b>	After having the class read a lively account of how the American colonists got sick and tired of England telling them what to do, you'll divide the class into groups to brainstorm the pros and cons of four government structures the new Americans could have used when it was time to create their own government. You'll help the class put together a class list, then have students choose what they believe is the most important pro and con from each list and explain their choices. They'll be all set for the next lesson, "Wanted: A 'Just Right' Government," where they'll learn what the colonists wanted in a government and what kind they created when they wrote the Constitution.
<b>CONCEPTS</b>	Experiences of American colonists leading up to the revolutionary war and formation of a new government; Major types of government including monarchy, anarchy, direct democracy, and representative democracy; specific benefits and drawbacks of each of these forms of government.
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	The student will... <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compare different types of governments by brainstorming the pros and cons to create a class list.</li><li>• Evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of each type of government by choosing the most important pro and con and explaining the choice.</li><li>• Evaluate the effectiveness of types of government at meeting particular concerns of the American colonists.</li></ul>

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(Reading handout "From King to Constitution: 'Get Off Our Backs!'" is located in a separate document.)

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>ANTICIPATE</b> | by asking students to think of the one thing they are most looking forward to being able to do when they finally move out on their own. (Remind them to keep it appropriate!) Have students share that thing with their neighbor. Then, ask students how they would feel if, once they are out on their own, someone came along and told them they couldn't do that anymore. | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Easy Prep</u></b></p> <p><u>Copy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "From King to Constitution: 'Get Off Our Backs'" reading (class set) (2-sided is OK)</li> <li>• "Quick! We Need A New Government! (or, 'What Might Have Been')" group activity chart (1 for each group)</li> <li>• "Quick! We Need A New Government!" individual response handout (class set)</li> <li>• "Quick! We Need A New Government!" closing worksheet</li> </ul> <p><u>Have On Hand:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sticky notes (optional!)</li> </ul> <p><u>Print:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PagePlan and Group Activity Guide for yourself</li> </ul> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>TELL</b>       | the class this is similar to what happened to the American colonists before America became its own nation, and that they are about to read what those colonists did about it.  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>DISTRIBUTE</b> | one copy of the "From King to Constitution: 'Get Off Our Backs'" handout to each student   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>PREVIEW</b>    | the reading page together. Point out that there is a king involved, that there are thirteen colonies, and hint at a problem with taxes.  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>READ</b>       | the "Get Off Our Backs" handout as a class, pausing to discuss as necessary.   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>TRANSITION</b> | by asking students their gut reaction to the cliffhanger: What kind of government might colonists have wanted right then?  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>TELL</b>       | students they will be doing an activity to compare different kinds of governments the colonists could have chosen.   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>GROUP</b>      | students into groups of 4.   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>EXPLAIN</b>    | how the activity will work. (see Group Activity Guide)   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>DISTRIBUTE</b> | one copy of the "Quick! We Need A New Government (or, 'What Might Have Been')" handout to each group. If using sticky notes, distribute sticky notes to each group.  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>PREVIEW</b>    | the handout together, paying special attention to the questions in the middle.   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>GUIDE</b>      | students through the brainstorming activity. (See Group Activity Guide)  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>DISTRIBUTE</b> | the "Quick! We Need A New Government!" individual response handout.  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>TIME</b>       | students for 5-6 minutes as they complete the handout by writing down their opinions about the most important pro and con for each government type.  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>DISTRIBUTE</b> | a copy of the "Quick! We Need A New Government!" closing worksheet to each student.  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>TIME</b>       | students for 6-8 minutes as they complete the worksheet.   |   |

# From King to Constitution: Group Activity Guide

"Get Off Our Backs!"

## GROUP BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY

Here's how the activity works: You will divide the class into groups of 4 (if you end up with one or two groups of 3 that's OK). Groups will use the group activity chart to brainstorm pros and cons for each type of government on the chart. Students will then add the group's ideas to a class list of pros and cons for each government type. You have several options for how to compile the class lists.

To help make sure the activity goes smoothly, follow these steps:

- 1) **EXPLAIN**            how the activity works in general terms. (see above description)
- 2) **GIVE**                each group a chart and preview the chart as a class.
- 3) **STATE**                the expectations for the activity:
  - Each group will list at least two pros and cons for each government type
  - Just re-writing the questions in the "Things to Think About" circle is NOT acceptable. Students should use those as a guide, but the pros and cons must be specific.
  - Each student in each group will be responsible for writing down the group's ideas for one type of government.
    - Option 1: Make 4 pro/con lists on the board. Students write their group's pros and cons directly on the board under the correct list
    - Option 2: Same as above, but each group gets sticky notes. Students write their pros and cons on sticky notes and stick them on the board
    - Option 3: Use the sticky notes, but instead of writing lists on the board, write lists on large sheets of paper and hang them around the room
- 4) **TIME**                groups for 15-20 minutes while they come up with their pros and cons and write them on the class list.
- 5) **FOCUS**                all students' attention on the class lists.
- 5) **NARROW**            each list by reading through the pros and cons out loud. Erase or group duplicates. You may want to enlist students to help with this part by calling individuals up to do the reading and grouping/erasing with your supervision. If students missed anything important, discuss and add to the list.
- 6) **DISTRIBUTE**        the individual response handout and follow the individual activity described on the PagePlan.

## **POSSIBLE PROS AND CONS**

### **Monarchy**

Pros: One person makes all the decisions, so decisions can be made quickly and easily; you always know who is making the rules so you know who to go to for help; the King isn't elected, so there are no bitter political battles

Cons: One person makes all the decisions. A bad monarch could hurt a lot of people.

### **Anarchy/Mob Rule**

Pros: People get to do whatever they want. There is maximum freedom.

Cons: Who will build things like roads? No government to make sure peoples' rights are protected. No government to create a military to protect people. No police to stop people from hurting each other. No courts to resolve disputes between people or punish people for hurting each other.

### **Direct Democracy**

Pros: Everyone gets a say on everything; people are more in control; if people disagree, they will talk to each other and try to work things out or convince each other to vote their way.

Cons: This is a big country with lots of issues, and people would spend all their time voting. If the majority didn't like an unpopular group, that group could be treated unfairly.

### **Representative Democracy**

Pros: People can go about their daily business without having to be directly involved in government. People can choose representatives who are skilled. People still get to have a say.

Cons: Unpopular groups could still be treated unfairly. Might give the representatives too much power. The representatives might not do what the people want them to do.

# QUICK! WE NEED A NEW GOVERNMENT! (or, "What Might Have Been")

## Group Activity Chart

### MONARCHY

#### Hail to the King! (or Queen)

One person is in charge. This person makes all the rules, enforces the rules, and decides when somebody has broken the rules.



### ANARCHY

#### Everyone for Themselves! (Mob Rule)

Nobody is in charge, so there are no rules. Everyone makes up their own rules. There is nothing to be enforced or decided.



#### Things to Think About

How will peoples' rights be protected?

What will life be like for unpopular groups of people?

Can anyone stop the person/group in charge from breaking the law?

Will people have a say in government?

Any other possible problems ??



#### Let's All Vote!

#### (On everything. All the time.)

Everyone gets a vote on what the rules should be, how to enforce the rules, and whether or not somebody broke them. Everyone makes decisions together by voting on everything all the time.

### DIRECT DEMOCRACY

#### Power to the People! (Without so much work.)

Everyone votes for a small group of people to represent them. The small group makes all the rules, enforces the rules, and decides whether somebody has broken the rules.

### REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

# MONARCHY

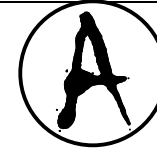


The most important benefit of this system is:

because:

The most important drawback of this system is:

because:



# ANARCHY

The most important benefit of this system is:

because:

The most important drawback of this system is:

because:

***QUICK!***  
**WE NEED A NEW GOVERNMENT!**

Name:

Date:

The most important benefit of this system is:

because:

The most important drawback of this system is:

because:

The most important benefit of this system is:

because:

The most important drawback of this system is:

because:

# DIRECT DEMOCRACY



# REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

# Quick! We Need A New Government! Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## A. True or False?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>_____ 1. When the first settlers came to America, they found lots of gold and everything was great.</p> <p>_____ 2. The American colonists had to follow England's laws.</p> <p>_____ 3. Once the Colonists signed the Declaration of Independence, they were free.</p> <p>_____ 4. Britain taxed American colonists to pay off war debts</p> <p>_____ 5. In England, Parliament took some power away from the King.</p> | <p>_____ 6. The Virginia Colony had a direct democracy.</p> <p>_____ 7. England kept a close eye on the American colonies the whole time.</p> <p>_____ 8. Not only did Britain tax the colonies, but it cracked down by taking away the colonists' freedoms.</p> <p>_____ 9. Because the colonists supplied the raw materials, they got to buy the finished products at a discount.</p> <p>_____ 10. The colonists boycotted British tea.</p> |
|---|---|

## B. Got Government?

**Decide which government would best solve each problem:**

(Most have more than one possible answer.)

PROBLEM COLONISTS FACED	BEST KIND OF GOVERNMENT	THIS GOVERNMENT WOULD HELP BECAUSE...
Need a way to protect all of the states against invaders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	
Want a government where people would have a say.	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	
Want a government that lets people have as much freedom as possible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	
Need a government that works even though people are spread out over a huge distance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	
Want a government that meets needs of people in different areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	
Want to protect peoples' rights and keep peoples' privacy—no searching houses!	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	
Want a government that can make decisions quickly when an urgent problem comes up.	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	
Want a government that thinks hard before making important decisions and considers all the options.	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	

# Quick! We Need A New Government! Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## \*\* Teacher Key \*\*

### A. True or False?

- F   1. When the first settlers came to America, they found lots of gold and everything was great.
- T   2. The American colonists had to follow England's laws.
- F   3. Once the Colonists signed the Declaration of Independence, they were free.
- T   4. Britain taxed American colonists to pay off war debts
- T   5. In England, Parliament took some power away from the King.
- F   6. The Virginia Colony had a direct democracy.
- F   7. England kept a close eye on the American colonies the whole time.
- T   8. Not only did Britain tax the colonies, but it cracked down by taking away the colonists' freedoms.
- F   9. Because the colonists supplied the raw materials, they got to buy the finished products at a discount.
- T   10. The colonists boycotted British tea.

### B. Got Government?

**Decide which government would best solve each problem:**

(Most have more than one possible answer.)

PROBLEM COLONISTS FACED	BEST KIND OF GOVERNMENT	THIS GOVERNMENT WOULD HELP BECAUSE...
Need a way to protect all of the states against invaders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	<i>Students might choose monarchy, direct democracy, or representative democracy. Accept all reasonable explanations.</i>
Want a government where people would have a say.	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	<i>Either direct or representative democracy, because monarchy doesn't have citizen input, and anarchy doesn't have government.</i>
Want a government that lets people have as much freedom as possible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	<i>Students might say anarchy, because there are no restraints. Either democracy is a reasonable answer also and a good reason would say that democracy has more freedom because it protects individual rights.</i>
Need a government that works even though people are spread out over a huge distance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	<i>Accept any answer with a reasonable explanation, though direct democracy is probably not a good choice.</i>
Want a government that meets needs of people in different areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	<i>Direct democracy and anarchy are the best answers, because power is not concentrated at all.</i>
Want to protect peoples' rights and keep peoples' privacy—no searching houses!	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	<i>Either democracy is best, because people have a say whether their houses get searched. In anarchy they couldn't stop it, and a king could do what he wanted.</i>
Want a government that can make decisions quickly when an urgent problem comes up.	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	<i>Monarchy or rep. democracy are the best choices; monarchy because there is only one person making the decision; representative democracy because people will pressure representatives to act.</i>
Want a government that thinks hard before making important decisions and considers all the options.	<input type="checkbox"/> Monarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Anarchy <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Rep. Democracy	<i>Accept reasonable answers. Representative democracy is probably the best choice because in a rep. democracy it is the representatives' job to make the decisions and they can be held accountable.</i>