The Foundations of Representative Government
The colonists brought ideas about government with them from England. By the 1600s the English people had political liberties, like trial by jury, that were almost unheard of elsewhere.
At the heart of the English system were two principles of government. Limited government and representative government greatly influenced the development of the United States.
The idea that government was not all-powerful had first appeared in the Magna Carta in 1215.
The Magna Carta established the principle of limited government. Even the king was not above the law! The Magna Carta protected the citizens from unfair punishment and from the loss of life, liberty, and property.
How the Magna Carta came to be...

**Magna Carta**

Way back in 1215, merrie old England was not so merrie. Why? Tyrannical King John ruled just as he pleased and made the English barons support him—and his wars—with high taxes. Then one day...

_Sire, we've drawn up a Charter listing 63 Rights we deserve as Freemen, including no taxation without our counsel. Sign right here, or there will be trouble!_

On June 15, 1215, in Runnymede Meadow, King John signed the barons' charter. Later called the Magna Carta, it was the first English document to limit absolute power of the king and grant rights to freemen.

_The Magna Carta created “rule by law” rather than “rule by men,” meaning there were laws that even the king could not break._
Magna Carta
Magna Carta – Main Idea

Limited the power of the king

* Our Constitution limits the power of the central government
As the Virginia colony grew, the settlers complained about taking orders from the Company in London. In 1619 the company agreed to let the colonists have some say in their government.
Ten towns in the colony each sent two representatives called burgesses to an assembly. The assembly could make local laws for the colony.
On July 30, 1619, the House of Burgesses met for the first time in a church in Jamestown.
The House of Burgesses made it possible for the colonists to have it your way with representation.
First representative assembly in colonies, enacted laws to safeguard individual rights
There were no laws in the new world so before going ashore, the Pilgrims wrote a formal document called the Mayflower Compact that established the “rule of Law”.
The Compact pledged their loyalty to England and declared their intention of forming an orderly society with laws that would be for the good of the colony.
Mayflower Compact – Main Idea

- Signed by most men on Mayflower
- An agreement that established the idea of self government and majority rule
In the 1630s Thomas Hooker, a minister, became dissatisfied with Massachusetts because the Puritan’s lacked toleration for those who believed differently. In 1636 he founded the town of Hartford, Connecticut.
They adopted a plan of government called the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut. This was the first written constitution in America, and it described the organization of representative government in detail.
First written constitution in the colonies, stated that people had the right to elect governors, judges, and a legislature
English Colonial Rule

In England, Parliament replaced King James with his daughter, Mary, and her husband, William. This “Glorious Revolution” showed how much power elected representatives have.
In 1689, William and Mary signed the English Bill of Rights. It guaranteed certain rights to all English citizens and later inspired the people who created the American Bill of Rights.
English Bill of Rights
Listed individual rights
Model for the Bill of Rights in our Constitution which is the first ten amendments