

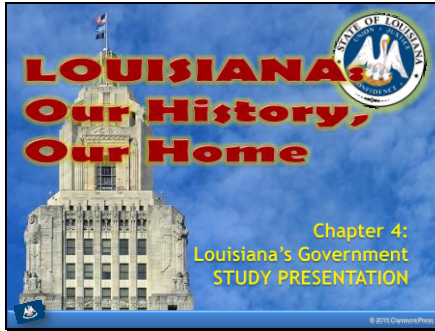


Louisiana: Our History, Our Home

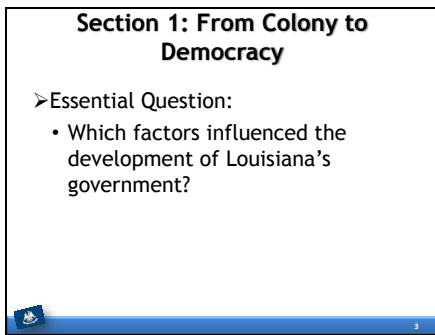
Chapter 4: Louisiana's Government

Quick Notes

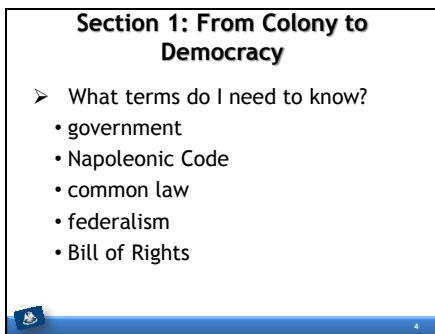
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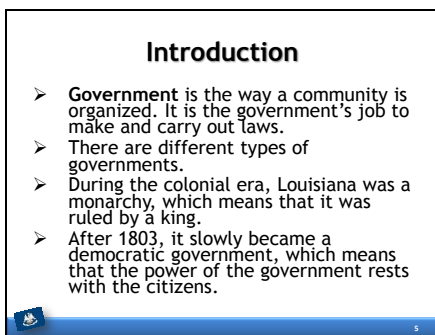
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Slide 4



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The History of Louisiana Government

- The **Napoleonic Code** was a set of civil laws made by Napoleon for France, which influenced Louisiana's first civil code.
- Civil laws set the ground rules for how individuals interact with each other.
- In 1803, the British system of **common law** was introduced to Louisiana and influenced criminal laws.
- When Louisiana became a democracy, the idea of citizens running the government was new.

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Foundations of Government

- The constitution of a government explains a government's purpose, organizations, and powers.
- A constitution is the most important statement of a government.
- Each level of government has its own powers and responsibilities given by the U.S. Constitution and the Louisiana Constitution.
- The U.S. Constitution and the Louisiana Constitution must work in harmony together.

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The United States Constitution

- The U.S. Constitution explains which powers belong to both the federal and state governments.
- **Federalism**, which is the separation of federal and state powers, is important for the government.
- The **Bill of Rights** are the first ten amendments of the U.S. Constitution. The tenth amendment discusses the reserved powers doctrine.




[Click to view the Constitution of the United States](#)

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The State Constitution

- Louisiana has had ten constitutions.
- The present Louisiana Constitution (1974) follows the U.S. Constitution more closely than any of our earlier state constitutions.
- Like the U.S. Constitution, it contains a Bill of Rights that guarantees citizens self-determination, equal treatment under the law, and freedom from discrimination.
- Louisiana's present constitution is more like a general framework for government than earlier versions.



[Click to view the first Louisiana state constitution \(1812\)](#)



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Section 2: Structure of State Government

- Essential Question:
 - How is power divided between the three branches of government in Louisiana?




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Section 2: Structure of State Government

- What terms do I need to know?
 - checks and balances
 - special session
 - reapportionment
 - conference committee
 - felony
 - misdemeanor
 - appeal
 - jury
 - grand jury
 - severance tax
 - taxes
 - gaming




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Introduction

- Louisiana's Constitution divides the government into three branches.
- By dividing powers among these branches, checks and balances are made.
- Examples of these powers would be the veto, canceling a veto, and the judicial review.



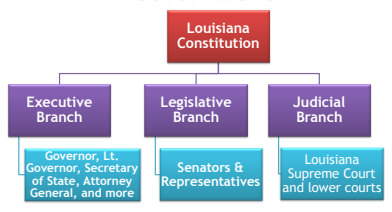
Louisiana State Capitol Building




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Louisiana's Three Branches of Government



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graph TD; A[Louisiana Constitution] --> B[Executive Branch]; A --> C[Legislative Branch]; A --> D[Judicial Branch]; B --> B1["Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, and more"]; C --> C1[Senators & Representatives]; D --> D1["Louisiana Supreme Court and lower courts"]
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Executive Branch

- This branch enforces laws passed by the legislature.
- The governor is the head of this branch.
- Six other officials are elected by statewide elections, like the lieutenant governor and the secretary of state.
- Each position has its own requirements and responsibilities.

[Louisiana's Executive Branch of Government](#)

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Governor

- To become governor of Louisiana, candidates must meet several criteria, including being at least 25 years old, a U.S. citizen, and a resident of Louisiana for at least 5 years.
- The governor is elected to a four-year term and can serve two back-to-back terms.
- One of the governor's most important duties is to prepare the state budget and submit it to the legislature.
- The governor can also call upon **special sessions** of legislature when extreme problems occur.

[Office of the Governor](#)

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Lieutenant Governor

- The lieutenant governor of Louisiana is similar to the vice president of the United States.
- The lieutenant governor can act temporarily as governor if needed.
- Other duties of the lieutenant governor include overseeing many state functions, like the Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism.

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Attorney General

- The attorney general is the state's head legal official and runs the state's Department of Justice.
- The attorney general's office provides legal advice and representation to the state's departments, agencies, boards, and commissions, and to statewide elected officials.
- The attorney general also defends Louisiana laws if they are challenged in the federal courts.

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Secretary of State

- The secretary of state is the chief election officer for Louisiana, and leads the Department of State.
- The department administers the election laws passed by the legislature.
- The secretary of state is the keeper of the Great Seal of the State of Louisiana. The seal is used to give official approval to state documents.




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Treasurer

- The state treasurer is the head of the Department of Treasury.
- The Department of the Treasury is in charge of the state's money and keeps records of the state's income and expenses.
- The state treasurer is required to prepare and present a yearly financial report to the governor and the legislature one month before each regular session of the legislature begins.




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Other Elected Officials

- Louisiana voters elect two additional members of the executive branch: the commissioner of agriculture and the commissioner of insurance.
- The members of two other boards are elected: the Public Service Commission and the state's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE).




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Legislative Branch

- Like the U.S. Congress, Louisiana's legislature is divided into two parts, which is known as bicameral.
- Having two chambers creates a balance of power between the chambers.

Louisiana's Legislative Branch of Government



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Legislative Membership

- The Louisiana legislature has 144 members: 39 senators and 105 representatives.
- Each member of the legislature is elected from a geographic district based on population.
- A U.S. Census, the official count of each state's population, occurs every ten years and is used to review district populations.
- If population numbers have changed, revising district boundaries might occur. This is called **reapportionment**.

[Click to see legislative maps](#)

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State Legislators

- Like the governor, legislators must meet certain criteria, including being at least 18 years old and a resident of their district for at least one year.
- Legislators are elected for 4 year terms.
- In 1995, voters in Louisiana approved a term limit of three back-to-back terms for legislators.

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Legislative Sessions

- The legislature meets every year.
- In odd-numbered years, the legislature meets for 45 days during a 60 day period. Tax bills can only be passed in odd-numbered years.
- In even-numbered years, the legislature meets for 60 days over an 85 day period.
- Members of each chamber elect officers to preside over the sessions.
- The **House of Representatives** elects a speaker of the House.
- In the state **Senate**, the elected leader is called the president of the Senate.

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Making Laws

- Of the 2,500 bills introduced in each session of the legislature, only about one-third become laws.
- Legislative committees study and debate proposed laws.
- Once a bill is introduced it has to be approved by the chambers and the governor before becoming laws.
- If different bill forms are liked in different chambers, a **conference committee** will work out the differences.

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Judicial Branch

- This branch interprets and applies the constitution and laws of the state.
- It also protects the rights of citizens.

Louisiana's Judicial Branch of Government

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Civil and Criminal Law

- The laws of Louisiana are divided into 2 categories: civil law and criminal law.
- Civil laws deal with how people interact with each other.
- Criminal laws protect society from wrongdoings. Serious crimes, like murder and armed robbery, are called **felonies**. Less serious crimes, like speeding, are called **misdemeanors**.
- There are many important jobs in this branch, such as sheriffs, police, city marshals, and district attorneys.

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Louisiana's Court System

- Louisiana's court system has 3 levels: 43 District Courts, 5 Courts of Appeal, and the **Louisiana Supreme Court**.
- District Courts are the main trial courts of the state, listening to both civil and criminal cases.
- The next step in the justice system would be to **appeal**, or to take to a higher court, a ruling in the Court of Appeals.
- If a case escalates enough, it may be taken to the Louisiana Supreme Court.

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Juries

- A person accused of a crime has the right to be tried before a jury of **peers** (persons of equal standing in society).
- A **jury** is a group of citizens who hear evidence on a legal case and make a decision based on the evidence.
- Citizens may also be called to serve on a **grand jury**. A **grand jury** is made up of twelve citizens who serve for six months.

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Funding State Government


- Governments must have money to function.
- All governments get their money (called revenue) in a variety of ways.
- Knowing how much money is needed starts with a detailed plan.



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The State Budget


- A budget is needed to plan how to acquire and spend money.
- This budget is put together by the governor.
- The Louisiana Constitution requires a balanced budget, which means that the state cannot spend more money than it takes in.



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Taxes


- Much of a state's revenue comes from **taxes**, which are amounts paid by citizens to their governments to support the government and its services.
- In Louisiana, the sales tax is the largest single source of revenue.
- Louisiana also collects severance tax, which is an amount charged for severing (removing) natural resources.
- Other types of taxes include property tax and income tax.



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Other Sources of Revenue

- Louisiana receives revenue from a variety of fees charged for certain kinds of government-issued items like drivers' licenses or business licenses.
- Oil and gas royalties (share of the profit) are another source of income.
- The federal government is also an important source of state revenue.
- **Gaming**, the name for legal gambling, is another large revenue source.





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Section 3: Local Governments

- Essential Question:
 - How does the parish system of local government work?




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Section 3: Local Governments

- What terms do I need to know?
 - parish
 - police jury
 - home rule
 - municipality




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Introduction

- Citizens are most likely to interact with government at the local level.
- In Louisiana, the units of local government are parishes, municipalities, and special districts.




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Parish Government

- The **parish** is the primary local government division.
- Louisiana is divided into 64 parishes.
- Louisiana is the only state in the nation that has parishes and parish seats rather than counties or county seats.
- Parish government is a legacy from Spanish colonial rule, when government divisions were based on districts created by the Catholic Church.



Ouachita Parish Courthouse



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Police Juries

- Police juries pass local laws for their parishes as well as build and maintain roads and public buildings.
- Police juries can have between 3 and 15 elected members.
- Sometimes police juries create special districts to perform specific services, like school, fire protection, levee, and water districts.
- The sheriff is elected to be the chief law enforcement officer and tax collector in the parish.

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Other Types of Parish Government

- The Louisiana Constitution of 1974 gave more authority to local governments.
- The power given to political subdivisions to govern their own affairs is known as **home rule**.
- Parishes with a home rule charter are allowed to organize in a form other than the police jury. These other forms of government include having an elected parish council and a parish president, or an elected parish council that is empowered to select a parish administrator (manager).

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Municipalities

- **Municipalities** are the cities, towns, and villages of different sizes, each being ranked by population.
- People who live in rural areas outside a city or town have no municipal government.
- A municipality elects a mayor and a council or a group of commissioners.

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School Boards

- Most local school systems share boundaries with their parish.
- School board members are elected from a district based on population in the parish and serve a 4 year term.
- School boards are special forms of government not linked with the parish government, but they are more closely regulated by the state.
- Each board chooses a superintendent to oversee operations of the school system.

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Section 4: Citizens and Government


- Essential Question:
 - What are the different ways citizens can participate in the Louisiana government?



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Section 4: Citizens and Government


- What terms do I need to know?
 - open primary system
 - political party
 - lobby
 - propaganda



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Introduction


- In a democratic government, the main focus is the citizens, their rights, and their responsibilities.
- While a citizen may have many rights, they also have many responsibilities.
- Citizens are also responsible for their actions and must respect the rights of others.
- Rights of citizens include: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the right to vote.



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Voting and Elections

- There are several requirements to meet before a citizen can be a registered voter.
- Statewide elections in Louisiana are held in 2 stages.
- The first stage is an **open primary system**, when all of the candidates, no matter what political party they represent, compete in the first (or primary) election.
- After the primary election, the two candidates with the most votes move on to a runoff election, where the one with the most votes wins.





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Political Parties


- **Political parties** are organizations who share ideas on how the government should work and have joined together.
- There are two major parties around, today: the Democratic Party and the Republican Party.
- Historically, people in Louisiana have often voted on the basis of local issues or identities rather than on the basis of party affiliation.



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Campaigns

- Many candidates organize campaigns to gain attention from voters, from television commercials to Internet ads.
- Running political campaigns has become very expensive because buying time for advertisements on television is quite costly.
- Fund-raising is an important part of the modern campaign process.



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Lobbying and Organizing

- Every citizen has the ability to attempt to influence legislators about issues, which is called **lobbying**.
- People who disagree on an issue sometimes accuse their opponents of creating **propaganda**.
- Propaganda is information spread widely in order to promote or discourage a particular proposal or political point of view
- Organization of many people has become more efficient through social media.

