



# North Carolina: People, Places, and Progress

## Chapter 03: Governing Our Nation and State

### Quick Notes



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#### Section 1: Achieving Democratic Ideals

➤ Essential Question:

- What were the ideals of democracy and fairness that guided the Founding Fathers to move from a monarchy to a republic?

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#### Section 1: Achieving Democratic Ideals

➤ What terms do I need to know?

- consensus
- Founding Fathers
- democracy
- popular sovereignty
- Declaration of Independence
- monarchy
- republic
- United States Constitution
- amendment
- Bill of Rights

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#### Introduction

- Decisions are often made by consensus (general agreement) or voting
- The issue of fairness was important to the Founding Fathers (the leaders who planned how the government of the United States would be organized)
- The ways the colonies were governed seemed unfair to many people, leading to the desire to create a new form of government and gain independence



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#### Democratic Ideals

- Ideal: a vision of what a perfect government would look like
- Citizens of the United States have worked hard for many years to make these ideals of good government reality
- The term democracy means control of a group or country by its members
- The ideal of popular sovereignty (rule by the people through their votes) is center of what makes our country great
- The first three democratic ideals were described by the Declaration of Independence
  - Life: everyone has the right to live and government must protect citizens
  - Liberty: everyone is free to act, behave, and think as they wish without government interfering (as long as the liberties of others are not harmed)
  - Pursuit of Happiness: everyone should be able to pursue happiness as long as it doesn't abuse the rights of others



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#### From Monarchy to Republicanism

- In Europe, where most colonists came from, countries were ruled by a monarchy (rule by a king or queen)
  - In a monarchy, the leader is in place for life and selected based on ancestry
- Colonists were ruled by England's king and Parliament, who would send new laws by ship across the Atlantic to the colonies, taking months. Colonists felt ignored by their ruler.
- In the colonies, the idea spread of an ideal republic (a country in which citizens ruled by voting for leaders)
  - Checks and balances spread political power across branches of government
  - Citizen elections allowed choice of candidate based on merit
  - Frequent elections insured that the people had a voice and leaders were held accountable
  - Weak executive branch would keep the leader from holding absolute power and prevent corruption



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### Quick Notes

#### Basic Principles of Government

- American government is separated into legislative, executive, and judicial branches and powers are divided into federal, state, and local levels
- The United States Constitution (the document that set up our nation's current framework for government) is the supreme law of the land
- All laws at every level must be consistent with the Constitution
- In the U.S. the people are sovereign and are the source of power and authority, elected officials govern by the consent of the governed
- The Founding Fathers set up a system of checks and balances to limit power of the government through the three branches and various levels of government
- American people elect public officials at all levels of government for specific terms of office



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#### The Protections of the Bill of Rights

- When the Constitution was completed in 1787, some delegates argued that it was not specific in the rights it granted to citizens
- In 1791, the first ten amendments (additions or changes to a constitution) were adopted and are now known as the Bill of Rights



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#### Section 2: Federal Government

- Essential Question:
  - How are the federal branch, judicial branch, and legislative branch structured and how does the Constitution adapt to the changes in the structure of the government through time?



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#### Section 2: Federal Government

- What terms do I need to know?
  - elastic clause
  - bicameral
  - enumerated powers
  - implied powers
  - ratify
  - Electoral College
  - judicial review



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#### Introduction

- The first three articles of the Constitution establish the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government
- To meet future changes and demands, they included an “elastic clause” empowering Congress to make laws necessary for the government of the United States



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#### Legislative Branch

- Article I created a bicameral (two-house) legislature of the U.S. Senate (Upper House) and House of Representatives (Lower House)
- Every state has 2 members in the Senate who serve 6 year terms and are elected by popular vote. The Vice President is the presiding officer of the Senate.
  - Must be at least 30 years old, citizen of the U.S. for at least 9 years, and resident of the state he or she represents
- Each state’s membership in the House is based on its population and serve 2 year terms
  - Must be at least 25 years old, a citizen of the U.S. for at least 7 years, and a resident of the state he or she represents
- Constitution grants certain powers to Congress
  - Enumerated powers are specifically given to Congress in the Constitution, implied powers are those given to Congress in the elastic clause
- House of Representatives has the power to impeach those in office, Senate confirms presidential appointments to the Supreme Court and ratifies (approves) treaties



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#### Executive Branch

- Constitution established the office of President and a process for electing the President that did not rely on the popular vote
- Each state has a number of electors equal to their number of members in Congress, creating the Electoral College which chooses the President and Vice President
- Executive branch is given power to carry out the laws made by Congress and includes the President, Vice President, and 15 cabinet members
- Vice President becomes President if the President dies while in office, resigns, or is impeached



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#### Judicial Branch

- Judicial branch has the power to interpret the Constitution and laws passed by Congress
- The Supreme Court includes a chief justice and 8 associate justices, who serve lifetime appointments
- Supreme Court has original jurisdiction (authority to hear a case for the first time) and appellate jurisdiction (authority to review a case already tried by a lower court)
- Most significant power is judicial review, which is the authority to determine the constitutionality of laws passed by Congress and state legislatures and any actions taken by the executive branch
- Below the Supreme Court is the U.S. Court of Appeals, which reviews cases heard in lower courts
- Below the Court of Appeals are U.S. District Courts, the only federal courts with juries and witnesses during trials
- Special Courts include the U.S. Tax Court, Court of Military Appeals, Court of International Trade, and the U.S. Claims Court



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#### Section 3: North Carolina Government

- Essential Question:
  - How are the three branches of government structured in North Carolina's state government?



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### Quick Notes

**Section 3: North Carolina Government**

- What terms do I need to know?
  - General Assembly
  - bill
  - constituent
  - veto
  - Council of State
  - felony
  - tax
  - county seat
  - sheriff
  - county commission
  - municipality
  - city council



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**Introduction**

- Several thousand North Carolinians hold public offices, both elected and appointed, throughout the state
- In the last several years, the leadership of the state has become more multiethnic and multicultural, with more variety of backgrounds among the state's public servants than ever in our history
  - Result of living up to democratic ideals



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**The Structure of State Government**

- Like the national government, North Carolina's state government has 3 branches
- The legislative branch is the lawmaking branch of the state
  - The entire membership of the General Assembly is elected every 2 years and includes 50 senators and 120 representatives
  - Votes on bills (proposed laws) that address the needs of their constituents (the people of the legislator's district)
- The executive branch enforces the laws of the state, with governor as head of the branch with veto power (ability to deny passage of legislation)
  - Makes sure budget is followed by state government and is in charge of various state departments
- The judicial branch is headed by the chief justice of the state Supreme Court and oversees courts of the state
  - District Courts (handle traffic violations and civil disputes), Superior Courts (cases sent by District courts and more serious crimes), Court of Appeals (handles appeals of cases previously tried), and the Supreme Court of the state decides if laws were properly executed in specific cases



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#### Funding State Government

- Governments get money to function in several ways
- The state's budget is a detailed plan for acquiring and spending money for the year
  - The governor prepares the budget and presents it to the legislature
- Taxes (money paid by citizens to the government to support government and the services they provide) supply much of the state's revenue
- States also receive revenue from various fees charged for certain kinds of government-issued items, like driver's licenses



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#### County Government

- Primary local government division
- Each county's courthouse and government are in a municipality called the county seat
- Each county has a sheriff as chief law enforcement agent, sheriff's deputies keep order and help administer the court system and county jail
- Each county is responsible for its schools and has a school board
- County commission is the key body for county government
  - Commissioners are elected by the people and are responsible for overseeing school budgets, monitoring law enforcement, and administering recreational facilities



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#### Municipal Government

- There are more than 500 municipalities (cities with their own government) in North Carolina
- Usually governed by a city council, headed by a mayor
- Municipalities are responsible for many public services, including police and fire protection, streets and sidewalks, street lights, water and sewer facilities, and parks



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# North Carolina: People, Places, and Progress

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**Section 4: The Responsibilities of Citizenship**

- Essential Question:
  - What are the responsibilities of citizens of North Carolina and the U.S., and why are those responsibilities important in the governing of the state?



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**Section 4: The Responsibilities of Citizenship**

- What terms do I need to know?
  - juror
  - political action committee (PAC)
  - lobbyist



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**Introduction**

- All American citizens have rights and responsibilities of citizenship
- Good citizens obey laws, serve on juries, pay taxes, stay informed, get involved, and vote
- Success of our democratic ideals is dependent on citizens being good participants in government



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#### Voting

- One of the most important ways to demonstrate citizenship is voting
- At 18 years old, you have the opportunity to register to vote
- In North Carolina, voters must be residents of the county for a least the last 30 days and must register to vote for the first time at least 25 days before the next election



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#### Obeying Laws

- Laws are rules enacted by federal, state, and local governments to provide order and keep the peace in society
- Without laws, there would be chaos and anarchy (mob rule)
- Violations of the law can lead to imprisonment and the loss of many rights and privileges



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#### Serving on Juries

- Another major responsibility of citizenship is to serve on a jury when called
- Jurors (citizens selected for jury duty) are randomly selected from a list of registered voters
- Trial jury has 12 jurors who determine guilt or innocence of the defendant (person being tried)
  - In criminal cases, vote must be unanimous to return a verdict. In civil cases, 9 of the 12 must agree on a verdict
- A grand jury consists of 18 citizens who determine if there is enough evidence against an accused person to issue an indictment (formal charge)



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#### Staying Informed

- Informed citizens are necessary for the success of a democratic society
- Staying informed allows citizens to make intelligent decisions when voting and not be swayed by campaign rhetoric
- Political action committees (PACs) try to keep the public informed and influence legislators to favor the group's position
- Some special interest groups employ lobbyists (persons who are paid to represent an interest group and present the views of their organization to lawmakers)
- Citizens also have the opportunity to join a political party and register as a party member to vote for that party's nominees in a primary election



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#### Citizen Volunteers

- Citizens who lend their expertise to boards, commissions, and other advisory groups
- Some examples are the State Medical Board and the State Board of Education
- Other citizens volunteer their spare time to do many different things



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#### Getting Involved

- Citizens in a democratic society have an obligation to participate in public affairs
- Citizens can help candidates run for public office, run for office themselves, participate in community service activities, serve in the military, debate public issues, or volunteer their time to civic groups



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_



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