

TEKS Cluster: Texas Government

7.13 Government. The student understands the basic principles reflected in the Texas Constitution.

7.14 Government. The student understands the structure and functions of government created by the Texas Constitution.

Connected Knowledge and Skills 7.15, 7.16

Principles of the Constitution

- ❖ 7.13(A)* identify how the Texas Constitution reflects the principles of limited government, republicanism, checks and balances, federalism, separation of powers, popular sovereignty, and individual rights *Spiral Standard*
Supporting Spiral Standard: 7.1(B)

Structure and Function of Government

- ❖ 7.13(B)* compare the principles and concepts of the Texas Constitution to the U.S. Constitution, including the Texas and U.S. Bill of Rights
- 7.14(A) describe the structure and functions of government at municipal, county, and state levels
- 7.14(B) identify major sources of revenue for state and local governments such as property taxes, sales taxes, bonds, and fees

Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship

- ❖ 7.15(B)* explain civic responsibilities of Texas citizens and the importance of civic participation
- 7.15(A) explain rights of Texas citizens
- 7.16(B)* describe the importance of free speech and press in a democratic society *Spiral Standard*

Student Expectations

- ❖ 7.13(A)* identify how the Texas Constitution reflects the principles of limited government, republicanism, checks and balances, federalism, separation of powers, popular sovereignty, and individual rights *Spiral Standard (R)*

Connected Spiral Standards

- explain the significance of the following dates: ... 1876, adoption of current state constitution ... 7.1(B)

Academic Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Terms
checks and balances federalism identify individual rights limited government popular sovereignty principle republicanism separation of powers	1876

Stimulus

Speech/Journal/ Diary	Letter/ Newspaper Article	Government Document	Secondary Source Text
Photograph/ Painting	Political Cartoon/ Advert./Other	Map	Chart/Table
Graph	Graphic Organizer	Bulleted List of Facts	Timeline

Content Builder

- Both the U.S. and Texas constitutions are the central elements that define the role and function of government and the individual rights protected by limiting that government. The Texas Constitution of 1876 was a replacement of the 1869 and 1866 constitutions that were initially required to satisfy the requirements of Reconstruction.
- This is the first introduction to all seven Constitutional principles. In Grades 3-5, students were introduced to the three branches of government, checks and balances, and the distinction between the responsibilities of the national and state governments.
- All principles together support limited government.
- Individual states agree to join together in a union of states in which each state retains individual powers within a unified government (federalism). People provide the foundation and empower the government (popular sovereignty) by voting for representatives (republicanism). Power is then shared within the central (federal) government based on checks and balances and separation of powers. The goal of shared powers (federalism, checks and balances, separation of powers) is to protect individual rights.

Instructional Implications

When you teach Principles of the Constitution, remember to:

- Pay attention to the vocabulary:
 - Consider that these terms are abstract and all require concrete examples.
 - Recognize that correct use of specific terminology by students is imperative to long-term application.
 - Define the terms using a vocabulary acquisition strategy such as verbal-visual vocabulary, in which students define the term and develop a visual representation to remind them of the word.
 - Use graphic organizers to help students determine the relationship between these terms, emphasizing the connections in the Content Builder section.
- Ensure students can identify and articulate the defining characteristics of each principle through real events, debates, and concrete examples in the Texas Constitution. (Article One: the Bill of Rights – Individual Rights; Articles II – V: Separation of Powers, Checks and Balances; and Article VI: Popular Sovereignty and Republicanism. The Constitution represents Federalism and Limited Government.)
- Discuss the reasons for the various constitutions written throughout Texas’ short history. A brief timeline with links can be accessed through the Texas A&M School of Law (<https://law.tamu.libguides.com/> and search for “Texas Constitution”).

Learning from Mistakes

Students may make the following mistakes:

- Confusing republicanism with the Republican Party (as previously democracy with the Democratic Party)
- Struggling with the differences between federalism (dividing the powers of the federal and state governments) and separation of powers
- Assuming our nation is a democracy rather than a constitutional republic

Student Expectations

- ❖ 7.13(B)* compare the principles and concepts of the Texas Constitution to the U.S. Constitution, including the Texas and U.S. Bill of Rights (R)
- 7.14(A) describe the structure and functions of government at municipal, county, and state levels (R)
- 7.14(B) identify major sources of revenue for state and local governments such as property taxes, sales taxes, bonds, and fees (S)

Academic Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Terms
bond/bond issue compare county describe fees function (of state and local government) governance municipal/municipality principle property tax revenue (sources) sales tax structure	Texas public education

Stimulus

Speech/Journal/ Diary	Letter/ Newspaper Article	Government Document	Secondary Source Text
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Content Builder

- Comparing Constitutions:
 - Students’ understanding of constitutional principles is an essential prerequisite to be able to compare the U.S. and Texas Constitutions and Bill of Rights.
 - Texas is currently the only state in the United States functioning under a Reconstruction Constitution and is the longest of all 50 state constitution. Over 600 amendments have been proposed to the Texas Constitution; currently, 474 have been approved by voters. Attempts to adopt a new Constitution or significantly revise the current Constitution have been defeated.
 - Other concepts to examine may include comparing the specificity and detail of the Texas Constitution to the more general terms of the U.S. Constitution; the structure of the two legislative branches, including the terms of office; and the number of amendments (27 in the U.S. Constitution compared to over 450 in the Texas Constitution).
 - Branches and functions of government: legislative (makes laws), executive (enforces laws), judicial (interprets laws)
 - Levels of government: federal, state, county, city, and local
 - Key office holders at each level including specific representatives for each student’s district (provides students the opportunity to personalize the concept of federalism by identifying the federal, state, and local officials representing the district in which they live)
- Structure of Government: During the framing of the 1875 Constitution, more emphasis was placed on the structure of the county rather than municipalities. Texas was largely rural and larger geographic land was more practical as a natural building block for local governance and growth. Each county was organized with a county court, precincts that included justices of the peace and constables, commissioners with executive administrations, clerks, attorneys, tax assessors, tax collectors, county treasurers, and surveyors. As municipalities (cities) grew within the counties, a charter had to be written and approved by the state legislature that defined how the city would be governed. Today, cities in Texas are governed by council-manager and mayor-council.
- Revenue: One of the functions of municipal, county, and state governments is the collection of taxes and fees. These revenue sources are then used to provide services to citizens. The concept of revenue sources at local and state levels and the services provided from those revenue streams can be expanded to identify and compare federal revenue sources and services to local and state sources/services. This comparison reinforces the concept of federalism and provisions in the U.S. Constitution 10th Amendment for delegated, shared/concurrent, and reserved powers.

(continued)

Instructional Implications

When you teach Structure and Function of Government, remember to:

- Using a T-chart, have students compare the principles and critical elements of the U.S. and Texas Constitutions. Points of comparison might include: head of the executive branch and term of office, members of the legislative branch and terms of office, parts of the judicial branch and method of choosing judges, and responsibility for making laws.
- Simulate various aspects of government (from structure to revenue sources) so students can internalize the cohesive nature of each level of government.
- Provide students opportunities to determine the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government at the state, county, and city (municipal) levels, including the names (and pictures) of people in key positions at each level. Use a graphic organizer to help students categorize the branches of government at each level. Connecting this learning to the national level will also help students understand the continuity of the functions of each branch of government. Use federal, state, and local government websites as needed to identify key persons holding office at each level. Current events also provide students opportunities to identify and describe the functions of each branch of government at state and local levels.
- The website <https://comptroller.texas.gov> provides data on Texas Net Revenue by Source from fiscal 1978 – present. Students can use these data tables to summarize major sources of revenue at the state level. Using the internet, allow students to access local government budget information, including revenue sources and expenditures. Excellent government expenditure graphs can be found at <http://www.usgovernmentspending.com>. It is important that students go beyond the parameters of the objective in identifying sources of revenue to explaining and analyzing how those revenues are spent to support citizens within local communities and the state.
- Have students identify their elected representatives for the State Board of Education and the local School Board. Access an agenda from a meeting of the local county commissioners or city council to determine the categories of decisions made by that group regarding local policies. Have students research local property tax rates, any recent or pending bond issues (including how the bond issues were expended), and revenues from state and federal sources to describe how those revenues are expended in the local budget. If possible, suggest that students attend a meeting (or view online footage) to observe its structure and function.

Learning from Mistakes

Students may make the following mistakes:

- Confusing the function of the legislative branch (making the law) with the executive branch (enforcing the law) at all levels (state and national)

Student Expectations

- ❖ 7.15(B)* explain civic responsibilities of Texas citizens and the importance of civic participation (R)
- 7.15(A) explain rights of Texas citizens (S)
- 7.16(B)* describe the importance of free speech and press in a democratic society
Spiral Standard (S)

Academic Vocabulary

Vocabulary	Terms
citizenship civic participation civic responsibilities constitutional republic democratic society freedom of speech freedom of the press point of view responsibilities rights	

Stimulus

Speech/Journal/ Diary	Letter/ Newspaper Article	Government Document	Secondary Source Text
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Content Builder

- Essential cornerstones of a democratic society include the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, informed participation in civic affairs, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press. Students need to be able to explain the rights of Texas citizens, as stated in the Texas and U.S. Bill of Rights, particularly the importance of free speech in maintaining a democratic society, and the relationship between these rights and civic responsibilities. Examples of civic responsibilities may include being a law-abiding citizen, serving on juries, voting, and participating in community service projects. It is important to note that without civic participation, a republic cannot function as it was designed and society ceases to function in a true democratic manner.
- Students should be able to make connections between rights afforded to citizens through the Bill of Rights and the responsibilities associated with those rights (e.g., the right to freedom of speech connects to the responsibility of not using speech to slander or libel another).
- Students must understand that freedoms, including freedom of speech and freedom of the press, are critical factors in limited governments and largely unfounded in unlimited governments. This understanding helps students distinguish between the rights of citizens in various forms of government studied in World Geography and World History.

Instructional Implications

When you teach Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship, remember to:

- Using a graphic organizer, identify and explain rights afforded to all citizens in the Bill of Rights; create examples of the responsibilities associated with each of the rights.
- Have students write about ways they exercise civic responsibility, connecting real-world examples of participatory citizenship. Students should also explain why this participation is essential to maintaining a constitutional republic.
- Have students rank in order what they believe are the five most important rights and defend their ranking. Tally student rankings to determine which rights are most important to the class as a whole. This instruction can serve as an introduction to the intentional connectivity of these rights as well as the larger discussion of responsible citizenship and civic participation.
- Have students describe the significance of free speech and a free press in the United States, giving examples of how they have been protected in Texas history and U.S. history. Examine debates over the limits of free speech and a free press throughout Texas and U.S. history, including 20th and 21st century examples and current events.

Learning from Mistakes

Students may make the following mistakes:

- Assuming the rights in the Texas Bill of Rights and the U.S. Bill of Rights are identical
- Confusing terms such as democratic society, democracy, and constitutional republic
- Assuming the United States is a democracy, not a constitutional republic