

RAFTING Through the Constitution

Learning Objective: The student will

- A. Understand the meaning of the seven principles of the Constitution
- B. Demonstrate their understanding of the principles of the Constitution by preparing a RAFT assignment.

TEKS/TAKS: 8.16D; US 15.D; US 18.A-C; US 25.B & D; GOVT 2.A; GOVT 8.D

Materials Needed: Transparency of the seven principles of the Constitution;
Copies of RAFT chart for the student.

Teaching Strategy:

1. Review the meaning of the seven principles of the U.S. Constitution using the transparency.
2. Explain to the students they will be using a new acronym to show their understanding of these principles. **RAFT** is an acronym used to help them set up different combinations that require students to synthesize their understanding of a particular topic. **RAFT** takes the place of traditional assignments and encourages students to demonstrate their understanding in a nontraditional format. The teacher should begin by explaining the meaning of the letters in the acronym and share several examples.

RAFT is an acronym that stands for

R-Role of the writer

A-Audience who will be reading the writing

F-Format of the writing

T-Topic or subject of the writing

Examples:

R-Truman

A-Dear Abby

F-Advice column

T-Problems with General MacArthur

R-George Washington

A-Martha

F-Letter

T-Difficulties in training the colonial army

R-Cotton gin
A-Southern planter
F-Advertisement
T-Change in the production of cotton

Encourage students to be creative (as long as it is plausible in their choices) for each of the categories. (See the example of the cotton gin as a possible role in the third example).

3. After the students understand the meaning of RAFT, put them in groups of three or four and have them draw one of the seven principles of the Constitution. Explain they are to create a **RAFT** chart for that principle of at least six roles, six audiences, six formats, and six topics.

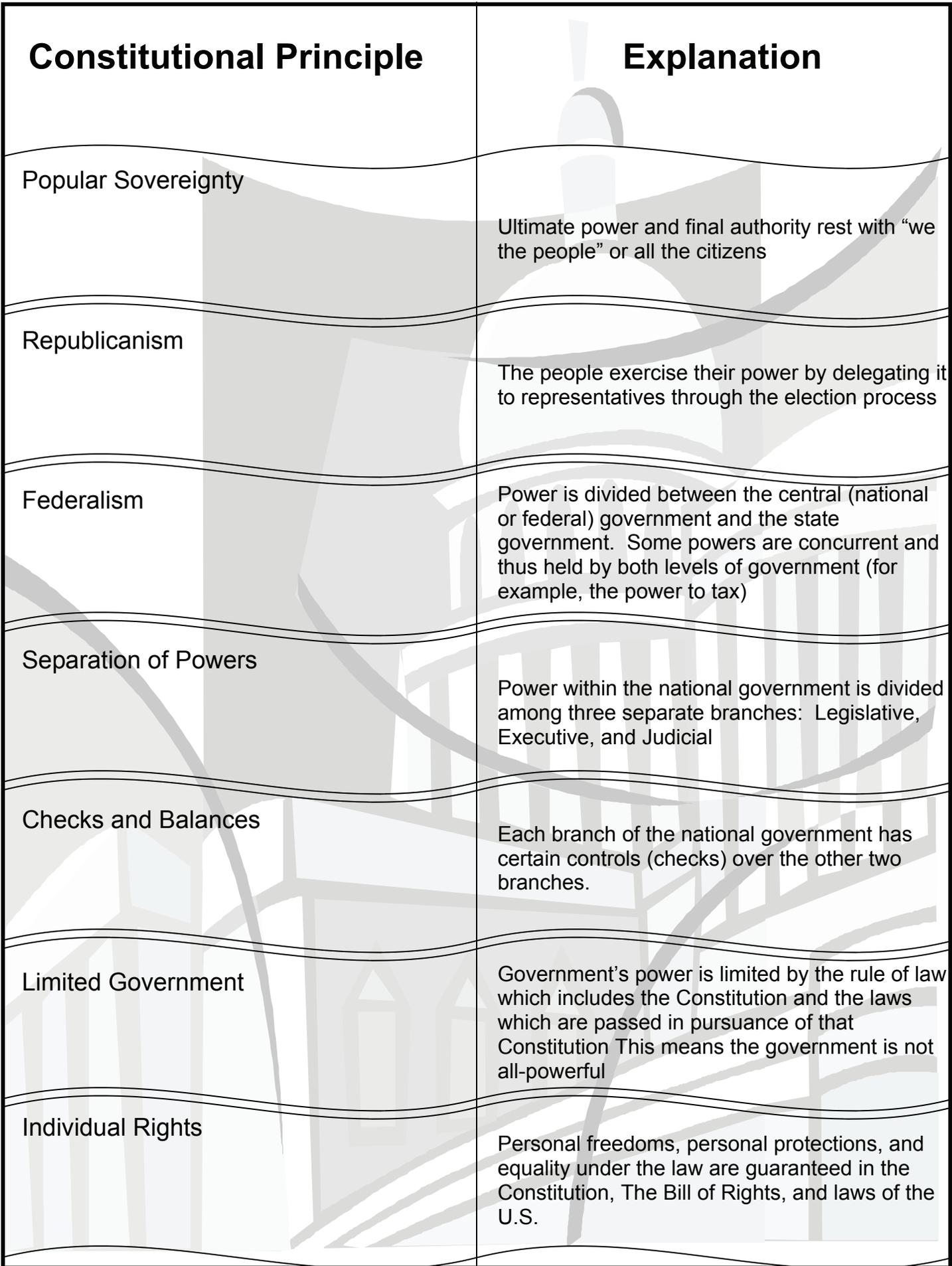
An example for separation of powers:

Role-Congressman sponsoring a bill
Audience-Constituents at a town meeting
Format-Speech
Topic-Status of the troop strength in Iraq

An example for checks and balances:

Role-President
Audience-Congress
Format-Veto memo
Topic-Status of troop strength in Iraq

4. When the students have completed their **RAFT** chart, each group should have the teacher check the six choices for each of the four letters. The teacher can either choose a possible combination or let the students prepare the combination of their choice to be presented to the class.
5. After each group presents their RAFT assignment, the teacher should debrief the presentation with the following questions:
 - How was the principle illustrated in the presentation?
 - What are some additional examples of how this principle is present in today's government?



Constitutional Principle	Explanation
Popular Sovereignty	Ultimate power and final authority rest with “we the people” or all the citizens
Republicanism	The people exercise their power by delegating it to representatives through the election process
Federalism	Power is divided between the central (national or federal) government and the state government. Some powers are concurrent and thus held by both levels of government (for example, the power to tax)
Separation of Powers	Power within the national government is divided among three separate branches: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial
Checks and Balances	Each branch of the national government has certain controls (checks) over the other two branches.
Limited Government	Government’s power is limited by the rule of law which includes the Constitution and the laws which are passed in pursuance of that Constitution This means the government is not all-powerful
Individual Rights	Personal freedoms, personal protections, and equality under the law are guaranteed in the Constitution, The Bill of Rights, and laws of the U.S.

R_{AFT}

A_{UDIENCE}

F_{ORMAT}

T_{OPIC}

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

