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UNIT NARRATIVE

The Texas Constitution serves as a foundational document that establishes the framework, powers, and limitations of government in the state of Texas. In this unit, students will explore how the Texas Constitution reflects the core principles of American democracy—limited government, checks and balances, federalism, separation of powers, popular sovereignty, and individual rights. By examining these guiding principles, students will gain insight into how the state government mirrors and differs from the U.S. Constitution, especially in the protection of citizens' rights through the Texas and U.S. Bill of Rights.

Students will analyze the structure and functions of government at the municipal, county, and state levels, identifying the distinct yet interconnected roles each level plays in maintaining public order, delivering services, and enacting laws. They will also examine how state and local governments generate revenue through taxes, bonds, and fees to fund public programs and infrastructure. Through this analysis, students will recognize the complexity of governance and the importance of financial stewardship in a democratic society.

Equally important, students will consider the role of citizens in sustaining democracy. They will learn about civic responsibilities such as voting, staying informed, and engaging in community life, connecting these duties to the broader ideals of freedom of speech and press guaranteed in democratic societies. This exploration encourages students to see themselves not only as observers but as active participants in the democratic process, capable of shaping their government through informed action and civic participation.

By the end of the unit, students will have a deepened understanding of the Texas Constitution as both a product of historical context and a living framework that guides governance today. They will appreciate how the principles embedded in the document continue to influence the balance of power, protect individual rights, and define what it means to be a responsible citizen of Texas.

CONTENT STANDARDS

Below are the standards **taught** and **assessed** in this unit.

Texas Government		Connected Knowledge and Skills 7.15, 7.16
<p>7.13 Government. The student understands the basic principles reflected in the Texas Constitution.</p> <p>7.14 Government. The student understands the structure and functions of government created by the Texas Constitution.</p>		
Readiness Standards	Supporting Standards	
<p>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</p> <p>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</p> <p>7.14(A) describe the structure and functions of government at municipal, county, and state levels</p> <p>7.15(B)* explain civic responsibilities of Texas citizens and the importance of civic participation</p>	<p>7.1(B)^ explain the significance of the following dates: ... adoption of current state constitution ...</p> <p>7.14(B) identify major sources of revenue for state and local governments such as property taxes, sales taxes, bonds, and fees</p> <p>7.15(A) explain rights of Texas citizens</p> <p>7.16(B)** describe the importance of free speech and press in a democratic society</p>	

UNDERSTANDINGS AND QUESTIONS

Key Understandings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Texas Constitution reflects the foundational democratic principles of limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, popular sovereignty, and individual rights. • While modeled after the U.S. Constitution, the Texas Constitution is more detailed and restrictive, emphasizing local control and limiting government power. • The Texas government operates through three branches—legislative, executive, and judicial—that share and balance power to protect the rights of citizens. • Municipal, county, and state governments serve distinct yet interrelated roles in meeting the needs of Texas residents, each with specific structures and responsibilities. • State and local governments raise revenue through taxes, bonds, and fees to fund public services, infrastructure, and programs that sustain communities. • The rights and responsibilities of Texas citizens—such as voting, obeying laws, and engaging in civic life—are essential to maintaining a functional and participatory democracy. • Freedom of speech and press ensures that citizens can express opinions, access information, and hold government accountable in a democratic society.

Key Questions

- How does the Texas Constitution reflect the fundamental principles of American democracy?
- In what ways does the Texas Constitution both resemble and differ from the U.S. Constitution?
- How do the three branches of the Texas government work together to maintain checks and balances?
- What are the structures and functions of government at the municipal, county, and state levels in Texas?
- How do state and local governments collect and use revenue to meet public needs?
- What rights and civic responsibilities do Texas citizens have, and why are they vital to democracy?
- How do freedoms such as speech and press protect democratic participation and accountability in Texas?