

# Perspectives on American Government

*Below are some common perspectives about American government and the U.S. Constitution.  
For each category, check one position that mostly closely reflects your view.*

## Guiding Principle of Constitutional Interpretation

- The plain meaning of the text of a legal document and not the intent of drafters, adopters, or ratifiers
- The dynamic meaning of the text that evolves, changes over time, and adapts to new circumstances without being formally amended
- The original public meaning of the Constitution as understood at the time of the Founding or, in the case of an amendment, its ratification

## Preferred Size of Federal Government

- Smaller government with fewer services
- Larger government with more services

## Scope of Federal Government

- Government should do more to solve problems and help meet the needs of people
- Government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals

## Federal Power under the Constitution

- The federal government may do only what the Constitution explicitly authorizes
- The federal government may do anything that the Constitution does not explicitly proscribe

## Interpretive Power of the Federal Branches

- Only the federal courts have the power to interpret the law
- Congress and the President have the power to interpret the law

## Nature of Rights

- Rights that are not mentioned in the Constitution must be deeply rooted in this Nation's history and tradition and implicit in the concept of ordered liberty.
- The Constitution must draw its meaning from the evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society.

## Protection of Rights

- The federal government is the appropriate guardian of rights
- The states are the appropriate guardian of rights

## Voting and Elections

- Voting is a right, and elections should be organized to include the greatest number of Americans
- Voting is a privilege, and elections should be organized to include the most qualified Americans