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Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Principles & Values of the United States Democracy***

**Limited Government**

The power of the government needs to be limited using the methods of separation of power and checks & balances. Power is divided among 3 branches of government: the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Each branch of government has its own responsibilities. The legislative branch makes laws, the executive branch carries out laws, and the judicial branch interprets laws. Each branch also holds some control over the other two branches. The executive branch can veto laws passed by the legislative branch. The legislative branch can override that veto. And the judicial branch can declare laws to be unconstitutional.

**Rule of Law**

The rule of law (constitution) for a nation needs to be in written form. A constitution is a plan that provides the rules of government. It is best to have these rules written so that the government cannot alter them without the consent of the people. When the government does not protect its citizens, the people have the right to change, do away with, or form a new government.

**Consent of the governed**

Government gets its permission to rule from the “consent of the governed.” People are the source of the government’s power. Government is a two way street: people give the government permission to rule over them, but the government must protect them. It is like a contract. When the government fails to uphold its end of the bargain, the people may break the contract.

**Rights & Freedoms**

Each individual has certain rights and freedoms. The Bill of Rights and other amendments list many of the rights that people have. Freedom of speech, the right to a jury trial, and right to bear arms are some examples. Government has a responsibility to ensure that people have rights & to protect those rights.

**Majority rule, minority rights**

The majority of our citizens make the decisions, but the majority also has to protect the rights of the minority. Democracy requires that government decisions be based on majority rule. In a democracy, people usually accept decisions made by the majority of the voters in a free election. But our democracy is also concerned about the possible tyranny of the majority. The Constitution helps ensure that the rights of the minority are protected.

**Equal under the law**

Every person is equal under the law. It is important that the American justice system treat all persons alike. This means that every person, regardless of wealth, social status, ethnic group, gender or age, is entitled to the full protection of the law. It grants all Americans rights such as those found in amendments five through eight.

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Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Directions: Read the description of each principle from your handout. Record 2-3 key phrases/details in order to describe & explain each principle. Also, identify which basic concept(s) of democracy each would fall under (There can be more than 1 answer for this).**

**Limited Government**

Democratic concept(s)

**Rule of Law**

Democratic concept(s)

**Consent of the governed**

Democratic concept(s)

**Rights & Freedoms**

Democratic concept(s)

**Majority Rule, Minority rights**

Democratic concept(s)

**Equal under the Law**

Democratic concept(s)