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Civics Test

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1. A constitution is a plan that structures what the government can and cannot do. It can put limits on everyone, even the people with the most power. It's a set of rules that usually have rules about how they can be changed. There are such things as written and unwritten constitutions, where unwritten ones are a combination of written laws and already existing precedents. Overall, a constitution structures how a government can be run and how its rules can be changed.

The founders were influenced by the Roman Republic. This republic showed Classical Republicanism, which emphasized small communities, moral education, and civic virtue. The common good was placed above the individual's good. The founders were also influenced by the Natural Rights Philosophy. This gives rights to all people the moment they are born. It emphasized individual rights, limited government, human equality, and popular sovereignty and government by consent.

2. Classical Republicanism and Natural Rights Philosophy are opposites. Classical Republicanism emphasizes the community. It should be a place where people know each other and where they think more about duties instead of rights. The Natural Rights Philosophy is all about rights and how the government can better serve the people instead of how the people can better serve each other.

It is important for societies to work to protect both because with too much of one kind of system, the government would fail. The people need to know how to protect themselves, but also how to help protect others. If everyone only cared about themselves, they would always seek personal advantage. If they only cared about the whole, they would let themselves deteriorate. Both are equally important aspects of life and government.

5. One British policy that violated the colonists' basic rights was the Stamp Act of 1765. It was a tax that required the purchase of stamps for things as simple as a newspaper or a legal document. This increased how much Britain controlled trade in the colonies. Another policy was the Quartering Act of 1765 which allowed governors to requisition people's homes to house troops. This encroached upon the right against unlawful entry into one's home and the right to property. Finally, the Townsend Revenue Act of 1767 passed taxes on tea, paper, and other things. The people in Britain weren't taxed as much, and this was all to support Britain's war.

The colonists rebelled by forming the Sons of Liberty, a group of men that resisted violence but did engage in political agitation. The Daughters of Liberty led boycotts. They wouldn't buy anything made by the English. They made their own cloth, for example, in hopes of making the colonies more economically independent. People also formed into a group called the Minutemen. In case of an attack, they would strike back on a minute's notice. The colonists wanted to be treated fairly and they weren't getting that from Britain. They decided the wrongs it had committed were too great, and set off to become independent of it.