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## American Democracy: Founding Ideas

At the beginning of the American democratic experiment, no other government in the world existed that allowed its citizens to participate so fully as in the United States. Over two centuries have passed since the founding of our republic, and the premises upon which our government were created are no longer discussed in detail. Do we not have the discussion because we all agree with the Founding Fathers or have we become lazy? To understand how the American system of democracy was created, it is essential to discuss what the American Founding Fathers thought about people, power, and governance. Once we have learned what these men thought, we should ask ourselves if their ideas are correct.

Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison wrote a series of essays supporting passage of the U.S. Constitution when each state voted for its adoption. These essays are known as “The Federalist Papers.” In an essay, discuss the ideas put forth by the writers of “The Federalist Papers.” How did these men view the nature of man? How did this view of human nature determine how the U.S. Constitution was written? Based on your historical analysis of history, was the U.S. Constitution founded on a premise or premises that you consider false or true? Defend your thesis with evidence and logic.

To answer this question well, you should be familiar with the following terms and people:

separation of powers                      factions, in “The Federalist Papers”      checks and balances  
independent judiciary                      “The Federalist Papers”                      James Madison  
Alexander Hamilton                      John Jay                      federalism

This essay has six assignments:

Assignment	Due Date		Due Date
1. Prewriting Activities	_____	4. Rough Draft	_____
2. Thesis Statement	_____	5. Final	_____
3. Outline	_____	6. Works Cited	_____

**Prewriting Activities**  
**A. Taking Notes**

Separation of Powers

What? \_\_\_\_\_  
Who? \_\_\_\_\_  
When? \_\_\_\_\_  
Where? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
Does this term show us how the Founding Fathers viewed the nature of man?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Any other information?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Source: \_\_\_\_\_

“The Federalist Papers”

What? \_\_\_\_\_  
Who? \_\_\_\_\_  
When? \_\_\_\_\_  
Where? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
Does this term show us how the Founding Fathers viewed the nature of man?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Any other information?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Checks and Balances

What? \_\_\_\_\_  
Who? \_\_\_\_\_  
When? \_\_\_\_\_  
Where? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
Does this term show us how the Founding Fathers viewed the nature of man?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Any other information?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Source: \_\_\_\_\_

## B. The Federalist Papers

1. What were “The Federalist Papers”? “The Federalist Papers” were a series of 85 essays written to support ratification of the U.S. Constitution. Nine of the 13 states had to approve the U.S. Constitution in order for it to be ratified.
2. Who were the main authors? Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay wrote “The Federalist Papers.” Hamilton wrote the majority of essays (most likely 51), with Madison (probably 29) and Jay (probably 5) writing the remainder.
3. After ratification of the U.S. Constitution, what happened to the writers of “The Federalist Papers”? Hamilton served as the first secretary of the Treasury, Madison became the fourth president, and Jay became the first Supreme Court justice.
4. What does James Madison write about the nature of man in “Federalist Paper no. 10”? Madison writes, “If men were angels, no government would be necessary.” Madison did not trust men with power; he thought that people needed to be controlled so that they would not attempt to take freedoms away from others.
5. According to Madison in “Federalist Paper no. 10”, what is the primary control of government? The primary control of government is “a dependence on the people.”
6. According to Madison in “Federalist Paper no. 10,” which part of government naturally dominates? The legislative power is the greatest.
7. What must be done to government in order for government to control itself, according to Madison in “Federalist no. 10”? Government must balance itself by providing a check on each of the powers.
8. What did Alexander Hamilton write about the conflicts between the state and the federal governments in “Federalist Paper no. 28”? Hamilton wrote that the state government can check the federal government, and the federal government can check the state government to insure that neither becomes too powerful.
9. According to “Federalist Paper no. 51,” what is “federalism”? Federalism is the separation of powers between the state and federal governments.
10. In “Federalist Paper no. 51,” Madison wrote, “Ambition must be made to counteract ambition.” What does this mean? Madison believed that men were not angels but rather ambitious individuals who might try to seize more power if unchecked. He wanted to create a government with a system of checks and balances to make sure no person or group seized too much power.
11. What must be done to diminish the power of the legislature, according to Madison in “Federalist no. 51”? The legislature must be divided in two, and the two parts should have little to do with each other.
12. What is your opinion of how the authors of “The Federalist Papers” viewed human nature? Why do you think this?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### C. Checks and Balances

The Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution so that one branch would never become too powerful. The writers thought that men were greedy and would always try to obtain more power if they could. Each branch, then, has powers to control the other two branches.

In this prewriting activity, write the powers that each branch has to control the other branches. As you are doing this, think if one of these powers makes this branch stronger.

<b>Powers of the Legislative Branch</b>	
Check the Executive Branch	Check the Judicial Branch
1. can impeach and remove president	1. can impeach and remove judges
2. can override a presidential veto	2. approves judges
3. can investigate president's actions	3. can make law that overrules decision

<b>Powers of the Executive Branch</b>	
Check the Legislative Branch	Check the Judicial Branch
1. can veto a bill	1. appoints judges
2. negotiates treaties	2. can grant pardons to federal criminals
3. can propose laws	

<b>Powers of the Judicial Branch</b>	
Check the Executive Branch	Check the Legislative Branch
1. can declare executive actions unconstitutional	1. can declare acts of Congress unconstitutional

### D. History and the Nature of Man

Using at least two historical examples, write a brief paragraph demonstrating how you view the nature of man. Is your view the same as the authors of "The Federalist Papers"? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **E. Class Discussion**

When you share ideas with other students, your ideas may be reinforced, rejected, or slightly changed. Listening to your classmates' ideas will help you form your own judgment.

Each student must interview at least three classmates who do not sit next to one another. The answers to the following questions must be written down on a piece of paper.

1. What is your name?
2. How did the authors of "The Federalist Papers" view the nature of man?
3. How did these men's perspective on human nature determine how the U.S. Constitution was written?
4. Based on your historical analysis, was the U.S. Constitution founded on a false or a true premise?
5. Which facts do you have that support what you think?

### **Reflection**

After you have written down all your classmates' responses, think about them and ask yourself the following questions. Write down your answers under your classmates' responses.

1. What do I think of my classmates' answers?
2. Which are the best answers to questions #2 through #4 above?
3. Have I changed the way I think? If so, then how?

You should now have a chance to present your ideas in a class discussion. If somebody says something with which you disagree, speak up! In your discussion, you may find out they are actually right, and you are wrong. All possible viewpoints should be valued and defended out loud. Test your ideas in class.

## Writing a Rough Draft for a Five-Paragraph Essay

### A. Introductory Paragraph

**The Social Studies essay begins directly with the thesis, unless the paper is meant to be longer than five-paragraphs.** Following the thesis is a brief explanation of the main topics that will be written in detail in the body paragraphs. Below is an example response to the essay question "How did the Cold War affect American society from 1945 to 1969?" (The Thesis Statement is in bold).

**The Cold War affected American society from 1945 to 1969 in foreign policy, domestic affairs, and presidential elections.** In foreign policy, the United States acted on a broad front to combat the spread of communism. In Latin America, in Asia, in the Middle East, and in Europe, American dollars and soldiers were utilized in peacetime activities and in war to prevent the spread of communism. Domestically, issues of the Cold War dominated life and politics. Americans built bomb shelters and students practiced war emergencies. Politicians hounded Americans believed to be communist sympathizers. In presidential elections, the key theme in foreign policy was, "How will you confront, or communicate, with the U.S.S.R?" Americans were concerned with how a president would represent his country with the communist world.

### B. The Body

The body of your essay is where you present your evidence to prove your thesis. In these paragraphs, you will present your evidence and explain how it supports the topic sentence. An example of this is found in Skill #10, Rough Draft of a One-Paragraph Essay. Keep the order of your arguments the same as the order of mention in the thesis. Attempt to order the events chronologically.

### C. Conclusion

In this paragraph, you need to restate your thesis, tie the topic sentences of your body paragraphs to the thesis, and leave the reader with the strongest evidence that supports your argument. Your job is to convince the reader that your position is correct. Write strongly.

Following this page are two forms — one basic and one advanced — to help you develop your rough draft.

**Basic Rough Draft Form for a Five-Paragraph Essay**  
(Use complete sentences. Use the back when you need space.)

**Paragraph I.**

Thesis Statement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Paragraph II.**

Topic Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A. Supporting Evidence: First of all, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Explanation (Explain how the evidence supports the thesis): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. Supporting Evidence: Secondly, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Explanation (Explain how the evidence supports the thesis): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

II. Closer: In conclusion, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Paragraphs III and IV.** Follow the structure of paragraph II.

**Paragraph V. Conclusion**

I. Restate thesis statement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

II. Strong statement that shows how the topic sentences support the thesis: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Advanced Rough Draft Form for a Five-Paragraph Essay

(Use complete sentences.)

### Paragraph I.

I. Thesis Statement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Paragraph II.

I. Topic Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A. Supporting Evidence: First of all, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Explanation (Explain how this supports the thesis): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. Supporting Evidence: Secondly, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Explanation (Explain how this supports the thesis): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

C. Supporting Evidence: Thirdly, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Explanation (Explain how this supports the thesis): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

D. Supporting Evidence: In addition, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Explanation (Explain how this supports the thesis): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E. Supporting Evidence: Furthermore, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Explanation (Explain how this supports the thesis): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

II. Closer: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Paragraphs III and IV.** Follow the same structure as above.

### Paragraph V. Conclusion

I. Restate thesis statement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

II. Strong statement that shows how the topic sentences support the thesis:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_