- **An English Political Heritage**
  - The English colonists brought with them a heritage of freedom and principles of government that helped shape the development of the United States.
  - The concept of limited government, dating from the Magna Carta in 1215, was an accepted part of the English system.
  - The Petition of Right in 1628 severely limited the power of the English monarch.
  - The colonists believed in the limits on the ruler's power and the freedoms protected in the English Bill of Rights, passed by Parliament in 1688.
  - The colonists firmly believed in representative government, following the model of Parliament.
  - The ideas of the seventeenth-century English philosopher John Locke deeply influenced the American colonists.

The Colonial Period

- Government in the Colonies
  - The present system of American government evolved largely from colonial governments and their practices.
  - Written plans of government were a key feature of the colonial period.
  - Representative assemblies elected by the people helped establish the tradition of representative government in America.
  - The division of government powers among the governor, the colonial legislatures, and colonial courts helped establish the principle of the separation of powers.

The Colonial Period