

3 Constitutionalism: authority that answers to something – Part 2

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary

Write each word three times.

English

Write it 3 times (English)

Constitutionalism

social contract

Recall

- You know a contract binds both sides.
- You have seen a rule that limits the person who made it.
- You know a question can be settled differently in two countries.

New ideas

Read these first. Each idea has a short worked example. Then do the Practice below.

■ 1 The alternative

Constitutionalism placed sovereignty in a body or in law rather than in a person. It answered the same question as absolutism and gave a different answer.

Worked example. Two states in one century, one placing authority in a king and one in a parliament, were disputing the same problem.

■ 2 Contract

The **social contract** argued that authority comes from an agreement among the governed, which makes it conditional. A ruler who breaks the terms can be resisted.

Worked example. If authority is granted, it can be withdrawn - which is the argument's whole force.

■ 3 Why commerce mattered

States with commercial elites and representative bodies had groups able to bargain with the crown. Where such groups were weak, the crown's claim met less resistance.

Worked example. A merchant class that lends the government money has a lever no peasant has.

Watch out: Absolutism and constitutionalism are two answers to one question - where sovereignty lies. Treating them as unrelated national styles loses the argument they were both part of.

Practice

2.1 State where constitutionalism placed sovereignty. [2]

2.2 State the social contract's claim and its consequence. [2]

2.3 Explain why a granted authority can be withdrawn. [2]

2.4 Explain why commercial elites strengthened representative bodies. [2]

2.5 State the question both systems answered. [1]
