Montesquieu

The Three Branches of Government
France, 1748

Montesquieu was a political scientist who lived in France just before the French Revolution of 1788. He devised an elaborate constitutional system.

(1) Separation of Powers:

There are three types of political power:
A) Those who make the law
B) Those who enforce the law
C) Those who interpret the law

(2) Three Branches

If one person has all three powers, he becomes a tyrant. So the best way to avoid tyranny is to spread that power among three branches: President, Congress, Supreme Court.

(3) Checks and Balances

Each branch checks the power of the other two.

(4) Majority Rule

In Parliament, the majority rules.

(5) Minority Rights

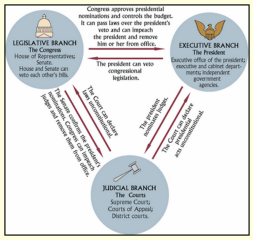
The government should protect the rights of the minority.

PREDICT:

Montesquieu impacted which element of the United States?

A – Government
B – Education, especially in the area of philosophy
C – Election of the President

A The Government of the United States!

In 1776, the American Revolution began.

In 1787, the Founding Fathers wrote the United States Constitution. Using Montesquieu's design, they created three branches of government.