

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING GOVERNMENT IN AMERICA



CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. Introduction: Politics and Government Matter (pp. 3–8)
 - A. Many Americans are apathetic about politics and government.
 - B. Political knowledge fosters civic virtues, educates citizens on policy, and promotes participation.
 - C. Voter turnout among the youth is lower than any other group.
- II. Government (pp. 8–9)
 - A. The institutions that make authoritative decisions for any given society are collectively known as **government**.
 - B. Two fundamental questions about governing serve as themes of this book.
 1. How should we govern?
 2. What should government do?
 - C. All national governments have certain functions in common:
 1. Governments maintain national defense.
 2. Governments provide public services called **public goods**.
 3. Governments preserve order.
 4. Governments socialize the young.
 5. Governments collect taxes.
- III. Politics (pp. 9–10)
 - A. **Politics** determines whom we select as our governmental leaders and what policies they pursue.
 - B. The ways in which people get involved in politics make up their **political participation**.
 - C. **Single-issue groups** are so concerned with one issue that their members will cast their votes on the basis of that issue only.
- IV. The Policymaking System (pp. 10–13)
 - A. People Shape Policy
 1. The **policymaking system** is the process by which policy comes into being and evolves over time. (See Figure 1.4)
 2. Political parties, elections, interest groups, and the media are key **linkage institutions** that transmit the preferences of Americans to the policymakers in government.
 3. The **policy agenda** consists of the issues that attract the serious attention of public officials and other people actively involved in politics at a given time.
 4. A **political issue** arises when people disagree about a problem or about a public policy choice made to fix a problem.

Study Guide For Government In America

George C. Edwards

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