

# AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

THE FEDERALIST PAPERS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

## Summary of Federalist 10 (Paragraph-by-Paragraph)

Nov 22, 1787: Federalist Paper No. 10 (New York) *This is the first essay by Madison in The Federalist. It contains twenty-three paragraphs.*

1. The "violence of faction" is the "mortal disease" of popular governments. The public assemblies have been infected with the vice of majority tyranny: "measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice, and the rights of the minor party; but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority."
2. What is a faction? "A number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community."
3. How can we cure "the mischiefs of faction?" We can either cure it by I) "removing its causes," or II) "controlling its effects."
4. There are "two methods of removing the causes of faction": I a) destroy "the liberty essential to its existence," or I b) give "to every citizen the same opinions, the same passions, and the same interests."
5. I a) is a "remedy that is worse than the disease," because it is "unwise." It entails the abolition of liberty, "which is essential to political life."
6. I b) is "impracticable." Opinions, passions, and interests are unlikely to be in harmony. "The diversity in the faculties of men, from which the rights of property originate, is not less an insuperable obstacle to a uniformity of interests. The protection of these faculties is the first object of government." And that leads to "the division of society into different interests and parties."
7. Further consideration of I b). "The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man." Thus, there are many sources of factions, "but the most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property." The "regulation of these various and interfering interests," that "grow up of necessity in civilized nations & forms the principal task of modern legislation and forms the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of government."
8. Further consideration of I b). Legislators, alas, tend to be "advocates and parties to the causes which they determine." But "justice and the public good," require "impartiality."
9. Further consideration of I b). "It is vain to say that enlightened statesmen will be able to adjust these clashing interests and render all subservient to the public good. Enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm."
10. Conclusion to I b) and the introduction to II. "The inference to which we are brought is that [I] the causes of faction cannot be removed and that relief is only to be sought in the means of [II] controlling its effects."
11. Further consideration of II) "controlling its effects." "The republican principle" of majority rule is the solution to minority faction. But what if we have majority faction? "To secure the public good and private rights against the danger of such a faction, and at the same time to preserve the spirit and form of popular government, is then the great desideratum by which this form of government can be rescued from the opprobrium under which it has labored and be recommended to the esteem and adoption of mankind."
12. The introduction of II a) and II b) as the solutions to majority faction. "Either [II a)] the existence of the same passion or interest in a majority at the same time must be prevented, or [II b)] the majority having such coexistent passion or interest, must be rendered by their number and local situation, unable to concert and carry into effect schemes of oppression."
13. The introduction of III, the form of government, to implement the solution. Madison declares that III a) "pure democracy," works against solutions II a) and II b).

14. III b) "a republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place, opens a different prospect and promises the cure for which we are seeking."
15. "The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic."
16. The first difference III b)\* is "to refine and enlarge the public views" by way of the election system. The question is do we choose "small (IVa) or extensive (IVb) republics?"
17. IV b) is better than IV a) because it provides "a greater probability of a fit choice" of representatives.
18. IV b) is better than IV a) because it "will be more difficult for unworthy candidates to practice the vicious arts by which elections are too often carried."
19. The Constitution "forms a happy combination" of IVa) and IVb): "the great and aggregate interests being referred to the national, the local and particular to the State legislatures."
20. The second difference III b)\*\* "is the greater number of citizens and extent of territory which may be brought within the compass of republican than of democratic government."
21. III b)\*\* clinches the case for IV b) over IV a).
22. "The influence of factious leaders may kindle a flame within their particular States but will be unable to spread a general conflagration through the other States."
23. "In the extent and proper structure of the Union, therefore, we behold a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government."



**BREAK IT DOWN!**

1. In paragraph 2, Madison presents his definition of a faction. What does he mean, in your own words?
2. Why does Madison (in paragraph 1) describe factions as violent and a "mortal disease," while warning against the "majority tyranny"?
3. What, according to paragraph 7, is the "most common and durable source of factions" (what most often causes factions to form and act)?
4. Why is a pure democracy (where people govern themselves directly) a bad thing, according to Madison?
5. According to Madison, what makes a republic (representative democracy) the better option for government – especially for a large population? (Hint: paragraphs 17, 18, 22)