

TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

AND THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

Tribal Governments

Those that authored the Constitution believed in Federalism, a system of government in which power is divided between a central authority and constituent political units. In simpler terms, they believed that power should be held partly by a central authority (the federal government) and partly by other units of government (local governments). The Constitution offered sovereignty to local governments. When an organization, state, or group of people, are described as being sovereign, this means that they possess supreme political power over themselves. In other words, a sovereign entity has the right and autonomy to govern itself. There are four types of local government recognized by the Federal Government within the United States. Each of these government types are granted the ability to govern themselves based on their sovereignty. Local governments are responsible for governing specific public services in a designated area. There are 38 federally recognized tribes in the state of Oklahoma. Each tribe operates under their own separate government.

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Research one of the 38 tribal governments and answer the following questions (A list of federally recognized tribes can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2nh3F0S>).

1. With what type of government does the tribe operate?
2. How many branches of government do they have?
3. How does their local government structure differ from other types of local government?
4. What are some unique and interesting qualities of this tribal government?
5. Define sovereignty as it relates to the tribe's government.
6. Explain how the federal government is a component of sovereignty for Native American tribes.

Helpful Tip: You may want to reach out to the tribe directly to get answers to some of these questions.

After conducting your research, complete a 1-2 page essay offering an overview of the tribal government you chose. Be sure to cite a minimum of three credible sources. Include at least two concrete details.

