



Law in the United States

What Is the Law?

Laws are rules for conduct that are established by government. Citizens are required to follow these rules and face consequences if they fail to do so. The severity of the consequence depends on the nature of the law that they violate.

The first known set of laws is the Code of Hammurabi, which was compiled sometime between 1792 B.C.E. and 1750 B.C.E. when Hammurabi was the king of Babylon. The Code of Hammurabi lists 282 rules and

consequences for a variety of actions. Included among these rules are the concepts of “an eye for an eye” (“If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out”) and “a tooth for a tooth” (“If a man knock out the teeth of his equal, his teeth shall be knocked out”).

Why is it important for a society to have laws? Write two or three sentences for your answer.

Law in the United States

Law in the United States

As the United States was declaring its independence from British rule, John Adams, a Massachusetts delegate to the Continental Congress, said, “We are a nation of laws and not men.”

The early history of the United States demonstrates the emphasis placed on the law. One of the first acts of the founders was to create a supreme law of the land, the Articles of Confederation, in 1777. This document was eventually replaced with the current supreme law of the land, the U.S. Constitution, which was written in 1787.

What did John Adams mean when he said that the United States was “a nation of laws and not men”? Write two or three sentences for your answer.

