**Origins:** In the 17th century, the English tradition of local autonomy in towns and shires influenced the form of government that developed in the American colonies. The English people were accustomed to local self-government. In addition, the roots of Federalism were planted in the working relationship that developed during the Colonial Period between the colonies and the English Crown and Parliament. During the Colonial Period the ground was laid for interstate relations. The framers of the Constitution, therefore, had to take into account two opposing forces: state patriotism that developed out of the Colonial Experience, and Americanism that tied the states together in their fight for freedom from England.

**Principles:** Federalism involves two levels of government, each assumed to derive its powers directly from the people, at least in democratic societies. Therefore, each level of government is considered supreme in the areas of power assigned to it.

Each level of government is protected by fundamental laws of the Constitution that prevent either level from usurping or destroying the other.