This introductory chapter provides an overview of the idea and importance of constitutions. A constitution is essentially a rulebook for how a state is run, and its function is to impose order and stability; to allocate power, rights, and responsibility and control the power of the state. Indeed, a state's constitution sets out the structure and powers of government and the relationship between individuals and the state, and a balanced constitution ensures a balance of power between the institutions of government. New constitutions can arise either through a process of evolution or as an act of deliberate creation. The chapter then considers the UK constitution. Public law is a fundamentally important part of the UK's national law and is the law about government and public administration. It places limitations on the power of the state through objective, independent controls. It is also known as 'constitutional and administrative law'.