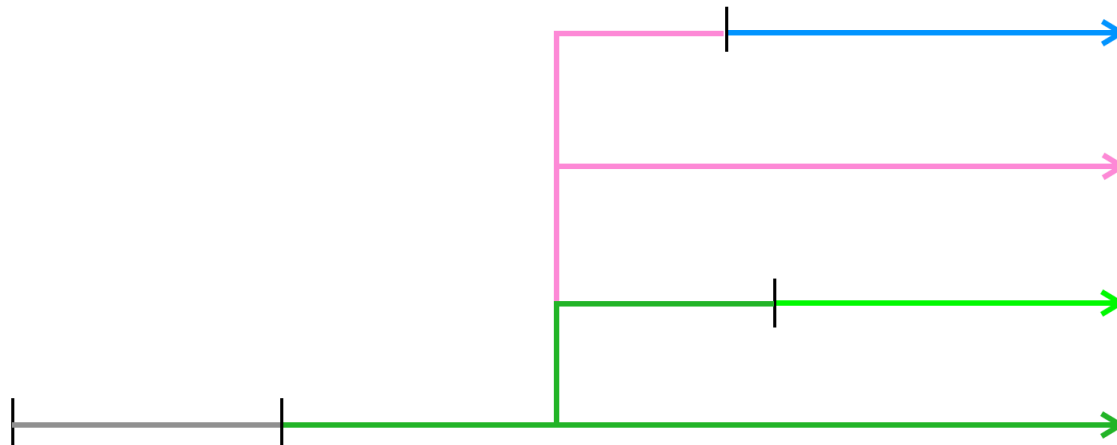


B. America and its Greco-Roman Roots

1. If we separate the family of Western civilization from the rest, we can make a timeline that looks like this:



2. The blue line begins with the birth of the United States in **1776**, when America declared its independence from the Great Britain.
3. When they created America, the "founding fathers" (the main leaders) they thought about whether to make America a democracy or a republic. They got these ideas from ancient Greece & Rome.
4. Democracy was invented by the Athenian leader Cleisthenes **c.508 BC**. His goal was to create a government where all the citizens could vote in the making of the laws.
5. The problem with this form of government is that it did not have limits on what the majority could do. The most dramatic what can happen is the case when Socrates was "voted to death." He had not committed any crime, but he was unpopular, especially with Athenian political leaders, so they used the power of democracy to rid themselves of him.
6. In Rome **c.509 BC**, the *Roman Republic* was established where people voted too, but there was a *constitution (set of basic laws)* that stopped the majority from doing whatever it wanted. It was called the *Laws of the Twelve Tables*.
7. A constitution is an important to preventing the majority from having the power to do whatever it wants, which is why America's founding father called the United States a *republic*.
8. So, for starters, our diagram of Western Civilization begins with Rome & Greece, and stretches up to modern America.

