



CHAPTER 7

A More Perfect Union

1777–1790

Why It Matters

When the American colonies broke their political ties with Great Britain, they faced the task of forming independent governments at both the state and national levels. In 1788 the Constitution became the official plan of American government.

The Impact Today

Created to meet the needs of a changing nation, the Constitution has been the fundamental law of the United States for more than 200 years. It has served as a model for many constitutions all over the world.



The American Journey Video The chapter 7 video, “Discovering Our Constitution,” examines how the Constitution has preserved our government and the rights of citizens for over two hundred years.

1777

- Articles of Confederation written



1783

- Treaty of Paris



United States

PRESIDENTS

1776

1779

1782



World

1778

- France goes to war against Britain

1780

- League of Armed Neutrality formed

1784

- Russians found colony on Kodiak Island, Alaska

Compare-Contrast Study Foldable Make this foldable to help you compare the Articles of Confederation to the U.S. Constitution.

Step 1 Fold a sheet of paper from side to side, leaving a 2-inch tab uncovered along the side.



Fold it so the left edge lies 2 inches from the right edge.

Step 2 Turn the paper and fold it into thirds.



Step 3 Unfold and cut along the two inside fold lines.



Cut along the two folds on the front flap to make 3 tabs.

Step 4 Label the foldable as shown.



Reading and Writing As you read the chapter, write what you learn about these documents under the appropriate tabs.



George Washington Addressing the Constitutional Convention by J.B. Stearns The Constitution created the basic form of American government.



1785

- 1785
 - First hot air balloon crosses English Channel

1787

- Shays's Rebellion
- U.S. Constitution signed
- Northwest Ordinance passed

1788

- U.S. Constitution ratified

Washington
1789–1797



1788

- 1788
 - British establish penal colony in Australia

1789

- French Revolution begins

1791

HISTORY
Online

Chapter Overview

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SECTION 1

The Articles of Confederation

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

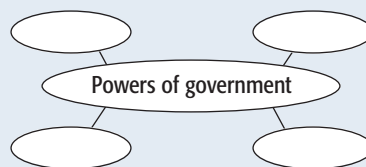
The leaders of the new United States worked to define the powers of government.

Key Terms

constitution, bicameral, republic, petition, ordinance, depreciate

Reading Strategy

Organizing Information As you read the section, re-create the diagram below and in the ovals list the powers you think a national government should have.



Read to Learn

- how the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation led to instability.
- how Congress dealt with the western lands.

Section Theme

Government and Democracy At both state and national levels, the government of the United States tried to define its powers.

Preview of Events

1775

1777

Articles of Confederation are written

1780

1781

All states approve Confederation government

1785

1783

Treaty of Paris officially ends American Revolution

1790

1787

Northwest Ordinance is passed



Phillis Wheatley

AN American Story

Many Americans, from colonial times on, spoke out for liberty. One who lent her voice to the pursuit of freedom was poet Phillis Wheatley. Celebrated as the founder of the African American literary tradition, Wheatley wrote many poems supporting the colonists in the Revolutionary War. For many Americans, like Wheatley, the end of the Revolution was a reason for joy. American liberty had survived the challenge of war. But could it meet the demands of peace?

Thirteen Independent States

Although the Americans won their independence, they had trouble winning Britain's respect. Ignoring the terms of the Treaty of Paris, the British kept troops at frontier posts in American territory. The British believed the new American government was weak and ineffective. While Americans were fighting for their independence on the battlefield, they were also creating new governments. After rejecting British rule, they needed to establish their own political institutions.



State Constitutions

In May 1776 the Continental Congress asked the states to organize their governments, and each moved quickly to adopt a state **constitution**, or plan of government. By the end of 1776, eight states had drafted constitutions. New York and Georgia followed suit in 1777, and Massachusetts in 1780. Connecticut and Rhode Island retained their colonial charters as state constitutions.

Their experience with British rule made Americans cautious about placing too much power in the hands of a single ruler. For that reason the states adopted constitutions that limited the power of the governor. Pennsylvania even replaced the office of governor with an elected council of 12 members.

Limiting Power

The states took other measures against concentration of power. They divided government functions between the governor (or Pennsylvania's council) and the legislature. Most states established two-house, or **bicameral**, legislatures to divide the power even further.

The writers of the constitutions not only wanted to prevent abuses of power in the states, but they also wanted to keep power in the hands of the people. State legislators were popularly elected, and elections were frequent. In most states, only white males who were at least 21 years old could vote. These citizens also had to own a certain amount of property or pay a certain amount of taxes. Some states allowed free African American males to vote.

The state constitutions restricted the powers of the governors, which made the legislatures the most powerful branch of government. The state legislatures struggled to make taxes more fair, but there were many disagreements. Going from dependent colonies to self-governing states brought new challenges.

 **Reading Check** **Explaining** Why did some states choose a bicameral legislature?



The Articles of Confederation

Forming a Republic

For Americans, establishing separate state governments was a much easier task than creating a central government. They agreed that their country should be a **republic**, a government in which citizens rule through elected representatives. They could not agree, however, on the organization and powers of their new republic.

At first most Americans favored a weak central government. They assumed the states would be very much like small, independent countries—similar to the way that the colonies had been set up. The states would act independently on most issues, working together through a central government only to wage war and handle relations with other nations.

Planning a New Government

In 1776 the Second Continental Congress appointed a committee to draw up a plan for a new government. The delegates in the Congress realized they needed a central government to

coordinate the war effort against Britain. After much debate the Congress adopted the committee's plan, the **Articles of Confederation**, in November 1777.

The Articles, America's first constitution, provided for a new central government under which the states gave up little of their power. For the states, the Articles of Confederation were "a firm league of friendship" in which each state retained "its sovereignty, freedom and independence."

Under the Articles of Confederation, the government—consisting of the Congress—had the authority to conduct foreign affairs, maintain armed forces, borrow money, and issue currency. Yet it could not regulate trade, force citizens to join the army, or impose taxes. If Congress needed to raise money or troops, it had to ask the state legislatures—but the states were not required to contribute. In addition the govern-

ment lacked a chief executive. The Confederation government carried on much of its business, such as selling western lands, through congressional committees.

Under the new plan, each state had one vote in Congress, regardless of its population, and all states had to approve the Articles as well as any amendments. Despite this arrangement, the larger states believed that their population warranted having more votes. The states were also divided by whether or not they claimed land in the West. Maryland refused to approve the Articles until New York, Virginia, and other states abandoned claims to lands west of the Appalachian Mountains. Finally the states settled their differences. With Maryland's ratification, all 13 states had approved the Articles. On March 1, 1781, the Confederation formally became the government of the United States.

Why It Matters

Surveying the Land

When the Revolution began, only a few thousand white settlers lived west of the Appalachian Mountains. By the 1790s their numbers had increased to about 120,000. Through the Ordinance of 1785, Congress created a system for surveying—taking a detailed measurement of an area of land—and selling the western lands.

The Ordinance at first applied only to what was then called the Northwest Territory—present-day Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin. It established a system of land survey and settlement that we still use today.

The Land Ordinance led to the sale of large amounts of land and speeded settlement of the Northwest Territory.



The Confederation Government

The years between 1781 and 1789 were a critical period for the young American republic. The Articles of Confederation did not provide a government strong enough to handle the problems facing the United States. The Congress had limited authority. It could not pass a law unless nine states voted in favor of it. Any attempt to change the Articles required the consent of all 13 states, making it difficult for the Congress to pass laws when there was any opposition. Despite its weaknesses, the Confederation did accomplish some important things. Under the Confederation government, Americans won their independence and expanded foreign trade. The Confederation also provided for settling and governing the nation's western territories.

Reading Check **Explaining** What powers did the Confederation government have?

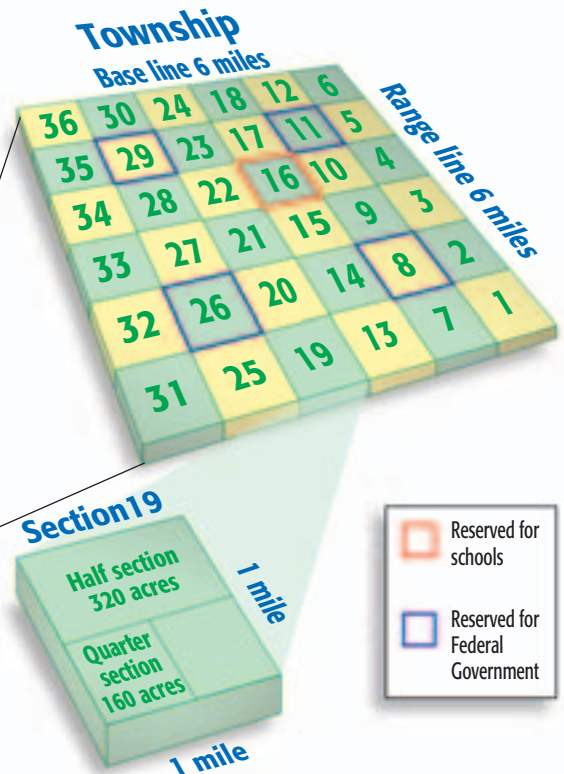
New Land Policies

At the beginning of the Revolutionary War, only a few thousand settlers lived west of the Appalachian Mountains. By the 1790s the number was approaching 120,000. These western settlers hoped to organize their lands as states and join the union, but the Articles of Confederation contained no provision for adding new states. Congress realized that it had to extend its national authority over the frontier and bring order to this territory.

During the 1780s all of the states except Georgia gave up their claims to lands west of the Appalachians, and the central government took control of these lands. In 1784 Congress, under a

Township: American Building Block

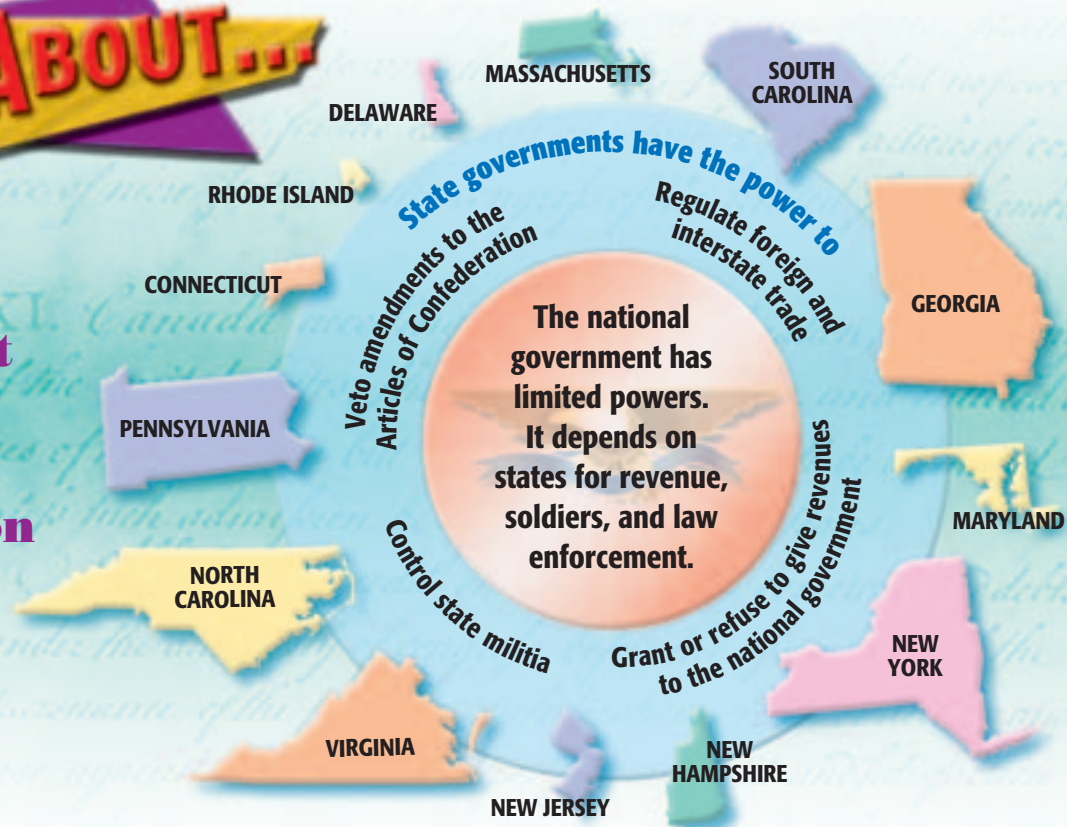
Western lands north of the Ohio River were divided into townships six miles to a side. Each township contained 36 square miles, or "sections."





MORE ABOUT...

Government Under the Articles of Confederation



plan proposed by Thomas Jefferson, divided the western territory into self-governing districts. When the number of people in a district reached the population of the smallest existing state, that district could **petition**, or apply to, Congress for statehood.

The Ordinance of 1785

In 1785 the Confederation Congress passed an **ordinance**, or law, that established a procedure for surveying and selling the western lands north of the Ohio River. The new law divided this massive territory into townships six miles long and six miles wide. These townships were to be further divided into 36 sections of 640 acres each that would be sold at public auction for at least a dollar an acre.

Land speculators viewed the law as an opportunity to cheaply accumulate large tracts of land. Concerned about lawless people moving into western lands, Richard Henry Lee, the president of Congress, urged that "the rights of property be clearly defined" by the government. Congress drafted another ordinance to protect the interests of hard-working settlers.

The Northwest Ordinance

The Northwest Ordinance, passed in 1787, created a single **Northwest Territory** out of the lands north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River. The lands were to be divided into three to five smaller territories. When the population of a territory reached 60,000, the people could petition for statehood. Each new state would come into the Union with the same rights and privileges as the original 13 states.

The Northwest Ordinance included a bill of rights for the settlers, guaranteeing freedom of religion and trial by jury. It also stated, "There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in said territory." This clause marked the United States's first attempt to stop the spread of slavery.

The Confederation's western ordinances had an enormous effect on American expansion and development. The Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance opened the way for settlement of the Northwest Territory in a stable and orderly manner.

✓ Reading Check Explaining What was the purpose of the Northwest Ordinance?



Trouble on Two Fronts

Despite its accomplishments, the Confederation government had so little power that it could not deal with the country's financial problems. It also failed to resolve problems with Britain and Spain.

Economics

Financial Problems

By 1781 the money printed during the Revolutionary War had **depreciated**, or fallen in value, so far that it was almost worthless. Unable to collect taxes, both the Continental Congress and the states had printed their own paper money. No gold or silver backed up these bills. The value of the bills plummeted, while the price of food and other goods soared. Between 1779 and 1781, the number of Continental dollars required to buy one Spanish silver dollar rose from 40 to 146. In Boston and some other areas, high prices led to food riots.

Fighting the war left the Continental Congress with a large debt. Congress had borrowed money from American citizens and foreign governments during the war. It still owed the Revolutionary soldiers their pay for military service. Lacking the power to tax, the Confederation

could not pay its debts. It requested funds from the states, but the states contributed only a small portion of the money needed.

Robert Morris's Import Tax

In 1781, faced with a total collapse of the country's finances, Congress created a department of finance under Philadelphia merchant **Robert Morris**. While serving in Congress, Morris had proposed a 5 percent tax on imported goods to help pay the national debt.

The plan required that the Articles of Confederation be changed to give Congress the power to levy the tax. Although 12 states approved the plan, Rhode Island's opposition killed the measure. A second effort in 1783 also failed to win unanimous approval. The financial crisis only worsened.

Problems with Britain

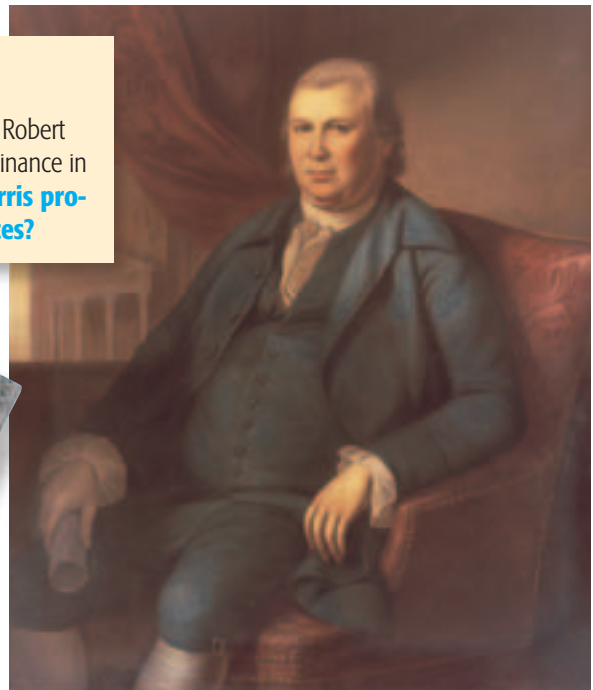
The weaknesses of the new American government became more evident as the United States encountered problems with other countries. In the Treaty of Paris of 1783, Britain had promised to withdraw from the lands east of the Mississippi River. Yet British troops continued to occupy several strategic forts in the Great Lakes region.

Picturing History

Pennsylvania merchant and banker Robert Morris became Superintendent of Finance in May 1781. **What reform did Morris propose to help the nation's finances?**



Continental currency



Robert Morris



John Hanson

The Forgotten President? Who was the first president of the United States? Was it George Washington—or John Hanson? Some historians consider Hanson the first United States president because he was the first to serve in the office in 1781 under the Articles of Confederation. Other historians argue that Hanson was the head of Congress, but not until George Washington began his term in 1789 did the nation have a “true” president.

British trade policy caused other problems. American merchants complained that the British were keeping Americans out of the West Indies and other profitable British markets.

In 1785 Congress sent **John Adams** to London to discuss these difficulties. The British, however, were not willing to talk. They pointed to the failure of the United States to honor *its* promises made in the Treaty of Paris. The British claimed that Americans had agreed to pay Loyalists for the property taken from them during the Revolutionary War. The Congress had, in fact, recommended that the states pay the Loyalists, but the states had refused.

Problems With Spain

If American relations with Great Britain were poor, affairs with Spain were worse. Spain, which held Florida as well as lands west of the Mississippi River, was anxious to halt American expansion into the territory it claimed. As a result, Spain closed the lower Mississippi River to American shipping in 1784. Western settlers depended on the Mississippi River for commerce. As **John Jay**, the American secretary of foreign affairs, had noted a few years earlier:

“The Americans, almost to a man, believed that God Almighty had made that river a highway for the people of the upper country to go to sea by.”

In 1786 American diplomats reached an agreement with Spain. Representatives from the Southern states, however, blocked the agreement because it did not include the right to use the Mississippi River.

The weakness of the Confederation and its inability to deal with problems worried many leaders. George Washington described the government as “little more than the shadow without the substance.” Many Americans began to agree that the country needed a stronger government.

Reading Check Analyzing Why did Spain close the lower Mississippi River to American trade?

SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

- Key Terms** Use each of these terms in a complete sentence that will help explain its meaning: **constitution, bicameral, republic, petition, ordinance, depreciate.**
- Reviewing Facts** Describe the country's financial problems after the Revolutionary War.

Reviewing Themes

- Government and Democracy** Why did most states limit the power of their governors and divide the legislature into two bodies?

Critical Thinking

- Predicting Consequences** What effect do you think the Northwest Ordinance had on Native Americans?
- Organizing Information** Re-create the diagram below and summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the Confederation government.

| The Articles of Confederation | |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Strengths | Weaknesses |
| | |

Analyzing Visuals

- Geography Skills** Study the material on pages 194 and 195 about the Ordinance of 1785. Then answer these questions. What present-day states were created from the Northwest Territory? How many sections are in a township?

Interdisciplinary Activity

Citizenship Imagine you are an American citizen in the 1780s. Create a poster that defends the Articles of Confederation. Be sure to include reasons the Confederation Congress is needed.

SECTION 2

Convention and Compromise

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

The new Constitution corrected the weaknesses of government under the Articles of Confederation.

Key Terms

depression, manumission, proportional, compromise

Reading Strategy

Organizing Information As you read the section, re-create the diagram below. In the boxes, describe the role each individual played in creating the new plan of government.

| | Role |
|-----------------|------|
| Edmund Randolph | |
| James Madison | |
| Roger Sherman | |

Read to Learn

- how the Constitutional Convention broke the deadlock over the form the new government would take.
- how the delegates answered the question of representation.

Section Theme

Groups and Institutions National leaders worked to produce a new constitution for the United States.

Preview of Events

1783

1784

Rhode Island passes plan to end slavery

1785

September 1786

Daniel Shays leads rebellion

1787

May 1787

Delegates meet to revise Articles of Confederation

1789

September 1787

Delegates sign draft of Constitution



George Washington

AN American Story

By 1786 many Americans observed that the Confederation was not working. George Washington himself agreed that the United States was really “thirteen Sovereignties pulling against each other.”

In the spring of 1787, Washington joined delegates from Virginia and 11 other states who gathered in Philadelphia to address this problem. Rhode Island decided not to participate. The delegates came “for the sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation.”

Economic Depression

The call to revise the Articles of Confederation came while the young nation faced difficult problems. Many Americans believed that the Confederation government was too weak to deal with these challenges.

After the Revolutionary War ended, the United States went through a **depression**, a period when economic activity slowed and unemployment



Picturing History

Only through donations was Massachusetts able to raise a militia to defeat Shays. **Why did Shays's Rebellion frighten many Americans?**

increased. Southern plantations had been damaged during the war, and rice exports dropped sharply. Trade also fell off when the British closed the profitable West Indies (Caribbean) market to American merchants. What little money there was went to pay foreign debts, and a serious currency shortage resulted.

Difficult Times for Farmers

American farmers suffered because they could not sell their goods. They had problems paying the requests for money that the states levied to meet Revolutionary War debts. As a result state officials seized farmers' lands to pay their debts and threw many farmers into jail. Grumblings of protest soon grew into revolt.

Shays's Rebellion

Resentment grew especially strong in Massachusetts. Farmers viewed the new government as just another form of tyranny. They wanted the government to issue paper money and make new policies to relieve debtors. In a letter to state officials, some farmers proclaimed:

“Surely your honours are not strangers to the distresses [problems] of the people but . . . know that many of our good inhabitants are now confined in [jail] for debt and taxes.”

In 1786 angry farmers lashed out. Led by **Daniel Shays**, a former Continental Army captain, they forced courts in western Massachusetts to close so judges could not confiscate farmers' lands.

In January 1787 Shays led more than 1,000 farmers toward the federal arsenal in **Springfield**, Massachusetts, for arms and ammunition. The state militia ordered the advancing farmers to halt, then fired over their heads. The farmers did not stop, and the militia fired again, killing four rebels. Shays and his followers scattered, and the uprising was over.

Shays's Rebellion frightened many Americans. They worried that the government could not control unrest and prevent violence. On hearing of the rebellion, George Washington wondered whether “mankind, when left to themselves, are unfit for their own government.” Thomas Jefferson, minister to France at the time, had a different view. “A little rebellion, now and then,” he wrote, “is a good thing.”

The Issue of Slavery

The Revolutionary War brought attention to the contradiction between the American battle for liberty and the practice of slavery. Between 1776 and 1786, 11 states—all except South Carolina and Georgia—outlawed or heavily taxed the importation of enslaved people.

Although slavery was not a major source of labor in the North, it existed and was legal in all the Northern states. Many individuals and groups began to work to end the institution of slavery. In 1774 Quakers in Pennsylvania organized the first American antislavery society. Six



years later Pennsylvania passed a law that provided for the gradual freeing of enslaved people.

Between 1783 and 1804, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey passed laws that gradually ended slavery. Still, free African Americans faced discrimination. They were barred from many public places. Few states gave free African Americans the right to vote. The children of most free blacks had to attend separate schools. Free African Americans established their own institutions—churches, schools, and mutual-aid societies—to seek opportunity.

The states south of Pennsylvania clung to the institution of slavery. The plantation system of the South had been built on slavery, and many Southerners feared that their economy could not survive without it. Nonetheless, an increasing number of slaveholders began freeing the enslaved people that they held after the war. Virginia passed a law that encouraged **manumission**, the freeing of individual enslaved persons, and the state's population of free African Americans grew.

The abolition of slavery in the North divided the new country on the critical issue of whether people should be allowed to hold other human beings in bondage. This division came at the time when many American leaders had decided that the Articles of Confederation needed strengthening. In the summer of 1787, when state representatives assembled to plan a new government, they compromised on this issue. It would take years of debate, bloodshed, and ultimately a war to settle the slavery question.

 **Reading Check Explaining** Why did Southern states support slavery?

A Call for Change

The American Revolution had led to a union of 13 states, but it had not yet created a nation. Some leaders were satisfied with a system of independent state governments that resembled the old colonial governments. Others saw a

strong national government as the solution to America's problems. They demanded a reform of the Articles of Confederation.

Two Americans active in the movement for change were **James Madison**, a Virginia planter, and **Alexander Hamilton**, a New York lawyer. In September 1786, Hamilton proposed calling a convention in Philadelphia to discuss trade issues. He also suggested that this convention consider what possible changes were needed to make

“the Constitution of the Federal Government adequate to the exigencies [needs] of the Union.”

At first George Washington was not enthusiastic about the movement to revise the Articles of Confederation. When he heard the news of Shays's Rebellion, Washington changed his mind. After Washington agreed to attend the Philadelphia convention, the meeting took on greater significance.

 **Reading Check Evaluating** Why did Madison and Hamilton call for a convention in 1787?

Picturing History

Philadelphia preachers Richard Allen (left) and Absalom Jones (right) founded the Free African Society and later set up the first African American churches.

What challenges did free African Americans face?



The Constitutional Convention

The Philadelphia meeting began in May 1787 and continued through one of the hottest summers on record. The 55 delegates included planters, merchants, lawyers, physicians, generals, governors, and a college president. Three of the delegates were under 30 years of age, and one, Benjamin Franklin, was over 80. Many were well educated. At a time when only one white man in 1,000 went to college, 26 of the delegates had college degrees. Native Americans, African Americans, and women were not considered part of the political process, so none attended.

Several men stood out as leaders. The presence of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin ensured that many people would trust the Convention's work. Two Philadelphians also played key roles. James Wilson often read Franklin's speeches and did important work on the details of the Constitution. Gouverneur Morris, a powerful speaker and writer, wrote the final draft of the Constitution.

From Virginia came Edmund Randolph and James Madison. Both were keen supporters of a strong national government. Madison's careful notes are the major source of information about the Convention's work. Madison is often called

the **Father of the Constitution** because he was the author of the basic plan of government that the Convention adopted.

Organization

The Convention began by unanimously choosing George Washington to preside over the meetings. It also decided that each state would have one vote on all questions. A simple majority vote of those states present would make decisions. No meetings could be held unless delegates from at least seven of the 13 states were present. The delegates decided to close their doors to the public and keep the sessions secret. This was a key decision because it made it possible for the delegates to talk freely.

The Virginia Plan

After the rules were adopted, the Convention opened with a surprise. It came from the Virginia delegation. Edmund Randolph proposed



America's *Architecture*

Independence Hall The Pennsylvania State House, later known as Independence Hall, was the site of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and of the Constitutional Convention. Independence Hall was restored in 1950 and is now maintained as a museum.

Why do you think this site was used for many important events?





People In History

James Madison 1751–1836



James Madison, only 36 at the time of the Constitutional Convention, was the best prepared of the delegates. In the months before the convention, he had made a detailed study of government. He read hundreds of books on history, politics, and economics. He also corresponded with Thomas Jefferson.

Madison looked for ways to build a strong but fair system of government. He knew that republics were considered weaker than monarchies because kings or queens could use their authority to act quickly and decisively. Who would provide the same leadership in a republic? At the same time, Madison was con-

cerned about protecting the people from misuse of power. As he searched for solutions, Madison worked out a new plan that included a system of balances among different functions of government. The delegates adopted many of Madison's ideas in what would become the United States Constitution.

that the delegates create a strong national government instead of revising the Articles of Confederation. He introduced the **Virginia Plan**, which was largely the work of James Madison. The plan called for a two-house legislature, a chief executive chosen by the legislature, and a court system. The members of the lower house of the legislature would be elected by the people. The members of the upper house would be chosen by the lower house. In both houses the number of representatives would be **proportional**, or corresponding in size, to the population of each state. This would give Virginia many more delegates than Delaware, the state with the smallest population.


Delegates from Delaware, New Jersey, and other small states immediately objected to the plan. They preferred the Confederation system in which all states were represented equally.

Delegates unhappy with the Virginia Plan rallied around **William Paterson** of New Jersey. On June 15 he presented an alternative plan that revised the Articles of Confederation, which was all the convention was empowered to do.

The New Jersey Plan

The **New Jersey Plan** kept the Confederation's one-house legislature, with one vote for each state. Congress, however, could set taxes and regulate trade—powers it did not have under the Articles. Congress would elect a weak executive branch consisting of more than one person.

Paterson argued that the Convention should not deprive the smaller states of the equality they had under the Articles. Thus, his plan was designed simply to amend the Articles.

 **Reading Check** **Explaining** Why did some delegates criticize the Virginia Plan?

Compromise Wins Out

The convention delegates had to decide whether they were simply revising the Articles of Confederation or writing a constitution for a new national government. On June 19 the states voted to work toward a national government based on the Virginia Plan, but they still had to resolve the thorny issue of representation that divided the large and small states.



Picturing History

Delegates to the Constitutional Convention met in this room at Independence Hall. **How many states had to ratify the Constitution before it went into effect?**

Discussion and Disagreement

As the convention delegates struggled to deal with difficult questions, tempers and temperatures grew hotter. How were the members of Congress to be elected? How would state representation be determined in the upper and lower houses? Were enslaved people to be counted as part of the population on which representation was based?

Citizenship

The Great Compromise

Under Franklin's leadership, the convention appointed a "grand committee" to try to resolve their disagreements. **Roger Sherman** of Connecticut suggested what came to be known as the **Great Compromise**. A **compromise** is an agreement between two or more sides in which each side gives up some of what it wants.

Sherman proposed a two-house legislature. In the lower house—the House of Representatives—the number of seats for each state would vary according to the state's population. In the upper house—the Senate—each state would have two members.

The Three-Fifths Compromise

Another major compromise by the delegates dealt with counting enslaved people. Southern states wanted to include the enslaved in their population counts to gain delegates in the House of Representatives. Northern states objected to this idea because enslaved people were legally considered property. Some delegates from Northern states argued that the enslaved, as property, should be counted for the purpose of taxation but not representation. However, neither side considered giving enslaved people the right to vote.

The committee's solution, known as the **Three-Fifths Compromise**, was to count each enslaved person as three-fifths of a free person for both taxation and representation. In other words, every five enslaved persons would equal three free persons. On July 12 the convention delegates voted to approve the Three-Fifths Compromise. Four days later, they agreed that each state should elect two senators.

**Student Web Activity**

Visit taj.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 7—Student Web Activities** for an activity on the Constitutional Convention.

Slave Trade

The convention needed to resolve another difficult issue that divided the Northern and Southern states. Having banned the slave trade within their borders, Northern states wanted to prohibit it throughout the nation. Southern states considered slavery and the slave trade essential to their economies. To keep the Southern states in the nation, Northerners agreed that the Congress could not interfere with the slave trade until 1808. Beginning that year Congress could limit the slave trade if it chose to.

Bill of Rights

George Mason of Virginia proposed a bill of rights to be included in the Constitution. Some delegates worried that without the protection of a bill of rights the new national government might abuse its power. However, most of the delegates believed that the Constitution, with its carefully defined listing of government powers, provided adequate protection of individual rights. Mason's proposal was defeated.

Approving the Constitution

The committees finished their work on the Constitution in late summer. On September 17, 1787, the delegates assembled in the Philadelphia

State House to sign the document. Franklin made a final plea for approval:

“I consent to this Constitution because I expect no better, and because I am not sure, that it is not the best.”

Three delegates refused to sign—Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts, and Edmund Randolph and George Mason of Virginia. Gerry and Mason would not sign without a bill of rights.

The Confederation Congress then sent the approved draft of the Constitution to the states for consideration. To amend the Articles of Confederation had required unanimous approval of the states. Getting a unanimous vote had proved slow and frustrating. Therefore, the delegates agreed to change the approval process for the Constitution. When 9 of the 13 states had approved, the new government of the United States would come into existence. (See pages 232–253 for the entire text of the Constitution.)

Reading Check **Analyzing** Who refused to sign the Constitution? Explain why.

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT**Checking for Understanding**

- Key Terms** Use the terms that follow to write a newspaper article about the main events of the Constitutional Convention: **depression, manumission, proportional, compromise.**
- Reviewing Facts** Explain what caused Shays's Rebellion. What was one effect?

Reviewing Themes

- Groups and Institutions** How did the Great Compromise satisfy both the small and the large states on the question of representation?

Critical Thinking

- Summarizing Information** You are asked to write a 30-second news broadcast to announce the agreement made in the Great Compromise. What would you include in the broadcast?
- Analyzing Information** Re-create the diagram below and identify arguments for and against ratifying the Constitution.

| Ratification | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Arguments for | Arguments against |
| | |

Analyzing Visuals

- Picturing History** Examine the images that appear on pages 202 and 204. What do they show? Where are they located? Why are these places important in the nation's history?

Interdisciplinary Activity

Government Create a political cartoon that illustrates the view of either the Northern states or the Southern states on how enslaved people should be counted for representation.



Critical Thinking SKILLBUILDER

Making Comparisons

Why Learn This Skill?

Suppose you want to buy a portable compact disc (CD) player, and you must choose among three models. You would probably compare characteristics of the three models, such as price, sound quality, and size, to figure out which model is best for you. When you study American history, you often compare people or events from one time period with those from a different time period.

Learning the Skill

When making comparisons, you examine two or more groups, situations, events, or documents. Then you identify similarities and differences. For example, the chart on this page compares two documents, specifically the powers each gave the federal government. The Articles of Confederation were implemented before the United States Constitution, which replaced the Articles.

When making comparisons, you first decide what items will be compared and determine which characteristics you will use to compare them. Then you identify similarities and differences in these characteristics.

Practicing the Skill

Analyze the information on the chart on this page. Then answer the following questions.

- 1 What items are being compared?
- 2 Which document allowed the government to organize state militias?
- 3 Which document allowed the government to coin money? Regulate trade?
- 4 In what ways are the two documents different?
- 5 In what ways are the two documents similar?

Powers of the Federal Government

| | Articles of Confederation | United States Constitution |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Declare war; make peace | ✓ | ✓ |
| Coin money | ✓ | ✓ |
| Manage foreign affairs | ✓ | ✓ |
| Establish a postal system | ✓ | ✓ |
| Impose taxes | | ✓ |
| Regulate trade | | ✓ |
| Organize a court system | | ✓ |
| Call state militias for service | | ✓ |
| Protect copyrights | | ✓ |
| Take other necessary actions to run the federal government | | ✓ |

Applying the Skill

Making Comparisons On the editorial page of your local newspaper, find two letters to the editor that express different viewpoints on the same issue. Read the letters and identify the similarities and differences between the two points of view.



Glencoe's **Skillbuilder Interactive Workbook CD-ROM, Level 1**, provides instruction and practice in key social studies skills.



SECTION 3

A New Plan of Government

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

The United States system of government rests on the Constitution.

Key Terms

Enlightenment, federalism, article, legislative branch, executive branch, Electoral College, judicial branch, checks and balances, ratify, Federalist, Antifederalist, amendment

Reading Strategy

Organizing Information Re-create the diagram below. In the boxes explain how the system of checks and balances works.

| | Has check or balance over: | Example |
|---------------|----------------------------|---------|
| President | | |
| Congress | | |
| Supreme Court | | |

Read to Learn

- about the roots of the Constitution.
- how the Constitution limits the power of government.

Section Theme

Civic Rights and Responsibilities

The Constitution outlines the responsibilities and the limits of the three branches of the national government.

Preview of Events

1680

1720

1760

1800

1689

English Bill of Rights established

1690

Locke publishes *Two Treatises of Civil Government*

1748

Montesquieu writes *The Spirit of Laws*

1787

Constitutional Convention meets in Philadelphia



Washington's chair,
Constitutional Convention

AN American Story

As Benjamin Franklin was leaving the last session of the Constitutional Congress, a woman asked, "What kind of government have you given us, Dr. Franklin? A republic or a monarchy?" Franklin answered, "A republic, Madam, if you can keep it." Franklin's response indicated that a republic—a system of government in which the people elect representatives to exercise power for them—requires citizens to take an active role.

Roots of the Constitution

After four long and difficult months, Franklin and the other delegates had produced a new constitution. The document provided the framework for a strong central government for the United States.

Although a uniquely American document, the Constitution has roots in many other civilizations. The delegates had studied and discussed the history of political development at length—starting with ancient Greece—so that their new government could avoid the mistakes of the past.

Many ideas embedded in the Constitution came from the study of European political institutions and political writers. British ideas and institutions particularly influenced the delegates.

The Framers who shaped the document were familiar with the parliamentary system of Britain, and many had participated in the colonial assemblies or their state assemblies. They valued the individual rights guaranteed by the British judicial system. Although the Americans had broken away from Britain, they respected many British traditions.

British System of Government

The **Magna Carta** (1215) had placed limits on the power of the monarch. England's lawmaking body, Parliament, emerged as a force that the king had to depend on to pay for wars and to finance the royal government. Like Parliament, the colonial assemblies controlled their colony's funds. For that reason the assemblies had some control over colonial governors.

The English Bill of Rights of 1689 provided another important model for Americans. Many Americans felt that the Constitution also needed a bill of rights.

Framers of the Constitution got many ideas on the nature of people and government from European writers of the Enlightenment. The **Enlightenment** was a movement of the 1700s that promoted knowledge, reason, and science as the means to improve society. James Madison and other architects of the Constitution were familiar with the work of **John Locke** and **Baron de Montesquieu** (MAHN•tuhs•KYOO), two important philosophers.

Locke, an English philosopher, believed that all people have **natural rights**. These natural rights include the rights to life, liberty, and property. In his *Two Treatises of Civil Government* (1690), he wrote that government is based on an agreement, or contract, between the people and the ruler. Many Americans interpreted natural rights to mean the rights of Englishmen defined in the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights. The Framers viewed the Constitution as a contract between the American people and their government. The contract protected the people's natural rights by limiting the government's power.

“[E]very man has a property in his own person. This nobody has any right to but himself.”

—John Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government* (1690)



In *The Spirit of Laws* (1748), the French writer Montesquieu declared that the powers of government should be separated and balanced against each other. This separation would keep any one person or group from gaining too much power. The powers of government should also be clearly defined and limited to prevent abuse. Following the ideas of Montesquieu, the Framers of the Constitution carefully specified and divided the powers of government.

✓ Reading Check **Describing** How did the English Bill of Rights influence Americans?

The Federal System

The Constitution created a federal system of government that divided powers between the national, or federal, government and the states. Under the Articles of Confederation the states retained their sovereignty. Under the Constitution the states gave up some of their powers to the federal government while keeping others.

Shared Powers

Federalism, or sharing power between the federal and state governments, is one of the distinctive features of the United States government.



Under the Constitution, the federal government gained broad powers to tax, regulate trade, control the currency, raise an army, and declare war. It could also pass laws that were “necessary and proper” for carrying out its responsibilities.

However, the Constitution left important powers in the hands of the states. The states had the power to pass and enforce laws and regulate trade within their borders. They could also establish local governments, schools, and other institutions affecting the welfare of their citizens. Both federal and state governments also had the power to tax and to build roads.

The Constitution Becomes Supreme Law of the Land

The Constitution and the laws that Congress passed were to be “the supreme law of the land.” No state could make laws or take actions that went against the Constitution. Any dispute between the federal government and the states was to be settled by the federal courts on the basis of the Constitution. Under the new federal system, the Constitution became the final and supreme authority.

 **Reading Check** **Describing** What is the principle of federalism?

The Organization of Government

Influenced by Montesquieu’s idea of a division of powers, the Framers divided the federal government into three branches—legislative, executive, and judicial. The first three **articles**, or parts, of the Constitution describe the powers and responsibilities of each branch.



America’s *Architecture*

The Old Senate Chamber The U.S. Senate met in the Old Senate Chamber from 1810 until 1859. The two-story chamber is semicircular in shape and measures 75 feet long and 50 feet wide. Two visitors galleries overlook the chamber. After the Senate moved to its present location, the room was occupied by the Supreme Court, from 1860 to 1935. **What branches of government conducted business in the chamber?**

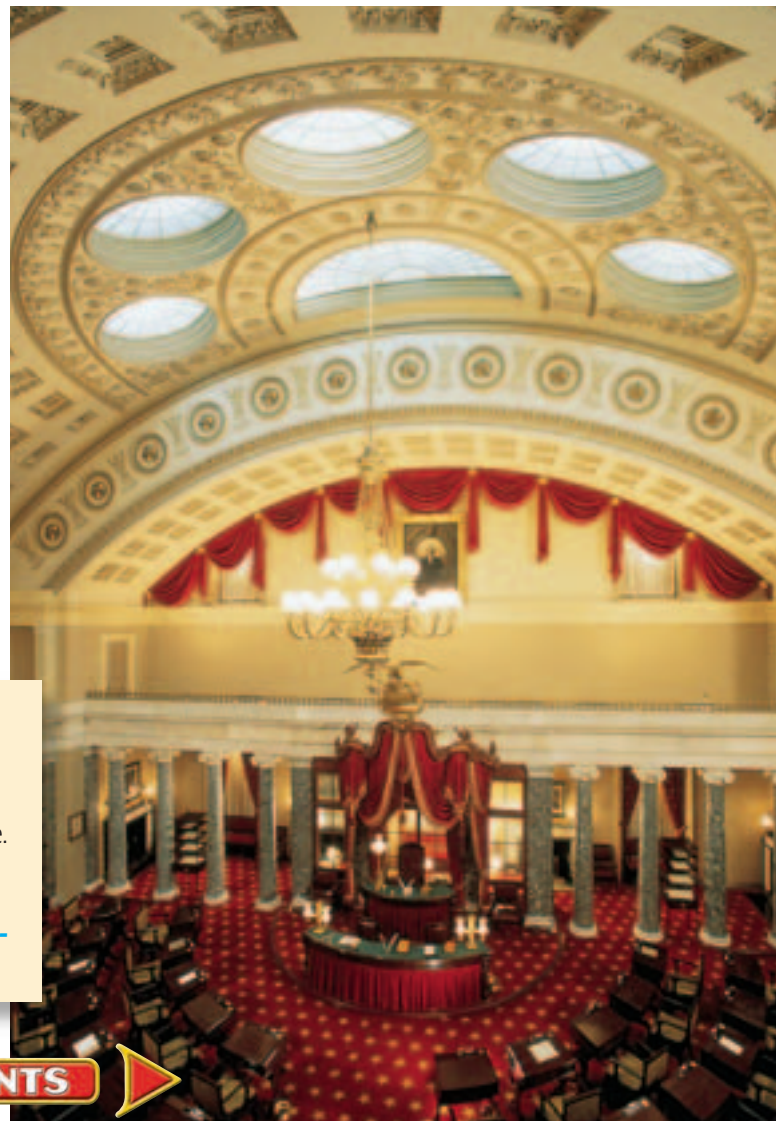
The Legislative Branch

Article I of the Constitution establishes Congress, the **legislative branch**, or lawmaking branch, of the government. Congress is composed of the House of Representatives and the Senate. As a result of the Great Compromise between large and small states, each state’s representation in the House is proportional to its population. Representation in the Senate is equal—two senators for each state.

The powers of Congress include collecting taxes, coining money, and regulating trade. Congress can also declare war and “raise and support armies.” Finally it makes all laws needed to fulfill the functions given to it as stated in the Constitution.

The Executive Branch

Memories of King George III’s rule made some delegates reluctant to establish a powerful executive, or ruler. Others believed that the





Picturing History

The Supreme Court has the final say in deciding what the Constitution means. **What types of cases does the Supreme Court hear?**

Confederation had failed, in part, because it lacked an executive branch or president. They argued that a strong executive would serve as a check, or limit, on Congress.

Article II of the Constitution established the **executive branch**, headed by the president, to carry out the nation's laws and policies. The president serves as commander in chief of the armed forces and conducts relations with foreign countries.

The president and a vice president are elected by a special group called the **Electoral College**, made up of presidential electors. Each state's voters select electors to cast their votes for the president and vice president. Each state has as many electors as it has senators and representatives in Congress. The president and vice president chosen by the electors serve a four-year term.

The Judicial Branch

Article III of the Constitution deals with the **judicial branch**, or court system, of the United States. The nation's judicial power resides in "one supreme Court" and any other lower federal courts that Congress might establish. The

Supreme Court and the federal courts hear cases involving the Constitution, laws passed by Congress, and disputes between states.

System of Checks and Balances

The most distinctive feature of the United States government is the separation of powers. The Constitution divides government power among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. To keep any one branch from gaining too much power, the Framers built in a system of **checks and balances**. The three branches of government have roles that check, or limit, the others so that no single branch can dominate the government.

Both the House and the Senate must pass a bill for it to become law. The president can check Congress by vetoing, or rejecting, the bill. However, Congress can then check the president by overriding, or voting down, the veto. To override a veto, two-thirds of the members of both houses of Congress must vote for the bill.

The system of checks and balances also applies to the Supreme Court. The president appoints Supreme Court justices, and the Senate must approve the appointments.



Over time, the Court became a check on Congress and the president by ruling on the constitutionality of laws and presidential acts. The system has been successful in maintaining a balance of power among the branches of the federal government and limiting abuses of power.

National Citizens

The Constitution created citizens of the United States. It set up a government in which the people choose their officials—directly or indirectly. Officials answer to the people rather than to the states. The new government pledged to protect the personal freedoms of its citizens.

With these revolutionary changes, Americans showed the world that it was possible for a people to change its form of government through discussion and choice—rather than through chaos, force, or war. The rest of the world watched the new nation with interest to see whether its experiment in self-government would really work.

✓ Reading Check **Explaining** Why does the Constitution divide government power among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches?

Citizenship

The Constitutional Debate

The delegates at Philadelphia had produced the Constitution, but its acceptance depended upon the will of the people. Gaining approval of the Constitution, with its radical new plan of government, was not going to be easy. Supporters and opponents prepared to defend their positions.

Before the Constitution could go into effect, nine states needed to **ratify**, or approve, it. State legislatures set up special ratifying conventions to consider the document. By late 1787 these conventions started to meet. Rhode Island stood apart. Its leaders opposed the Constitution from the beginning and therefore did not call a convention to approve it.

A great debate now took place throughout the country. In newspapers, at public meetings, and in ordinary conversations, Americans discussed the arguments for and against the new Constitution.

Linking Past & Present

Great Seal of the United States

The Great Seal of the United States is the official seal of the United States government. The seal appears on important government documents. First adopted in 1782, it remains in use today. The face of the seal shows an American eagle with its wings spread. The seal also includes the motto *E pluribus unum* ("From many, one"). Most Americans don't know it, but they often carry around the seal. The one-dollar bill has both sides of the Great Seal on its back.



The United States has had several versions of the Great Seal.

The Great Seal and the number thirteen

On the Great Seal are

- 13 stars in the crest above the eagle
- 13 stripes on the eagle's shield
- 13 arrows in the eagle's left claw
- 13 olives and leaves in the eagle's right claw
- 13 letters in *E Pluribus Unum*
- 13 letters in the motto above the eye, *Annuuit Coeptis*

Federalists

Supporters of the new Constitution were called **Federalists**. Better organized than their opponents, Federalists enjoyed the support of two of the most respected men in America—George Washington and Benjamin Franklin.



Three of the nation's most gifted political thinkers—James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and **John Jay**—also backed the Constitution.

Madison, Hamilton, and Jay teamed up to write a series of essays explaining and defending the Constitution. These essays appeared in newspapers around the country and were widely read by Americans of every persuasion. Called *The Federalist Papers*, they were later published as a book and sent to delegates at the remaining ratifying conventions. 📖 (See page 986 of the Appendix for an excerpt from *The Federalist Papers*.) Jefferson described the series of essays as

“the best commentary on the principles of government which was ever written.”

Antifederalists

The Federalists called those who opposed ratification **Antifederalists**. Although not as well organized as the Federalists, the Antifederalists

Picturing History

Antifederalist Mercy Otis Warren feared that the Constitution would make the central government too powerful. **What was the biggest criticism of the Constitution by Antifederalists?**



had some dedicated supporters. They responded to the Federalists with a series of their own essays, now known as the *Antifederalist Papers*. Their main argument was that the new Constitution would take away the liberties Americans had fought to win from Great Britain. The Constitution would create a strong central government, ignore the will of the states and the people, and favor the wealthy few over the common people. Antifederalists preferred local government close to the people. An energetic central government, they feared, would be government by a small, educated group of individuals. They agreed with Patrick Henry, who warned that the Constitution was “incompatible with the genius of republicanism.”


Protecting Rights

Perhaps the strongest criticism of the Constitution was that it lacked a bill of rights to protect individual freedoms. Antifederalists believed that no government could be trusted to protect the freedom of its citizens. Several state conventions took a stand and announced that they would not ratify the Constitution without the addition of a bill of rights.

Mercy Otis Warren, a Massachusetts opponent of the Constitution, expressed the problem faced by many Antifederalists. She admitted the need for a strong government but feared it.

“We have struggled for liberty and made costly sacrifices . . . and there are still many among us who [value liberty] too much to relinquish . . . the rights of man for the dignity of government.”

In many ways the debate between Federalists and Antifederalists came down to their different fears. Federalists feared disorder without a strong central government. They believed that more uprisings like Shays's Rebellion would occur. They looked to the Constitution to create a national government capable of maintaining order. The Antifederalists feared oppression more than disorder. They worried about the concentration of power that would result from a strong national government.

 **Reading Check Explaining** According to the Antifederalists, why was a bill of rights important?



Analyzing Political Cartoons

A cartoon published in 1788 celebrates New Hampshire becoming the ninth state to ratify the Constitution. **From the cartoon, which was the first state to ratify?**



Adopting the Constitution

On December 7, 1787, Delaware became the first state to approve the Constitution. On June 21, 1788, the ninth state—New Hampshire—ratified it. In theory that meant that the new government could go into effect. However, without the support of the two largest states—New York and Virginia—the future of the new government was not promising. Neither state had ratified yet, and both had strong Antifederalist groups.

In Virginia, **Patrick Henry** gave fiery speeches against the proposed Constitution. It did not, he charged, sufficiently limit the power of the federal government. Still, Virginia ratified the Constitution at the end of June 1788, after being assured that the Constitution would include a bill of rights amendment. An **amendment** is something added to a document.

That left three states—New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island—to ratify. In July 1788, New York finally ratified it by a narrow margin. North Carolina ratified in November 1789, and Rhode Island ratified in May 1790.

After ratification came the celebrations. Boston, New York, and Philadelphia held big parades accompanied by cannon salutes and ringing church bells. Smaller celebrations took place in hundreds of American towns.

The task of creating the Constitution had ended. The Bill of Rights would be added in 1791, after the new government took office. Now it was time for the nation to elect leaders and begin the work of government.

✓ Reading Check Explaining Why was the support of New York and Virginia vital to ratifying the Constitution?

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

- Key Terms** Define the following terms: **Enlightenment, federalism, article, Electoral College, checks and balances, ratify, Federalist, Antifederalist, amendment.**
- Reviewing Facts** What influence did John Locke have on American government?

Reviewing Themes

- Civic Rights and Responsibilities** Why did the Framers of the Constitution believe that a division of powers and a system of checks and balances were necessary in a government?

Critical Thinking

- Finding the Main Idea** What do you think was the most important reason for establishing a strong central government under the Constitution?
- Comparing** Re-create the diagram below. Describe the differences between Hamilton's and Henry's views on the Constitution.

| Views on the Constitution | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Hamilton | Henry |
| | |

Analyzing Visuals

- Political Cartoons** Study the political cartoon on this page. Then answer the questions that follow. What do the pillars represent? How do the last two pillars appear?

Interdisciplinary Activity

Citizenship Refer to the Bill of Rights on pages 244–245. Collect photographs from newspapers or magazines that illustrate the freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. Put your photos on a poster entitled “Pictures of Liberty.”

CHAPTER 7

ASSESSMENT and ACTIVITIES

Chapter Summary

A More Perfect Union



1777

- Congress adopts the Articles of Confederation to coordinate the war effort against Britain.

1781

- The Articles of Confederation formally become the government of the United States.

1784

- Spain closes the lower Mississippi River to American shipping.

1785

- The Land Ordinance provides a method for settlement of public lands north of the Ohio River.

1787

- Congress provides for the organization of the Northwest Territory and outlines the steps that a territory must take in order to become a state.
- Delegates meet in Philadelphia and draft the Constitution.
- Delaware becomes the first state to ratify the Constitution.



1788

- New Hampshire becomes the ninth state to vote for ratification.

1790

- The last of the 13 states—Rhode Island—votes for ratification.

1791

- Bill of Rights is added to the Constitution.



Reviewing Key Terms

For each of the pairs of terms below, write a sentence or short paragraph showing how the two are related.

1. constitution, ratify
2. bicameral, legislative branch
3. executive branch, Electoral College

Reviewing Key Facts

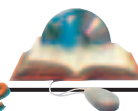
4. Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation.
5. What caused the depression after the Revolution?
6. How did the Northwest Ordinance provide for the country's expansion?
7. According to the Virginia Plan, how was the legislature to be set up?
8. Who supported the New Jersey Plan?
9. What was the Three-Fifths Compromise?
10. What powers did the Constitution leave in the hands of the state governments?
11. Why did some states want a bill of rights added to the Constitution?
12. How did the *Federalist Papers* and the *Antifederalist Papers* influence ideas on systems of U.S. government?
13. How does the system of checks and balances work?

Critical Thinking

14. **Comparing** Who had the most power under the Articles of Confederation? Re-create the diagram below. In the boxes, describe the powers given to the state and national governments.

| State Governments | National Government |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| | |

15. **Analyzing Themes: Groups and Institutions** Were the people who attended the Constitutional Convention representative of the American public? Explain.
16. **Drawing Conclusions** Why was a system of checks and balances built into the Constitution?
17. **Analyzing Information** Refer to the grievances listed in the Declaration of Independence on pages 154–157. How were these grievances addressed in the Constitution?



Self-Check Quiz

Visit taj.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 7—Self-Check Quizzes** to prepare for the chapter test.



Geography and History Activity

Examine the map of the Northwest Territory on page 195. Then answer the questions that follow.

18. How many miles long and wide was a township?
19. How many miles long and wide was a section?
20. How many acres were in a section?

Practicing Skills

Making Comparisons The two statements that follow reflect the opinions of an Antifederalist and a Federalist toward the ratification of the Constitution. Read the opinions; then answer the questions.

“These lawyers and men of learning, and moneyed men . . . make us poor illiterate people swallow down the pill, expect to get into Congress themselves; they expect to be the managers of this Constitution, and get all the power and all the money into their own hands, and then they will swallow up all of us little folks. . . . This is what I am afraid of.”

— Amos Singletary, farmer

“I am a plain man, and get my living by the plough. . . . I did not go to any lawyer, to ask his opinion; I formed my own opinion, and was pleased with this Constitution. . . . I don’t think the worse of the Constitution because lawyers, and men of learning, and moneyed men, are fond of it.”

— Jonathan Smith, farmer

21. Who is the Antifederalist? How do you know?
22. How are the two opinions similar? How are they different?
23. In your opinion, does the Antifederalist or the Federalist make the stronger argument? Explain.

Citizenship Cooperative Activity

24. **Interviewing** In groups of three, interview students from your school and adults from your community to find out what they know about the powers of government specified in the Constitution. Prepare a list of questions to use in your interviews. To keep the interviews brief, you might use yes/no questions, such as “Does the Constitution give the government the power to regulate highways?” Compile the answers and present a report to your class.

Economics Activity

25. For a week, keep track of the number of times that you read about or hear about the topics of unemployment and inflation. Write down the source from which you heard or read this information. After each entry, indicate whether the economic news was good.



Alternative Assessment

26. **Portfolio Writing Activity** Review the Bill of Rights to the Constitution (first 10 amendments) on pages 244–245. Summarize each in your journal. Next, choose the amendment from the Bill of Rights that you think is the most important. Write a paragraph in which you explain your choice. Finally, knowing what you know about today’s society, write a short description of a right you think the Framers of the Constitution should have included.



**Standardized
Test Practice**

Directions: Choose the *best* answer to the following multiple choice question.

Each of the states enacted state constitutions in the late 1700s. All state constitutions

- A established equal rights for all persons living in the state.
- B set up legislative and executive branches of state government.
- C granted women the right to vote.
- D agreed that states would be supervised by the federal government.

Test-Taking Tip:

Eliminate answers that do not make sense. For example, *equal rights for all* (choice A) is a fairly new concept. During the 1700s, women and enslaved people had few rights.