

U.S. History to 1865 Study Guide

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS OF LEARNING
CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK –2015 STANDARDS
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STANDARD USI.7B CONSTITUTION

b) describe the historical development of the Constitution of the United States.

STANDARD USI.7A ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

The student will demonstrate knowledge of the challenges faced by the new nation by

a) identifying the weaknesses of the government established by the Articles of Confederation.

The Articles of Confederation was a constitution written during the American Revolution to establish the powers of the new national government.

Weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation-

- Provided for a **weak national government**
- Gave Congress no **power to tax or regulate commerce** among the states
- Provided for **no common currency**
- Gave each state **one vote** regardless of size
- Provided for **no executive or judicial** branches



Outcomes of the Articles of Confederation

- **First constitution** of the United States
- The **Northwest Ordinance**
 - Outlined the process for admitting a new state to the Union
 - **Outlawed slavery in the new territories**



After four months of deliberations in Philadelphia, the delegates finally agree on a new U.S. Constitution.

The development of the Constitution of the United States was significant to the foundation of the American republic.

The Constitution of the United States of America established a federal system of government based on power being shared between the national and state governments.

Confederation to Constitution

- **Weaknesses** in the Articles of Confederation led to the effort to draft a **new constitution**.

The Constitutional Convention

- State delegates met in **Philadelphia** and decided not to revise the Articles of Confederation but to **write a new constitution**.
- **George Washington** was elected president of the Constitutional Convention.
- **James Madison** became known as the “**Father of the Constitution**.”
- Delegates debated over how **much power should be given to the new national government** and how large and small states should be represented in the new government.
- The **structure** of the new national government included three **separate branches of government**:
 - **Legislative** (makes the laws)
 - **Executive** (carries out the laws)
 - **Judicial** (interprets the laws)
- The **Great Compromise** decided **how many votes** each state would have in the **Senate** and the **House of Representatives**.
- The **Constitution was signed** at the end of the convention.

Ratification of the Constitution

- A minimum of **nine of the thirteen states** had to vote in favor of the Constitution before it could become law.

The Bill of Rights

- Based on the **Virginia Declaration of Rights (George Mason)** and the **Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom (Thomas Jefferson)**
- These **first ten amendments** to the Constitution provide a **written guarantee of individual rights** (e.g., freedom of speech, freedom of religion).

STANDARD US1.7c



FIRST FIVE PRESIDENTS

c) describe the major accomplishments of the first five presidents of the United States.

Congress and the first five presidents made decisions establishing a strong government that helped the nation grow in size and power.

All of the first five presidents were **Virginians** except **John Adams**.

Accomplishments during the first five presidencies

- **George Washington**
 - **Federal court system** was established.
 - The **Bill of Rights** was added to the Constitution of the United States of America.
 - Plans were created for development of the **national capital in Washington, D.C.** Benjamin **Banneker**, an African American astronomer and surveyor, helped complete the design for the city.
- **John Adams**
 - A **two-party system** emerged during his administration.



- **Thomas Jefferson**
 - He bought **Louisiana** from France (**Louisiana Purchase**).
 - **Lewis and Clark** explored new land west of the Mississippi River.



- **James Madison**
 - The **War of 1812** caused European nations to **gain respect** for the United States.
- **James Monroe**
 - He introduced the **Monroe Doctrine** warning European nations **not to interfere** in the Western Hemisphere.