

U.S. HISTORY TO 1865 - USI.7 – A NEW NATION 2023 STANDARDS

STANDARD USI.7A – ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

- a. *explain the strengths, weaknesses, and outcomes of the government established by the **Articles of Confederation***

Key Idea:

The **Articles of Confederation** was America's **first national constitution**, created during the Revolutionary War to establish a system of government for the new country.

Strengths

- **Unified the colonies** under one government during the war.
- **Allowed Congress** to make treaties, declare war, and manage western lands.
- Led the colonies to **victory** over Great Britain.

Weaknesses

- The national government had **no power to tax** or regulate trade.
- There was **no executive branch** to enforce laws and **no national court** system to settle disputes.
- Each **state acted independently**, often ignoring national laws.
- It was **difficult to make changes**—all 13 states had to agree on any amendment.

Consequences



Shay's Rebellion

- Problems such as **Shays' Rebellion** (1786) showed the government's **weakness in maintaining order**.

- These challenges led to a call for a **stronger central government**.

Questions for thought

- What problems did the Articles of Confederation **fail to solve**?
- Why did the new nation **fear** creating a **strong** central government?
- How did **Shays' Rebellion** reveal the need for change?

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STANDARD USI.7B – NEW CONSTITUTION

- b. *describe the **Constitutional Convention** and the development of the Constitution of the United States, with an emphasis on the role of **James Madison**;*

Key Idea:

The weaknesses of the Articles led delegates from 12 states to meet in Philadelphia in 1787 to create a new constitution.

The Constitutional Convention



Constitutional Convention

- Delegates debated how power should be **divided** between the **national** and **state governments**.
- The resulting **Constitution** of the United States created a **federal system**, sharing power between national and state governments.
- **James Madison**, known as the "**Father of the Constitution**," played a **leading role** by taking detailed notes, proposing the **Virginia Plan**, and helping shape the final document.

Key Influences

- **Virginia Declaration of Rights** (George Mason) – inspired ideas of **individual freedoms**.
- **Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom** (Thomas Jefferson) – established **freedom of religion**.
- **Charters of the Virginia Company of London** – early models of **self-government**.

Questions for thought

- What was **James Madison's role** in shaping the Constitution?
- What documents and ideas influenced the new government?
- Why was a **stronger central government** needed?

STANDARD USI.7C - CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

- c. examine constitutional issues debated, including the role of the **national government** and the debate over **ratifying the Constitution**, the influence of the **Federalist Papers**, and the reasons for the addition of the **Bill of Rights**

Key Idea:

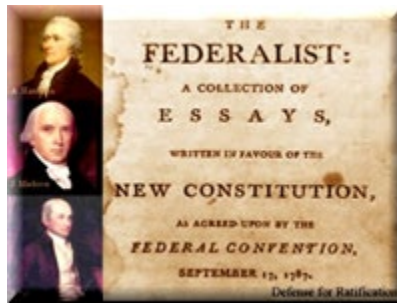
Not everyone agreed on how the new Constitution should be approved or how much power the national government should have.

Major Debates

- **Federalists (Madison, Hamilton, Jay):** Supported the new Constitution; believed a **strong national government** would unite the country and maintain order.
- **Anti-Federalists (Patrick Henry, George Mason):** Feared a **powerful central government**; demanded a Bill of Rights to protect individual freedoms.

The Federalist Papers

- A series of essays written by **James Madison**, , and **John Jay** to explain and defend the **Alexander Hamilton Constitution**.
- Helped convince states to **ratify (approve)** the new Constitution



The Bill of Rights

- The **first ten amendments** to the Constitution, added in 1791, guaranteed rights such as **freedom of speech, religion, press, and trial by jury**.
- The Bill of Rights helped secure ratification and made the Constitution a “living document,” adaptable through future amendments.

Questions for thought

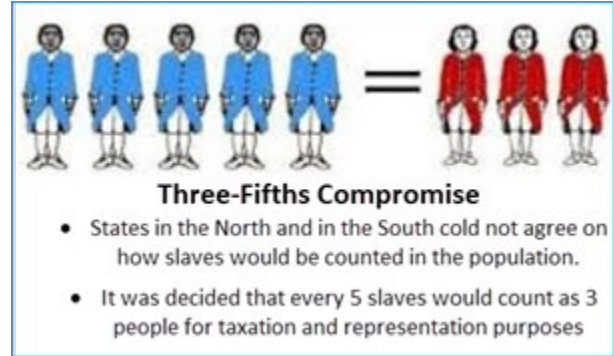
- Who were the **Federalists** and **Anti-Federalists**, and what did each believe?
- Why was the **Bill of Rights** added to the Constitution?
- How does the **amendment process** make the Constitution adaptable?

STANDARD USI.7D –THREE-FIFTHS COMPROMISE

- d. explain the **Three-Fifths Compromise**

Key Idea:

Delegates at the Constitutional Convention **disagreed over how enslaved people** should be counted for representation and taxation.



The Compromise

Southern states wanted **enslaved people counted** toward population totals (to gain more seats in Congress).

- Northern states objected, arguing that enslaved people, denied rights, **should not count toward representation**.
- The **Three-Fifths Compromise** resolved the debate by counting **three out of every five** enslaved persons for both taxation and representation.

Impact:

This compromise temporarily **eased tensions** but exposed the **deep divisions** over slavery that would continue for decades.

Questions for thought

- Why was the **Three-Fifths Compromise** created?
- How did it **balance the interests** of northern and southern states?
- How did this issue foreshadow **future conflicts** over slavery?

STANDARD US1.7E – THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

e. *examine the three branches of government.*

Key Idea:

The Constitution created a government with **three separate branches** to ensure that no one part became too powerful—a system known as **checks and balances**.

Judicial Power Strengthened

- **John Marshall**, as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (1801–1835), **strengthened the power** of the judicial branch.

- Landmark decisions such as **Marbury v. Madison** (1803) established **judicial review**, allowing courts to declare laws unconstitutional.

Questions for thought

- What are the main responsibilities of **each branch of government**?
- How does the system of **checks and balances** prevent abuse of power?
- How did John Marshall expand the **power of the judiciary**?

The Structure of the Federal Government

Branch	Main Role	Key Powers	Checks on Other Branches
Legislative (Congress)	Makes laws	Declares war, approves budgets, confirms presidential appointments	Can override vetoes and impeach officials
Executive (President)	Enforces laws	Signs/vetoes laws, commands military, appoints officials	Can veto laws, nominates judges
Judicial (Supreme Court)	Interprets laws	Determines constitutionality of laws	Can strike down unconstitutional actions