

The Confederation Era

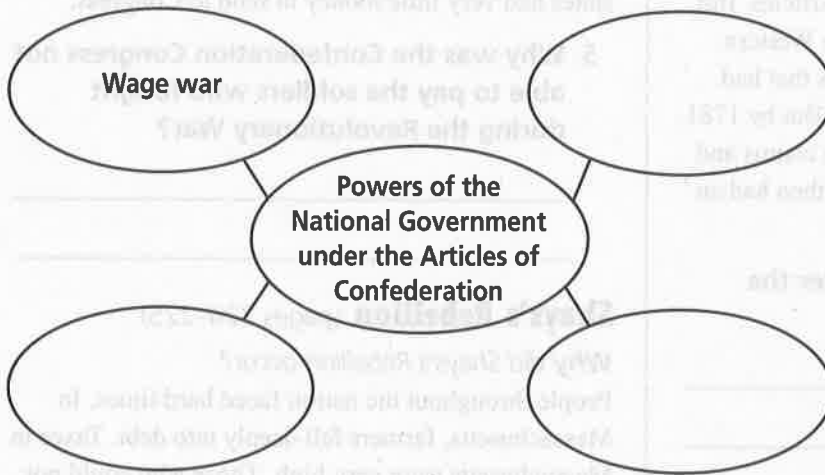
BEFORE YOU READ

In the last chapter, you read about the issues that faced the United States after winning the Revolutionary War.

In this section, you will learn about the early years of the United States.

AS YOU READ

Use this diagram to take notes on the powers the national government had under the Articles of Confederation.



TERMS & NAMES

Wilderness Road A road that traveled westward over the Appalachian Mountains into Kentucky

republic A government in which the people elect representatives to govern

Articles of Confederation The first government of the United States

Land Ordinance of 1785 Law that set up townships in the Western lands, which became known as the Northwest Territory

Northwest Territory Land that formed the modern states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota

Northwest Ordinance Law that organized the Northwest Territory

Shays's Rebellion Anti-tax protest by farmers

Moving West (page 221)

What was the Wilderness Road?

In 1775, Daniel Boone and 30 others helped to build the **Wilderness Road**. This road ran westward over the Appalachian Mountains into Kentucky. Settlers traveled the road on foot and on horseback.

Some Native Americans hunted, fished, and lived in the Kentucky region. The movement of the settlers there led to violence between the Native Americans and the settlers. But the settlers continued coming. By 1790, about 100,000 Americans lived there.

1. How did settlers use the Wilderness Road?

New State Governments (page 222)

What kind of governments did the independent colonies set up?

After the colonies became independent, each state set out to create its own government. Some states created governments with separate branches. Some included a bill of rights as part of the constitution. All the states set up republican forms of government. In a **republic**, people choose representatives to govern them.

2. What form of government did all the new states set up?

The Articles of Confederation

(pages 222–223)

What were the Articles of Confederation?

In 1776, the Continental Congress met to set up a national government. They agreed on a plan called the **Articles of Confederation**. It gave much power to the states and little power to the national government. The government was run by a Confederation Congress. Each state had one vote in the Congress.

Under the Articles, most important powers were left to the states. For example, the states had the power to tax. The states were also left in control of the Western lands.

In 1778, eight states had *ratified* the Articles. But some of the small states that did not have Western lands refused to sign. They felt that states that had Western lands would have an advantage. But by 1781, all of the states had given up the Western claims and accepted the Articles. The United States then had an official government.

3. Who had the most powers under the Articles of Confederation?

The Northwest Ordinance (page 223)

What was the Northwest Ordinance?

One of the most important questions facing the Confederation Congress was what to do with the Western lands. So Congress passed laws on how to divide and govern these lands. The **Land Ordinance of 1785** staked out six-mile square plots, called townships. These lands later became the **Northwest Territory**. It included land that formed the states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota.

The **Northwest Ordinance** described how the Northwest Territory was to be governed. It outlined when the territories could govern themselves. It also established settlers' rights. This law was important because it set a pattern for the orderly growth of the United States.

4. What did the Northwest Ordinance do?

Weaknesses of the Articles (page 224)

What major problems did the Confederation Congress face?

The Confederation Congress had few successes other than the Northwest Ordinance. The new nation faced problems that the Congress did not have the power to solve.

One problem was *debt*. The Congress had borrowed large amounts of money during the Revolutionary War. Much of the money was owed to soldiers of its own army. Even if the Congress wanted to pay the soldiers, it did not have power to *levy* taxes. It depended on the states to send money. But the states had very little money to send to Congress.

5. Why was the Confederation Congress not able to pay the soldiers who fought during the Revolutionary War?

Shays's Rebellion (pages 224–225)

Why did Shays's Rebellion occur?

People throughout the nation faced hard times. In Massachusetts, farmers fell deeply into debt. Taxes in Massachusetts were very high. Those who could not pay their debts lost their land and were jailed.

In 1787, farmers in Massachusetts held a tax protest. They asked the state legislature for relief from their debts. The legislature refused. The farmers rebelled, led by Daniel Shays. This rebellion became known as **Shays's Rebellion**. The Massachusetts *militia* killed four protesters. Although the protesters were defeated, the protest won the sympathy of many Americans. Many people felt that the nation needed to have a stronger national government to help solve its problems.

6. What caused Shays's Rebellion?

Creating the Constitution

BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read about the problems the nation faced under the Articles of Confederation.

In this section, you will learn how these problems led to the creation of the Constitution.

AS YOU READ

Use this chart to take notes on how the following plans and compromises helped to form a new plan of government.

PLAN/COMPROMISE	WHAT IT CALLED FOR
Virginia Plan	
New Jersey Plan	
Great Compromise	
Three-Fifths Compromise	

TERMS & NAMES

Constitutional Convention

Meeting in Philadelphia called to change the Articles of Confederation

James Madison One of the leaders of the Constitutional Convention

Virginia Plan Plan that called for representation in the legislature to be based on states' population or wealth

New Jersey Plan Plan that called for each state to have equal representation in the legislature

Great Compromise Called for a two-house legislature with representation based on population in one house and equal representation in the other house

Three-Fifths Compromise Called for counting three-fifths of the slave population for representation and taxation

A Constitutional Convention Is Called

(pages 228–229)

Why did Alexander Hamilton want the states to send representatives to Philadelphia?

In September 1786, *delegates* from five states met in Annapolis, Maryland. They wanted to help promote trade among the states by creating national trade laws. But creating such changes would require *amending* the Articles of Confederation. Under the Articles, the national government had no power to regulate trade among the states.

The Annapolis delegates called for the states to send representatives to Philadelphia the following May to discuss such changes. In the meantime, Shays's Rebellion broke out. Fearing the rebellion might spread, 12 states sent delegates to Philadelphia in 1787.

1. Why did 12 states send delegates to Philadelphia in 1787?

The Convention's Delegates (page 229)

What were the delegates at the Constitutional Convention like?

Fifty-five delegates came to the **Constitutional Convention** in Philadelphia. They were an impressive group. About three-fourths had been representatives to the Continental Congress.

Most of the nation's leaders were there, including George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and **James Madison**.

But not every American leader was there. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were not at the meeting because they were overseas. Patrick Henry refused to go because he opposed the Convention.

In addition, there were no women, blacks, or Native Americans invited to participate in the Convention.

2. Who were some of the famous men at the Constitutional Convention?

The Delegates Assemble; The Convention Begins

(pages 229–230)

How did the delegates want to change the Articles of Confederation?

At first, the delegates did not have a clear idea about what they wanted to do. Some thought they would amend the Articles. Others thought they would set up a whole new government. They all agreed that the plan should protect people’s rights. They all believed that the government needed to be strong enough to protect people’s rights. But it should not be too strong to be controlled by the people.

The first order of business at the Convention was to elect a president. Every single delegate voted for George Washington. Next, the delegates had to decide on the rules for the Convention. The delegates decided that in order for everyone to speak freely and not be pressured by the politics of the time, the discussions would remain secret.

3. What kind of government did the delegates want to set up?

The Virginia Plan; The Great Compromise

(pages 230–232)

What was the Great Compromise?

The first speaker at the Convention, Virginia’s Edmund Randolph, proposed a whole new plan of government. The plan is known as the **Virginia Plan**. It called for three branches of government. The legislature would be made up of two houses and representatives from each state would be based on the state’s population.

The larger states supported the plan. The smaller states opposed the plan because they believed that the larger states would have the most power.

New Jersey delegate William Paterson presented a different plan. It was called the **New Jersey Plan**. This plan called for a one-house legislature in which each state would have one vote. After some debate, the Virginia Plan won. The **Great Compromise** solved the problem of representation in the legislature. According to the compromise, the House of Representatives would

be based on state populations. But each state would have an equal number of votes in the Senate.

4. How did the Great Compromise settle the issue of representation in the legislature?

Slavery and the Constitution

(pages 232–233)

How did the Convention address the issue of slavery?

Next, the Convention had to decide who would be counted in the population of each state. The Southern states wanted slaves to be counted for representation but not taxation. The Northern states, who had fewer slaves than the Southern states, wanted slaves to be counted for taxation but not for representation. After some debate, the delegates reached the **Three-Fifths Compromise**. It said that three-fifths of the slave population would be counted to determine representation in the legislature and taxation. The Convention also agreed that Congress could not ban the slave trade until 1808.

5. What issue did the Three-Fifths Compromise settle?

Regulating Trade

(page 233)

Who would control trade?

The delegates gave the national government the power to regulate trade. The national government could pass laws on how goods could be *exported*.

On September 15, 1787, all but three of the delegates voted to support the Constitution in its final form. Washington sent it to the Confederation Congress, and Congress sent it to the states to be ratified.

6. According to the new Constitution, who had the power to regulate trade?

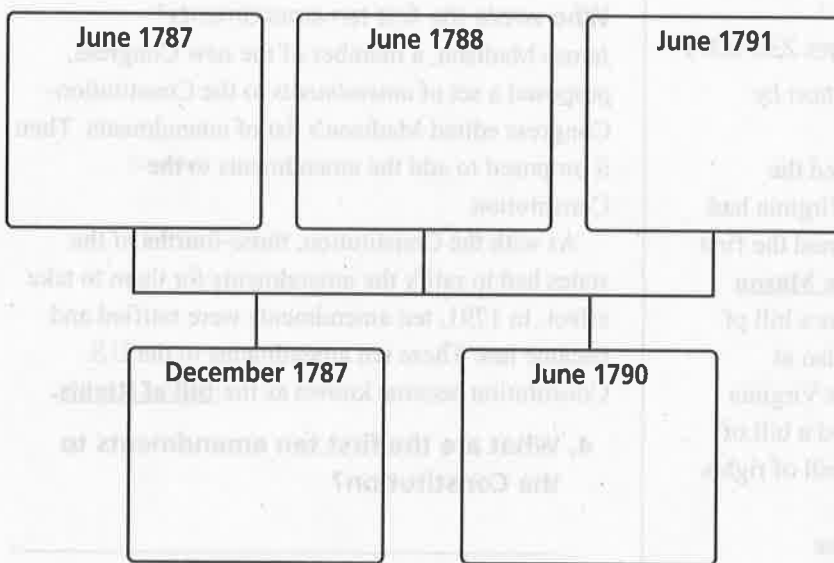
Ratifying the Constitution

BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read how the Constitution was created.
 In this section, you will learn how the Constitution was ratified.

AS YOU READ

Use this time line to take notes on the events that led to the ratification of the Constitution.



TERMS & NAMES

federalism A system of government in which power is shared among the federal government and the states

Federalists People who supported ratification of the Constitution

Antifederalists People who opposed ratification of the Constitution

The Federalist papers Essays that explained and defended the Constitution

George Mason Influential Virginian who opposed ratification of the Constitution

Bill of Rights Set of amendments to the Constitution passed to protect individual rights

Federalists and Antifederalists

(pages 234–235)

Who were the Federalists and Antifederalists?

The framers of the Constitution knew that the Constitution would cause *controversy*. They began to work for its *ratification*.

The framers knew that people feared that the Constitution might give the national government too much power. The framers explained that the new Constitution was based on **federalism**. In a federal system, the national government and state governments share power.

The people who supported ratification were known as **Federalists**. People who opposed the Constitution were known as **Antifederalists**. They thought that the Constitution took too much power

away from the states. They also thought it did not guarantee people’s rights. Both sides published their arguments in newspapers and pamphlets.

1. What side did the Federalists and Antifederalists take on the Constitution?

The Federalist Papers (pages 235–236)

Who wrote The Federalist papers?

The Federalists wrote and published essays in support of the Constitution. The best known essays are **The Federalist papers**. They were later published as a book called *The Federalist*.

The authors of *The Federalist* papers were Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay. Jay had been the secretary of foreign affairs for the Confederation Congress.

Most of the newspapers supported the Constitution. As a result, they gave more publicity to the Federalists than the Antifederalists. Even so, opposition to ratification was strong in many areas.

2. What were *The Federalist* papers?

The Battle for Ratification (pages 236–237)

How many states ratified the Constitution by June 1788?

By late June 1788, nine states had ratified the Constitution. However, New York and Virginia had not yet voted. Virginia’s convention opened the first week in June. Patrick Henry and **George Mason** refused to sign the final document unless a bill of rights was added. James Madison was also at Virginia’s convention. He suggested that Virginia ratify the Constitution and recommended a bill of rights be added. With the addition of a bill of rights likely, Virginia ratified the Constitution.

The news that Virginia had ratified the Constitution reached New York while its delegates were still meeting. New York also ratified the

Constitution and called for a bill of rights to be added. Rhode Island became the last state to ratify the Constitution in 1790. By then, the new Congress had already written a bill of rights and submitted it to the states for approval.

3. Why were Virginia and New York reluctant to ratify the Constitution?

The Bill of Rights (page 237)

Who wrote the first ten amendments?

James Madison, a member of the new Congress, proposed a set of *amendments* to the Constitution. Congress edited Madison’s list of amendments. Then it proposed to add the amendments to the Constitution.

As with the Constitution, three-fourths of the states had to ratify the amendments for them to take effect. In 1791, ten amendments were ratified and became law. These ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution became known as the **Bill of Rights**.

4. What are the first ten amendments to the Constitution?

Skillbuilder

Use the chart below to answer the questions.

Federalists	Antifederalists
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported removing some powers from the states and giving more powers to the national government Favored dividing powers among different branches of government Proposed a single person to lead the executive branch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wanted important political powers to remain with the states Wanted the legislative branch to have more power than the executive Feared that a strong executive might become a king or tyrant Believed a bill of rights needed to be added to the Constitution to protect people’s rights

1. Which group wanted the national government to have more power?

2. Which group was more in favor of adding a bill of rights to the Constitution?

Glossary/After You Read

amending Changing

amendments Formal changes to the Constitution

controversy A dispute between sides holding opposing views

debt Money owed

delegates People given power to act for others; representatives to a convention

exported Sent to another country for trade

levy To order to be paid

militia A group of citizens who receive military training but are only called in emergencies

ratification Approval

ratified Approved

Terms & Names

A. If the statement is true, write "true" on the line. If it is false, change the underlined word or words to make the statement true.

- _____ 1. The Articles of Confederation gave little power to the national government and much power to the states.
- _____ 2. The Land Ordinance of 1785 described how the Northwest Territory was to be governed.
- _____ 3. The disagreement over the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan was settled by the Three-Fifths Compromise.
- _____ 4. Essays supporting the Constitution were published as The Federalist papers.
- _____ 5. The first ten amendments to the Constitution are known as the Bill of Rights.

B. Write the letter of the name or term that matches the description.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| a. Wilderness Road | e. New Jersey Plan |
| b. Shays's Rebellion | f. federalism |
| c. Constitutional Convention | g. Federalists |
| d. Virginia Plan | h. Antifederalists |

- _____ 1. People who wanted to ratify the Constitution
- _____ 2. Plan that called for representation in the legislature to be based on population or wealth
- _____ 3. An anti-tax protest by farmers
- _____ 4. Road that ran across the Appalachian Mountains into Kentucky
- _____ 5. Meeting held to discuss changes to the Articles of Confederation

Main Ideas

1. What was the purpose of the Northwest Ordinance?

2. What weakness of the Articles of Confederation led to money problems for the new nation?

3. Why did the smaller states oppose the Virginia Plan?

4. Why did the framers of the Constitution base the new plan of government on federalism?

5. Why did the Antifederalists want a bill of rights to be added to the Constitution?

Thinking Critically

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What were the main arguments for and against the Constitution?
2. Do you think the writers of the Constitution were right to compromise over the issue of slavery? Explain.