
Creating the American Government

What problems did the young nation face after the Revolution?

- Continued problems with England
 - The British kept their forts in the western territories
 - The Articles lacked the ability to raise an army to push them out
 - The British felt they had the right to ignore the Treaty of Paris since the US had done the same (it did not return Loyalist properties after the war)
 - The British continued to restrict American commerce
 - It denied them the right to trade within its empire while it meanwhile flooded American markets with cheap and better made manufactured goods
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What problems did the young nation face after the Revolution?

■ Foreign debts

- ❑ America owed a great deal of money to foreign nations following the Revolution, chiefly France
 - ❑ The Articles lacked the ability to collect taxes from its citizens or the states → therefore the nation was unable to pay its debts
 - ❑ This lack of honoring debt led to America being disgraced in the eyes of many European nations
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What problems did the young nation face after the Revolution?

- Economic weaknesses would lead to early financial depressions
 - Due to the states seeing themselves as sovereign nations within a single nation, there was much competition between states attempting to gain economic advantage against one another
 - Tariffs were imposed against one another, cutting off potential markets needed for economic growth
 - States were printing large amounts of paper money that were useful only within their borders
 - This widespread printing of money would lead to high levels of inflation throughout the US
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The Annapolis Convention

- In 1785 George Washington hosted delegates at his home (Mt. Vernon) to discuss the Articles and what could be done to improve
 - They decided that they should meet the next year at Annapolis
 - At the 1786 Annapolis Convention few states bothered to send delegates
 - However, Shays' Rebellion that summer would convince the states to show up for the next convention at Philadelphia in 1787
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The Constitutional Convention

- All states except Rhode Island would send delegates to Philadelphia the summer of 1787
 - There were 55 delegates
 - The men were on average college-educated, early 40's, and politically experienced (most served in state legislatures)
 - Though the convention had been intended to make revisions to the Articles, by the end of the summer the delegates would draft an entirely new Constitution, creating a new US government
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The Constitutional Convention

- The first order of business was electing a chairperson
 - George Washington was unanimously chosen
 - The delegates decided that the meetings would remain private from the public
 - James Madison was to be the chief author of the Constitutional articles
 - He is known as “the Father of the Constitution”
 - Alexander Hamilton, Gouverneur Morris, and John Dickinson also served in this role
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Problems and Solutions

- Most 18th Century Americans feared tyrannical government
 - This is what had led to the weak central government of the Articles
 - In order to overcome these fears while maintaining a strong central government the idea of checks and balances was implemented into the Constitution
 - Where each branch of government has powers and limitations given to it in regards to monitoring the activities of the other branches
 - The Executive Branch (the President), the Legislative Branch (the Congress) , the Judicial Branch (the Courts)
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Problems and Solutions

- **Congressional Representation and the Great Compromise**
 - Virginia Plan: large states wanted congressional representation to depend upon state population
 - New Jersey Plan: small states wanted congressional representation to be equally fixed
 - The Connecticut Compromise (a.k.a. the Great Compromise)
 - It was decided that there would be two houses, with the lower house's (House of Representatives) representation depending on population and the upper house's (the Senate) representation being equal
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Problems and Solutions

■ The 3/5 Compromise

- ❑ With the matter of representation being decided, there was now the issue of how population would be decided...
 - ❑ The Southern states wanted their slaves to count when determining representation in Congress, the Northern states did not
 - ❑ Meanwhile, the Northern states wanted slaves to count in determining taxes, the South did not
 - ❑ It was decided in the 3/5 Compromise that slaves would count as $\frac{3}{5}$ a person in figuring both representation in Congress and in state taxes
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Problems and Solutions

■ The Slavery Issue

- Many of the Founding Fathers wanted to abolish slavery at the Constitutional Convention
 - During the arguments concerning the 3/5 Compromise it was decided that...
 - No mention of abolishing slavery would be made in the Constitution
 - The importing of slaves would be allowed to continue until 1808 whereupon Congress would have the right to vote to abolish the slave trade
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Problems and Solutions

■ The Commercial Compromise

- ❑ One of the greatest weaknesses of the Articles had been the federal government's lack of ability in levying taxes and regulating commerce
 - ❑ The North wanted the government to have the right to control commerce and taxes, Southern states feared the central government regulating their factory economy
 - ❑ It was decided the federal government could levy taxes, regulate interstate and foreign commerce, and also levy tariffs on imports... it did not have the power to tax exports (the biggest fear of the South)
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Ratifying the Constitution

- It was determined that 9 of the 13 states were necessary in ratifying the Constitution
 - The Constitutional delegates anticipated some opposition to the Constitution
 - Hence the 9 instead of all 13
 - They also stated that ratification in each state would be decided by elected conventions, not state legislatures
 - They figured that the state legislatures would not want to give up their powers to the federal government that the Constitution was saying they would have to
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The Federalist Debate

- Those who favored a powerful central (federal) government were known as Federalists
 - Those who favored personal free choice and states' rights were called Anti-Federalists
 - These were the two chief parties involved in the ratification debate
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The Federalist Debate

- The Federalists

- Led by Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin, and James Madison
 - Were mainly found in the New England colonies and major cities
 - Their main argument was that a stronger central government was necessary to maintain an orderly government and society
 - They pointed to the failures of the Articles as support for their argument
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The Federalist Debate

■ The Anti-Federalists

- ❑ Led by Patrick Henry, George Clinton, and George Mason
 - ❑ The party was comprised of farmers and frontiersmen; mainly found in the Middle and Southern colonies
 - ❑ They feared that increasing the powers of the federal government would limit democracy and states' rights
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The Federalist Papers

- It appeared as though New York was going to be a central state in the ratification process
 - The Anti-Federalists enjoyed strong support in the state
 - The Federalist leaders published a series of newspaper articles attempting to convince citizens to support the ratification of the Constitution
 - These articles came to be collectively known as *The Federalist Papers*
 - The authors were Madison, Hamilton, and John Jay
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Ratification

- In Virginia and New York the Anti-Federalists were able to gain enough support to block ratification
 - Their main argument was that there was no list of rights to protect the citizens from the abuses of a strong central government
 - The Federalists promised that the first order of the new government would be to draft a Bill of Rights
 - This promise convinced enough Anti-Federalists to change their votes and the Constitution was approved
 - Virginia was the first to swing its vote and soon afterwards New York would do the same
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