

Creation of the Constitution

As the early nation emerged from the American Revolution, questions arose as to how the new nation would govern itself. America's first attempt was the Articles of Confederation which was a loose confederation of states with a weak central government. But the failures of this early government led to calls for a convention to develop a new government. After much debate and compromise, a new Constitution was written that created a strong central government with three separate branches and a system of checks and balances. This new Constitution faced a battle to be ratified and accepted by the states, but ultimately it was successful. This is the same document that still governs America today.

Directions: Use the content from the Bee in a Box website to help answer the following questions:

PEOPLE

Alexander Hamilton

- 1) Why did Alexander Hamilton argue against including a Bill of Rights in the Constitution?

Thomas Hobbes

- 1) Why did Thomas Hobbes argue that man should enter into a compact?
- 2) Explain the important ideas that many founders and Hobbes differed on.

John Jay

- 1) Describe the experience that strengthened John Jay's desire for a stronger central government?

John Locke

- 1) Why did John Locke believe that people should unite in society?

James Madison

- 1) Why is James Madison known as the "Father of the Constitution?"

George Mason

- 1) Explain several reasons why George Mason opposed the new Constitution in 1787?
- 2) Why is George Mason known as the "Grandfather of the Bill of Rights?"

Baron de Montesquieu

- 1) What ideas did Baron de Montesquieu believe in that led him to be the most quoted man at the Constitutional Convention in 1787?

Gouverneur Morris

- 1) It is believed that Gouverneur Morris changed the wording of the beginning of the Constitution from "We the states" to "We the people", how does this change the meaning of the document?

Edmund Randolph

- 1) Despite ultimately voting to ratify the Constitution, why did Edmund Randolph at first refuse to sign it?

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

- 1) How did Jean-Jacques Rousseau's differ from John Locke on his views of private property?

Roger Sherman

- 1) As a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, explain Roger Sherman's beliefs on what the new document should include.

James Wilson

- 1) James Wilson believed in the direct election of a President – why was this a radically different idea presented during the Constitutional Convention?

DOCUMENTS

Magna Carta

- 1) Describe features of the Magna Carta that later influenced documents like the English Bill of Rights, U.S Constitution, and Bill of Rights?

English Bill of Rights

- 1) How are the English Bill of Rights and U.S. Bill of Rights similar?

Articles of Confederation

- 1) Why were the Articles of Confederation replaced by the U.S. Constitution in 1787?

Land Ordinance of 1785 & Northwest Ordinance

- 1) Why were the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance such important laws?

Three-Fifths Compromise

- 1) Why would the North was the count slaves for taxation but not representation, and why would the South want the opposite – count slaves for representation but not taxation?

Federalist Papers

- 1) Why are the Federalist Papers still such an important document today?

Anti-Federalist Essays

- 1) Explain a few arguments made by Anti-Federalists opposing ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

Bill of Rights

- 1) Explain how the Bill of Rights was added to the U.S. Constitution.

EVENTS

Shay's Rebellion

- 1) How did Shay's Rebellion help lead to the Constitutional Convention?

Meeting of the Constitutional Convention

- 1) Why were the proceedings of the Constitutional Convention kept secret from the public?

CONNECTION QUESTIONS:

- 1) John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Baron de Montesquieu were all political and philosophical writers that influenced the founding fathers. Which of these philosophers ideas are the most influential in American life today and why?
- 2) How are George Mason and James Madison alike and how are they different?
- 3) Passed under the Articles of Confederation, the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance were important and successful laws. Explain how key features of these laws, like supporting public education and outlawing slavery, influenced America in years to come.
- 4) If you lived in 1787, would you have been a Federalist or an Anti-Federalist and why?
- 5) Which freedom protected by the Bill of Rights do you believe is the most important and why?