

# C-NOTES

# C-NOTES: CONSTITUTION HIGHLIGHTS (Chapter 8)

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Analyze significant events  
leading up to/taking place at  
the Constitutional Convention.

# C-NOTES: Constitution Highlights

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## C-NOTES: CONSTITUTION HIGHLIGHTS (Chapter 8)

Analyze significant events leading up to/taking place at the Constitutional Convention.

Articles of  
Confederation  
(A/C)

- ◆ First American constitution in 1777, created loose alliance of 13 independent states
- ◆ A/C was weak by design—the people did NOT trust a strong central government (feared another Parliament or king)

Weaknesses  
of the A/C

- ◆ Each state had only one vote in Congress
- ◆ Compared to the states, Congress had very limited powers:  
It could declare war, appoint military officers, and coin money
- ◆ Laws must be approved by 9 of 13 states
- ◆ Congress could not control trade between states or with foreign countries
- ◆ Congress had to ask states for money—it had no authority to collect taxes
- ◆ Single branch of government (legislative branch):  
No president (executive branch) to carry out laws passed by Congress  
No national court system (judicial branch) to settle disputes between states

One Success  
of the A/C

- ◆ Northwest Ordinance (NWO) set up a government in 1787 for the Northwest Territory (lands north of Ohio River and east of Mississippi River)
- ◆ Highlights: NWO had a bill of rights and outlawed slavery, allowed territory to be subdivided (to create future states), population of 60,000 free settlers could apply for statehood, and each new state received the same privileges as the original 13 states

Shays' Rebellion

- ◆ In 1786, farmers in MA protest to prevent the state from seizing farms for unpaid loans
- ◆ Event signaled that A/C did NOT work to solve the national debt nor organize militia

# Constitutional Convention

- ◆ **May to September 1787 in Philadelphia, PA (all states sent delegates except RI)**
- ◆ **Original goal: Revise the A/C (Articles of Confederation)**

# Leading Delegates

- ◆ Benjamin Franklin (oldest at 81),  
George Washington (elected  
president of the convention),  
Alexander Hamilton, and  
James Madison ("Father of the  
Constitution")  
*(Absent: Thomas Jefferson was in  
France at the time)*

# Virginia Plan (Proposed Plan 1)

- ◆ Supported by large states
- ◆ Called for strong national government with three branches: legislative (pass laws), executive (carry out laws), and judicial (interpret laws)
- ◆ Legislative branch has two houses—seats in both awarded on the basis of population
- ◆ Larger states have more representatives (and more power) than smaller states

# New Jersey Plan (Proposed Plan 2)

- ◆ Supported by small states
- ◆ Also proposed three branches of government
- ◆ Legislative branch has only one house—  
each state has only one vote, regardless of size (similar to A/C)
- ◆ Power would be equal among all states
- ◆ National government has power to collect taxes & regulate trade (NOT part of A/C)

# Great Compromise (1 + 2 = Solution!)

- ◆ **Two houses of Congress**
- ◆ **Senate: Each state has two members (supported by small states)**
- ◆ **House (of Representatives):  
Based on state's population  
(supported by large states)**

# Three-Fifths Compromise

- ◆ Another disagreement over representation in Congress
- ◆ Southern states wanted slaves included in their population count (if slaves not counted, northern states would have more members in the House)
- ◆ Delegates agreed to let the South count three-fifths (3 out of every 5) of the slaves
- ◆ Slave trade could NOT be outlawed for at least 20 years



# Ratification

- ◆ Nine out of 13 states had to ratify (approve) the Constitution for it to go into effect  
(First to ratify: Delaware [DE])  
(Last to ratify: Rhode Island [RI])

# Federalists

- ◆ Supporters of the Constitution who favored a strong federal (national) government
- ◆ Believed the Constitution still protected the rights and powers of the individual states

# *The Federalist Papers*

- ◆ Essays written by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay to explain and defend the Constitution

# Antifederalists

- ◆ Opposed the Constitution because it had no bill of rights—needed to protect basic liberties (such as freedoms of speech and religion)
- ◆ Three problems: It made the national government too strong, left the states too weak, and gave the President too much power

# Antifederalists

- ◆ Remember: **A-B-C...**  
**Antifederalists** want a  
**Bill of Rights** for the  
**Constitution!!**

# Bill of Rights

- ◆ Written by James Madison
- ◆ Added by the amendment process  
(12 proposed/10 added)
- ◆ First ten amendments to prevent  
the kind of abuses Americans  
suffered under British rule and to  
protect individual freedoms (such  
as religion, speech, and press)

# End of Notes



**End of Notes.**

# MERE HISTORY



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