Essential Question What events led to the development of American democracy?

Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards

SS.912.C.1.2 Explain how the Declaration of Independence reflected the political principles of popular sovereignty, social contract, natural rights, and individual rights. SS.912.C.1.3 Evaluate the ideals and principles of the founding documents (Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, Federalist Papers) that shaped American Democracy. SS.912.C.1.4 Analyze and categorize the diverse viewpoints presented by the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists concerning ratification of the Constitution and inclusion of a bill of rights. SS.912.C.3.1 Examine the constitutional principles of representative government, limited government, consent of the governed, rule of law, and individual rights.
America Gets a Constitution

SECTION 1  The Roots of American Democracy
• The English political heritage of representative government, limited government, and individual rights influenced the development of government in the United States.
• From the start, the English colonies in North America experimented with forms of self-government.
• The English colonists were influenced by ideas from various intellectual traditions, ranging from republicanism to natural rights theory, Judeo-Christian ideals and the work of Enlightenment thinkers.

SECTION 2  American Independence
• After the French and Indian War, the colonists rebelled against British attempts to assert control over the colonies and against new British taxes.
• In 1775 the Second Continental Congress called for the writing of a formal Declaration of Independence.

SECTION 3  Articles of Confederation
• In 1777 the Second Continental Congress passed the first official plan for national government, the Articles of Confederation.
• After the Revolutionary War, weaknesses in the Articles led to conflicts among the states, sparking calls for a stronger national government.

SECTION 4  The Constitutional Convention
• At the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, delegates debated competing plans—the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan—for how the new government should be organized.
• To finalize the Constitution, delegates compromised on key issues.

SECTION 5  Ratification and the Bill of Rights
• Ratification of the Constitution involved a heated debate between those who supported the Constitution and those who opposed it.
• Antifederalists opposed the Constitution because it lacked a bill of rights.
• The *Federalist Papers* outlined the key ideas of the Federalists, who supported the Constitution.
• The struggle for ratification took place in every state.

Connecting to the Constitution

Our nation’s system of government is based on constitutional law established by the United States Constitution. See the “We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution” pages in this chapter for an in-depth exploration of the national government and the Bill of Rights.
In April 1607, more than 10 years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, three small wooden ships—the Susan Constant, the Godspeed, and the Discovery—landed on the marshy shores of coastal Virginia. The ships carried just over 100 English men and boys. In little over a month’s time, they built a fort and founded Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in North America. Within six months, however, more than half of the colonists were dead, mostly from famine. These troubled early days are what most Americans know of Jamestown. But Jamestown should also be remembered for something more significant. Jamestown was the birthplace of American democracy. In 1619 a series of reforms were made to attract more settlers to Jamestown. One of the reforms permitted the colonists to elect a representative body modeled after the English Parliament. On July 30, 1619, the first representative assembly in North America met at a church in Jamestown. The 22 burgesses, or representatives, in attendance passed laws concerning tobacco and taxes and took measures against drunkenness and gambling to preserve the common good of the colony. In time, the assembly gave rise to Virginia’s colonial House of Burgesses, ultimately influencing the shape of the U.S. government.
English Political Heritage

The first English settlers did not arrive in North America with a master plan for democratic government, but they did not arrive empty-handed. Settlers brought with them a rich political heritage built on ideas of limited government, representative government, and individual rights. These seeds of democracy took root in the rough-and-ready wilderness of Jamestown and, in time, spread to the other English colonies.

Colonial government would never be an exact copy of the British system. Instead, it grew into a uniquely American form of democracy. What caused this development? According to historian Frederick Jackson Turner, it was the circumstances in which the colonists found themselves. Faced with landscapes and situations unknown in England, colonial leaders had to adapt old ideas to a new environment. The result was democracy that Turner said “came out of the American forest.” To understand this new democracy, one must first explore the English traditions on which it is based.

Representative Government

England’s tradition of representative government dates to the eleventh century, when a council of religious leaders and nobles formed to advise the king. Gradually, the council’s importance grew, and towns and villages began to send their own representatives to participate in the council’s proceedings.

Over time, the king’s advisory council evolved into a bicameral, or two-chamber, legislature called Parliament. Nobles composed the upper house, or House of Lords. Lesser officials and local representatives participated in the House of Commons, the lower house. As a representative assembly, Parliament worked to limit the power of the English monarchs.

Limited Government

One of the earliest English efforts toward limited government dates to the year 1215, when English nobles forced King John to sign Magna Carta, or the “Great Charter.” Weakened by military losses in France and in desperate need of funds, John demanded that nobles pay more taxes. The nobles rebelled and began to move a large army toward London. At Runnymede, near London, they forced John to sign Magna Carta, the document they had drawn up.

Magna Carta was a significant move from the “rule of man” to the “rule of law.” By signing the document, King John conceded that even kings and queens had to obey English laws. The document also outlined a number of individual rights that the king could not violate. For example, the king was no longer able to levy taxes without approval from the nobles. The document also guaranteed people accused of crimes the right to a trial by a jury of their peers.

The original intent of Magna Carta was to protect the rights of nobles. In time, the rights protected by Magna Carta would be extended to most of the English people.

Individual Rights

Alongside representative and limited government, a tradition of individual rights developed in England. When in 1628 a new confrontation between the king and Parliament put these rights at risk, England’s legislature made King Charles I sign the Petition of Right. The document required monarchs to obtain Parliament’s approval before levying new taxes. It also said that monarchs could not unlawfully imprison people, force citizens to house soldiers in their homes, or establish military rule during times of peace.

The Petition of Right was part of an extended conflict between Charles and Parliament. In 1642 the conflict erupted into the English Civil War, in which an army raised by Parliament defeated Charles and his supporters. In 1649 Charles was beheaded. England would not have another king until 1660, when Charles II assumed the throne.

Although the English monarchy appeared to have returned to normalcy, it was forever changed. Parliament had dramatically increased its power at the Crown’s expense.
This was unusual for the time. The rest of Europe was entering the Age of Absolutism, a time when monarchs claimed the “divine right of kings” and wielded absolute power.

The extent of Parliament’s new power would soon be made clear when James II, Charles’s brother, took the throne in 1685. James II’s enthusiastic promotion of his faith, Roman Catholicism, led to renewed conflicts between Crown and Parliament. Most of the English were Protestants and, fearing the king would impose the Catholic religion on the country, Parliament launched a rebellion. The rebels rallied behind James’s daughter, Mary, and her husband, William of Orange, who were Protestants. On November 5, 1688, William landed his army in England. With a force twice the size of William’s army, James should have easily turned back the invaders. Many of his officers and soldiers, however, deserted to the other side, leaving James without a strong fighting force. The country had clearly abandoned its king.

On February 13, 1689, Parliament offered the English crown to William and Mary. Before taking the throne, the couple had to swear “to govern the people of this kingdom according to the statutes in Parliament.” Moreover, Parliament passed the English Bill of Rights for the monarchs to sign. No longer would monarchs be able to enact laws, raise taxes, or keep an army without Parliament’s consent. The document also guaranteed Parliament the privilege of free speech and gave all people protection from cruel and unusual punishment. Without a shot having ever been fired, what came to be called the Glorious Revolution was over.

The ultimate result of the Glorious Revolution was the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in England. As Magna Carta and the English Civil War had done before, the Glorious Revolution set clear limits on royal authority and shifted power to Parliament. At the same time, the English Bill of Rights set expectations about the “rights of Englishmen.” English ideas about limited and representative government, as well as individual rights, were far-reaching. They spread beyond England itself.

**The English Colonies**

Beginning in the early 1600s—before the Petition of Right and the English Bill of Rights were signed—English colonists had begun to settle parts of North America. They brought with them English political theories and methods of governance.

**Experiments in Early Governance** From the start, the English settlers drew on their English heritage and tested new political forms. For example, the first meeting of Jamestown’s House of Burgesses in 1619 was an early experiment with representative government. So too was the 1620 signing of the Mayflower Compact by all adult men on board the Mayflower, prior to their landing at Plymouth Rock. By signing, they agreed to form a society governed by majority rule and based on the consent of the people.

Other milestones quickly followed. In 1639 Connecticut colonists approved the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, a set of laws that limited the power of government and gave all free men the right to choose people to serve as judges. The Massachusetts Body of Liberties of 1641, the first code of law in New England, protected the individual rights of citizens in the Bay Colony. For example, it protected personal property from seizure by colonial authorities.

Such experiments took place within a broader context of English rule. Each of the thirteen colonies was established by charter, an agreement whereby the English king gave settlers the right to choose people to serve as judges. The Massachusetts Body of Liberties of 1641, the first code of law in New England, protected the individual rights of citizens in the Bay Colony. For example, it protected personal property from seizure by colonial authorities.

**Types of English Colonies** England established three types of colonies in North America: proprietary, royal, and charter. A proprietary colony was based on a grant of land by the English monarch to a proprietor, an individual or a group who financed the the start of the colony. The proprietor represented the Crown and could appoint all officials and make laws for the colony.

Nine colonies started as proprietary colonies. Maryland was originally granted to Lord Baltimore as a refuge for Catholics in
1632, and Pennsylvania was established by a charter granted to Sir William Penn in 1681. In 1701, Penn replaced his charter with the Charter of Privileges, which established a unicameral legislature, an elected assembly, and freedom of worship. In time, all proprietary colonies, except Pennsylvania and Maryland, became royal colonies.

**Royal colonies** were directly controlled by the king through an appointed governor. In time each royal colony had a two-house legislature. Members of the lower house were elected, but the king appointed members to the upper house. By the mid-1770s, Delaware, Georgia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North and South Carolina, and Virginia were under the direct control of the Crown.

**Charter colonies** operated under charters agreed to by the colony and the king. Charter colonies enjoyed the most independence from the Crown. By the American Revolution, there were only two charter colonies left, Rhode Island and Connecticut. Each had an elected legislature that made laws for the colony and appointed the colony’s governor. The charters for the Connecticut and Rhode Island colonies were so effective that they were later used as state constitutions.

**Reading Check** How were charter colonies and royal colonies different?

### Intellectual Influences

English traditions and colonial experiments in self-rule shaped American democracy, but there were other influences as well. Ideas would be key to transforming loyal English colonists first into revolutionaries and then into founders of a new nation.

**Republicanism** The term *republicanism* refers to a broad set of ideas about representative government that can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome. Republican thinking highly values citizen participation, the public good, and civic virtue—the idea that people should place the common good over their private interests.

Such ideas were popular among the Framers of the U.S. Constitution. The Framers rejected the idea of monarchy and looked to the Roman Republic for a model of representative democracy. They were also well versed in classical Greek and Roman ideas about government, such as the Greek philosopher Aristotle’s argument that unrestricted power vested in a king could easily lead to tyranny.

The Framers also came to republican ideas through the work of Renaissance scholars such as Niccolò Machiavelli. In his book *Discourses on Livy* (1513–17), Machiavelli put forth a theory of a republic based on civic virtue. He argued that a republic could survive only so long as its citizens actively participated in government and put the good of the republic before their own needs. For a republic to thrive, Machiavelli argued, it had to represent the interests of three levels of society: the monarch (the one), the aristocracy (the few), and the people (the many). At the time, asserting that government should be of and for the people was a radical suggestion.
Machiavelli’s views helped undermine the idea that a monarch’s power was God-given, one of the basic beliefs underlying feudalism, the reigning political order of his time.

For ideas about how to design a republican government, the Framers turned to the work of French philosopher Charles de Montesquieu. In *Spirit of the Laws* (1748), Montesquieu argued that government power had to be divided between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. Montesquieu called this the separation of powers.

**Judeo-Christian Influences** The Framers’ political thinking was influenced by a Judeo-Christian religious heritage, which includes traditions common to both Judaism and Christianity. These religions see the law and individual rights as being of divine origin. Moreover, the Framers benefited from the Protestant Reformation, a sixteenth-century Christian reform movement whose leaders developed ideas about individual responsibility, the freedom to worship as one chooses, and self-government.

**Enlightenment Thinkers** The Framers were deeply concerned with liberty and individual rights. These ideas had strong ties to the Enlightenment, an intellectual movement that took place in Europe during the eighteenth century, and are sometimes referred to as classical liberal concerns.

The Framers were particularly taken with Enlightenment ideas about people possessing natural rights to life, liberty, and property. They were equally influenced by the idea of a social contract—the belief that people agreed to form government to protect their rights. Such ideas were put forth by the British political thinker John Locke in *The Second Treatise on Government* (1690) and by the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *The Social Contract* (1762), both of whom you read about in Chapter 1.

Enlightenment thinkers also wrote about economic and civil liberties. In thinking about how best to protect economic freedom and rights to property, the Framers drew from the Scottish economist Adam Smith’s work, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). In defense of civil liberties, such as freedom of speech and religion, many of the Framers turned to an outspoken French philosopher named François Marie Arouet, better known by his pen name, Voltaire.

For ideas about how to use the law to protect people’s natural rights to life, liberty, and property, the Framers looked to the English legal scholar William Blackstone. Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765–69) was a comprehensive overview of English law that became the basis for law in the colonies and influenced the writing of the U.S. Constitution.

**Reading Check** Summarizing What intellectual influences shaped the Framers’ views on republicanism?

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**Reviewing Ideas and Terms**

1. a. **Identify** Which landmark English documents challenged the absolute authority of the monarchy?
   b. **Predict** What ideas expressed in *Magna Cartera* do you think would most influence the authors of the U.S. Constitution?

2. a. **Define** Which political philosopher is associated with the idea of the separation of powers?
   b. **Elaborate** Why might colonists in a proprietary colony be unhappy if their colony were converted to a royal colony?

3. a. **Recall** How is civic virtue important to republicanism?
   b. **Rank** Which of the natural rights—life, liberty, or property—do you think is most important? Explain.

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**Critical Thinking**

4. **Analyze** Copy the chart below and list the major political ideas from each document that influenced the colonies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Major Political Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Magna Carta</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Petition of Right</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>English Bill of Rights</em></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**Focus on Writing**

5. **Expository** Write a paragraph explaining why the concept of civic virtue is still important today. Give at least one example of a private interest that people give up for the common good.
The British imposed new policies on their American colonies, sparking rebellion and, in time, the American Revolution.

Reading Focus

1. How did British colonial policies lead to American independence?
2. What were the aims of the Continental Congresses?
3. Which ideas and events inspired the Declaration of Independence?
4. How did the first state governments reflect the conflict that led to the American Revolution?

Key Terms
- New England Confederation
- Iroquois Confederation
- Albany Plan of Union
- Stamp Act
- First Continental Congress
- Second Continental Congress
- Virginia Declaration of Rights

The Colonies Become States

In hindsight, the American Revolution seems inevitable—the only course of action for the English colonies to take. In the summer of 1776, however, the way was not so clear. The course for revolution would not be set until a small group of delegates sent from each colony met at the Second Continental Congress in Pennsylvania. Together, they passed a bold resolution to sever ties with Great Britain, the world’s most powerful empire.

The resolution was the Declaration of Independence. Written in flowing script on a large sheet of paper, the document outlined the delegates’ reasons for seeking independence. Then, in the final paragraph, the authors made their radical declaration: “We... solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and by Right ought to be Free and Independent States.” These were fighting words that the delegates pledged to back with “our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.” The seven bloody years of revolution that followed would put their resolve to the test.

The Road to Independence

The road that led the American colonies to unite with one another and break with Great Britain was long and fraught with conflict. In part, the break was the result of the British government’s failure to respect the English traditions of representative government, limited government, and individual rights—all of which had been transplanted to the colonies.
Early Attempts at Unity  One of the earliest steps toward colonial unity came in 1643 when the Plymouth, Connecticut, Massachusetts Bay, and New Haven colonies formed the New England Confederation. Their common purpose was to defend against threats from Native Americans and from nearby Dutch colonies. Despite frequent disagreements, the confederation held together until 1684.

Nearly 70 years later, the outbreak of the French and Indian War (1754–1763) spurred a new drive toward unity in the colonies. The war pitted the British against the French in a struggle for control over the North American continent. In 1754, as fighting raged on the colonies’ western frontier, Great Britain urged its colonies to sign a treaty with the Iroquois Confederation, a powerful alliance of six Native American nations—the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora. Guided by a constitution and a council of leaders, the alliance had held strong for close to 200 years, keeping peace among its members.

To gain the support of the Iroquois in the fight against the French, the northern colonies invited Iroquois leaders to a meeting in Albany, New York. At the meeting, Benjamin Franklin, inspired by the Iroquois, proposed a plan that became known as the Albany Plan of Union. The plan called for a council of representatives appointed by the colonial assemblies and a president general appointed by the king. The proposed council would have the power to control trade, raise armies, build settlements, and equip fleets.

Although the delegates in Albany unanimously approved the Albany Plan, the colonial assemblies were quick to reject it. They feared that the plan gave too much power to the Crown. Likewise, the British, uneasy at the prospect of united colonies, rejected the plan. Franklin’s plan, however, would not be forgotten. Less than a quarter of a century later, it became the basis for an early draft of the first official constitution for the newly born United States.

Growing Tensions  By the mid-1700s the colonists had grown quite used to handling their own affairs with little interference from the British. The king and Parliament intervened mainly in colonial business having to do with trade and foreign relations. Soon after George III became king in 1760, however, the British government began to tighten its control over the colonies.

French and Indian War

In 1754, the British and French forces battle for control of the Ohio River valley. The British win, gain control over North America, and tax the colonies to repay massive war debts.

The war unites the colonies against a common enemy. Some colonists voluntarily join the war effort. Others resist having to shelter and supply British troops.

The Stamp Act

In 1765 Parliament passes the Stamp Act, a tax on paper goods. The act requires all goods to bear a stamp to show that the tax had been paid.

Outraged colonists boycott British goods, claiming Parliament had no right to tax them without their consent. Nine colonies send delegates to a Stamp Act Congress.
Even though most colonists viewed themselves as loyal subjects of the British Crown, there was a growing attitude among members of Parliament that the colonies had become too independent. The real rise in tensions would follow the French and Indian War, when Parliament placed new financial burdens on the colonists.

**Changes in British Policies** Through a series of spectacular and costly military engagements, the British emerged victorious in the French and Indian War. But the war left Great Britain with massive debts.

To offset the cost of the war and the ongoing defense of the colonies, Parliament looked to the colonists as a source of revenue. With George III’s blessing, Parliament enforced trade restrictions that benefited Britain. Beginning in 1764 with the Sugar Act, Parliament imposed a series of taxes designed to alleviate Britain’s debt.

The colonists, however, had no representation in Parliament, and they resented being taxed without their consent. “No taxation without representation” became a rallying cry throughout the colonies. The right to tax, the colonists argued, rightfully belonged to their elected colonial assemblies.

**The Stamp Act Congress** The colonists’ reaction to the Stamp Act of 1765, Parliament’s first attempt to tax the colonists directly, should have been a warning sign of the rough times to come. The Stamp Act required a government tax stamp on paper goods and all legal documents, including contracts and licenses. Newspapers, almanacs, and even printed sermons and playing cards had to bear the official stamp.

The Stamp Act infuriated colonists, who responded with organized protest. Secret colonial societies called the Sons of Liberty sprang up across the colonies. Their goal was to intimidate the stamp agents charged with collecting Parliament’s taxes. In many places, mobs forced stamp agents out of office. In Philadelphia, colonists even conducted a mock hanging of a stamp agent.

In October 1765 nine colonies sent delegates to the Stamp Act Congress in New York to craft a united response to the new tax measure. The congress was the colonies’ first attempt at forging a plan to work together since the 1754 Albany meeting. It sent a petition to the king that declared their loyalty but voiced a strong protest, asserting that the power to tax colonies should belong solely to the colonial assemblies.
Colonial Protests  Although Parliament repealed the Stamp Act in 1766, it continued to impose new taxes. The new measures stoked the flames of colonial resistance, and in some communities protests erupted into violence. On March 5, 1770, British soldiers fired into a crowd of colonial protestors in Boston, killing five people in an event known as the Boston Massacre.

A number of resistance groups began to organize, often in secret. They staged rallies, published pamphlets, and recruited community leaders to protest British policies they deemed unfair to the colonies. In 1772 colonial activist Samuel Adams formed the Committees of Correspondence to inform the other colonies of events in Boston. Through organized letter-writing campaigns with similar groups, a network of communication formed among the colonies.

When Parliament gave all rights to the American tea trade to one British company, the East India Company, Adams and other Boston colonists reacted by staging the Boston Tea Party. On December 16, 1773, a group of colonists disguised themselves as Native Americans, boarded three British ships and dumped the ships’ tea cargo overboard into Boston Harbor.

For Parliament and George III, the Boston Tea Party was a brazen act of disrespect that had to be punished. “The Colonies must either submit or triumph,” the king wrote. Parliament passed a new set of harsh laws in 1774. Called the Intolerable Acts in the colonies, the laws closed Boston Harbor, ended all forms of self-rule in Massachusetts, and called for the quartering of British troops in private homes. Thousands of British troops were dispatched to the colonies to enforce the new measures.

The First Continental Congress  Every colony except Georgia sent delegates to the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia in fall of 1774. The delegates sent George III a document known as the Declaration and Resolves, demanding a repeal of the Intolerable Acts, an end to British military occupation, and the power of the colonies to impose their own tax laws. Congress also called for a boycott of British goods until its demands were met. The delegates agreed to meet again the following May should the king refuse to address their grievances.

The British rejected the colonists’ demands. In April 1775, British troops clashed with colonial militia at Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts. The clashes became known as “the shot heard ’round the world,” the first time the colonists met the British with armed resistance.

The Second Continental Congress  Three weeks after Lexington and Concord, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia. Again representatives from 12 of the 13 colonies attended. Many delegates no longer expected better treatment by the Crown. This time, they were resolved to take strong measures. One of the Congress’s first actions was to organize the ragtag militia around Boston into an official Continental Army. By a unanimous vote, delegates then made George Washington its commander.

Still, some delegates clung to hopes of reconciliation. In July 1775, the Congress sent George III a final appeal. In the Olive Branch Petition, the delegates pledged continuing loyalty and begged the king to ask Parliament to repeal the new measures. George III refused to read the petition. On August 23, he proclaimed the American colonists to be in a full state of rebellion. Every effort would be made, he said, “to suppress such rebellion, and to bring the traitors to justice.”

With the Revolutionary War now under way, the Congress assumed the role of a government. It had no legal grounds to do so, but it did so out of desperate necessity. During the Revolution, the Congress would raise troops, borrow money, send diplomats to Europe, and create a monetary system. Most importantly, it would declare the colonies independent from Britain.

The Continental Congresses

Most American colonists held out hope for a compromise that would roll back the harshest tax measures. Toward this end, the Virginia and Massachusetts assemblies called for a general meeting of the colonies to be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
The Common Sense of Democracy  On January 10, 1776, a 47-page political pamphlet that would inspire widespread support for independence appeared in Philadelphia. The pamphlet was Common Sense by Thomas Paine, an Englishman who had arrived in America only a year earlier.

In plain language, Paine persuasively made the case for a break with England. He laid blame for colonial hostilities at Parliament’s feet. Then he took the king in particular and monarchy in general to task, arguing that “a thirst for absolute power is the natural disease of monarchy.” For Paine, independence was the only “common sense” course of action for the colonists to take.

Paine saw the history of the world hanging on the outcome of the colonies’ rebellion. “We have it in our power,” he wrote, “to begin the world over again.” That new world would take the form of a republican government, in which people governed themselves through democratically elected representatives. Paine’s message struck a chord. Within three months of its first printing, 150,000 copies of Common Sense had flown off colonial presses.

According to Paine, why was independence “common sense”?

The Declaration of Independence

The armed conflict continued for months before independence was officially declared. On June 7, 1776, Virginia delegate Richard Henry Lee stood before the Congress and proposed a resolution to officially declare independence from Great Britain. No longer concerned with restoring their “rights as Englishmen,” the delegates passed Lee’s resolution on July 2.

Congress appointed a committee of five to write a formal statement justifying the move for independence. The committee included John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Livingston, Roger Sherman, and a Virginian named Thomas Jefferson. Widely esteemed for his writing ability, Jefferson wrote most of the document in little more than two weeks.

Jefferson later claimed that he consulted “neither book nor pamphlet” to write the Declaration. However, Jefferson likely drew on the Virginia Declaration of Rights, which was inspired by John Locke’s view of the social contract theory that you read about in Chapter 1. Written mostly by George Mason, the Virginia Declaration proclaimed “all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights” that cannot be denied.

Likewise, echoing Locke’s view on natural rights, Jefferson’s Declaration states that people have “unalienable” rights to “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” that no government can take away because they are granted by “their Creator,” or God. Jefferson also drew on Locke’s idea that government is the result of a social contract based on the consent of the people. As Jefferson argued, governments derive “their just powers from the consent of the governed.” If a government disregards the rights of its people, then the people have a legitimate right to change their government.

On the evening of July 4, 1776, the Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence. Britain’s thirteen colonies ceased to exist. A new nation of united sovereign states had entered the world stage.

How did John Locke’s ideas inspire the Declaration of Independence?

Thomas Jefferson was born into a family of wealthy Virginia planters. Upon graduating from the College of William and Mary, he practiced law before serving in the Virginia House of Burgesses. Jefferson had many roles in early American government. He served as governor of Virginia, ambassador to France, secretary of state, and as president of the United States. In addition, Jefferson was also a writer, philosopher, inventor, architect, slaveholder, scientist, musician, and astronomer.

Because of his writing ability, Jefferson was called upon to draft the Declaration of Independence. Next to the Declaration, Jefferson was most proud of writing the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom (1786), which protected freedom of religion in Virginia and provided the basis for the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

How did Jefferson contribute to American government?
The State Constitutions

In May 1776 the Continental Congress passed a resolution encouraging each colony to draft its plan for government. By 1780, each of the 13 newly independent states had adopted its own written constitution. This was a remarkable feat. At that time, no nation in Europe had a written constitution. Moreover, the early state constitutions tested ideas about how to design a republican government that protected individual rights. These ideas would later influence the writing of the U.S. Constitution.

Self-Government All of the new state constitutions established republican governments with strong legislatures composed of elected representatives. Voting rights, however, differed from state to state. Seven states granted the right to vote to any adult male taxpayer, while other states set property qualifications for voting. Although slaves were denied the right to vote, free African American men could vote in some states if they met the requirements for voters. New Jersey was the only state to allow women who met property qualifications to vote.

Separation of Powers Each state established three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial. The new constitutions gave state legislatures the real power to govern, including the power to conduct foreign affairs and declare war. With the exception of Pennsylvania, all legislatures had two houses. In some states, the legislature elected the governor and state judges.

Limited Government The strong legislative bodies that the colonists created reflected their general distrust of monarchy. The colonists, however, were careful not to grant unlimited power to their legislative bodies. Annual elections, term limits, and separation of powers were established as checks on legislative power. Because colonists feared that a strong executive might undermine a republic, their state constitutions kept the power of the governors deliberately weak, and nine constitutions limited the governor’s term to one year.

Individual Rights One way to protect people from the excesses of government power was to legally protect their rights. The Massachusetts constitution of 1780 was the first of seven state constitutions to include a bill of rights that protected individual liberties. These liberties included trial by jury, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech. Almost all of the rights later included in U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights were protected in some form in the early state constitutions.

FOCUS ON WRITING

6. Descriptive Imagine that you are a journalist working for a colonial American newspaper in 1776. Write an editorial comparing and contrasting the Declaration of Independence to the social contract theory.
The Declaration of Independence

In Congress, July 4, 1776
The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.
He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws of Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislature.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:
For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighboring Province, establishing therein an *arbitrary* government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to *render* it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislature, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of *foreign mercenaries* to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & *perfidy* scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic *insurrections* amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have *petitioned for redress* in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free People.

Nor have We been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an *unwarrantable jurisdiction* over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and *magnanimity*, and we have *conjured* them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of *consanguinity*. We must, therefore, *acquiesce* in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the *rectitude* of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United...
The Congress adopted the final draft of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. A formal copy, written on parchment, was signed on August 2, 1776.

The following is part of a passage the Congress removed from Jefferson’s original draft: “He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither.” Why do you think the Congress deleted this passage?

Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

John Hancock
Button Gwinnett
Lyman Hall
George Walton
William Hooper
Joseph Hewes
John Penn
Edward Rutledge
Thomas Heyward, Jr.
Thomas Lynch, Jr.
Arthur Middleton
Samuel Chase
William Paca
Thomas Stone
Charles Carroll of Carrollton
George Wythe
Richard Henry Lee
Thomas Jefferson
Benjamin Harrison
Thomas Nelson, Jr.
Francis Lightfoot Lee
Carter Braxton
Robert Morris
Benjamin Rush
Benjamin Franklin
John Morton
George Clymer
James Smith
George Taylor
James Wilson
George Ross
Caesar Rodney
George Read
Thomas McKean
William Floyd
Philip Livingston
Francis Lewis
Lewis Morris
Richard Stockton
John Witherspoon
Francis Hopkinson
John Hart
Abraham Clark
Josiah Bartlett
William Whipple
Samuel Adams
John Adams
Robert Treat Paine
Elbridge Gerry
Stephen Gerry
William Ellery
Roger Sherman
Samuel Huntington
William Williams
Oliver Wolcott
Matthew Thornton
On June 7, 1776, Richard Henry Lee rose to the floor of the Second Continental Congress to make a dramatic proposal: “Resolved: These United Colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown.” Soon after, the Congress voted to do two things: to declare independence and to establish a confederation to govern the states.

As one committee of congressional delegates began work on the Declaration of Independence, a second committee acted quickly to organize a new government. They now had a revolution to win. The committee’s delegates drew on a number of sources for their confederation. The product of their labors took its name, the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union, from Benjamin Franklin’s plan. It was the first plan of government for the United States.

The new government would be strong enough to see the colonies through the American Revolution, but it would not last long. As the founders soon learned, their confederation was deeply flawed. By 1785 George Washington and other important leaders were discussing the need to reform the plan—or replace it.

The Articles of Confederation declared the 13 former colonies to be sovereign states in a “perpetual union” called the United States of America.


### First National Government

In June 1776, on the eve of independence, the Second Continental Congress turned its attention to creating a national government. The committee appointed to the task consisted of one delegate from each former colony. With John Dickinson, the delegate from Pennsylvania, serving as chief author, the committee drew up a new model of government. In their eyes, the United States was to be a confederation. The delegates aimed to build a “firm league of friendship” among 13 states that retained their “sovereignty, freedom, and independence.”

On June 12, 1777, after six drafts and several months of debate, Congress adopted the nation’s first constitution, the **Articles of Confederation**. Before it could go into force, it had to be *ratified*, or formally approved, by all of the states.

### A Delay in Ratification

Disputes over who would control the vast western lands that stretched between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River delayed the ratification process. Small states feared that large states with claims to western lands would become enormously powerful and overpower smaller states. For this reason, small states without land claims refused to approve the Articles. To win states’ approval, the authors of the Articles changed their plan, granting the Confederation control over western lands. Maryland, the last state to pass the Articles, held out until 1781.

### Powers of the National Government

The Articles of Confederation guarded state powers by creating a weak national government. Fearing the power wielded by a king, the authors of the Articles made no provision for an executive office. Nor did they provide for a national court system.

The Articles did call for a one-house Congress, in which each state had one vote. Delegates to the Congress were appointed and paid by their state legislatures. To pass any major legislation, nine states had to agree. Moreover, any change to the Articles required approval from all of the 13 states.

The Articles gave Congress the power to act on matters of common interest to the states. Congress could admit new states and organize the division of western lands. Congress could also settle disputes between states, organize a postal service, coin and borrow money, appoint military officers, and raise an army. The powers to declare war, make peace, and conduct foreign policy were also given to Congress by the Articles.

### State Powers

The states retained all powers not specifically given to Congress. According to Article II of the document, each state would retain “every power, jurisdiction, and right which is not by this confederation expressly delegated to the United States in Congress assembled.” The states’ powers included the ability to collect taxes and enforce national laws. It was also up to the states to contribute funds to the national government as they saw fit.

### Weaknesses of the Articles

On paper, the Confederation Congress looked powerful enough. The Articles had given Congress a number of key responsibilities. In reality, the Articles placed limits on Congress that kept it from effectively enforcing its laws and policies. For example, without a separate executive branch, the national government lacked the means to carry out Congress’s laws. Without a national court system, Congress had to rely on the state courts to apply national laws.
More important, the Articles denied Congress the power to tax. Congress could ask the states for money, but the states often refused. This situation made it difficult to raise money for a national army. It also meant that Congress could not raise the funds necessary to repay money that the nation had borrowed during the Revolution. Nor could it pay many of the soldiers who had fought for independence.

Congress also lacked the authority to regulate commerce, or trade, between the states. For example, Congress was not able to intervene when one state passed laws taxing goods from other states in an effort to give an advantage to its local businesses. Although Congress had the power to coin money, it did not have the sole power to do so. By the mid-1780s several different state currencies were in circulation. Some states refused to accept the currencies of other states. Such barriers to trade created major obstacles to the economic development of the young country.

Congress was further hindered by the degree of consensus required to pass laws. Rarely did 9 of the 13 states agree on any policy. Moreover, only one state had to raise an objection to block changes to the Articles. Such disagreement weakened Congress’s ability to act swiftly and decisively.

**Reading Check** Summarizing What were the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation?

**Pressures for Stronger Government**

With independence from Britain secured by the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the United States faced a range of challenges that, for the most part, the national government was ill-equipped to meet. The shortcomings of the government created by the Articles of Confederation would lead to calls for a new plan of government to replace the Articles.

**Northwest Ordinance** One of Congress’s greatest successes was the passage of the **Northwest Ordinance** of 1787. The ordinance established a plan for settling the Northwest Territory, which included areas that are now in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. This territory included the disputed western lands that had delayed ratification of the Articles.

The Northwest Ordinance created a system for admitting new states to the Union. It banned slavery in the territory. It also included a bill of rights that guaranteed representative government, religious freedom, trial by jury, and other freedoms to settlers. For more than 125 years, the ordinance guided the nation’s westward expansion.

**Dangers and Unrest** When Congress turned to other challenges—war debts, a sluggish economy, uncooperative states, and civil unrest—it largely floundered. Perhaps the most pressing problem was the war debts. Congress had borrowed heavily from foreign creditors and wealthy Americans to pay for the war. In addition, it owed back wages to soldiers. To meet its obligations, in 1783 Congress called on the states to approve a tax on imports. Unanimous consent was needed. With war debts of their own, the states balked. By 1787 only nine states had consented. Without a steady stream of income, the government was broke.

To make matters worse, the economy was slow to recover from a postwar depression. Farmers were particularly hard hit. Many fell into debt and faced losing their farms. Creditors in all states feared that borrowers would not make good on their loans.

Meanwhile, the states pursued their own interests. Some flouted laws passed by Congress and the terms of foreign treaties. Others negotiated directly with foreign powers and raised their own armed forces. In a 1786 letter to James Madison, George Washington likened the United States to “thirteen sovereignties pulling against each other and tugging at the federal head.”

**Shays’s Rebellion** In September 1786 a small band of Massachusetts farmers rebelled at the prospect of losing their land. Led by former Revolutionary War captain Daniel Shays, the farmers attacked courthouses to prevent judges from foreclosing on farms. By 1787, the ranks of **Shays’s Rebellion** had swelled to nearly 2,500. Shays even stormed the Springfield military arsenal, where hundreds of guns were stored. The
Shays's Rebellion

Because news of Shays's uprising shocked the nation and led to calls for stronger government, Shays's Rebellion has been called the last battle of the American Revolution.

Massachusetts legislature asked Congress for help, but Congress had neither money nor forces to offer. Finally, a hastily assembled state militia scattered Shays and his angry mob.

Shays’s Rebellion came at a sensitive time. It showed just how feeble the Confederation Congress was, and it hastened moves to revise the Articles of Confederation.

Calls to Revise the Articles

In March 1785 George Washington invited representatives from Virginia and Maryland to his home at Mount Vernon. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss resolving a trade dispute between the two states.

The success of the Mount Vernon meeting convinced James Madison to organize a second, larger meeting at Annapolis, Maryland, to discuss regulating commerce between all of the states. At his urging, the Virginia General Assembly issued meeting invitations to the states. Nine states accepted, but delegates from only five states showed up. The poor attendance led to a call for yet another meeting—this time to discuss strengthening the Articles of Confederation.

The next meeting was to be held in May 1787 in Philadelphia. In an address to the states, Alexander Hamilton called on states to send delegates to discuss commerce and all matters necessary to make the national government “adequate to the exigencies [emergencies] of the union.”

In February 1787 Madison persuaded the Confederation Congress to endorse the Philadelphia meeting “for the sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation.” No mention was made of writing a new constitution.

Reading Check

Identifying Cause and Effect

What events caused leaders to want to revise the Articles of Confederation?

Reviewing Ideas and Terms

1. a. Recall What issue led to the delay of the ratification of the Articles of Confederation?
   b. Explain How did the Articles of Confederation reflect the colonists’ fear of monarchy?
2. a. Identify What weakness in the Articles prevented Congress from financing its activities?
   b. Explain How did the distribution of powers under the Articles make the national government dependent on the states?
3. a. Identify What was Shays's Rebellion?
   b. Summarize Describe the events leading from Shays's Rebellion to the call for the Constitutional Convention.

Critical Thinking

4. Compare and Contrast Copy the chart below and take notes on the powers and limits of Congress under the Articles of Confederation.

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5. Expository Write a paragraph explaining the impact of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 on the United States, the Midwest, and your state.
Crafting a More Perfect Union  There is a story often told of the closing day of the Constitutional Convention held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. As delegate Benjamin Franklin exited the convention, he was approached by a woman who asked him whether the delegates had created a republic or a monarchy. Franklin responded, “A republic, if you can keep it.”

As one of the 55 delegates who toiled for four months to create a new framework for the government of the United States, Franklin understood the significance of a republican government. Because the U.S. Constitution granted unprecedented power to the people to choose their leaders, the new government’s success or failure now rested in the hands of the American people. It was a brave, new experiment in self-rule.

For more than 220 years, the American people have kept the republic going strong. Today the United States is the world’s oldest constitutional democracy.
Drafting a New Constitution

By May 1787 the United States was on the verge of a crisis. The weak central government created by the Articles of Confederation had proved inadequate to the social, diplomatic, and economic problems the new nation faced. Delegates from the states gathered at a convention in Philadelphia to revise the Articles of Confederation, which they unanimously agreed was too weak to meet the nation’s needs. The result, however, was an entirely new plan for government.

The Convention Meets

On May 25, 1787, after a quorum, or majority, of state delegations had arrived, the convention got under way. Representatives from 12 of the 13 states would eventually attend. Leaders in Rhode Island, fearful that the convention would strip power from the states, refused to send a delegation. Over the course of the next four months, the delegates to the convention worked together to draft the framework for a new government.

Framers of the Constitution

The 55 delegates who attended the Convention were a remarkable group. One-third of the delegates had served in the Continental Army. Eight had signed the Declaration of Independence. Almost all had experience in colonial, state, or local government. They ranged in age from 26-year-old Jonathan Dayton of New Jersey to 81-year-old Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania. Together, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention are known as the Framers of the Constitution for their efforts in drafting the framework of the new government.

Several of the Framers played key roles in guiding the convention. George Washington, for example, gave the meetings an air of dignity and authority in his role as president of the convention. Virginia’s James Madison also played a pivotal role. Madison took the lead in planning the convention and in calling for a new government. Today Madison is hailed as the Father of the Constitution because of his influence on the outcome of the convention.

Reading Check

Drawing Conclusions

Why did the delegates want to keep the proceedings secret?

Rival Plans

The delegates had been sent to Philadelphia to revise the Articles of Confederation, but many of them believed the Articles were irredeemably flawed. When the convention opened, delegates soon raised the idea of creating a new form of government. In the days that followed, two rival plans emerged—the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan.

The Virginia Plan

In the weeks before the Philadelphia convention, delegates from Virginia had gathered to discuss the problems of the existing government. It quickly became...
apparent to them that what was needed was not a revision of the Articles of Confederation, but an entirely different government. They formulated a proposal to that effect. On the fourth day of the Convention, Virginia delegate Edmund Randolph presented the group’s proposal, known as the Virginia Plan, to the Philadelphia Convention.

Based largely on the ideas of James Madison, the Virginia Plan called for a central government divided into three branches—legislative, executive, and judicial—each with the power to check the other branches. Unlike the Articles of Confederation, Virginia’s proposal called for a strong national government with the power to make laws, levy its own taxes, and control commerce between the states. The new government would also have the power to override state laws.

In addition, the Virginia Plan called for a bicameral legislature. Membership in both houses of Congress would be based on a state’s population, with more populous states having a greater number of representatives. Members of the lower house would be directly elected by the people, while members of the upper house would be selected by state legislatures.

The New Jersey Plan  Delegates from small states were concerned that the Virginia Plan gave too much power to the large states. After two weeks of discussion, the small states countered with a plan of their own, presented by William Paterson of New Jersey. Paterson’s New Jersey Plan called for a strong central government made up of three branches. However, the plan was designed to stick closer to the Articles of Confederation.

It proposed a unicameral legislature. Each state would have one vote, giving equal representation to every state regardless of its population. As a result, each state—large or small—would have equal say in determining public policy.

After three days of vigorous debate, the Convention voted on the New Jersey Plan. Despite support from small states, the plan was ultimately rejected.

Contrasting How did the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan differ?

Conflict and Compromise

For weeks after the rejection of the New Jersey Plan, the Convention was deadlocked. Tempers flared, and at times it seemed the Convention would fall apart. In the end, a series of compromises saved the Convention.

The Great Compromise  On June 30, 1787, Roger Sherman of Connecticut rose to present a plan he and a group of fellow delegates had devised. The Connecticut Compromise, now known as the Great Compromise, combined elements from both the Virginia and the New Jersey plans.

Like the Virginia Plan, the Great Compromise called for the creation of a bicameral legislature. Membership in the lower house, known as the House of Representatives, would be based on a state’s population, thus pleasing the states with larger populations. Members of the lower house would be elected by popular vote.

In the upper house, known as the Senate, each state would have two members regardless of its population. Similar to the New Jersey Plan, this proposal would protect the smaller states by granting them equal representation. Members of the Senate would be selected by state legislatures.

Sherman’s plan solved the dilemma over representation to the satisfaction of large and small states alike. On July 16, delegates to the convention approved the compromise. Their work, however, was not yet finished.
Compromises over Slavery  The issue of slavery lay just below the surface of debates throughout the Philadelphia Convention. At issue was not whether slavery would be allowed to continue. Rather, delegates argued over two key points. The first point concerned whether or not enslaved people should be counted as part of a state’s population. The second was whether the importation of enslaved people should be allowed to continue.

Counting enslaved people would greatly increase the population—and thus the power—of the southern states in the House of Representatives. Northern delegates argued that enslaved people should not be counted as part of a state’s population since enslaved people were not allowed to vote. Southern delegates, however, insisted that enslaved people should be counted, even though they had no intention of extending the vote to slaves.

This dispute was settled by what came to be called the Three-Fifths Compromise. It provided that three-fifths of the enslaved people in a state would be counted when determining a state’s population. Thus, for every five enslaved people, three would be added to the state’s population total to determine the number of representatives a state would have in the House.

The Framers also took up the issue of the slave trade. By 1787 there was widespread agreement in the North that the slave trade was inhumane and many northern delegates wanted to ban the slave trade, but not the institution of slavery itself. Southern delegates warned that such a proposal would endanger the entire work of the Convention.

Once again, the Convention was saved by a last-minute compromise. The Atlantic slave trade would be protected for the next 20 years. A clause in Article I, Section 9, of the Constitution prohibited Congress from
interfering with the importation of enslaved people until 1808. In exchange, the delegates agreed that a simple majority in both houses of Congress would be all that was needed to regulate commerce.

**Presidential Election** The delegates negotiated another compromise to settle how to select the president. Some delegates believed that the president should be elected directly by the people. Others wanted the president to be chosen by the state legislatures or by the national legislature.

The Framers created a system in which the president would be chosen by state electors. The number of a state’s electors would match the number of representatives the state had in both houses of Congress. Many delegates assumed that state legislatures would choose the electors by popular vote. If no presidential candidate received a majority of electoral votes from the states, the House of Representatives would choose the president.

**Finalizing the Constitution** Throughout the hot summer of 1787, weary delegates debated a number of difficult issues. They settled disputes and made key decisions. In the middle of July, they set about writing a draft. By September, the delegates had only one thing left to do—show their approval by signing the final document.

Benjamin Franklin urged the delegates to overlook the parts of the document that they did not like because it was as close to a perfect Constitution as he thought possible.

**PRIMARY SOURCE**

“I confess that there are several parts of this constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am not sure I shall ever approve them ... It therefore astonishes me, Sir, to find this system approaching so near to perfection as it does ... Thus I consent, Sir, to this constitution because I expect not better, and because I am not sure that it is not the best.”

—Benjamin Franklin, September 17, 1787

Franklin urged the meeting to “act heartily and unanimously” in signing the Constitution. Many who signed the document wholeheartedly supported the new plan, and others signed in spite of their misgivings. A handful of respected delegates, however, refused to sign the document because it lacked a bill of rights. They were George Mason and Edmund Randolph of Virginia and Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts.

In all, 39 delegates from 12 states signed the Constitution. The Constitutional Convention adjourned on Monday, September 17, 1787. It was now time for the American people to approve the document.

**REVIEWING IDEAS AND TERMS**

1. a. Recall What was the original purpose of the 1787 Constitutional Convention?
   b. Summarize What qualifications did the Convention’s delegates possess?

2. a. Explain How did the Virginia Plan aim to improve the structure of the national government?
   b. Contrast How did supporters of the Virginia Plan and New Jersey Plan differ?

3. a. Summarize What were the key issues involved in the compromises made over slavery?
   b. Predict What might have happened if the delegates were not able to agree to the terms of the Great Compromise?

**CRITICAL THINKING**

4. Compare and Contrast Copy the diagram below and take notes comparing and contrasting the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan.

5. Descriptive James Madison kept a journal recording the proceedings of the Constitutional Convention. Write a diary entry describing a pivotal event that happened at the convention from Madison’s point of view.
Mandatory National Public Service

Should the national government institute new programs for mandatory national public service?

THE ISSUE
The Framers of the U.S. Constitution believed strongly that a representative democracy could not last without active citizen participation and a spirit of civic virtue, or people’s ability to place the common good over their own self-interest. In their view, all citizens must be prepared to do their part to maintain democracy and the public good. In addition to voting and paying taxes at the local, state, and national levels, civic participation can also mean volunteering one’s service and abilities at any one of these levels, either independently or as part of a group.

At present, the United States sponsors voluntary military service as well as voluntary public service opportunities. To ensure the future of our republic, however, some people have proposed that our national government should institute a mandatory public service plan.

VIEWPOINTS

Public service should be mandatory. Proponents of mandatory public service see it as the best way to cultivate civic virtue in our nation’s youth. Young people could choose service in either the nation’s military or a nationally funded public service program, such as AmeriCorps, which sponsors community service programs ranging from public education to building public housing. In exchange, the government would offer money for college or other payment. Such a system would promote patriotism and tolerance of one’s fellow citizens and would help our nation’s future leaders develop the compassion and courage they need to maintain democracy.

Public service should remain voluntary. Many people argue that the needs of the people are better served by private volunteerism and civic organizations, not the government. Mandatory service runs contrary to personal liberty and takes away freedom of choice, a freedom most Americans are reluctant to give up. Moreover, mandatory service would diminish the spirit and quality of service, since people might perform it grudgingly. Lastly, paying for a mandatory public service program would be enormously expensive. Society would not be able to reap the benefits until years later, and the government would be footing the bill.

What Is Your Opinion?

1. Do you think that the government should institute mandatory public service? Explain.
2. Should Americans continue to care about civic virtue? Why or why not?
Ratification and the Bill of Rights

Main Idea
Before the Constitution could take effect, a heated debate between those in favor of the Constitution and those who opposed it took place in all the states.

Reading Focus
1. What were the main points of disagreement between the Antifederalists and the Federalists?
2. What were the main arguments made by the authors of the Federalist Papers?
3. Why was the Bill of Rights important to the ratification of the Constitution?

Key Terms
Federalists
Antifederalists
Publius
Federalist Papers
Bill of Rights

SS.912.C.1.4 Analyze and categorize the diverse viewpoints presented by the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists concerning ratification of the Constitution and inclusion of a bill of rights.

On October 27, 1787, the New York Independent Journal invited its readers to join the debate. Upon opening their newspapers, readers found Federalist Paper No.1, the first in a new series of essays written to defend the Constitution and to persuade New Yorkers to ratify it. The essays outlined the philosophy behind the Constitution and argued for a strong national government. Later, the essays were collected in a volume called The Federalist and circulated widely in other states.

The authors of The Federalist were not the only ones writing essays and pamphlets. Opponents of the Constitution weighed in on the debate with their own vigorous writings. After all, the stakes were high. For the first time in history, a people had a chance to prove, in the words of Federalist Paper No.1, that they could create a government “by reflection and choice” instead of having rule imposed on them by “accident and force.”

Many Revolutionary leaders, like Virginian Patrick Henry, opposed the Constitution on the grounds that it gave the national government too much power.

As one of the authors of the Federalist Papers, New Yorker Alexander Hamilton helped build support for the Constitution in New York State and in the rest of the nation.
Antifederalists versus Federalists

On September 17, 1787, the Constitutional Convention adjourned. The result of the Convention—the Constitution, an entirely new plan of government—went far beyond the delegates’ original intention, to revise the Articles of Confederation. When the Constitution was finally published, the drastic changes surprised some and angered others. With the memory of British rule still fresh in the minds of Americans, many feared a too-powerful national government.

The Framers had anticipated resistance from Congress and the state legislatures. The new national government would not only greatly reduce the powers of state legislatures, but also would completely restructure Congress as established by the Articles of Confederation. Therefore, before concluding the Convention, the Framers outlined a process for ratifying the Constitution that bypassed these bodies. The process called for voters in each state to elect representatives to a state ratifying convention. To become the law of the land, the Constitution had to be ratified by 9 of the 13 states. In the fall of 1787, the battle for ratification began.

The battle would drag on for 10 months, pitting former allies against each other. On one side, there were the supporters of the Constitution, once called nationalists, now called Federalists. On the other side of the debate stood those who opposed the Constitution. They were called Antifederalists.

Antifederalists

- Opposed the Constitution
- Feared a too-strong national government
- Believed only a small republic could protect rights
- Drew support from small farmers in rural areas
- Believed a bill of rights was necessary to protect individual liberties

Federalists

- Supported the Constitution
- Wanted a strong national government
- Believed a large republic could best protect individual liberty
- Drew support from large farmers, merchants, and artisans
- Believed a bill of rights was unnecessary

The Antifederalists

Although they recognized the need for a stronger national government, the Antifederalists charged that the Constitution betrayed the democratic ideals of the American Revolution. In their view, representative government could only exist in a small territory. They saw the document as an assault upon state sovereignty, republicanism, and the liberty of the people. They believed that the national government called for by the Constitution would become too powerful and that the strong executive it described would be too similar to a king.

The Antifederalists’ strongest criticism, however, was that the Constitution lacked something that every state constitution possessed—a bill of rights guaranteeing the people’s civil liberties. In 1776, for example, Virginia had passed a bill of rights that protected free speech, the right to a trial by jury, the right of property owners to vote, and other individual liberties. Antifederalists believed that without explicit protections of those rights written into the Constitution, a national government could easily violate those rights.

The Federalists

By contrast, the Federalists were enthusiastic supporters of a powerful and vigorous national government. Like the Antifederalists, the Federalists feared a central government that was too strong and too far away. Only one thing worried the Federalists more: a weak national government. The Federalists believed a sufficiently powerful national government would strengthen the fragile union and be able to promote the public good.

Such a government would have to be empowered to defend the nation against foreign enemies, regulate trade, and put down internal disturbances, like the mob violence witnessed during Shays’s Rebellion. The Federalists believed that the Constitution would give the country the strong, orderly national government that the Articles of Confederation had failed to deliver. At the same time, they pointed out that the separation of powers in the Constitution put limits on government power.

Reading Check Contrasting Over what issues did Antifederalists and Federalists disagree?
The Federalist Papers

Three of the most intellectually gifted Federalists—Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay—teamed up to write a series of articles defending the Constitution for New York newspapers. They wrote under the pen name of Publius to honor one of the founders of the Roman Republic. Between fall 1787 and spring 1788, Publius authored a total of 85 essays.

The essays were collected into a single volume and circulated throughout the states. They proved hugely influential in the ratification debate. According to Thomas Jefferson, they were “the best commentary on the principles of government which was ever written.” Today, the essays are collectively called the Federalist Papers and considered a classic statement of American political theory.

In the essays, Madison, Hamilton, and Jay defended the principles underlying the Constitution. In Federalist Papers No. 10 and 51, Madison argued that the Constitution would balance the influence of factions, or groups who attempt to bend the government to serve their own will at the expense of the common good. Other Federalist Papers, including No. 47, 48, 49, 50, and 51, explained how the Constitution used principles of government—namely checks and balances and separation of powers—to limit national authority and preserve liberty.

In response, the Antifederalists published essays of their own, under names such as Brutus and the Federal Farmer. Protecting liberty was one of their chief concerns. The Federal Farmer wrote: “There are certain unalienable and fundamental rights, which in forming the social compact . . . ought to be explicitly ascertained and fixed.”

**Reading Check** Making Inferences Why were the Federalist Papers written?

The Fight for Ratification

Because they did not trust government, the Antifederalists wanted the basic rights of the people spelled out in the Constitution. The struggle over a bill of rights became a key focus in the fight over ratification.

Winning over the States When the fight for ratification began, the Federalists, fresh from the Constitutional Convention, were better prepared than their opponents. They first targeted the small states. Attracted by equal representation in the Senate, the small states were quick to ratify. Delaware led the way, approving the Constitution on December 7, 1787.

In the largest and most powerful states—Massachusetts, Virginia, and New York—the ratification struggle was much harder. Strong leaders weighed in on both sides. The Federalists counted James Madison, George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and Benjamin Franklin among their ranks. The Antifederalists countered with Samuel Adams, Patrick Henry, and Richard Henry Lee.

Patrick Henry was particularly passionate in his opposition. In a speech before the Virginia ratifying convention, Henry asked this question:

**Primary Source**

“My political curiosity . . . leads me to ask, who authorized them to speak the language of, ‘We, the People,’ instead of ‘We, the States?’”

—Patrick Henry, June 4, 1788
Despite objections from noted patriots such as Patrick Henry, the Federalists continued to make progress toward ratification. After agreeing to add a bill of rights, the Federalists secured a victory in Massachusetts in February 1788. The vote was close, 89 to 79, but the win marked a shift in public opinion and helped convince both Maryland and South Carolina to ratify. On June 21, 1788, New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify, and the Constitution officially went into effect.

Ultimately, the promise of a bill of rights was key to winning over other states—New York and Virginia included—where the Constitution was hotly debated. In the end, all 13 states ratified. North Carolina and Rhode Island were the final holdouts. Both withheld their approval until after the new government was already at work.

**Bill of Rights** During the First Congress, James Madison encouraged his fellow legislators to make a bill of rights one of the new government’s first priorities. To this effect, he suggested a number of rights be protected in amendments, or official changes, to the Constitution. The ideas for these rights had been voiced before—in the English Bill of Rights, the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, and in various state constitutions.

In September 1789 Congress proposed 12 amendments and sent them to the states for ratification. By December 1791 the states had ratified 10 of the amendments. Traditionally called the **Bill of Rights**, these amendments protect such rights as freedom of speech, press, and religion as well as due process protections, such as the right to a fair trial and trial by jury.

**Reading Check** Summarizing How did the promise to add a bill of rights to the Constitution influence the ratification debate?

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**SECTION 5 ASSESSMENT**

**Reviewing Ideas and Terms**

1. **a. Summarize** Why did the Framers establish a ratification process that bypassed Congress and the state legislatures?
   **b. Compare and Contrast** How did the Antifederalists and Federalists differ in their views on national government?

2. **a. Identify** Who were the authors of the **Federalist Papers**?
   **b. Explain** How did the **Federalist Papers** contribute to the ratification debate?

3. **a. Recall** Why did the Antifederalists insist on a bill of rights?
   **b. Predict** What might have happened if the Federalists had failed to make good on their promise of a bill of rights?

4. **Sequence** Copy the flowchart below and list the order of the events that led to ratification of the Constitution.

5. **Persuasive** Write a letter from James Madison to Patrick Henry to convince him to support the Constitution.

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**Critical Thinking**

**FOCUS ON WRITING**
Constitutional Issue: Freedom of Speech

Schenck v. United States (1919)

Are the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights guaranteed absolutely? The Supreme Court’s decision in Schenck v. United States considered what limits, if any, could be set on free speech without violating the individual freedoms outlined in the First Amendment.

Background

Shortly after the United States entered World War I, Congress passed the Espionage Act of 1917. The law aimed to silence opposition to the war and stop any activity that might undermine the nation’s chances at victory. It made illegal any activity that might obstruct the recruiting or enlistment of soldiers. Congress amended the act with the Sedition Act of 1918, which made it a crime to “willfully utter, print, write or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government of the United States or the Constitution of the United States.”

Still, many people opposed the war, including Charles Schenck, the general secretary of the Socialist Party of America. Among his other antiwar activities, he distributed thousands of leaflets urging men to resist the draft. Schenck was arrested and charged with violating the Espionage Act, which made interfering with the draft illegal. He was found guilty and appealed his case to the Supreme Court.

Arguments for Schenck

Since political speech was protected under the First Amendment, Schenck argued that the Espionage Act was unconstitutional. He claimed his opposition to what he considered an immoral war was a protected right. If Congress could choose under what circumstances a citizen’s rights could be diminished, Schenck warned, other First Amendment rights would also be in danger of being taken away.

Arguments for the United States

The United States argued that the case did not involve the First Amendment, but the draft policy. During a time of war, the nation must be able to take steps to defend itself, including against speech that threatens to jeopardize national security or the personal safety of American citizens. The Espionage Act was warranted and just, because criticisms of the government should not be allowed during a military crisis.

In 1919 the Supreme Court issued a unanimous decision, upholding the Espionage Act and Schenck’s conviction. Writing for the majority, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes argued that the government could restrict freedom of speech in wartime if such speech posed “a clear and present danger” to national security. The court determined that Schenck’s leaflets posed just such a danger. Today the question of how and if free speech should be limited in wartime continues to challenge American society. The right to disagree with government policy is considered an essential right by many Americans. Others feel that it is unpatriotic to oppose an ongoing war.

Critical Thinking

What Do You Think? What is the policy on war protest and the draft today? Compare the Espionage Act of 1917 to current laws, such as the Patriot Act, that deal with treason, sedition, and subversive activities. What effect do you think the limitation of free speech has on American democracy today?
Individual Rights and the U.S. Constitution

The Framers of the Constitution believed that individual rights had to be protected from government interference. To ensure the adoption of the Constitution, they promised to add a bill of rights that would safeguard individual rights.

Who may hold rights? Rights may be held by individuals, classes (categories) of individuals, or institutions.

- **Individuals.** The idea that individuals can hold rights reflects the belief that humans should be considered autonomous and self-governing. This includes the belief that each individual should possess certain fundamental rights, such as those to freedom of thought and conscience, privacy, and movement. This emphasis on the rights of individuals is reflected in natural rights philosophy, exemplified in the Declaration of Independence by the statement that “all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.”

- **Classes (categories) of individuals.** Under most legal systems members of certain classes or categories of individuals within a society are recognized in the law as holding certain rights. For example, laws may grant such rights to children, the mentally ill or disabled, veterans, and those who hold professional qualifications, such as teachers, doctors, attorneys, building contractors, and airplane pilots.

- **Institutions.** Institutions such as schools, governmental institutions at local, state, and national levels; unions; universities; business partnerships; and corporations also hold certain rights.

What are common categories of rights? Three common categories are personal rights, economic rights, and political rights.

- **Personal rights.** These rights provide for individual autonomy, including, among others rights, freedom of thought and conscience, privacy, and movement. The idea that humans are autonomous, self-governing individuals with fundamental rights is central to natural rights philosophy. The rights to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness often are said to be “God-given” or based on nature. Every person is believed to possess such rights at birth. The purpose of government is to protect those rights.

- **Economic rights.** These rights include choosing the work one wants to do, acquiring and disposing of property, entering into contracts, creating and protecting intellectual property such as copyrights or patents, and joining labor unions or professional associations. Like political rights, such rights can be created and protected by statutes, national or state constitutions, or both. Many people consider economic rights to be associated with ownership.

- **Political rights.** These are rights of individuals that address political participation and can be created and protected by statutes, national or state constitutions, or both. Examples are the rights to vote and to engage in political activities, such as supporting particular candidates for office or running for office.

What kinds of rights does the Bill of Rights protect? The Bill of Rights is commonly understood to contain specific guarantees of individual rights. In fact, the situation is more complicated because the Bill of Rights involves a number of different types of rights.
For example, the Second Amendment provides that “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” Some people argue that this amendment refers to the institutional rights of states to maintain militia units. Others contend that it refers to the individual right to keep and bear arms. The Supreme Court seemed to side with the institutional view in *United States v. Miller* (1939), but lower federal courts have continued to debate the issue. In 2007 the Court agreed to revisit the question by agreeing to rule on a case challenging the constitutionality of a District of Columbia ban on the possession of handguns by individuals.

The Tenth Amendment states, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” Of all the amendments the Anti-Federalists demanded in state ratifying conventions, one designed to reserve powers to the states was the most common. Two views of the Tenth Amendment are

- It states the nature of American federalism but adds nothing to the Constitution as originally ratified.
- It protects the powers of the states against the national government.

### The Bill of Rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amendment I</th>
<th>Safeguards freedom of religion, speech, press, and the right to assembly and to petition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amendment II</td>
<td>Asserts the need for a militia and protects the right to keep and bear arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment III</td>
<td>Prevents soldiers from taking over private homes during peacetime or war unless authorized to do so by law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment IV</td>
<td>Prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment V</td>
<td>Protects the rights of accused persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment VI</td>
<td>Provides the right to a speedy, fair trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment VII</td>
<td>Guarantees the right to a trial by a jury of one’s peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment VIII</td>
<td>Prohibits excessive bail and fines, prohibits cruel and unusual punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment IX</td>
<td>Ensures that people’s rights that are not specifically listed in the Constitution are retained by the people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment X</td>
<td>Grants to the states and to the people powers that are not specifically listed in the Constitution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reviewing Ideas and Terms

1. **Identify** Select three rights from the Bill of Rights. Are the rights you selected personal, economic, or political rights?
2. **Explain** What do you think is the meaning of the Ninth Amendment? the Tenth?

### Critical Thinking

3. **Evaluate** What is the importance of the Bill of Rights to the preservation of individual rights in the American political system? How does the Bill of Rights serve the public good?
**Comprehension and Critical Thinking**

**SECTION 1 (pp. 32–36)**

1. **a. Review Key Terms** For each term, write a sentence that explains its significance or meaning: Magna Carta, Petition of Right, English Bill of Rights.
2. **b. Analyze** How did the struggle between Parliament and the English monarch affect American ideas about government?
3. **c. Contrast** How did royal, proprietary, and charter colonies differ from one another?

**SECTION 2 (pp. 37–42)**

1. **a. Review Key Terms** For each term, write a sentence that explains its significance or meaning: Iroquois Confederation, Albany Plan of Union, Stamp Act, delegates, First Continental Congress, Second Continental Congress.
2. **b. Analyze** Why did the colonists object to Britain’s Parliament placing taxes on the colonies?
3. **c. Contrast** How did the goals of the delegates attending the First and Second Continental Congresses differ?

**SECTION 3 (pp. 47–50)**

1. **a. Review Key Terms** For each term, write a sentence that explains its significance or meaning: Articles of Confederation, ratify, Northwest Ordinance, Shays’s Rebellion.
2. **b. Summarize** What powers did states have under the Articles of Confederation?
3. **c. Explain** What do you think was the most significant weakness of the Articles of Confederation?

**SECTION 4 (pp. 51–55)**

1. **a. Review Key Terms** For each term, write a sentence that explains its significance or meaning: Virginia Plan, New Jersey Plan, Great Compromise, Three-Fifths Compromise.
2. **b. Explain** Who were the Framers?
3. **c. Contrast** How did the New Jersey and Virginia plans differ?

**SECTION 5 (pp. 57–60)**

1. **a. Review Key Terms** For each term, write a sentence that explains its significance or meaning: Federalists, Antifederalists, Bill of Rights.
2. **b. Summarize** What were the key points of the Antifederalists?
3. **c. Elaborate** How did the Federalist Papers contribute to the ratification process?
4. **d. Identify** What is the Bill of Rights and why was it important to the ratification process?
Critical Reading

Read the passages in Section 2 entitled “The Road to Independence.” Then answer the questions that follow.

6. Which of the following meetings was the earliest example of an attempt at colonial unity?
   A New England Confederation
   B Albany Plan of Union
   C Annapolis Convention
   D Articles of Confederation

7. Which of the following events led colonial leaders to call for the First Continental Congress?
   A French and Indian War
   B Stamp Act
   C Boston Tea Party
   D Intolerable Acts

8. Conduct Internet or library research to find a current event that illustrates one of the following concepts: rule of law, social contract, natural rights, or representative government.
   Then write a paragraph describing the event or situation and how it illustrates the concept you selected. Be sure to explain the concept and, where possible, compare and contrast it to a similar event from English or U.S. history.

9. Choose one foundational document of American democracy, such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, or the Bill of Rights.
   Explain how the document expresses basic political principles, such as popular sovereignty, the rule of law, the separation of powers, limited government, and representative government.

Connecting to the Constitution

10. Conduct Internet or library research to find copies of the Bill of Rights to the Constitution, the English Bill of Rights, and the Virginia Declaration of Rights. Analyze each document and compare it to a copy of your state bill of rights. In what ways are the documents similar? How are the documents different? What factors might help explain these differences?

Analyzing Primary Sources

Political Cartoon First published in May 1754, the cartoon below appeared in Benjamin Franklin’s newspaper, the Pennsylvania Gazette, with an editorial Franklin wrote concerning the “disunited state” of the colonies.

11. Analyze What is happening in this cartoon?
12. Draw Conclusions How does the imagery in the cartoon illustrate the cartoonist’s opinion of the relationship between the colonies?

Focus on Writing

Think about the following issue:

During ratification of the Constitution, the Antifederalists withheld approval of the Constitution until they secured a promise of a bill of rights. Consider what might have happened if the Antifederalists had lost this debate.

13. Assignment How might your life be different if you were not protected by the Bill of Rights? Write a three-paragraph narrative in the form of a story about someone who is not protected by the Bill of Rights. First, write an opening sentence that will catch the attention of your readers. Follow it up with interesting and believable details that will convey your story.