

Handout A: The Constitutional Convention

Warm-Up:

1. Reflect on the Primary Source analysis of the Articles of Confederation. The Articles of Confederation were drafted shortly after the Declaration of Independence. How does the design of this system of government attempt to prevent the tyranny against which the drafters were fighting?
2. The Articles were drafted during a time of conflict, not a time of peace. What impact might this have had on the design of the confederation?
3. What challenges did the framers of the Articles of Confederation face in crafting a national government for all thirteen colonies?
4. To what extent does the system resulting from the Articles of Confederation seem like it would be an effective system of government? Explain your response.

Constitution Solutions:

Step 1: Read the first four paragraphs of the “**The Constitutional Convention**” Narrative. As you read, compile a list of deficiencies in the Articles of Confederation in the chart below.

Step 2: Read each excerpt from the Constitution (strips). As you read, consider what deficiency of the Articles of Confederation this line of the Constitution addresses. When you have found an excerpt of the Constitution that directly addresses a problem with the Articles, cite that excerpt as “Article X, Section Y” in the second column. You do not need to write down the entire excerpt in the “Solution in the Constitution” box. Note: There may be some excerpts that apply to more than one issue in your interpretation and some that do not apply to any in your interpretation. Therefore, it is suggested that you organize the strips before committing your solution to paper.

Step 3: Once you find solutions, evaluate each to determine the underlying constitutional principle(s) in these solutions. Write as many as apply in the third column.

Comparing the Articles of Confederation with the Constitution

Deficiencies in the Articles of Confederation	Solution in the Constitution	Underlying Constitutional Principle(s)

Application: Drawing Conclusions

1. How did the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation ultimately lead to the crafting of the Constitution?
2. How did the Constitution address those weaknesses?
3. How did the context of the drafting of the Constitution differ from that of the Articles of Confederation?
4. How did this context and the framers' experience under the Articles affect the drafting of the Constitution?
5. What social, political, or economic problems, if any, that were apparent under the Articles of Confederation were not addressed by the original Constitution?
6. Why do you think these problems remained?
7. Which groups of society represent the missing voice in "We, the People"? To what extent are these groups excluded from the Constitution of 1787?
8. What constitutional principles were evident in the revisions made to the United States government?

Evaluation:

To what extent did the Constitution achieve a "more perfect Union" and a government better able to govern and protect natural rights? Explain your answer in five to seven sentences, ensuring you state a clear claim and provide supporting evidence from the documents (the Articles of Confederation, the Narrative, and/or the Constitution).