

# Handout A: Federalist/Anti-Federalist Document Packet

## Directions:

Evaluate the arguments for and against entrusting a national legislature with the power of taxation.

## Warm-Up:

1. In creating a budget for yourself, what are your top priorities?

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2. If you were responsible not only for yourself, but for running a country, what would your top priorities be for your budget?

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3. How would you convince others that these causes are worth paying for?

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## Exploration:

After the Constitution was signed in Philadelphia in September 1787, a vigorous debate over its ratification began. Supporters of the Constitution and a stronger federal government than existed in the Articles of Confederation were known as Federalists. The Federalists argued that a strong central government was needed to maintain order and preserve the Union. Anti-Federalists argued that such a government would be too powerful and would restrict powers of states and rights of individuals. The following documents focus on the Federalist/Anti-Federalist disagreements over Congress's power to tax found in Article 1, Section 8, in the Constitution.

1. What was the main argument of the Federalists?
2. What was the main argument of the Anti-Federalists?

**Directions:**

Read the documents below and answer the questions that follow. These five documents will help you formulate a response to the following question: Evaluate the arguments for and against entrusting a national legislature with the power of taxation.

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## Document 1: Excerpts from Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution, 1787

**Source:**

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>

**Introduction:**

After deliberating on the Constitution in Philadelphia, the delegates to the Convention returned to their home states in late September 1787 knowing that their work was unfinished. The Constitution was written and signed, but two-thirds of the states, or nine of the thirteen, would have to ratify the Constitution before it could go into effect.

Text
The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;
To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;
To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes; . ..
To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures; . .
To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

1. How many states had to ratify the Constitution before it went into effect?
2. What powers are given to the U.S. Congress regarding the economy in Article 8 of the Constitution?
3. List three ways this document demonstrates that the government created under the Constitution was more powerful than the central government created under the Articles of Confederation.

## Document 2: Excerpts from Federalist No. 12: “The Utility of the Union in Respect to Revenue,” November 27, 1787 by Alexander Hamilton (Publius)

### Source:

<https://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/The+Federalist+Papers#TheFederalistPapers-12>

### Introduction:

In the fall of 1787, the debate over ratifying the Constitution began. This debate took place “out of doors” in newspapers, taverns, parlors, and homes of Americans, as well as within each state’s ratification convention. In this context, the first essay of what became known as The Federalists Papers was published in a New York newspaper in October 1787. An additional 84 essays followed in various newspapers over the next six months. These essays argued in strong support of the Constitution and its ratification. The following two documents were written by Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton was the driving force behind The Federalist Papers and recruited James Madison and John Jay to write with him. Each author wrote anonymously using the pen name Publius. The name Publius was chosen in honor of the Roman Publius Valerius Publicola, who was instrumental in the founding of the Roman Republic.

Text
To the People of the State of New York: . . .
The prosperity of commerce is now perceived and acknowledged by all enlightened statesmen to be the most useful as well as the most productive source of national wealth, and has accordingly become a primary object of their political cares. . . .
One national government would be able, at much less expense, to extend the <b>duties</b> [taxes] on imports, beyond comparison, further than would be practicable to the States separately, or to any partial <b>confederacies</b> [loose alliance of states]. . . .
A nation cannot long exist without revenues. Destitute of this essential support, it must resign its independence, and sink into the degraded condition of a province. This is an extremity to which no government will of choice <b>accede</b> [agree to]. Revenue, therefore, must be had at all events. . . .
PUBLIUS.

1. Who were the authors of *The Federalist Papers*?

2. What was their goal in writing these essays?

3. How were *The Federalist Papers* published?
4. Why do you think the authors wrote under a pseudonym?
5. How is the choice of the pseudonym “Publius” connected to the authors’ goal in writing these essays?
6. According to Hamilton, what is the best source of national wealth?
7. What adjective does Hamilton use to describe statesmen who acknowledge this fact and what does that imply?
8. According to Hamilton, what will happen to a country without a source of revenue?

## Document 3: Excerpts from Federalist No. 13, “Advantage of the Union in Respect to Economy in Government,” November 28, 1787 by Alexander Hamilton (Publius)

### Source:

<https://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/The+Federalist+Papers#TheFederalistPapers-13>

### Introduction:

Alexander Hamilton also wrote Federalist No. 13, which was published one day after Federalist No. 12. In Federalist No. 13, Hamilton argues that a single national government would operate much more efficiently and cost-effectively than a confederacy of states.

Text
To the People of the State of New York:
As CONNECTED with the subject of revenue, we may with propriety consider that of economy. The money saved from one object may be usefully applied to another, and there will be so much the less to be drawn from the pockets of the people. If the States are united under one government, there will be but one national <b>civil list</b> [individuals paid by the government] to support; if they are divided into several confederacies, there will be as many different national civil lists to be provided for. . . . The entire separation of the States into thirteen unconnected sovereignties is a project too extravagant and too replete with danger to have many advocates. . . .
If, in addition to the consideration of a plurality of civil lists, we take into view the number of persons who must necessarily be employed to guard the inland communication between the different confederacies against illicit trade, and who in time will infallibly spring up out of the necessities of revenue; and if we also take into view the military establishments which it has been shown would unavoidably result from the jealousies and conflicts of the several nations into which the States would be divided, we shall clearly discover that a separation would be not less injurious to the economy, than to the tranquility, commerce, revenue, and liberty of every part.
PUBLIUS.

1. At the end of the first paragraph, what adjectives does Hamilton use to describe the idea of maintaining thirteen sovereign states rather than one national government?
2. List three examples Hamilton uses to argue that it would be more economical or less expensive to support one national government over divided state governments.
3. How does Hamilton’s argument in Federalist No. 13 (Document 3) support his argument in Federalist No. 12 (Document 2)?

## Document 4: Brutus 1, October 18, 1787, author unknown, possibly Robert Yates

### Source:

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/brutus-i/>

### Introduction:

There is no one definitive Anti-Federalist counterpart to the writings of Hamilton, Madison, and Jay. Anti-Federalist writings were generally not as organized as the essays now known as The Federalist Papers, but their writing was vast and varied. Anti-Federalist writings do not typically match up with specific essays in The Federalist Papers but rather discuss arguments against the Constitution on a thematic level. Like The Federalist Papers, many of the Anti-Federalist writings were published serially in newspapers and under pseudonyms. The following Anti-Federalist essay appears in The New York Journal. Between October 18, 1787, and April 10, 1788, this newspaper published sixteen Anti-Federalist essays written under the pen name Brutus.

Text
To the Citizens of the State of New-York. . . .
When the people once part with power, they can seldom or never resume it again but by force. Many instances can be produced in which the people have voluntarily increased the powers of their rulers; but few, if any, in which rulers have willingly abridged their authority. This is a sufficient reason to induce you to be careful, in the first instance, how you deposit the powers of government. . . .
This government is to possess absolute and uncontrollable power, legislative, executive and judicial, with respect to every object to which it extends, for by the last clause of section 8th, article 1st, it is declared “that the Congress shall have power to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this constitution, in the government of the United States; or in any department or office thereof.” . . .
It is proper here to remark, that the authority to lay and collect taxes is the most important of any power that can be granted; it connects with it almost all other powers, or at least will in process of time draw all other after it; it is the great mean of protection, security, and defense, in a good government, and the great engine of oppression and tyranny in a bad one. This cannot fail of being the case, if we consider the contracted limits which are set by this constitution, to the late governments, on this article of raising money. No state can emit paper money — lay any duties, or imposts, on imports, or exports, but by consent of the Congress; and then the net produce shall be for the benefit of the United States. The only mean therefore left, for any state to support its government and discharge its debts, is by direct taxation; and the United States have also power to lay and collect taxes, in any way they please. Every one who has thought on the subject, must be convinced that but small sums of money can be collected in any country, by direct taxes; hence,] when the federal government begins to exercise the right of taxation in all its parts, the legislatures of the several states will find it impossible to raise monies to support their governments. Without money they cannot be supported, and they must dwindle away, and, as before observed, their powers absorbed in that of the general government.

1. In what ways were the Anti-Federalist writings similar to *The Federalist Papers*?
2. How were they different?
3. In the first paragraph, why does the author warn the people about giving power to government?
4. What two adjectives does the author use in the second paragraph to describe the powers given to the government in the Constitution? What does this tell you about his point of view on the ratification of the Constitution?
5. What is the most important power a government can have, according to the last paragraph?
6. Why is this the most important power?
7. Who held this power in the Articles of Confederation?

## Document 5: State-by-State Ratification Summary

### Source:

Solberg, Winton U., ed. *The Constitutional Convention and the Formation of the Union*, 2nd ed. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 375.

<https://www.docsoffreedom.org/readings/the-ratification-debate/activities>

States in Order of Ratification	Date of Ratification	Convention Vote for Ratification	Convention Vote against Ratification
Delaware	December 7, 1787	Unanimous	
Pennsylvania	December 12, 1787	46	23
New Jersey	December 18, 1787	Unanimous	
Georgia	January 2, 1788	Unanimous	
Connecticut	January 9, 1788	128	40
Massachusetts (including Maine)	February 7, 1788	187	168
Maryland	April 28, 1788	63	11
South Carolina	May 23, 1788	149	73
New Hampshire	June 21, 1788	57	46
Virginia	June 26, 1788	89	79
<b>Constitution declared ratified July 2, 1788.</b>			
New York	July 26, 1788	30	27
North Carolina	November 21, 1789	195	77
Rhode Island	May 29, 1790	34	32

1. Based on this chart, in what state(s) would you expect the most debate over ratification? Why?



## Document 6: Excerpts from “The Address and reasons of dissent of the minority of the convention, of the state of Pennsylvania, to their constituents” Philadelphia, December 12, 1787

Signed by Nathaniel Breeding and twenty others; followed by the vote of the convention on ratification of the Constitution.

### Source:

[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/bdsdcc:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(bdsdccc0401\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/bdsdcc:@field(DOCID+@lit(bdsdccc0401)))

### Introduction:

Pennsylvania was the second state to ratify the Constitution on December 12, 1787. Twenty-one of the delegates who voted against ratification penned the following document.

Text
The powers of Congress under the new constitution, are compleat and unlimited over the purse and the sword, and are perfectly independent of, and supreme over, the state governments: whose intervention in these great points is entirely destroyed. By virtue of their power of taxation, Congress may command the whole, or any part of the property of the people. They may impose what imposts upon commerce; they may impose what land-taxes, poll-taxes, excises, duties on all written instruments, and duties on every other article that may judge proper; in short, every species of taxation, whether of an external or internal nature is comprised in section the 8th, of article the 1st, viz. “The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, to pay the debts, and provide for the common defence and general welfare of the United States.”
As there is no one article of taxation reserved to the state governments, the Congress may monopolise every source of revenue, and thus indirectly demolish the state governments, for without funds they could not exist, the taxes, duties and excises imposed by Congress may be so high as to render it impracticable to levy further sums on the same articles; but whether this should be the case or not, if the state governments should presume to impose taxes, duties or excises, on the same articles with Congress, the latter may <b>abrogate</b> [annul] and repeal the laws whereby they are imposed, upon the allegation that they interfere with the due collection of their taxes, duties or excises, by virtue of the following clause, part of section 8th, article 1st, via. “To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.”
The congress might gloss over this conduct by construing every purpose for which the state legislatures now lay taxes, to be for the “general welfare,” and therefore as of their jurisdiction.

1. Who is the intended audience for this document? *Hint: Look at the title.*

2. Why did the authors write this document?

3. The first paragraph reveals a fear that Congress would abuse its power of taxation using what justification?
4. What fear is discussed in the second paragraph of this excerpt?

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### **Application:**

Now that you have read the documents, go back through each and highlight evidence that will help you answer the prompt:

*Evaluate the arguments for and against entrusting a national legislature with the power of taxation.*

### **Writing a Thesis Statement:**

Analyze the prompt to be sure you understand what you are expected to accomplish in your response. It is better to partially answer all parts of the prompt than it is to write a complete response that addresses only part of the prompt. In your own words, what is this prompt asking you?

1. A thesis statement condenses your arguments to a nutshell and may appear in either the beginning or the end of an essay, but it is not written until after you have planned your overall response and marshalled your evidence. A good thesis statement accomplishes the following:
  - a. Fully addresses all parts of the prompt, while acknowledging the complexity of the issue.
  - b. Clearly takes a side—makes a declarative statement that one thing is more important, more persuasive, and so on, than another. Because the prompt often requires the writer to “assess” or “evaluate,” or explain “to what extent,” the thesis statement must show which side the writer takes.
  - c. Suggests a “table of contents” or road map for the essay. Shows what elements enter into consideration.
  - d. Summarizes an essay that is proven by abundant and persuasive facts and evidence.
2. In a document-based question (DBQ) essay, the student writes a well-organized response to target a specific prompt, analyzing pertinent documents and including relevant background information to support the thesis.

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In the space below, write your thesis statement in response to the prompt you wrote above. Then, use bullet points to show what evidence you will use in the rest of your essay to provide factual support for your position.