

Federalists and Anti-Federalists

Debate Congressional Powers

Directions

Work with an assigned partner and place the quote cards into “Federalist” and “Anti-Federalist” piles. Be prepared to explain why you chose your answer for each card.

Document One

“With regard to direct taxes; these include poll taxes, land taxes, excises, duties on written instruments, on everything we eat, drink, or wear; they take hold of every species of property, and come home to every man’s house and pocket.”

Document Two

“Was it not an acknowledged object of the convention, and the universal expectation of the people, that the regulation of trade should be submitted to the general government, in such a form as would render it an immediate source of general revenue?”

Document Three

“How far the clause in the eighth section [“necessary and proper” clause] of the first article may operate to do away all idea of confederated states and to effect an entire consolidation of the whole into one general government, it is impossible to say. The powers given by this article are very general and comprehensive, and it may receive a construction to justify the passing almost any law.”

Document Four

“That standing armies may be established, and appropriation of money made for their support for two years, that the militia of the most remote state may be marched into those states situated at the opposite extreme of this continent.”

Document Five

“Shall the union be constituted the guardian of the common safety? Are fleets, and armies, and revenues, necessary to this purpose? The government of the union must be empowered to pass all laws, and to make all regulations, which have relation to them. The same must be the case in respect to commerce, and to every other matter to which its jurisdiction is permitted to extend.”

Document Six

“It is expressly to execute these powers, that the sweeping clause, as it has been affectedly called, authorizes the national legislature to pass all necessary and proper laws. If there be any thing exceptionable, it must be sought for in the specific powers, upon which this general declaration is predicated.”

Document Seven

“They propose to lodge in the general government very extensive powers, powers nearly, if not altogether, complete and unlimited, over the purse and the sword . . . And therefore, unless the people shall make some great exertions to restore to the state governments their powers in matters of internal police; as the powers to lay and collect, exclusively, internal taxes, to govern the militia . . . the balance cannot possibly continue long. But the state governments must be annihilated, or continue to exist for no purpose.”

Document Eight

“The convention thought the concurrent jurisdiction preferable . . . and it is evident that it has at least the merit of reconciling an indefinite constitutional power of taxation in the federal government, with an adequate and independent power in the states to provide for their own necessities.”