

The Fight For Our New Constitution

High School US/VA History and US/VA Government

Objectives: Students will be able to:

- analyze, interpret, and synthesize evidence from primary and secondary resources;
- use, create, and interpret charts, graphs, diagrams, and pictures to determine characteristics of people, places, and events;
- recognize direct cause-and-effect relationships;
- compare and contrast ideas and perspectives;
- use evidence to draw conclusions and make generalizations; and
- access a variety of media, including online resources.

Standards

Virginia: VUS.5a	Weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation and How the Bill of Rights Was Influenced by the Virginia Declaration of Rights and the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom
VUS.5b	Compromises of the Constitution
VUS.5c	Federalists and Anti-Federalists
GOVT.4a	Ratification Debates
GOVT.4c,4d,7b	Fundamental Principles Upon Which the U.S. Constitution is Based; Organization of the National Government; Checks & Balances and Separation of Powers
National: NSS-C.5-8.3	Principles of Democracy
NSS-USH.5-12.3 Era 3	Revolution & the New Nation (1754-1820s)

Approx. Time: Three 90 minute blocks or six 45 minute blocks

HOOK: Ask students to raise their hands if they think their parents are way too strict. Ask a few to share some of their experiences and ask them how they feel about their parents being so strict. What would they like to see change? Now ask students to raise their hands if they think their parents should be stricter. You may get a few—if so have them share like the other students and ask them how they feel about their parents giving them too much freedom/not paying enough attention to them. If no students admit their parents should be more strict, take a second to talk about what might happen if kids had too much freedom to do whatever they wanted.

Next, explain to them that this is what happened to America when we were deciding to create our first government after getting our independence from England. The king often abused the colonists and gave them little freedom and power to govern themselves. The result was the colonies revolted and gained independence. Because of that experience, when the colonists created their first government, they made sure it wasn't so powerful as to be abusive. In the first government, the colonists gave the states and people more power than the federal government. However, it was so weak that the United States soon found itself not so united, in debt, and coming apart.

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WHAT STUDENTS WILL DO:

1. **Students will learn about the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation and predict the problems created by these weaknesses. [While they are doing this, have them keep in mind what the creators of the Articles of Confederation were thinking when the Articles were created.]**
2. **Students will next**
 - a. describe the three major compromises of the constitutional convention;
 - b. identify what interests were being balanced by those compromises;
 - c. explain why compromise is necessary in a democracy; and
 - d. judge which of the compromises that were made were not so good.
3. **Students will be introduced to the fundamental principles of the Constitution, and then**
 - a. identify the three branches of government,
 - b. identify the make-up of each branch of government, and
 - c. identify the constitutional checks among the three branches.
4. **Students will then**
 - a. create a list of differences between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists,
 - b. identify prominent people who were Federalist and Anti-Federalists,
 - c. read primary source documents from *The Federalist* papers and a speech from John Marshall, and then
 - d. identify or outline what makes them Federalists.
5. **Students will interpret primary source documents to identify the influences of the Bill of Rights.**
6. **Lastly, as a post-assessment, students will identify sections of the Constitution which represent either fixes to the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation or competing interests being balanced.**

I PREVIEW: Show students the *Justice in the Classroom* Chapter Two video clip to preview what will be learned in the lessons (Approx. 8 minutes).