Lesson Plan 1 - Compromise

Why Don’t We All Agree?

Overview

One of the most important concepts for students to understand is that conflict in the legislative process can be very productive. When people disagree, they must work together to find a solution that works best for everyone. Often through this debate, many details that may have been overlooked by one party will be noticed by another and brought to the attention of the whole group. Debate and compromise are useful ways of crafting the best solution to a problem. In this lesson, students will work together to plan a class party. They will learn to compromise with each other in order to make the party work for everyone.

Goals

During this lesson, students should

- Compromise with each other in order to achieve a common goal.
- Justify solutions suggested to achieve goal.
- Revise plans made by own group in order to gain approval of those plans by the other group.

Duration

One 45 minute lesson.

Materials

Worksheet for planning party

National Standards

National Standards for Civics and Government: 5-E Traits for Democracy

Vocabulary

Compromise
Negotiation
Majority
Party
Veto

Lesson

Introduction

Explain to the students that one of the most important skills for legislators to have is the ability to negotiate and compromise. Legislators must listen to and try to please many different types of people. They must all agree as a group
about the laws they create. Legislators must **negotiate** with others to insure that the ideas that are most important to them are included in the laws. They must also **compromise** with the other legislators in by giving up or changing certain things they may have wanted in the laws. By compromising, legislators can at least get some of what they wanted to achieve in creating a law.

For example, it is Jennifer's turn to cook dinner for her family. Jennifer wants to cook spaghetti and meatballs for dinner, and she wants to make banana splits for dessert. Her mother wants her to include a vegetable. Her brother wants green beans. Her sister hates green beans. Jennifer **negotiates** with her brother and sister to get them to agree. Her sister will **compromise** and agree to a salad if she can have walnuts on her banana split. Her brother will **compromise** and agree to a salad for dinner if Jennifer will make garlic bread. They all agree, and their mother approves of the dinner plans. The siblings have found a plan that works for everyone.

**Main Activity**

Tell the students that they will be planning a party for the class, but they must find a plan that works for a **majority** of the class members. Tell them that any plan must have final approval from you, that you can **veto** any plan that you find inappropriate. Don't give any other rules for their planning.

Divide the class into two groups. Hand each group the planning worksheet for the party. Explain that each group will have ten minutes to come up with a plan. At the end of ten minutes, the two groups will swap papers. Explain that once the groups have swapped, they must come up with one plan for the whole class based on what they know the other groups want. Give them a new worksheet. Tell students to focus on the points they have in common. Give them ten minutes to revise their plan. At the end of ten minutes, call both groups together and discuss both plans. Allow each group to revise the plan based on the discussion. Put the plans to a vote, or create one plan based on the class discussion and then vote on it. Continue revising and voting until one plan emerges as the clear winner of the majority of students.

Remind students during this process that they have a common goal, and that if they can't agree, the goal will not be met and no party will get planned.

Note: This lesson could be very frustrating for students. **The teacher should modify this process to make it instructive for the students based on their needs and level of understanding.** The students should see that this process is frustrating, but not to the point of anger or to a breakdown of the common goal. Some groups may also need some guidance in crafting a plan, such as selecting a group leader and/or someone to write down the plans.

**Closure**

After voting, ask students what they noticed about negotiating and compromising with their fellow classmates. Make the connection between the classroom and legislators. Legislators must negotiate and compromise all the time as part of their jobs. Sometimes, this can be difficult for them. Sometimes, it is not. Ask students to imagine they are legislators. How might they promote negotiation and compromise? Are there particular traits that legislators should have to be good at compromising?

**Follow Up/Extensions**

Let the students have the party they have planned. By allowing students to put the solution they have crafted into action, they will learn important lessons about how difficult it is to create the best solution and to compromise to get that solution.
Don't give the students any input about things they may have forgotten in their plan. If they forget to plan for napkins or a stereo system for the music, they will learn a valuable lesson about how difficult it can be to make the best plan.

Bibliography

The National Conference of State Legislatures website has interesting and instructive information about state legislatures. www.ncsl

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Lesson Plan: The Great Compromise - A House Divided

SUBJECTS
Civics, US Government, US History

GRADE LEVEL
6-8

OBJECTIVES
In this lesson, students create their own solution to the problem of representation at the Constitutional Convention and read primary sources to gain different perspectives on the compromise that was actually reached. The lesson concludes with students creating a cartoon depiction of the final compromise. Students will explain what the Great Compromise was and evaluate its significance; explain how the Great Compromise exists in our government today; explain why we have two houses in Congress; name the two houses of Congress and explain the system of representation each house uses; and distinguish between and explain the meaning of equal and proportional representation.

LESSON PLAN

Class 1

Students brainstorm in journals individually: What do you know about the Constitutional Convention and what happened there?

Discuss as a class—bring out key ideas:

(1) was meeting in 1787 to create new Constitution for country (Constitution we use today)
(2) they were creating the plan for government for our country
(3) had delegates from most states
(4) long hot summer in Philadelphia
(5) encountered many conflicts along the way because states wanted different things

Introduce to students: One of the problems the delegates at the Convention had to figure out was how to represent the states in Congress—or how many people from each state should be able to
represent their states. Write on board key fact to understand—states had very different populations—some had many people, some had few. Their problem: What is a fair way to represent the states? One possible way: have the same number of representatives from each state. Another way: have more representatives from states with more people. Have students work in groups to complete “What is a fair way to represent the states in Congress?” handout and come up with new solution. Students present their solutions.

Class 2

Review from previous day: --what is equal representation?--what is proportional representation?--what were your solutions to the representation problem? Introduce the two primary sources: one is a Senator's speech from 1998, the other is a letter from Thomas Jefferson to James Madison in 1787. These sources discuss the solution to the representation problem reached at the Constitutional Convention. Students work with a partner to read two sources and take notes/analyze in "The Great Compromise: Primary Source Perspectives" handout.

Recommended excerpts:

- Byrd speech: paragraphs 1-6, and paragraph 10
- Jefferson letter: in 2nd paragraph, sentences 1-7

Class 3

Use previous day's readings and notes to discuss what students learned about Great Compromise from primary source. Fill in graphic organizer "The conflict over representation" together as class (or discuss and have students do). Introduce evaluation: students draw a cartoon (single frame or multiple frames) depicting the result of the Great Compromise. They must write a caption that explains their depiction and demonstrates their assessment of the results of the Great Compromise. (eg, "A Great Compromise and A Great Job" or "A House Divided—but it will stand" or "Two Houses that we still live in today"). Final class discussion: Ask students: Should we care about the Great Compromise? How important is this to know about?

RESOURCES

- Robert Byrd on the Great Compromise
- Senate Historical Office on the Great Compromise
- "The letters of Thomas Jefferson-to James Madison, Paris, Dec. 20, 1787"
"What is a fair way to represent the states in Congress?" (handout)

"The Great Compromise: Primary Source Perspectives" (handout)
  
  "The Conflict over Representation" (handout)
History of the Senate

On March 21, 1980, Senate Majority Leader Robert C. Byrd launched a unique historical project – an unprecedented series of addresses on the Senate's history and operations. These essays, later revised and published, became the centerpiece of the Senate's 1989 bicentennial commemoration.

Address by Senator Robert C. Byrd, September 15, 1998

The Senate - The Great Forum of Constitutional Liberty

Thank you very much. I am deeply grateful for the overly charitable and generous words from our leader, Senator Lott, who initiated this series of lectures, and I am grateful for the more-than-kind, always-overlooking-my-faults words from my own leader on the Democratic side, Mr. Daschle.

I thank you also for introducing my wife. She has put three children through school--our two daughters, and myself.

I'm grateful for the presence of a former majority leader and former minority leader--all in one--Howard Baker, and his lovely wife, Nancy Kassebaum-Baker. You honor me by coming here tonight, Howard and Nancy, and I deeply appreciate it.

I had seen Mike Mansfield some days ago and he indicated that he was coming; is he here tonight? Very well, perhaps he could not make it.

I'm glad, also, to see in our midst one of the rocks of Gibraltar -- there are only two--the real rock and Strom Thurmond.

He is the only remaining Senator with whom I took the oath of office when I first came here.

I'm greatly flattered by the presence of so many of my peers. And I can say something good about every one of you because I know something good about you.

A Look Backward

Clio being my favorite muse, let me begin this evening with a look backward over the well-traveled road of history. History always turns our faces backward, and this is as it should be, so that we might be better
informed and prepared to exercise wisdom in dealing with future events.

"To be ignorant of what happened before you were born," said Cicero, "is to remain always a child."

So, for a little while, as we meet together in this hallowed place, let us turn our faces backward.

Look about you. We meet tonight in the Senate Chamber. Not the Chamber in which we transact our business daily now, but the Old Senate Chamber where our predecessors wrote the laws before the Civil War. Here, in this room, Daniel Webster--he moved about the Chamber from time to time--Daniel Webster orated, Henry Clay forged compromises, and John C. Calhoun stood on principle. Here, Henry Foote of Mississippi pulled a pistol on Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri. Senator Benton ripped open his coat, and said, "Let the assassin fire!" And, "Stand out of the way." Here the eccentric Virginia Senator John Randolph brought his hunting dogs into the Chamber, and the dashing Texas Senator, Sam Houston, sat over here to my right; he sat at his desk whittling wooden hearts for ladies in the gallery. Seated at his desk in the back row, Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner was beaten violently over the head with a cane wielded by Representative Preston Brooks of South Carolina, who objected to Sumner's strongly abolitionist speeches and the vituperation that Sumner had heaped upon Brooks' uncle, Senator Butler of South Carolina.

The Senate first met here in 1810, but, because our British cousins chose to set fire to the Capitol during the War of 1812, Congress was forced to move into the Patent Office Building in downtown Washington, and later into a building known as the Brick Capitol, located on the present site of the Supreme Court Building. Hence, it was December 1819 before Senators were able to return to this restored and elegant Chamber. They met here for 40 years, and it was during that exhilarating period that the Senate experienced its "Golden Age."

Here, in this room, the Senate tried to deal with the emotional and destructive issue of slavery by passing the Missouri Compromise of 1820. That act drew a line across the United States, and asserted that the peculiar institution of slavery should remain to the south of the line and not spread to the north. The Missouri Compromise also set the precedent that for every slave state admitted to the Union, a free state should be admitted as well, and vice versa. What this meant in practical political terms was that the North and the South would be exactly equal in voting strength in this Chamber, and that any settlement of the explosive issue of slavery would have to originate here in the Senate. As a result, the nation's most talented and ambitious legislators began to leave the House.
of Representatives to take seats here in the Senate Chamber. Here, they fought to hold the Union together through the omnibus compromise of 1850, only to overturn these efforts by passing the fateful Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854.

The Senators moved out of this room in 1859, on the eve of the Civil War. When they marched in procession from this Chamber to the current Chamber, it marked the last time that leaders of the North and South would march together. The next year, the South seceded, and Senators who had walked shoulder to shoulder here parted to become military officers and political leaders of the Union and of the Confederacy.

This old Chamber that they left behind is not just a smaller version of the current Chamber. Here the center aisle divides the two parties, but there are an equal number of desks on either side—you will count 32 on one side and 32 on the other side—not because the two parties were evenly divided but because there was not room to move desks back and forth depending on the size of the majority, as we do today. That meant that some members of the majority party had to sit with members of the minority. It did not matter to them. The two desks in the front row on the center aisle were not reserved for the majority and minority leaders as they are now, because there were no party floor leaders at that time. No Senator spoke for his party; every Senator spoke for himself. There were recognized leaders among the Senators, but only unofficially. Everyone knew, for example, that Henry Clay led the Whigs, but he would never claim that honor. Clay generally sat in the last row at the far end of the Chamber so he could talk to Senators as they came in to vote.

The Senate is Still the Same Institution

The Senate left this Chamber because it outgrew the space. When they first met here in 1810 there were 32 Senators. So many states were added over the next four decades that when they left in 1859, there were 64 Senators. Yet, while the Senate had increased in size, it was essentially the same institution that the Founders had created in the Constitution. Today, another century and four decades later, and having grown to 100 Senators, it is still essentially the same institution. The actors have changed; the issues have changed; but the Senate, which emerged from the Great Compromise of July 16, 1787, remains the great forum of the states.

This is so, largely, because as a nation, we were fortunate to have wise, cautious people draft and implement our Constitution. They were pragmatists rather than idealists. James Madison, particularly, had a shrewd view of human nature. He did not believe in man's perfectibility. He assumed that those who achieved power would always try to amass
more power and that political factions would always compete out of self-interest. In "The Federalist Papers," Madison reasoned that "in framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the government; and, in the next place, oblige it to control itself." Madison and other Framers of the Constitution divided power so that no one person, no single branch of Government could gain complete power. As Madison explained it: "Ambition must be made to counteract ambition."

However, ambition has not always counteracted ambition, as we saw in the enactment by Congress of the line-item veto in 1996. Just as the Roman Senate ceded its power over the purse to the Roman dictators, Sulla and Caesar, and to the later emperors, thus surrendering its power to check tyranny, so did the American Congress, the Senate included. By passing the Line-Item Veto Act the Congress surrendered its control over the purse, control which had been vested by the Founding Fathers here in this legislative branch.

**The Legislative Branch Must Be Eternally Vigilant**

This brings me to the first point that I would like to leave with you this evening. It is this: the legislative branch must be eternally vigilant over the powers and authorities vested in it by the Constitution--eternally vigilant. This is vitally important to the security of our constitutional system of checks and balances and separation of powers. George Washington, in his Farewell Address of September 17, 1796, emphasized the importance of such vigilance:

> It is important likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those intrusted with its administration to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department, to encroach upon one another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. . . . The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasions of the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern. . . . To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them.

Each Member of this body must be ever mindful of the fundamental duty to uphold the institutional prerogatives of the Senate if we are to preserve the vital balance which Washington so eloquently endorsed.

During my 46 years in Congress, and particularly in more recent years, I
have seen an inclination—I think I have—on the part of many legislators in both parties to regard a chief executive in a role more elevated than the framers of the Constitution intended. We, as legislators, have a responsibility to work with the chief executive, but it is intended to be a two-way street. The Framers did not envision the office of President as having the attributes of royalty. We must recognize the heavy burden that any President bears, and wherever and whenever we can, we must cooperate with the chief executive in the interest of all the people. But let us keep in mind Madison's admonition: "Ambition must be made to counteract ambition."

As Majority Leader in the Senate during the Carter years, I worked hard to help President Carter to enact his programs. But I publicly stated that I was not the "President's man"; I was a Senate man. For example, in July 1977, I opposed President Carter's plan to sell the AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) to Iran. Iran was then a military ally of the United States, but I was troubled over the potential security risks involved and the possibility of compromising highly sophisticated technology in that volatile region. I was concerned that the sale ran contrary to our national interests in maintaining a stable military balance and limited arms proliferation in the Middle East. Both Houses of Congress had to vote disapproval resolutions to stop the sale. I enlisted the support of the then-Republican Minority Leader, Howard Baker. Senator Baker was someone who could rise above political party when he believed that the national interests required it, just as he did during the Panama Canal debates. The Carter Administration chose to withdraw the sale of AWACS temporarily. Shortly afterwards, the Iranian revolution occurred and the Shah was replaced. Had the sale gone through as planned, those sophisticated aircraft would have fallen into the hands of an unfriendly government. As so often has happened in our history, individual courage and character again chartered our course.

**To Rise Above Party**

This brings me to my second point. On the great issues, the Senate has always been blessed with Senators who were able to rise above party, and consider first and foremost the national interest. There are very worthy examples in Senate history.

When I came to the Senate in 1959, artists were at work painting five porthole portraits in the Senate reception room. The Senate had appointed a special Committee chaired by Senator John F. Kennedy to select the five most significant Senators in Senate history. This was no easy task, because there were many potential candidates. In setting the criteria, the Committee looked to Senators who had stood firm for principle, who had not blown with the winds, and who had made
personal sacrifices for the national good. They were not saints, nor were they perfect men. Daniel Webster's personal financial dealings left an eternal blot upon his record; yet, he deserved to have his portrait in the Senate reception room, not simply as a great orator but as a man who sacrificed his own political standing by endorsing the compromise of 1850, which was deeply unpopular in his home State of Massachusetts, but which he realized was the best chance to hold the Union together.

In my almost 46 years in Congress, I have seen other courageous Senators. I have already referred to the courage demonstrated by former Senator Howard Baker during the Panama Canal debates. Without Senator Baker's support, the Panama Canal Treaties would never have been approved by the Senate. We needed two-thirds; we were swimming uphill. The odds were against us. The killing of American servicemen in Panama would have gone on, but Senator Howard Baker threw his shoulder behind the wheel and helped to construct what he and I referred to as leadership amendments, amendments which protected U.S. interests in that region, and we both worked shoulder to shoulder against great odds, as indicated by the polls. We did so because we believed, after careful study, that the treaties were in the best interests of the United States. There are people in my own State of West Virginia who still don't believe that. But I was convinced of it.

Howard Baker knew what my old majority leader, Mike Mansfield, and all students of the Senate's institutional role know. Political polarization--too much emphasis on which side of the aisle one sits, is not now, and has never been, a good thing for the Senate. I am talking about politics when it becomes gamesmanship or when it becomes mean-spirited or when it becomes overly manipulative, simply to gain advantage. I am not talking about honestly held views or differing political positions. Those things enrich our system. Americans have always loved a good debate. And that is what I believe they wish for now: more substantive and stimulating debate and less pure politics and imagery. But I well understand history and its ebb and flow, and I well know that we live in an age of imagery. It is simply my wish that, sometime soon, the rising tide of imagery and partisanship will begin to ebb rather than to flow quite so freely.

Washington, in his farewell address, warned us against the "baneful effects of the spirit of party" when he said:

...in governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural tendency, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose. And there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be, by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it. A fire not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance to
prevent its bursting into a flame, lest instead of warming, it should consume.

So, I believe that the American people are more than tired of partisan warfare. I believe they wish for less of it from the Congress, especially in the Senate, where more statesmanship and a longer view are still expected. Declining participation in elections, and repeated public surveys which indicate weariness, distrust, and alienation within our system ought to serve as a harbinger to be ignored at our peril.

It must be a matter of concern to all of us that all too few Americans look to officeholders for inspiration in these troubled and turbulent times. How can we attract the talent needed to serve in public office in future years if elected officials continue to be held in such low esteem? I would very much like to see a rekindling of basic faith in our leaders, and a renewal of interest in politics and of public service. But the existence of inspiring leadership by public officials is fundamental to a shoring up of that faith.

In fact, I think the American people are in desperate need of some old-fashioned heroes. Now, it seems, today's heroes, if we want to loosely use the term, are merely celebrities--rock stars who spout deplorable messages, or sports figures who amass fortunes advertising baggy clothes at exorbitant prices. I'm not talking about Sammy Sosa. I'm not talking about Mark McGwire. They are my heros, too, as was Babe Ruth in 1927. Not much to look up to here, I say. Not much to build dreams on.

Look hard at the content of our popular culture. There is really nothing much to inspire and look up to. And regrettably there also is not much to counter the empty commercialism which is so prevalent today. It has become the norm.

*The Duty Beyond Our Duties*

So where are we in all of this? What is our role? What part can we as Senators--authority figures, statesmen representing the people--play while we simultaneously endeavor to carry out our 200-year-old mandate, bequeathed to us by some of the most brilliant men of their age, or of any age before or since?

Well, we can show up for roll call votes, carry out our committee assignments, issue the obligatory press releases, dutifully follow up on constituent requests, and answer our mail. All of these are necessary and to a greater or lesser degree important. But a reemphasis by the Senate on our strict institutional role is certainly something which I would like
to see. It is a sobering and heavy responsibility all by itself, and its very weightiness tends to cool the over-heated passions of political demagoguery. After all, that role is, in a constitutional sense, the reason we are here. The Framers expected a zealous defense of our powers to keep the tyrants at bay.

But there is still another role--an intangible something--that we who are privileged to sit in this body, and indeed leaders in the private sector, as well as those who write and reflect upon the news, are called upon to play. I call it the duty beyond our duties. The duty I am talking about is the duty to endeavor to inspire others and to demonstrate, through personal example, that public service of all types ought to be an honorable calling. Contrary to what many believe, it is absolutely the wrong place for the slick and the insincere.

Serving the public in a leadership role demands honesty, hard work, sacrifice, and dedication from those who dare to ask the people for such an awesome trust. Those who ask to shoulder that mantle also shoulder a much larger personal obligation than many of us may regularly contemplate.

Mr. Leader, we all have a clear responsibility to serve as role models to inspire our people, and particularly our young people, to be and to do their best. On that score, we politicians, as a group, generally miss the mark. Perhaps it's because power, whether it be the power of political office, or the power to run giant corporations, or the power to report and analyze events, is a very heady thing. It can lead to arrogance, self aggrandizement, disregard for playing by the rules, and contempt for the people who send us here. It can lead us to forget that we are servants, not masters.

In the real world, exemplary personal conduct can sometimes achieve much more than any political agenda. Comity, courtesy, charitable treatment of even our political opposites, combined with a concerted effort to not just occupy our offices, but to bring honor to them, will do more to inspire our people and restore their faith in us, their leaders, than millions of dollars of 30-second spots or glitzy puff-pieces concocted by spinmeisters.

These are troubling times for our nation and our people on both the national and international fronts. For our country to weather the rough seas ahead, we must use our most tempered judgments and seek out our best and most noble instincts. Our example here can be a healing element--a balm to salve the trauma of distrust and disillusionment too long endured by a good people. Let each of us follow his or her own conscience when it comes to issues, but as we do so, may we be ever
mindful there are people watching us, and the people who sent us here can take us back home again. Let us be aware of the sublimely uplifting part which the example of simple dignity, decency, decorum, and dedication to duty can play in the life of a nation.

Let us also remember that even after two hundred years, the Senate is still the anchor of the Republic, the morning and evening star in the American constitutional constellation. It has had its giants and its little men, its Websters and its Bilbos, its Calhouns and its McCarthys. It has been the stage of high drama, of comedy and of tragedy, and its players have been the great and the near great, those who think they are great, and those who probably never will be great. It has weathered the storms of adversity, withstood the barbs of cynics and the attacks of critics, and provided stability and strength to the nation during periods of civil strife and uncertainty, panics and depressions. In war and in peace, it has been the sure refuge and protector of the rights of the states and of a political minority because great and courageous Senators have always been there to stay the course and keep the faith. And it can do so again as long as we are ever blessed in this august body with those who hear the clear tones of the bell of duty, the Senate will continue to stand—the great forum of constitutional American liberty!

To enjoy the applause of one's own colleagues and peers is a high honor, indeed.
1787-1800

July 16, 1787

A Great Compromise

July 16, 1887, began with a light breeze, a cloudless sky, and a spirit of celebration. On that day, two hundred senators and representatives boarded a special train for a journey to Philadelphia to celebrate a singular congressional anniversary.

Exactly two hundred years earlier, the framers of the U.S. Constitution, meeting at Independence Hall, had reached a supremely important agreement. Their so-called Great Compromise (or Connecticut Compromise in honor of its architects, Connecticut delegates Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth) provided a dual system of congressional representation. In the House of Representatives each state would be assigned a number of seats in proportion to its population. In the Senate, all states would have the same number of seats. Today, we take this arrangement for granted; in the wilting-hot summer of 1787, it was a new idea.

In the weeks before July 16, 1787, the framers had made several important decisions about the Senate’s structure. They turned aside a proposal to have the House of Representatives elect senators from lists submitted by the individual state legislatures and agreed that those legislatures should elect their own senators.

By July 16, the convention had already set the minimum age for senators at thirty and the term length at six years, as opposed to twenty-five for House members, with two-year terms. James Madison explained that these distinctions, based on "the nature of the senatorial trust, which requires greater extent of information and stability of character," would allow the Senate "to proceed with more coolness, with more system, and with more wisdom than the popular[ly elected] branch."

The issue of representation, however, threatened to destroy the seven-week-old convention. Delegates from the large states believed that because their states contributed proportionally more to the nation’s financial and defensive resources, they should enjoy proportionally greater representation in the Senate as well as in the House. Small-state delegates demanded, with comparable intensity, that all states be equally represented in both houses. When Sherman proposed the compromise, Benjamin Franklin agreed that each state should have an equal vote in the Senate in all matters—except those involving money.

Over the Fourth of July holiday, delegates worked out a compromise plan that sidetracked Franklin’s proposal. On July 16, the convention adopted the Great Compromise by a heart-stopping margin of one vote. As the 1987 celebrants duly noted, without that vote, there would likely have been no Constitution.

Reference Items:


To James Madison Paris, Dec.20, 1787

dear sir,

-- my last to you was of oct. 8 by the count de moustier. yours of july 18. sep. 6. & oct. 24. have been successively received, yesterday, the day before & three or four days before that. i have only had time to read the letters, the printed papers communicated with them, however interesting, being obliged to lie over till i finish my dispatches for the packet, which dispatches must go from hence the day after tomorrow. i have much to thank you for. first and most for the cyphered paragraph respecting myself. these little informations are very material towards forming my own decisions. i would be glad even to know when any individual member thinks i have gone wrong in any instance. if i know myself it would not excite ill blood in me, while it would assist to guide my conduct, perhaps to justify it, and to keep me to my duty, alert.

i must thank you too for the information in thos. burke's case, tho' you will have found by a subsequent letter that i have asked of you a further investigation of that matter. it is to gratify the lady who is at the head of the convent wherein my daughters are, & who, by her attachment & attention to them, lays me under great obligations. i shall hope therefore still to receive from you the result of the further enquiries my second letter had asked. the parcel of rice which you informed me had miscarried accompanied my letter to the delegates of s. carolina. mr. bourgoin was to be the bearer of both & both were delivered together into the hands of his relation here who introduced him to me, and who at a subsequent moment undertook to convey them to mr. bourgoin. this person was an engraver particularly recommended to d'r. franklin & mr. hopkinson. perhaps he may have mislaid the little parcel of rice among his baggage.

i am much pleased that the sale of western lands is so successful. i hope they will absorb all the certificates of our domestic debt speedily, in the first place, and that then offered for cash they will do the same by our foreign one.

the season admitting only of operations in the cabinet, and these being in a great measure secret, i have little to fill a letter. i will therefore make up the deficiency by adding a few words on the constitution proposed by our convention. i like much the general idea of framing a government which should go on of itself peaceably, without needing continual recurrence to the state legislatures. i like the organization of the government into legislative, judiciary & executive. i like the power given the legislature to levy taxes, and for that reason solely approve of the greater house being chosen by the people directly. for tho' i think a house chosen by them will be very illy qualified to legislate for the union, for foreign nations &c. yet this evil does not weigh against the good of preserving inviolate the fundamental principle that the people are not to be taxed but by representatives chosen immediately by themselves. i am captivated by the compromise of the opposite claims of the great & little states, of the latter to equal, and the former to proportional influence. i am much pleased too with the substitution of the method.
of voting by persons, instead of that of voting by states: and I like the negative given to the Executive with a third of either house, though I should have liked it better had the Judiciary been associated for that purpose, or invested with a similar and separate power.

There are other good things of less moment. I will now add what I do not like. First the omission of a bill of rights providing clearly & without the aid of sophisms for freedom of religion, freedom of the press, protection against standing armies, restriction against monopolies, the eternal & unremitting force of the habeas corpus laws, and trials by jury in all matters of fact triable by the laws of the land & not by the law of nations. To say, as Mr. Wilson does that a bill of rights was not necessary because all is reserved in the case of the general government which is not given, while in the particular ones all is given which is not reserved, might do for the audience to whom it was addressed, but is surely a gratis dictum, opposed by strong inferences from the body of the instrument, as well as from the omission of the clause of our present confederation which had declared that in express terms. It was a hard conclusion to say because there has been no uniformity among the states as to the cases triable by jury, because some have been so incautious as to abandon this mode of trial, therefore the more prudent states shall be reduced to the same level of calamity. It would have been much more just & wise to have concluded the other way that as most of the states had judiciously preserved this palladium, those who had wandered should be brought back to it, and to have established general right instead of general wrong. Let me add that a bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth, general or particular, & what no just government should refuse, or rest on inferences. The second feature I dislike, and greatly dislike, is the abandonment in every instance of the necessity of rotation in office, and most particularly in the case of the President. Experience concurs with reason in concluding that the first magistrate will always be re-elected if the Constitution permits it. He is then an officer for life. This once observed, it becomes of so much consequence to certain nations to have a friend or a foe at the head of our affairs that they will interfere with money & with arms. A Galloman or an Angloman will be supported by the nation he befriends. If once elected, and at a second or third election out voted by one or two votes, he will pretend false votes, foul play, hold possession of the reins of government, be supported by the States voting for him, especially if they are the central ones lying in a compact body themselves & separating their opponents: and they will be aided by one nation of Europe, while the majority are aided by another. The election of a President of America some years hence will be much more interesting to certain nations of Europe than ever the election of a king of Poland was. Reflect on all the instances in history antient & modern, of elective monarchies, and say if they do not give foundation for my fears. The Roman emperors, the popes, while they were of any importance, the German emperors till they became hereditary in practice, the kings of Poland, the Deys of the Ottoman dependances. It may be said that if elections are to be attended with these disorders, the seldomer they are renewed the better. But experience shews that the only way to prevent disorder is to render them uninteresting by frequent changes. An incapacity to be elected a second time would have been the only effectual preventative. The power of removing him every fourth year by the vote of the people is a power which will not be exercised. The
king of Poland is removeable every day by the Diet, yet he is never removed. Smaller objections are the Appeal in fact as well as law, and the binding all persons Legislative Executive & Judiciary by oath to maintain that constitution. I do not pretend to decide what would be the best method of procuring the establishment of the manifold good things in this constitution, and of getting rid of the bad. Whether by adopting it in hopes of future amendment, or, after it has been duly weighed & canvassed by the people, after seeing the parts they generally dislike, & those they generally approve, to say to them 'We see now what you wish. Send together your deputies again, let them frame a constitution for you omitting what you have condemned, & establishing the powers you approve. Even these will be a great addition to the energy of your government.'

At all events I hope you will not be discouraged from other trials, if the present one should fail of its full effect. I have thus told you freely what I like & dislike: merely as a matter of curiosity, for I know your own judgment has been formed on all these points after having heard everything which could be urged on them. I own I am not a friend to a very energetic government. It is always oppressive. The late rebellion in Massachusetts has given more alarm than I think it should have done. Calculate that one rebellion in 13 states in the course of 11 years, is but one for each state in a century & a half. No country should be so long without one. Nor will any degree of power in the hands of government prevent insurrections. France, with all it's despotism, and two or three hundred thousand men always in arms has had three insurrections in the three years I have been here in every one of which greater numbers were engaged than in Massachusetts & a great deal more blood was spilt. In Turkey, which Montesquieu supposes more despotic, insurrections are the events of every day. In England, where the hand of power is lighter than here, but heavier than with us they happen every half dozen years. Compare again the ferocious depredations of their insurgents with the order, the moderation & the almost self extinguishment of ours. After all, it is my principle that the will of the majority should always prevail. If they approve the proposed Convention in all it's parts, I shall concur in it cheerfully, in hopes that they will amend it whenever they shall find it work wrong. I think our governments will remain virtuous for many centuries; as long as they are chiefly agricultural; and this will be as long as there shall be vacant lands in any part of America. When they get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, they will become corrupt as in Europe. Above all things I hope the education of the common people will be attended to; convinced that on their good sense we may rely with the most security for the preservation of a due degree of liberty. I have tired you by this time with my disquisitions & will therefore only add assurances of the sincerity of those sentiments of esteem & attachment with which I am Dear Sir

your affectionate friend & servant

Th. Jefferson

P. S. The instability of our laws is really an immense evil. I think it would be well to provide in our constitutions that there shall always be a twelve-month between the
ingross-ing a bill & passing it: that it should then be offered to it's passage without changing a word: and that if circum-stances should be thought to require a speedier passage, it should take two thirds of both houses instead of a bare majority.
Introduction

Signing of Constitution, by Howard C. Cristy.

Credit: Courtesy of American Memory Collection

Alexander Hamilton of New York—a brilliant, ambitious, former aide-de-camp and secretary to Washington during the Revolution, had … become a powerful political figure … There were others who played major roles—Oliver Ellsworth of Connecticut; Edmund Randolph of Virginia; William Paterson of New Jersey …"
— The Creation of the U.S. Constitution

In the course of over two centuries since the nation's founding, the Constitution of the United States has become an iconic document for many Americans, who may with difficulty imagine real people piecing it together detail by painstaking detail through meetings, discussions, committee work, and compromise. Yet we have good records of those proceedings. By means of such records, among them James Madison's extensive notes, we can witness the unfolding drama of the Constitutional Convention and the contributions of those whom we have come to know as the Founding Fathers: Madison, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and others who played major roles in founding a new nation.

What were some of the conflicts debated in the meetings and discussions that led to the creation of the Constitution of the United States? What interests and passions drove those conflicts—and to what shared principles did the Founders appeal as they struggled to reach a compromise? In this lesson, students will learn how the Founding Fathers debated, then resolved, their differences in the Constitution. Learn through their words and the words of others how the Founding Fathers created "a model of cooperative statesmanship and the art of compromise" (From The Charters of Freedom on the EDSITEment resource Digital Classroom).

Note: Use this lesson as a sequel to, or in conjunction with, the complementary lesson, Constitutional Convention: Four Founding Fathers You May Never Have Met. By completing the activities in both lesson, students will become familiar with the Constitutional Convention and the men and ideas that shaped the U.S. Constitution.
Guiding Questions

- What was the nature of the debates held during the Constitutional Convention?
- In what ways do the debates represent "a model of cooperative statesmanship and the art of compromise"?

Learning Objectives

After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to

- List some ideas proposed and debated during the Constitutional Convention.
- Discuss the important issues requiring compromise during the Constitutional Convention.

Preparation Instructions

- Review the lesson plan. Locate and bookmark suggested materials and other useful websites. Download and print out selected documents and duplicate copies as necessary for student viewing.
- Download the handouts for this lesson, available here as a PDF. Please note that this is a 31-page document. After you review the lesson plan, print out and make an appropriate number of copies of any handouts you plan to use in class. The contents of this document are as follows:
  
  Pages 1–3 Example of a Transcript Revised for a Reader's Theater Reading  
  Pages 4–29 Transcripts of Debates:

  Madison Debates for May 30, 1787  
  Madison Debates for May 31, 1787  
  Madison Debates for June 1, 1787  
  Elliot Debates for June 4, 1787  
  Madison Debates for June 13, 1787  
  Rufus King Debates for June 18, 1787  
  Madison Debates for July 12, 1787

  Page 30 Chart for Statements in Documents Page 31 Chart for Odd Statements

- Congress for Kids, an extension of the EDSITEment resource Congress Link, features a very basic description of the governmental system prescribed by the Constitution and its amendments. For review purposes, start with the discussion of the Three Branches of our Government and then click on "More" to proceed through subjects such as:
  - System of Checks and Balances
  - Legislative Branch
  - Senate
  - Making Laws
Executive Branch
- Judicial Branch

A detailed history of the Constitutional Convention and the document it produced is available through the EDSITEment resource Digital Classroom in the essay The Constitution: A History. For convenience, you may also wish to download the following PDF, Four State Plans, which contains excerpts from the article summarizing the four plans discussed in this lesson as well as some other issues that threatened to divide the delegates. The Text of the Constitution is available on the EDSITEment resource Digital Classroom.

- A Biographical index of all those attending the Constitutional Convention is also available through Digital Classroom.

Reader's theater, used to dramatize texts of many kinds, is a staged reading with a minimum of the trappings of theater. Scripts are used during the performance; familiarity with the script rather than memorization is all that is required. Costumes are not used. Movement is minimal or non-existent. Narration, especially useful with texts not written for the theater, bridges gaps in the dialogue. Because students generally enjoy such low-pressure performance, reader's theater stimulates interest in the text under consideration. Here, performance is suggested to enhance understanding and to emphasize the drama of the proceedings of the Constitutional Convention.

- The following books provide background on the personalities of the Constitution's framers and the Constitutional Convention debates. These or other books, read prior to or in conjunction with your study of the Constitution, may help you communicate to your students the vested interests, friendships, and enmities that motivated and animated the debates of the Constitutional Convention.
  - Shh! We're Writing the Constitution by Jean Fritz, Tomie dePaola (Illustrator) At 64 pages and a reading level for ages 9-12, this book offers a quick, easy and entertaining read. As it exhibits Fritz's usual level of accurate research, this book could be the single best way to help students prepare for a deeper understanding of the Constitution. It should be effective read by students or as a read-aloud by the teacher in the days before your study of the Constitution begins.
  - Decision in Philadelphia: The Constitutional Convention of 1787 by Christopher Collier, James Lincoln Collier The Colliers have written excellent, well-researched works of historical fiction for young adults, such as My Brother Sam Is Dead. This book, written for general audiences, may be effective excerpted.

Classes that have already completed Constitutional Convention: Four Founding Fathers You May Never Have Met can skip the first activity in this lesson plan.

Activity 1. Introducing the Constitutional Convention

As necessary, begin by reviewing with students the Virginia, New Jersey, and Hamilton Plans, as well as the Great Compromise (Connecticut Plan). If desired, use the summaries found in the Preparation Instructions section, above. Adapt the "Chart of Various Plans (Blank)" on page 1 of the PDF as an organizer to help students see the differences and similarities between the various plans. The "Chart of Various Plans" — the same chart, complete with information—is available on page 2 of the PDF. Here are some additional sources of information to use in your review:

- A good discussion of the basic issues requiring compromise during the Constitutional Convention, written for grades 6–8, is offered at History of the Constitution, a feature
Activity 2. Selecting the Debate Transcripts

Divide the class into small groups. Using the "Example of a Transcript Revised for a Reader's Theater Reading" on pages 1-3 of the PDF file, Handouts, review with students the kinds of changes they can expect to see in the debate transcripts provided in this lesson. If students are comfortable with the revised version featured in this example, they are ready to proceed with Activity 3. Presenting the Reader's Theater, below.

If your students have difficulty with the minimally revised "translation" of the original text, you may wish to break down the language further. There are a few options for accomplishing this, depending on your students' abilities. You can use the sample transcript to demonstrate what students are to do on their own and then assign the transcripts (listed in Activity 3, below) to student groups. The students would then work together to prepare a newly revised script on their own. If desired, check over the scripts before proceeding.

Another option is to work together as a class to further revise the transcripts. Feel free to use different strategies with different groups. For example, after the class works together creating a script, one group could prepare that script for reading aloud while the other groups create their own scripts. In any case, emphasize that students should make as few changes as possible—just enough to illuminate the meaning of the original text—and focus on creating a script that will seem real when read aloud.

Activity 3. Presenting the Reader's Theater

Divide the class into small groups. Download, copy, and distribute to each group one of the following transcripts, found on pages 4-28 of the Handouts. Or, for any students who are able to do so, allow them to locate online a section of the debates to use on their own. (NOTE: The excerpts vary in length, so assign them to groups accordingly.)

- Madison Debates for May 30, 1787
- Madison Debates for May 31, 1787
- Madison Debates for June 1, 1787
- Elliot Debates for June 4, 1787 (NOTE TO THE TEACHER: This is one of the shortest excerpts. It consists largely of a series of very short statements.)
- Madison Debates for June 13, 1787 (NOTE TO THE TEACHER: This is one of the shortest excerpts.)
- Rufus King Debates for June 18, 1787 (NOTE TO THE TEACHER: This is one of the shortest excerpts, though a few of the speeches are relatively long.)
- Madison Debates for July 12, 1787 (NOTE TO THE TEACHER: This is one of the longest excerpts; the discussion centers around the heated issue of slavery.)

Each group is to prepare a "reader's theater"-style presentation of their selection by assigning roles, including a narrator to read the portions of the script that do not indicate
actual speech. Though not essential, students may benefit from first reading the biographies of the figures they will portray. A good place to start is with the biographies available at the Founding Fathers' Page on the EDSITEment resource Digital Classroom.

Each group could also be required to locate the section in the Constitution that deals with the subject under discussion in their transcript (e.g., veto power, how states should be represented in the legislature, etc.) to remind the class of the final decision on the issue. The Text of the Constitution is available on the EDSITEment resource Digital Classroom.

After students have had a chance to complete their research, each group should present their reading and any other details they have gathered about it to the class.

Activity 4. Discussing the Founding Fathers' debates
Once all groups have presented, engage students in a discussion of the nature of the debates they dramatized in their readings. For example, can they point to points in the debates (in the excerpts used or anywhere else) where there was:

- A free flow of ideas?
- Respect shown from one delegate to another?
- Disrespect shown from one delegate to another?
- A delegate raising a point based on the interests of his region?
- A delegate raising a point based on his state's size?
- A delegate foregoing regional or other interests for the sake of compromise?
- A delegate suggesting something we now might view as rather odd?
- A delegate suggesting something that became part of the final document?
- A delegate admitting frustration about something?

Extending The Lesson

- If the class has adequate access to technology and students want to further explore the debates, familiarize students with the Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787 (Madison's Debates), available on the EDSITEment resource The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School, and/or The Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution (Elliot's Debates), available on the EDSITEment-reviewed website American Memory. Have students scan the transcripts on their own or in small groups, looking for individual statements that, for the most part, became part of the Constitution. This is a way of demonstrating how many minds contributed to the Constitution as it now stands. Students can use the "Chart for Statements in Documents" on page 30 of the Handouts PDF, for collecting statements that became part of the Constitution. The full Text of the Constitution may be accessed from the EDSITEment-reviewed website Digital Classroom.
- Students can also search for statements made by delegates that now seem unusual, irrelevant, or even rather odd, relative to the proposals adopted in the end. This is a way of demonstrating the far-ranging nature of the discussion and the ability of those present to speak their minds. Let students share their findings with the class, pointing out how a particular statement differs from an item in the final Constitution or why it now seems rather unusual, irrelevant, or odd. For examples of statements we would now deem odd,
use "Examples of Rather Odd Statements from the Constitutional Debates" on page 29 of the PDF; for a chart students can use for collecting odd statements, use "Chart for Odd Statements" on page 31 of the PDF. The full Text of the Constitution may be accessed from the EDSITEment-reviewed website Digital Classroom.

- Students might be interested in making comparisons between the various records of the debates of the Constitutional Convention (Madison's, Hamilton's, King's, and so on). For example, students can compare records for June 1 and/or June 4, using these resources available on the EDSITEment-reviewed website The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School:
  - Madison, June 1
  - Hamilton, June 1
  - Madison, June 4
  - Rufus King, June 4
  Cross-references from Madison's notes to King's and Hamilton's are also offered in the Avalon Project's Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787

- Students could create a flow chart indicating issues cited in the debates that were eventually addressed in the Constitution. Similarly, students with technical skills could create an annotated copy of the Constitution with links to relevant sections of the debate. The full Text of the Constitution may be accessed from the EDSITEment resource Digital Classroom.

- Students wishing to research other lesser-known Founding Fathers can start with the Founding Fathers' Page, on the EDSITEment resource Digital Classroom, and/or FindLaw's Founding Fathers' Page, available via a link from the EDSITEment-reviewed website Internet Public Library.

- The EDSITEment resource CongressLink offers a series of lesson plans related to the Constitution, such as The Great Compromise—A House Divided (6–8) and A Mock Constitutional Convention (9–12), that might work in your classroom.

- Who were the framers of the Constitution? What was their profession? Age? Socio-economic class? Students can create a composite portrait of the members of the Constitutional Convention using Founding Fathers: A Brief Overview, on the EDSITEment resource Digital Classroom. Students wishing to dig deeper can start with the biographies offered on the Digital Classroom's Founding Father's Page

- Students with other inquiries about the Founding Fathers can consult Questions and Answers Pertaining to the Constitution on the EDSITEment resource Digital Classroom.

Selected EDSITEment Websites

- American Memory
  - The Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution (Elliot's Debates)
- The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School
  - The American Constitution: A Documentary Record
  - Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787
  - Madison, June 1
  - Hamilton, June 1
  - Madison, June 4
  - Rufus King, June 4
- CongressLink
  - The Great Compromise—A House Divided (6–8)
- A Mock Constitutional Convention (9–12)
- Congress for Kids
- Articles of Confederation
- Executive Branch
- Great Compromise
- Judicial Branch
- Legislative Branch
- Making Laws
- Senate
- System of Checks and Balances
- Three Branches of our Government
- Writing of the Constitution

- Digital Classroom
  - Founding Fathers: A Brief Overview
  - The Creation of the U.S. Constitution
  - Oliver Ellsworth
  - Founding Fathers' Page
  - Alexander Hamilton
  - William Paterson
  - Questions and Answers Pertaining to the Constitution
  - Edmund Randolph
  - Text of the Constitution
  - U.S. Constitution

- Internet Public Library
  - Hamilton and the U.S. Constitution
  - Ben's Guide to the U.S. Government for Kids (6–8)
  - Constitutional Convention
  - Glossary
  - FindLaw Constitutional Law Center
  - FindLaw's Founding Fathers' Page
  - Oliver Ellsworth (1745–1807) Connecticut
  - William Paterson (1745–1806) New Jersey
  - Edmund Randolph (1753–1813) Virginia
  - Revolution to Reconstruction
  - The Hamilton Plan (Constitutional Convention, June 18, 1787
Lesson Plan: Simulating the Constitutional Convention of 1787

Objectives: The students will...

1. Identify the key issues discussed at the Constitutional Convention;
2. Describe the problems and solutions that were addressed by the Great Compromise of the Constitutional Convention of 1787.

Motivation: (Anticipatory Set): Warm-Up: The Great Compromise Cartoon Analysis (Below is a sample of worksheet in student workbook):
In a paragraph below, explain what this cartoon is trying to communicate:

Answer: Delegates to the Constitutional Convention did not know how to set up representation in the legislative branch. Large states wanted representation to be set up based on the population of each state. Small states wanted equal representation; they compromised by creating a two house, or bicameral, legislature with a House of Representatives where the number of delegates is based on a state’s population, and a Senate, where each state has two votes. These houses make up the present-day Congress.

Procedure: Researching the Great Compromise.

· Have students read about the Great Compromise in their textbooks or using the Internet.

· Use the websites below to print biographies of the key delegates who attended the Constitutional Convention. Laminate and distribute the biographies to each student. Names in bold should be used first. Additional names can be allotted for remaining students.

· While students work, distribute the roles of the delegates to the convention to each student.

· Students should read their roles carefully. Have them take notes and determine which way the delegate voted on the Constitution and why.

The website for this listing is found on the WWW at:

If you are typing these web addresses, use the underscore symbol between the words “constitution founding fathers.” (Shift + - =_) _ is an underscore.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biographies of Constitutional Convention delegates *indicates delegates who did not sign the Constitution</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connecticut</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>William. Samuel Johnson</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Roger Sherman</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oliver Ellsworth (Elsworth)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
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<tr>
<td>George Read</td>
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<td>Jacob Broom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abraham Baldwin</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William L. Pierce*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biographies of Constitutional Convention delegates *indicates delegates who did not sign the Constitution</td>
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</tbody>
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| Daniel Carroll  
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_maryland.html#Carroll |
| Luther Martin  
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_maryland.html#Martin |
| John F. Mercer  
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_maryland.html#Mercer |
| Massachusetts  
| Nathaniel Gorham  
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_massachusetts.html#Gorham |
| Rufus King  
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_massachusetts.html#King |
| Elbridge Gerry  
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_massachusetts.html#Gerry |
| Caleb Strong  
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_massachusetts.html#Strong |
| New Hampshire  
| John Langdon  
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_new_hampshire.html#Langdon |
| Nicholas Gilman  
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_new_hampshire.html#Gilman |
| New Jersey  
| William Livingston  
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_new_jersey.html#Livingston |
| David Brearly (Brearley)  
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_new_jersey.html#Brearley |
| William Paterson (Patterson)  
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_new_jersey.html#Paterson |
| Jonathan Dayton  
http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_new_jersey.html#Dayton |
| William C. Houston  
* |
<table>
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<th>Biographies of Constitutional Convention delegates</th>
<th>*indicates delegates who did not sign the Constitution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexander Hamilton</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Lansing, Jr.*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Yates*</td>
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<td>North Carolina</td>
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<td>William Blount</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Dobbs Spaight*</td>
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<td>Hugh Williamson</td>
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<tr>
<td>William R. Davie*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexander Martin*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benjamin Franklin</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Mifflin</td>
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<td>Robert Morris</td>
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<td>George Clymer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Fitzsimons (fitzsimons; Fitzsimmons)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jared Ingersoll</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biographies of Constitutional Convention delegates</td>
<td>*indicates delegates who did not sign the Constitution</td>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Rhode Island | Rhode Island did not send any delegates to the Constitutional Convention.

| George Washington | (This role is usually played by the teacher, but it can be awarded to a high-functioning, responsible student) [http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_virginia.html#Washington](http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_virginia.html#Washington) |
Biographies of Constitutional Convention delegates *indicates delegates who did not sign the Constitution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Biography Link</th>
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Description: (Instructional Input): Simulating the Constitutional Convention

Place the state names on the desks around the room.

Have students move to their respective states. Students should introduce themselves to other delegates in the room and to their own delegation.

Begin the Convention with the introduction to George Washington, President of the Convention, the oath of secrecy, and the review of the rules of order.

Distribute the following "bill of proposal" to each state delegation. Each state has its own individual bill. Have each state discuss the issues and record their responses on the sheet. The "bill" should be used to guide any member of a state delegation that wishes to participate in the debate during the convention.

- New Hampshire
- Massachusetts
- Connecticut
- New York
- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania
- Maryland
- Delaware
- Virginia
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Georgia
- RI (Not represented)

Debate the following issues:
1) How should states be represented in the new government?
2) Should slaves be counted as a part of a state’s population?
3) How should the national executive be elected?

Post each of the options on the board. Use poster board or large newsprint to post each topic when it is time to discuss each. If these materials are not available, use the chalkboard or overhead projector.

A delegate must nominate one of the options to be debated. It is then seconded and discussed.

Students should then place a solution on the table, which must be seconded as well. In order to pass, the option must have the support of a majority of states. State “delegations” must discuss the proposed solutions within their own groups before voting as a state.
Have the students try to compromise on each issue after it is debated. As Washington, lead the debate so that a compromise is suggested.

Vote on suggested compromises by state. Each state records its vote for each proposal on a piece of paper and submits it to the President of the Convention, who reads the votes from written pieces of paper. Record the votes for each state and post them on the board.

**Application/Reflection: Signing the Constitution**

- Have the delegates sign the Constitution (a laminated version of the Constitution will serve as the document). Use washable felt-tip pens for students to sign. If you can find or make a copy of the signatures on the Constitution, have students sign by tracing directly on the delegates’ names.

- If the delegate did not sign, have them explain why he chose not to.

- Debrief the experience by asking how it felt to be a delegate and by asking about the importance of compromise on certain issues.

**Evaluation: The lesson will be evaluated by…**

1. Levels of participation by each student;
2. Student’s scores on future tests and quizzes;
3. Quality of students’ written research pieces.
The Founding Fathers
Delegates to the Constitutional Convention

On February 21, 1787, the Continental Congress resolved that:

...it is expedient that on the second Monday in May next a Convention of delegates who shall have been appointed by the several States be held at Philadelphia for the sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation...

The original states, except Rhode Island, collectively appointed 70 individuals to the Constitutional Convention, but a number did not accept or could not attend. Those who did not attend included Richard Henry Lee, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Samuel Adams and, John Hancock.

In all, 55 delegates attended the Constitutional Convention sessions, but only 39 actually signed the Constitution. The delegates ranged in age from Jonathan Dayton, aged 26, to Benjamin Franklin, aged 81, who was so infirm that he had to be carried to sessions in a sedan chair.

The Founding Fathers: Connecticut

Oliver Ellsworth, Connecticut

Oliver Ellsworth was born on April 29, 1745, in Windsor, CT, to Capt. David and Jemima Ellsworth. He entered Yale in 1762 but transferred to the College of New Jersey (later Princeton) at the end of his second year. He continued to study theology and received his A.B. degree after 2 years. Soon afterward, however, Ellsworth turned to the law. After 4 years of study, he was admitted to the bar in 1771. The next year Ellsworth married Abigail Wolcott.

From a slow start Ellsworth built up a prosperous law practice. His reputation as an able and industrious jurist grew, and in 1777 Ellsworth became Connecticut's state attorney for Hartford County. That same year he was chosen as one of Connecticut's representatives in the Continental Congress. He served on various committees during six annual terms until 1783.

Ellsworth was also active in his state's efforts during the Revolution. As a member of the Committee of the Pay Table, Oliver Ellsworth was one of the five men who supervised Connecticut's war expenditures. In 1779 he assumed greater duties as a member of the council of safety, which, with the governor, controlled all military measures for the state.

When the Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia in 1787 Ellsworth once again represented Connecticut and took an active part in the proceedings. During debate on the Great Compromise, Ellsworth proposed that the basis of representation in the legislative branch remain by state, as under the Articles of Confederation. He also left his mark through an amendment to change the word "national" to "United States" in a resolution. Thereafter, "United States" was the title used in the convention to designate the government.

Ellsworth also served on the Committee of Five that prepared the first draft of the Constitution. Ellsworth favored the three-fifths compromise on the enumeration of slaves but opposed the abolition of the foreign slave trade. Though he left the convention near the end of August and did not sign the final document, he urged its adoption upon his return to Connecticut and wrote the Letters of a Landholder to promote its ratification.

Ellsworth served as one of Connecticut's first two senators in the new federal government between 1789 and 1796. In the Senate he chaired the committee that framed the bill organizing the federal judiciary and helped to work out the practical details necessary to run a new government. Ellsworth's other achievements in Congress included framing the measure that admitted North Carolina to the Union, devising the non-intercourse act that forced Rhode Island to join, drawing up the bill to regulate the consular service, and serving on the committee that considered Alexander Hamilton's plan for funding the national debt and for incorporating the Bank of the United States.

In the spring of 1796 he was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and also served as commissioner to France in 1799 and 1800. Upon his return to America in early 1801, Ellsworth retired from public life and lived in Windsor, CT. He died there on November 26, 1807, and was buried in the cemetery of the First Church of Windsor.

Image: Courtesy of Independence National Historical Park
William Samuel Johnson, Connecticut

William Samuel Johnson was the son of Samuel Johnson, the first president of King's College (later Columbia College and University). William was born at Stratford, CT, in 1727. His father, who was a well-known Anglican clergyman-philosopher, prepared him for college and he graduated from Yale in 1744. About 3 years later he won a master of arts degree from the same institution and an honorary master's from Harvard.

Resisting his father's wish that he become a minister, Johnson embraced law instead--largely by educating himself and without benefit of formal training. After admittance to the bar, he launched a practice in Stratford, representing clients from nearby New York State as well as Connecticut, and before long he established business connections with various mercantile houses in New York City. In 1749, adding to his already substantial wealth, he married Anne Beach, daughter of a local businessman. The couple was to have five daughters and six sons, but many of them died at an early age.

Johnson did not shirk the civic responsibilities of one of his station. In the 1750s he began his public career as a Connecticut militia officer. In 1761 and 1765 he served in the lower house of the colonial assembly. In 1766 and 1771 he was elected to the upper house. At the time of the Revolution, Johnson was disturbed by conflicting loyalties. Although he attended the Stamp Act Congress in 1765, moderately opposed the Townshend Duties of 1767, and believed that most British policies were unwise, he retained strong transatlantic ties and found it difficult to choose sides. Many of his friends resided in Britain; in 1765 and 1766 Oxford University conferred honorary master's and doctor's degrees upon him; he had a strong association with the Anglican Church; he acted as Connecticut's agent in Britain during the years 1767-71; and he was friendly with men such as Jared Ingersoll, Sr., who were affiliated with the British administration.

Johnson finally decided to work for peace between Britain and the colonies and to oppose the extremist Whig faction. On that basis, he refused to participate in the First Continental Congress, to which he was elected in 1774, following service as a judge of the Connecticut colonial supreme court (1772-74). When hostilities broke out, he confined his activities to peacemaking efforts. In April 1775 Connecticut sent him and another emissary to speak to British Gen. Thomas Gage about ending the bloodshed. But the time was not ripe for negotiations and they failed.

Johnson fell out of favor with radical patriot elements who gained the ascendancy in Connecticut government and they no longer called upon his service. Although he was arrested in 1779 on charges of communicating with the enemy, he cleared himself and was released.

Once the passions of war had ebbed, Johnson resumed his political career. In the Continental Congress (1785-87), he was one of the most influential and popular delegates. Playing a major role in the Constitutional Convention, he missed no sessions after arriving on June 2; espoused the Connecticut Compromise; and chaired the Committee of Style, which shaped the final document. He also worked for ratification in Connecticut.

Johnson took part in the new government, in the U.S. Senate where he contributed to passage of the Judiciary Act of 1789. In 1791, the year after the government moved from New York to Philadelphia, he resigned mainly because he preferred to devote all his energies to the presidency of Columbia College (1787-1800), in New York City. During these years, he established the school on a firm basis and recruited a fine faculty.

Johnson retired from the college in 1800, a few years after his wife died, and in the same year wed Mary Brewster Beach, a relative of his first bride. They resided at his birthplace, Stratford. He died there in 1819 at the age of 92 and was buried at OldEpiscopal Cemetery.

Image: Courtesy of The National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

Roger Sherman, Connecticut
In 1723, when Sherman was 2 years of age, his family relocated from his Newton, MA, birthplace to Dorchester (present Stoughton). As a boy, he was spurred by a desire to learn and read widely in his spare time to supplement his minimal education at a common school. But he spent most of his waking hours helping his father with farming chores and learning the cobbler's trade from him. In 1743, 2 years after his father's death, Sherman joined an elder brother who had settled in New Milford, CT.

Purchasing a store, becoming a county surveyor, and winning a variety of town offices, Sherman prospered and assumed leadership in the community. In 1749 he married Elizabeth Hartwell, by whom he had seven children. Without benefit of a formal legal education, he was admitted to the bar in 1754 and embarked upon a distinguished judicial and political career. In the period 1755-61, except for a brief interval, he served as a representative in the colonial legislature and held the offices of justice of the peace and county judge. Somehow he also eked out time to publish an essay on monetary theory and a series of almanacs incorporating his own astronomical observations and verse.

In 1761, Sherman abandoned his law practice, and moved to New Haven, CT. There, he managed two stores, one that catered to Yale students, and another in nearby Wallingford. He also became a friend and benefactor of Yale College, and served for many years as its treasurer. In 1763, or 3 years after the death of his first wife, he wed Rebecca Prescott, who bore eight children.

Meanwhile, Sherman's political career had blossomed. He rose from justice of the peace and county judge to an associate judge of the Connecticut Superior Court and to representative in both houses of the colonial assembly. Although opposed to extremism, he promptly joined the fight against Britain. He supported nonimportation measures and headed the New Haven committee of correspondence.

Sherman was a longtime and influential member of the Continental Congress (1774-81 and 1783-84). He won membership on the committees that drafted the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation, as well as those concerned with Indian affairs, national finances, and military matters. To solve economic problems, at both national and state levels, he advocated high taxes rather than excessive borrowing or the issuance of paper currency.

While in Congress, Sherman remained active in state and local politics, continuing to hold the office of judge of the Connecticut Superior Court, as well as membership on the council of safety (1777-79). In 1783 he helped codify Connecticut's statutory laws. The next year, he was elected mayor of New Haven (1784-86).

Although on the edge of insolvency, mainly because of wartime losses, Sherman could not resist the lure of national service. In 1787 he represented his state at the Constitutional Convention, and attended practically every session. Not only did he sit on the Committee on Postponed Matters, but he also probably helped draft the New Jersey Plan and was a prime mover behind the Connecticut, or Great, Compromise, which broke the deadlock between the large and small states over representation. He was, in addition, instrumental in Connecticut's ratification of the Constitution.

Sherman concluded his career by serving in the U.S. House of Representatives (1789-91) and Senate (1791-93), where he espoused the Federalist cause. He died at New Haven in 1793 at the age of 72 and is buried in the Grove Street Cemetery.

*Image: Courtesy of The National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution*
Franklin was born in 1706 at Boston. He was the tenth son of a soap and candlemaker. He received some formal education but was principally self-taught. After serving an apprenticeship to his father between the ages of 10 and 12, he went to work for his half-brother James, a printer. In 1721 the latter founded the New England Courant, the fourth newspaper in the colonies. Benjamin secretly contributed 14 essays to it, his first published writings.

In 1723, because of dissension with his half-brother, Franklin moved to Philadelphia, where he obtained employment as a printer. He spent only a year there and then sailed to London for 2 more years. Back in Philadelphia, he rose rapidly in the printing industry. He published The Pennsylvania Gazette (1730-48), which had been founded by another man in 1728, but his most successful literary venture was the annual Poor Richard's Almanac (1733-58). It won a popularity in the colonies second only to the Bible, and its fame eventually spread to Europe.

Meantime, in 1730 Franklin had taken a common-law wife, Deborah Read, who was to bear him a son and daughter, and he also apparently had children with another nameless woman out of wedlock. By 1748 he had achieved financial independence and gained recognition for his philanthropy and the stimulus he provided to such civic causes as libraries, educational institutions, and hospitals. Energetic and tireless, he also found time to pursue his interest in science, as well as to enter politics.

Franklin served as clerk (1736-51) and member (1751-64) of the colonial legislature and as deputy postmaster of Philadelphia (1737-53) and deputy postmaster general of the colonies (1753-74). In addition, he represented Pennsylvania at the Albany Congress (1754), called to unite the colonies during the French and Indian War. The congress adopted his "Plan of Union," but the colonial assemblies rejected it because it encroached on their powers.

During the years 1757-62 and 1764-75, Franklin resided in England, originally in the capacity of agent for Pennsylvania and later for Georgia, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. During the latter period, which coincided with the growth of colonial unrest, he underwent a political metamorphosis. Until then a contented Englishman in outlook, primarily concerned with Pennsylvania provincial politics, he distrusted popular movements and saw little purpose to be served in carrying principle to extremes. Until the issue of parliamentary taxation undermined the old alliances, he led the Quaker party attack on the Anglican proprietary party and its Presbyterian frontier allies. His purpose throughout the years at London in fact had been displacement of the Penn family administration by royal authority—the conversion of the province from a proprietary to a royal colony.

It was during the Stamp Act crisis that Franklin evolved from leader of a shattered provincial party's faction to celebrated spokesman at London for American rights. Although as agent for Pennsylvania he opposed by every conceivable means the enactment of the bill in 1765, he did not at first realize the depth of colonial hostility. He regarded passage as unavoidable and preferred to submit to it while actually working for its repeal.

Franklin's nomination of a friend and political ally as stamp distributor for Pennsylvania, coupled with his apparent acceptance of the legislation, armed his proprietary opponents with explosive issues. Their energetic exploitation of them endangered his reputation at home until reliable information was published demonstrating his unabated opposition to the act. For a time, mob resentment threatened his family and new home in Philadelphia until his tradesmen supporters rallied. Subsequently, Franklin's defense of the American position in the House of Commons during the debates over the Stamp Act's repeal restored his prestige at home.

Franklin returned to Philadelphia in May 1775 and immediately became a distinguished member of the Continental Congress. Thirteen months later, he served on the committee that drafted the Declaration of Independence. He subsequently contributed to the government in other important ways, including service as postmaster general, and took over the duties of president of the Pennsylvania constitutional convention.

But, within less than a year and a half after his return, the aged statesman set sail once again for Europe, beginning a career as diplomat that would occupy him for most of the rest of his life. In the years 1776-79, as one of three commissioners, he directed the negotiations that led to treaties of commerce and alliance with France, where the people adulated him, but he and the other commissioners squabbled constantly. While he was sole commissioner to France (1779-85), he and John Jay and John Adams negotiated the Treaty of Paris (1783), which ended the War for Independence.

Back in the United States, in 1785 Franklin became president of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania. At the Constitutional Convention, though he did not approve of many aspects of the finished document and was
hampered by his age and ill-health, he missed few if any sessions, lent his prestige, soothed passions, and compromised disputes.

In his twilight years, working on his Autobiography, Franklin could look back on a fruitful life as the toast of two continents. Energetic nearly to the last, in 1787 he was elected as first president of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery—a cause to which he had committed himself as early as the 1730s. His final public act was signing a memorial to Congress recommending dissolution of the slavery system. Shortly thereafter, in 1790 at the age of 84, Franklin passed away in Philadelphia and was laid to rest in Christ Church Burial Ground.

Image: Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

### Jared Ingersoll, Pennsylvania

![Jared Ingersoll](Image)
The son of Jared Ingersoll, Sr., a British colonial official and later prominent Loyalist, Ingersoll was born at New Haven, CT, in 1749. He received an excellent education and graduated from Yale in 1766. He then oversaw the financial affairs of his father, who had relocated from New Haven to Philadelphia. Later, the youth joined him, took up the study of law, and won admittance to the Pennsylvania bar.

In the midst of the Revolutionary fervor, which neither father nor son shared, in 1773, on the advice of the elder Ingersoll, Jared, Jr., sailed to London and studied law at the Middle Temple. Completing his work in 1776, he made a 2-year tour of the Continent, during which time for some reason he shed his Loyalist sympathies.

Returning to Philadelphia and entering the legal profession, Ingersoll attended to the clients of one of the city's leading lawyers and a family friend, Joseph Reed, who was then occupied with the affairs of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania. In 1781 Ingersoll married Elizabeth Pettit (Pettit). The year before, he had entered politics by winning election to the Continental Congress (1780-81).

Although Ingersoll missed no sessions at the Constitutional Convention, had long favored revision of the Articles of Confederation, and as a lawyer was used to debate, he seldom spoke during the proceedings.

Subsequently, Ingersoll held a variety of public positions: member of the Philadelphia common council (1789); attorney general of Pennsylvania (1790-99 and 1811-17); Philadelphia city solicitor (1798-1801); U.S. District Attorney for Pennsylvania (1800-01); and presiding judge of the Philadelphia District Court (1821-22). Meantime, in 1812, he had been the Federalist Vice-Presidential candidate, but failed to win election.

While pursuing his public activities, Ingersoll attained distinction in his legal practice. For many years, he handled the affairs of Stephen Girard, one of the nation's leading businessmen. In 1791 Ingersoll began to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court and took part in some memorable cases. Although in both Chisholm v. Georgia (1792) and Hylton v. United States (1796) he represented the losing side, his arguments helped to clarify difficult constitutional issues. He also represented fellow-signer William Blount, a senator, when he was threatened with impeachment in the late 1790s.

Ingersoll's long career ended in 1822, when he died less than a week after his 73d birthday. Survived by three children, he was buried in the cemetery of Philadelphia's First Presbyterian Church.

Image: Courtesy of National Archives, Records of Exposition, Anniversary, and Memorial Commissions

### James Madison, Virginia

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The oldest of 10 children and a scion of the planter aristocracy, Madison was born in 1751 at Port Conway, King George County, VA, while his mother was visiting her parents. In a few weeks she journeyed back with her newborn son to Montpelier estate, in Orange County, which became his lifelong home. He received his early education from his mother, from tutors, and at a private school. An excellent scholar though frail and sickly in his youth, in 1771 he graduated from the College of New Jersey (later Princeton), where he demonstrated special interest in government and the law. But, considering the ministry for a career, he stayed on for a year of postgraduate study in theology.

Back at Montpelier, still undecided on a profession, Madison soon embraced the patriot cause, and state and local politics absorbed much of his time. In 1775 he served on the Orange County committee of safety; the next year at the Virginia convention, which, besides advocating various Revolutionary steps, framed the Virginia constitution; in 1776-77 in the House of Delegates; and in 1778-80 in the Council of State. His ill health precluded any military service.

In 1780 Madison was chosen to represent Virginia in the Continental Congress (1780-83 and 1786-88). Although originally the youngest delegate, he played a major role in the deliberations of that body. Meantime, in the years 1784-86, he had again sat in the Virginia House of Delegates. He was a guiding force behind the Mount Vernon Conference (1785), attended the Annapolis Convention (1786), and was otherwise highly instrumental in the convening of the Constitutional Convention in 1787. He had also written extensively about deficiencies in the Articles of Confederation.

Madison was clearly the preeminent figure at the convention. Some of the delegates favored an authoritarian central government; others, retention of state sovereignty; and most occupied positions in the middle of the two extremes. Madison, who was rarely absent and whose Virginia Plan was in large part the basis of the Constitution, tirelessly advocated a strong government, though many of his proposals were rejected. Despite his poor speaking capabilities, he took the floor more than 150 times, third only after Gouverneur Morris and James Wilson. Madison was also a member of numerous committees, the most important of which were those on postponed matters and style. His journal of the convention is the best single record of the event. He also played a key part in guiding the Constitution through the Continental Congress.

Playing a lead in the ratification process in Virginia, too, Madison defended the document against such powerful opponents as Patrick Henry, George Mason, and Richard Henry Lee. In New York, where Madison was serving in the Continental Congress, he collaborated with Alexander Hamilton and John Jay in a series of essays that in 1787-88 appeared in the newspapers and were soon published in book form as The Federalist (1788). This set of essays is a classic of political theory and a lucid exposition of the republican principles that dominated the framing of the Constitution.

In the U.S. House of Representatives (1789-97), Madison helped frame and ensure passage of the Bill of Rights. He also assisted in organizing the executive department and creating a system of federal taxation. As leaders of the opposition to Hamilton's policies, he and Jefferson founded the Democratic-Republican Party.

In 1794 Madison married a vivacious widow who was 16 years his junior, Dolley Payne Todd, who had a son; they were to raise no children of their own. Madison spent the period 1797-1801 in semiretirement, but in 1798 he wrote the Virginia Resolutions, which attacked the Alien and Sedition Acts. While he served as Secretary of State (1801-9), his wife often served as President Jefferson's hostess.

In 1809 Madison succeeded Jefferson. Like the first three Presidents, Madison was enmeshed in the ramifications of European wars. Diplomacy had failed to prevent the seizure of U.S. ships, goods, and men on the high seas, and a depression wrecked the country. Madison continued to apply diplomatic techniques and economic sanctions, eventually effective to some degree against France. But continued British interference with shipping, as well as other grievances, led to the War of 1812.

The war, for which the young nation was ill prepared, ended in stalemate in December 1814 when the inconclusive Treaty of Ghent which nearly restored prewar conditions, was signed. But, thanks mainly to Andrew Jackson's spectacular victory at the Battle of New Orleans (Chalmette) in January 1815, most Americans believed they had won. Twice tested, independence had survived, and an ebullient nationalism marked Madison's last years in office, during which period the Democratic-Republicans held virtually uncontested sway.
In retirement after his second term, Madison managed Montpelier but continued to be active in public affairs. He devoted long hours to editing his journal of the Constitutional Convention, which the government was to publish 4 years after his death. He served as co-chairman of the Virginia constitutional convention of 1829-30 and as rector of the University of Virginia during the period 1826-36. Writing newspaper articles defending the administration of Monroe, he also acted as his foreign policy adviser.

Madison spoke out, too, against the emerging sectional controversy that threatened the existence of the Union. Although a slaveholder all his life, he was active during his later years in the American Colonization Society, whose mission was the resettlement of slaves in Africa.

Madison died at the age of 85 in 1836, survived by his wife and stepson.

Image: Courtesy of the Collection of Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa

George Mason, Virginia

In 1725 George Mason was born to George and Ann Thomson Mason. When the boy was 10 years old his father died, and young George's upbringing was left in the care of his uncle, John Mercer. The future jurist's education was profoundly shaped by the contents of his uncle's 1500-volume library, one-third of which concerned the law.

Mason established himself as an important figure in his community. As owner of Gunston Hall he was one of the richest planters in Virginia. In 1750 he married Anne Eilbeck, and in 23 years of marriage they had five sons and four daughters. In 1752 he acquired an interest in the Ohio Company, an organization that speculated in western lands. When the crown revoked the company's rights in 1773, Mason, the company's treasurer, wrote his first major state paper, *Extracts from the Virginia Charters, with Some Remarks upon Them*.

During these years Mason also pursued his political interests. He was a justice of the Fairfax County court, and between 1754 and 1779 Mason was a trustee of the city of Alexandria. In 1759 he was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses. When the Stamp Act of 1765 aroused outrage in the colonies, George Mason wrote an open letter explaining the colonists' position to a committee of London merchants to enlist their support.

In 1774 Mason again was in the forefront of political events when he assisted in drawing up the Fairfax Resolves, a document that outlined the colonists' constitutional grounds for their objections to the Boston Port Act. Virginia's Declaration of Rights, framed by Mason in 1776, was widely copied in other colonies, served as a model for Jefferson in the first part of the Declaration of Independence, and was the basis for the federal Constitution's Bill of Rights.

The years between 1776 and 1780 were filled with great legislative activity. The establishment of a government independent of Great Britain required the abilities of persons such as George Mason. He supported the disestablishment of the church and was active in the organization of military affairs, especially in the West. The influence of his early work, *Extracts from the Virginia Charters*, is seen in the 1783 peace treaty with Great Britain, which fixed the Anglo-American boundary at the Great Lakes instead of the Ohio River. After independence, Mason drew up the plan for Virginia's cession of its western lands to the United States.

By the early 1780s, however, Mason grew disgusted with the conduct of public affairs and retired. He married his second wife, Sarah Brent, in 1780. In 1785 he attended the Mount Vernon meeting that was a prelude to the Annapolis convention of 1786, but, though appointed, he did not go to Annapolis.

At Philadelphia in 1787 Mason was one of the five most frequent speakers at the Constitutional Convention. He exerted great influence, but during the last 2 weeks of the convention he decided not to sign the document.

Mason's refusal prompts some surprise, especially since his name is so closely linked with constitutionalism. He explained his reasons at length, citing the absence of a declaration of rights as his primary concern. He then discussed the provisions of the Constitution point by point, beginning with the House of Representatives. The House he criticized as not truly representative of the nation, the Senate as too powerful. He also claimed that the power of the federal judiciary would destroy the state jurisdictions, render justice unattainable, and enable the rich to oppress
and ruin the poor. These fears led Mason to conclude that the new government was destined to either become a monarchy or fall into the hands of a corrupt, oppressive aristocracy.

Two of Mason's greatest concerns were incorporated into the Constitution. The Bill of Rights answered his primary objection, and the 11th amendment addressed his call for strictures on the judiciary.

Throughout his career Mason was guided by his belief in the rule of reason and in the centrality of the natural rights of man. He approached problems coolly, rationally, and impersonally. In recognition of his accomplishments and dedication to the principles of the Age of Reason, Mason has been called the American manifestation of the Enlightenment. Mason died on October 7, 1792, and was buried on the grounds of Gunston Hall.

Edmund Randolph, Virginia

On August 10, 1753, Edmund Randolph was born in Tazewell Hall, Williamsburg, VA. His parents were Ariana Jenings and John Randolph. Edmund attended the College of William and Mary and continued his education by studying the law under his father's tutelage.

When the Revolution broke out, father and son followed different paths. John Randolph, a Loyalist, followed the royal governor, Lord Dunmore, to England, in 1775. Edmund then lived with his uncle Peyton Randolph, a prominent figure in Virginia politics. During the war Edmund served as an aide-de-camp to General Washington and also attended the convention that adopted Virginia's first state constitution in 1776. He was the convention's youngest member at age 23. Randolph married Elizabeth Nicholas in 1776.

Randolph continued to advance in the political world. He became mayor of Williamsburg and Virginia's attorney-general. In 1779 he was elected to the Continental Congress, and in November 1786 Randolph became Governor of Virginia. In 1786 he was a delegate to the Annapolis Convention.

Four days after the opening of the federal convention in Philadelphia, on May 29, 1787, Edmund Randolph presented the Virginia Plan for creating a new government. This plan proposed a strong central government composed of three branches, legislative, executive, and judicial, and enabled the legislative to veto state laws and use force against states that failed to fulfill their duties. After many debates and revisions, including striking the section permitting force against a state, the Virginia Plan became in large part the basis of the Constitution.

Though Randolph introduced the highly centralized Virginia Plan, he fluctuated between the Federalist and Antifederalist points of view. He sat on the Committee of Detail that prepared a draft of the Constitution, but by the time the document was adopted, Randolph declined to sign. He felt it was not sufficiently republican, and he was especially wary of creating a one-man executive. He preferred a three-man council since he regarded "a unity in the Executive" to be the "foetus of monarchy." In a Letter . . . on the Federal Constitution, dated October 10, 1787, Randolph explained at length his objections to the Constitution. The old Articles of Confederation were inadequate, he agreed, but the proposed new plan of union contained too many flaws. Randolph was a strong advocate of the process of amendment. He feared that if the Constitution were submitted for ratification without leaving the states the opportunity to amend it, the document might be rejected and thus close off any hope of another plan of union. However, he hoped that amendments would be permitted and second convention called to incorporate the changes.

By the time of the Virginia convention for ratification, Randolph supported the Constitution and worked to win his state's approval of it. He stated his reason for his switch: "The accession of eight states reduced our deliberations to the single question of Union or no Union."

Under President Washington, Edmund Randolph became Attorney General of the United States. After Thomas Jefferson resigned as Secretary of State, Randolph assumed that post for the years 1794-95. During the Jefferson-Hamilton conflict he tried to remain unaligned. After retiring from politics in 1795, Randolph resumed his law practice and was regarded as a leading figure in the legal community. During his retirement he wrote a history of Virginia. When Aaron Burr went on trial for treason in 1807, Edmund Randolph acted as his senior counsel. In 1813, at age 60 and suffering from paralysis, Randolph died while visiting Nathaniel Burwell at Carter Hall. His body is buried in the graveyard of the nearby chapel.
George Washington, Virginia

The eldest of six children from his father's second marriage, George Washington was born into the landed gentry in 1732 at Wakefield Plantation, VA. Until reaching 16 years of age, he lived there and at other plantations along the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers, including the one that later became known as Mount Vernon. His education was rudimentary, probably being obtained from tutors but possibly also from private schools, and he learned surveying. After he lost his father when he was 11 years old, his half-brother Lawrence, who had served in the Royal Navy, acted as his mentor. As a result, the youth acquired an interest in pursuing a naval career, but his mother discouraged him from doing so.

At the age of 16, in 1748, Washington joined a surveying party sent out to the Shenandoah Valley by Lord Fairfax, a land baron. For the next few years, Washington conducted surveys in Virginia and present West Virginia and gained a lifetime interest in the West. In 1751-52 he also accompanied Lawrence on a visit he made to Barbados, West Indies, for health reasons just before his death.

The next year, Washington began his military career when the royal governor appointed him to an adjutantship in the militia, as a major. That same year, as a gubernatorial emissary, accompanied by a guide, he traveled to Fort Le Boeuf, PA, in the Ohio River Valley, and delivered to French authorities an ultimatum to cease fortification and settlement in English territory. During the trip, he tried to better British relations with various Indian tribes.

In 1754, winning the rank of lieutenant colonel and then colonel in the militia, Washington led a force that sought to challenge French control of the Ohio River Valley, but met defeat at Fort Necessity, PA - an event that helped trigger the French and Indian War (1754-63). Late in 1754, irked by the dilution of his rank because of the pending arrival of British regulars, he resigned his commission. That same year, he leased Mount Vernon, which he was to inherit in 1761.

In 1755 Washington reentered military service with the courtesy title of colonel, as an aide to Gen. Edward Braddock, and barely escaped death when the French defeated the general's forces in the Battle of the Monongahela, PA. As a reward for his bravery, Washington rewone his colonelcy and command of the Virginia militia forces, charged with defending the colony's frontier. Because of the shortage of men and equipment, he found the assignment challenging. Late in 1758 or early in 1759, disillusioned over governmental neglect of the militia and irritated at not rising in rank, he resigned and headed back to Mount Vernon.

Washington then wed Martha Dandridge Custis, a wealthy widow and mother of two children. The marriage produced no offspring, but Washington reared those of his wife as his own. During the period 1759-74, he managed his plantations and sat in the Virginia House of Burgesses. He supported the initial protests against British policies; took an active part in the nonimportation movement in Virginia; and, in time, particularly because of his military experience, became a Whig leader.

By the 1770s, relations of the colony with the mother country had become strained. Measured in his behavior but strongly sympathetic to the Whig position and resentful of British restrictions and commercial exploitation, Washington represented Virginia at the First and Second Continental Congresses. In 1775, after the bloodshed at Lexington and Concord, Congress appointed him as commander in chief of the Continental Army. Overcoming severe obstacles, especially in supply, he eventually fashioned a well-trained and disciplined fighting force.

The strategy Washington evolved consisted of continual harassment of British forces while avoiding general actions. Although his troops yielded much ground and lost a number of battles, they persevered even during the dark winters at Valley Forge, PA, and Morristown, NJ. Finally, with the aid of the French fleet and army, he won a climactic victory at the Battle of Yorktown, VA, in 1781.

During the next 2 years, while still commanding the agitated Continental Army, which was underpaid and poorly supplied, Washington denounced proposals that the military take over the government, including one that planned to appoint him as king, but supported army petitions to the Continental Congress for proper compensation. Once the Treaty of Paris (1783) was signed, he resigned his commission and returned once again to Mount Vernon. His
wartime financial sacrifices and long absence, as well as generous loans to friends, had severely impaired his extensive fortune, which consisted mainly of his plantations, slaves, and landholdings in the West. At this point, however, he was to have little time to repair his finances, for his retirement was brief.

Dissatisfied with national progress under the Articles of Confederation, Washington advocated a stronger central government. He hosted the Mount Vernon Conference (1785) at his estate after its initial meetings in Alexandria, though he apparently did not directly participate in the discussions. Despite his sympathy with the goals of the Annapolis Convention (1786), he did not attend. But, the following year, encouraged by many of his friends, he presided over the Constitutional Convention, whose success was immeasurably influenced by his presence and dignity. Following ratification of the new instrument of government in 1788, the electoral college unanimously chose him as the first President.

The next year, after a triumphal journey from Mount Vernon to New York City, Washington took the oath of office at Federal Hall. During his two precedent-setting terms, he governed with dignity as well as restraint. He also provided the stability and authority the emergent nation so sorely needed, gave substance to the Constitution, and reconciled competing factions and divergent policies within the government and his administration. Although not averse to exercising presidential power, he respected the role of Congress and did not infringe upon its prerogatives. He also tried to maintain harmony between his Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, whose differences typified evolving party divisions from which Washington kept aloof.

Yet, usually leaning upon Hamilton for advice, Washington supported his plan for the assumption of state debts, concurred in the constitutionality of the bill establishing the Bank of the United States, and favored enactment of tariffs by Congress to provide federal revenue and protect domestic manufacturers.

Washington took various other steps to strengthen governmental authority, including suppression of the Whisky Rebellion (1794). To unify the country, he toured the Northeast in 1789 and the South in 1791. During his tenure, the government moved from New York to Philadelphia in 1790, he superintended planning for relocation to the District of Columbia, and he laid the cornerstone of the Capitol (1793).

In foreign affairs, despite opposition from the Senate, Washington exerted dominance. He fostered United States interests on the North American continent by treaties with Britain and Spain. Yet, until the nation was stronger, he insisted on the maintenance of neutrality. For example, when the French Revolution created war between France and Britain, he ignored the remonstrances of pro-French Jefferson and pro-English Hamilton.

Although many people encouraged Washington to seek a third term, he was weary of politics and refused to do so. In his “Farewell Address” (1796), he urged his countrymen to forswear party spirit and sectional differences and to avoid entanglement in the wars and domestic policies of other nations.

Washington enjoyed only a few years of retirement at Mount Vernon. Even then, demonstrating his continued willingness to make sacrifices for his country in 1798 when the nation was on the verge of war with France he agreed to command the army, though his services were not ultimately required. He died at the age of 67 in 1799. In his will, he emancipated his slaves.
Welcome to the Constitutional Convention

Your state:

Large or Small

Slave or Free

Our mission is to create a legislative branch that will make fair laws for all of the 13 states. There are two main areas to consider:

1) How will the states be represented in the new Congress? Should the number of representatives be based on the number of people living in the state (in other words, by population)? Or should each state have an equal number of votes? We must answer this question before members of the new Congress can vote on any new bills (laws being considered).

2) How will slaves in the new states be taxed? Should slave-holding state pay full taxes on every slave living within its borders?

What do you propose regarding these issues? Please develop your proposal below and be ready to submit it to the President of the Convention to be considered by all of delegates present.

Thank you.

On representation in the new Congress:

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On taxation of slave-holding states:

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On the method of electing the executive:

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This lesson is designed to assist students in recognizing some of the key people in the process of drafting the United States Constitution. Prior knowledge of the weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation and the Constitutional Convention itself will be needed in order for students to be successful. 

Learning Objectives

Student will be able to take notes on nine of the delegates that contributed to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania by viewing the "The Framers: The Constitution Construction Men" PowerPoint. Student will be able to use PowerPoint notes to select a delegate that he thinks is the most important convention contributor and write a proper paragraph to support his decision. 

Duration

This lesson will take approximately 45 minutes. 

Materials

SMART Board Framers of the Constitution PowerPoint

Procedure

Teacher will review the vocabulary terms "convention" and "delegates." He/she will also review the weaknesses of The Articles of Confederation in relation to the need for a new plan of government. Teacher will put the nine delegates' names on the board: James Madison, Edmund Randolph, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, William Paterson, Alexander Hamilton, Gouverneur Morris, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams. Students will copy the nine delegate's names, leaving space for brief notes. Teacher will inform students that they will need to take notes on the nine featured delegates during the PowerPoint presentation. These notes will be used to write a proper paragraph on the delegate at the U.S. Constitutional Convention that they think is the most important of all. 

Teacher will show "The Framers: The Constitution Construction Men" PowerPoint. During this presentation, teacher will underline the key contributions of the delegates for students to copy into their notes. The teacher will also discuss the contributions of the delegates to students' lives by using the following questions: 

Slide #1: Why are delegates referred to as "framers" or "construction men?" What do framers do? Why was a new constitution needed in 1787? 

Slide #2: How would a delegate being prepared for a convention help the process? Did the large or small states like the Virginia Plan? Why was it important to compromise on the composition of legislative branch? What would have happened if the large states did not ratify the U.S. Constitution? 

Slide #3: How would it be helpful for someone to be bold and strong at the Constitutional Convention? 

Slide #4: What does "witte" mean? Does anyone have a friend who is funny? How would humor help in a serious complicated situation? 

Slide #5: What would a convention be like if there was not a leader? Why would it be important to not show a whole lot of emotion in a challenging experience like making decisions about a government that was in trouble? 

Slide #6: Which states liked the Jersey Plan? Why would it be important to make the small states happy when making a new plan for government? 

Slide #7: How is being a federalist connected with the drafting of the U.S. Constitution? What if federalist were not at the convention? 

Slide #8: What if the constitution were never written down? What if Gouverneur Morris was a junky writer? Would anyone have trusted him? 

Slide #9: What does it mean when you are there at heart? Why would it be important to have outside support in the process of drafting a new constitution for a country that was in trouble because of a weak plan of government that was not working? 

Assessment

Students will be evaluated based on their paragraphs about the delegates. The following rubric will be used to score the assignment:

http://www.nylearns.org/module/content/search/item/4098/viewdetail.ashx#sthash.qI20HGt0.dpuf
George Washington retiring to Mt. Vernon!

I think I’ll go harvest some cranberries

George, as your friend I will miss you. As your Vice President, I am ready to take my spot in the big chair! K.I.T.
Sept. 19, 1796 4:00

George, may the future leaders of France learn much from your example....
Sept. 19, 1796 3:45

A Farewell...
It is with a heavy heart that I decide not to renew a third term as President of the United States of America. While the nation has fared me well, it is time for a new order...
Sept. 19, 1796 2:30

Dear Friend, it is with a great sadness I watch you go! Without you to lead our nation, the reservations I have held for the anti-federalists grow stronger. I will write to you with my concerns!

I am often referred to as the Father of the United States of America, go me!

Information
Networks:
Founding Fathers of America
Birthday:
February 22, 1732
Political Beliefs:
I often say I don’t like political parties, but often side with the federalists and my buddy Hamilton.

Friends

Personal Information
Activities: Making Cranberry pies, fighting redcoats, and forming a United States of America
Favorite Books/Documents:
Anything on law, the Constitution of the United States of America, the Federalist Papers
Favorite Quotations:
“If the freedom of speech is taken away then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter.”
“Laws made by common consent must not be trampled on by individuals.”

Education
Schooling: College, smallege. I only went to school for 8 years and arithmetic was my favorite subject!