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## **Chapter 8 Confederation to Constitution, 1776—1791**

The Articles of Confederation prove inadequate to govern the new nation. U.S. delegates create the Constitution and, after much debate, it is ratified.

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### **Section 1: The Confederation Era Section 2: Creating the Constitution Section 3: Ratifying the Constitution**

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### **Section 1: The Confederation Era**

The Articles of Confederation were too weak to govern the nation after the war ended.

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### **Section 1: The Confederation Era**

#### **Moving West**

- Settlers mainly travel on **Wilderness Road** into Kentucky
- Tensions between settlers and Native Americans lead to conflicts
- By 1790s, about 100,000 Americans live in Kentucky region

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#### **New State Governments**

- After independence, each state creates its own government
- Some states set up governmental branches to limit power of government
- Some states include a bill of rights to help control government
- All state governments are **republics**—people choose representatives

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#### **The Articles of Confederation**

- **Articles of Confederation**—plan for national government
- Gives national government few powers
- Can make war, make peace, sign treaties, issue money
- Each state has 1 vote in Congress
- States have important powers like setting taxes, enforcing laws

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### *Continued* **The Articles of Confederation**

- Continental Congress passes Articles of Confederation in 1777
- In 1778, 8 states ratify, small states refuse to sign
- Large states with Western lands have advantage in paying debts
- All states give up Western lands, articles are ratified in 1781

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### **The Northwest Ordinance**

- **Land Ordinance of 1785** divides Western lands into townships
- Lands known as the **Northwest Territory**
- **Northwest Ordinance** (1787) describes how territory is governed:
  - rules for attaining self-government, statehood
  - conditions for settlement
  - outlaws slavery
  - freedom of religion
  - trial by jury

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### **Weaknesses of the Articles**

- Revolutionary War leaves U.S. government with huge debts
- Articles of Confederation do not give Congress power to raise taxes
- States provide Congress with little tax money
- Congress unable to pay soldiers, soldiers riot

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### **Shays's Rebellion**

- Mid-1780s Massachusetts people pay high taxes, many have little money
- Many farmers cannot pay debts, property is auctioned
- If auctioned property does not pay debts, farmer is put in prison
- Group of men, led by Daniel Shays, rebel—**Shays's Rebellion**
- Rebellion is subdued, emphasizes that government needs reform

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### **Section 2: Creating the Constitution**

The states sent delegates to a convention to solve the problems of the Articles of Confederation.

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## Section 2: Creating the Constitution

### A Constitutional Convention Is Called

- Delegates from 5 states meet to create national trade laws
- Call for national meeting in Philadelphia
- Afraid of rebellion, 12 states (except Rhode Island) send delegates (1787)

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### The Convention's Delegates

- 55 state delegates meet at **Constitutional Convention** in Philadelphia
- Delegates include George Washington, Benjamin Franklin
- One of the ablest delegates is **James Madison**
- Delegates do not include Native Americans, African Americans, women

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### The Delegates Assemble

- Delegates want to create government strong enough to maintain order
- But also want government that protects people's rights

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### The Convention Begins

- George Washington elected president of the Constitutional Convention
- Delegates do not want decisions influenced by political pressures
- To ensure this, they decide that discussions will remain secret

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### The Virginia Plan

- The **Virginia Plan** divides government into 3 branches:
  - legislature makes the laws
  - executive enforces the laws
  - judiciary interprets the laws
- Legislature has two houses
- Representation is based on each state's population or wealth
- Larger states support plan, smaller states oppose
- Smaller states are afraid larger states will control them

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### The Great Compromise

- **New Jersey Plan** is an alternative plan for U.S. government:
  - legislature has one house

- each state has one vote
- Delegates vote for the Virginia Plan over the New Jersey Plan
- Delegates pass the **Great Compromise**
- Each state is given equal votes in senate:
  - satisfies the smaller states
- State's population determines representation, House of Representatives
  - satisfies the larger states

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### **Slavery and the Constitution**

- Southern states want slaves counted for representation, not for taxes
- Northern states want slaves counted for taxes, not for representation
- To solve dispute, delegates agree to the **Three-Fifths Compromise**:
  - 3/5 of slave population counts for direct taxes
  - 3/5 of slave population counts for representation
- Debate, delegates agree slave trade cannot be banned until 1808

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### **Regulating Trade**

- Delegates place few limits on Congress's power to regulate commerce
- Southerners succeed in banning Congress from taxing imports
- Native Americans are not foreign nations or part of separate states
- On September 15, 1787, delegates approve the Constitution
- Constitution sent to the states for ratification

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### **Section 3: Ratifying the Constitution**

Americans across the nation debated whether the Constitution would produce the best government.

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### **Federalists and Antifederalists**

- Supporters of the Constitution claim that it is based on federalism
- **Federalism**—power is shared between central government, states
- People who support the Constitution are called **Federalists**
- People who oppose the Constitution are called **Antifederalists**
- Afraid Constitution takes too much power from states
- Also feel that Constitution does not guarantee rights for the people

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### ***The Federalist Papers***

- Federalists write essays, answer Antifederalists' attacks
- Best-known essays are ***The Federalist Papers***
- Authors are James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay
- Appeal to people's reason and emotion

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### **The Battle for Ratification**

- June 1787, 9 states ratify Constitution, New York, Virginia yet to vote
- New York, Virginia influential states, Federalists want their support
- Virginian **George Mason** opposes ratification until bill of rights added
- James Madison also suggests bill of rights, Virginia, New York ratify
- Rhode Island is last state to ratify (1790)

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### **The Bill of Rights**

- States ask that the Constitution include a bill of rights
- James Madison makes list of changes, or amendments, to Constitution
- Congress edits amendments, puts them at the end of the Constitution
- In 1791, states ratify 10 amendments, known as **Bill of Rights**