



THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION AND THE U.S. CONSTITUTION DBQ



Historical Context:

The Articles of Confederation, which were ratified in 1781, provided the first form of a national government in the United States. In 1787, a convention was called to revise the Articles. The convention developed an entirely new form of government as outlined in the Constitution, which sought to address the weaknesses of the Articles. The Preamble of the Constitution states the following goals for the new system of government: "in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity."

Task:

Using the information from the documents and your knowledge of social studies, write an essay in which you:

- Discuss the **two** most important problems which made the Articles of Confederation a poor form of government.
- Discuss how the **two** main constitutional compromises dealt with the various sectional differences between the states.
- Explain **two** differences between the Federalists and Antifederalists in their views about the new Constitution.

Part A

Short-Answer Questions

Directions: Analyze the documents and answer the short-answer questions that follow each document in the space provided.

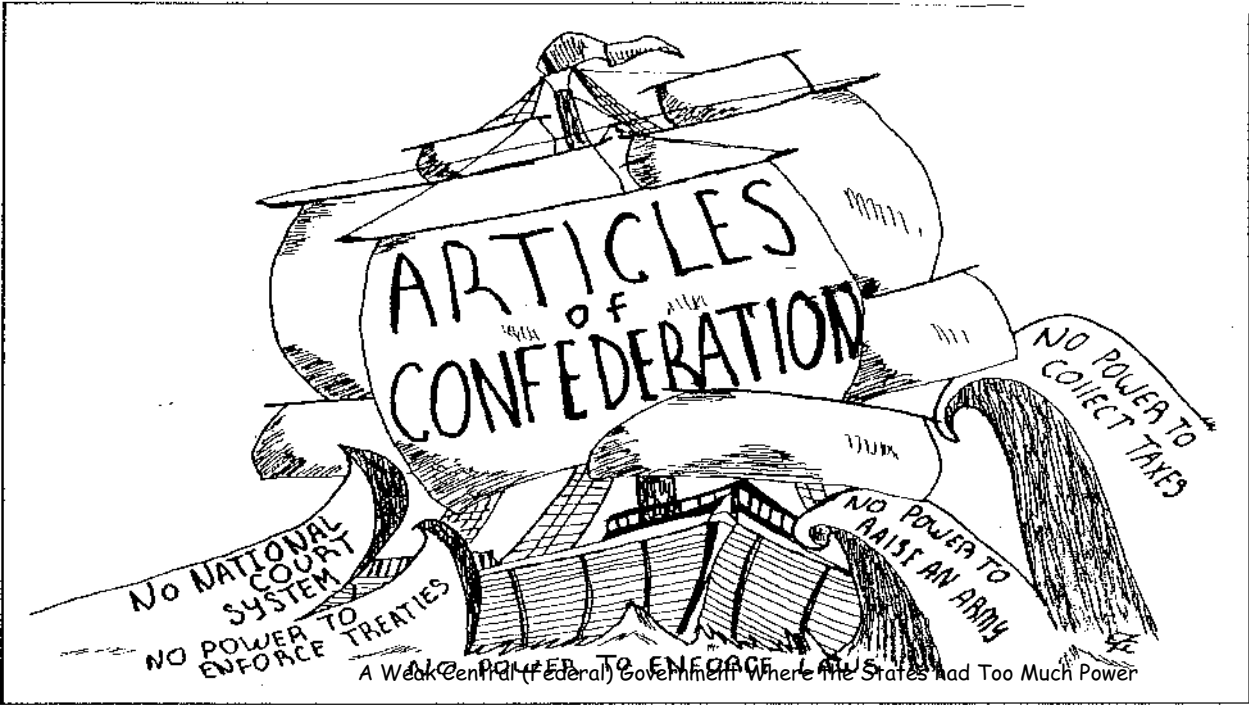
Document 1



...We are fast verging to anarchy and confusion! How melancholy [sad] is the reflection, that in so short a space, we should have made such large strides towards fulfilling the prediction of our transatlantic foe [enemy]! "leave them to themselves, and their government will soon dissolve." Will not the wise and good strive hard to avert [prevent] this evil?...What stronger evidence can be given of the want of energy in our governments than these disorders [Shays' Rebellion]? If there exists not a power to check them, what security has a man for life, liberty, or property?

Source: George Washington's letter to James Madison, November 5, 1786

1. According to Washington, what is needed to prevent an uprising like Shays' Rebellion? [1]



"Rough Sailing Ahead?"

2a. Based on this cartoon, identify two problems with the Articles of Confederation. [1]

2b. Based on this cartoon, what phrase is used to summarize all the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation? [1]

2c. What idea is the cartoonist expressing when he titled this political cartoon "Rough Sailing Ahead"? [2]

Debate over Ratification of the United States Constitution

Speaker A: “Our liberty depends on guaranteed individual rights. Citizens with these rights will be able to make decisions for the good of the whole nation.”

Speaker B: “I admire your optimism; however, only a well-educated group of elected officials should be trusted to make decisions for the good of all.”

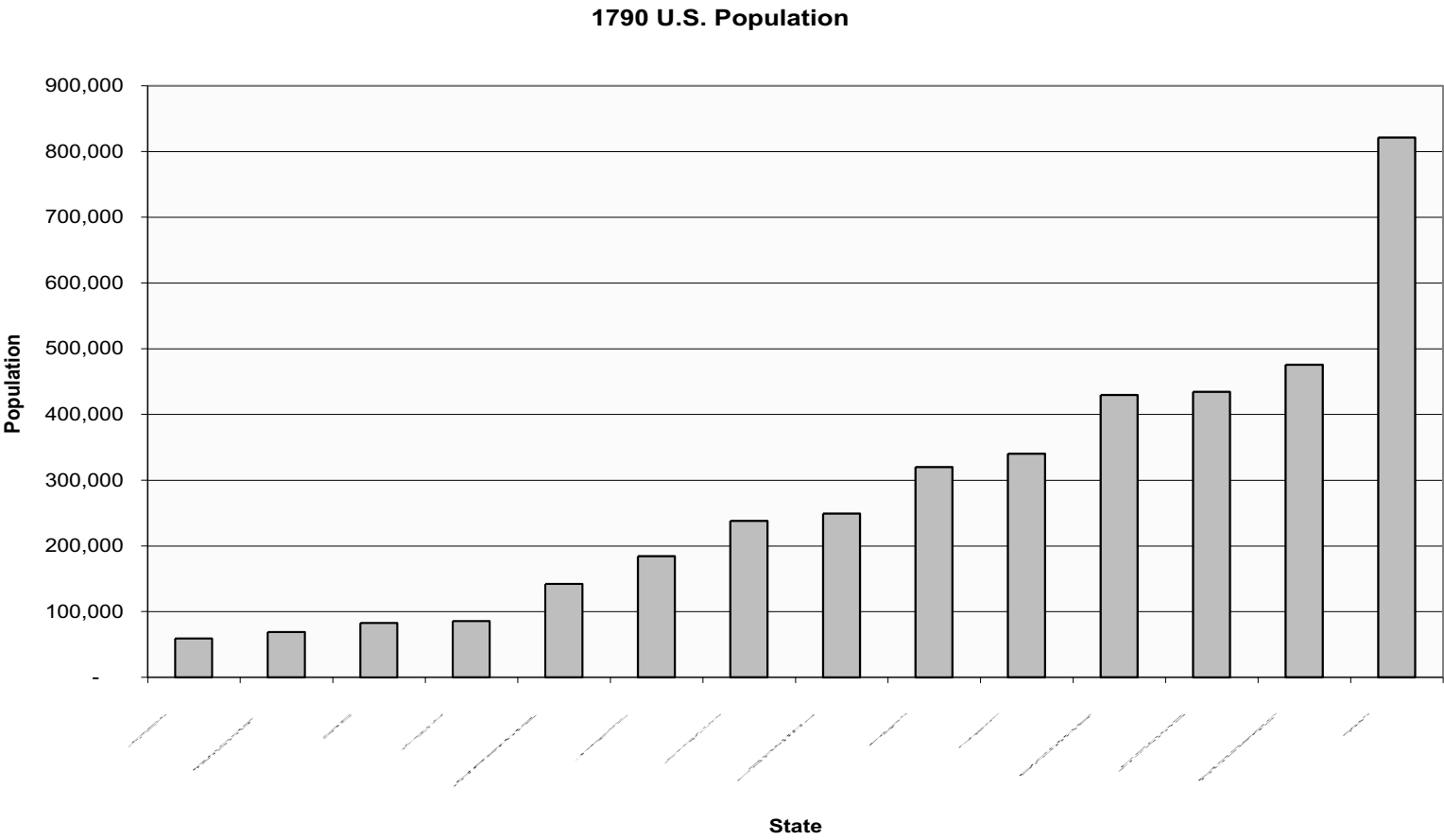
Speaker A: “We must not allow the rule of a few privileged officials to overpower the will of average citizens.”

Speaker B: “A strong central government, composed of elected officials, will be acting in the best interests of all citizens.”

Speaker A: “I fear you are ignoring the needs of the people. There must be a guarantee that the freedoms of citizens will not be trampled over by a strong national government.”

3a. According to the reading above would Speaker A consider himself to be a Federalist or an Antifederalist?[1]

3b. According to the reading above would Speaker B consider himself to be a Federalist or an Antifederalist?[1]



4a. According to the graph, list the two states which would most likely support representation in the new Congress based on population. [1]

4b. According to the graph, list the two states which would most likely support representation in the new Congress based on equal representation. [1]

Document 5

“The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States...Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons...

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years...”

Source: Article I of the U.S. Constitution

5a. What is the source of the document? [1]

5b. According to the document, how is representation in the House of Representatives and the Senate determined? [2]

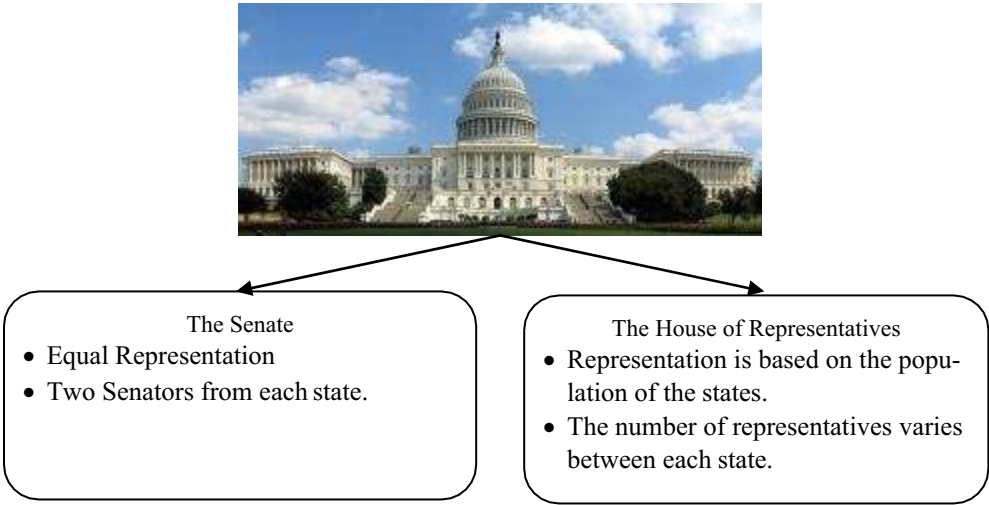
House of Representatives

Senate

5c. What was the name of the compromise, detailed in passage above, that established the way in which slaves would be counted toward representation in the House of Representatives? [1]

Document 6

The Great Compromise created a Congress that is made up of Two Branches



6a. What constitutional compromise is illustrated in the chart above? [1]

6b. How did the Great Compromise settle the problem of representation in Congress which was created by sectionalism amongst the states? [1]

Document 7

On April 30, 1789, George Washington was sworn in as the first president of the United States. The new United States Constitution had already been ratified, yet the future of the new country was still at risk. Many of the founding fathers were demanding a "bill of rights" which would protect the people from the government. This bill of rights was to be added to the Constitution to guarantee individual liberties and to make sure that the new government would not treat citizens like the old colonial government of Great Britain did. The two large states of Virginia and New York had yet to ratify the Constitution and demanded that a bill of rights be added to the Constitution before they would ratify the document.

Two groups opposed each other, **the Federalists** who wanted a strong government and no bill of rights, and the **Anti-Federalists** who wanted more power for the states and a bill of rights. To reach an agreement which would allow all the states to ratify the new Constitution, James Madison promised to add a bill of rights to the Constitution.

The Constitution Webquest www.yourhistorysite.com

7a. Which group of founders was in favor of adding a Bill of Rights to the Constitution? [1]

7b. What were the two main reasons that this group wanted a Bill of Rights added to the Constitution? [2]
