

Lesson 2: A Quiet Revolution. Case Study 1.

Overview: In this lesson, the students will begin to examine fiscal policy decisions made during the Articles of Confederation. They will evaluate the decision of the founding to write the Constitution. The students will explain how and why the power of taxation was given to the government and understand the power to tax as a legitimate power of government.

Time Allotment : 1 block class, 90 minutes

Objectives. OAH National Standards in parenthesis

The students will be able to identify weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation (Historical Research).

The students will be able to evaluate and understand why the decision was made to write the US Constitution. (Historical Analysis)

The student will be able to identify the consequences in regards to the national debt, the writing of the US Constitution had on federal power.(Historical Analysis and Interpretation)

The students will write and answer questions based on historical letters. (Historical Comprehension and Research)

United States Government Standards – 12th grade

GOVT.1 The student will demonstrate mastery of the social studies skills citizenship requires, including the ability to

- a) analyze primary and secondary source documents;
- b) create and interpret maps, diagrams, tables, charts, graphs, and spreadsheets;
- c) analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media;
- d) distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information;
- e) evaluate information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion;
- f) identify a problem and prioritize solutions;
- g) select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate.

GOVT.16 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the role of government in the Virginia and United States economies by

- a) analyzing the impact of fiscal and monetary policies on the economy;
- b) describing the creation of public goods and services;
- c) examining environmental issues, property rights, contracts, consumer rights, labor management relations, and competition in the marketplace.

Procedure:

Do Now: Students enter the class and answer the following question written on the board

How does government get money for services they provide? List some of the services government provides. (taxes – schools, roads, military, entitlement programs, consumer safety, police, fire, ambulance, medical research, foreign aid, subsidies to businesses). Ask students how important taxes are to a society. Answers will vary.

A. Distribute copies of the letters, one copy for each pair. Distribute copies of the worksheet The Quiet Revolution – A Case study in Responding to Debt.

<http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/aea/cfm/doc.cfm?id=L17830907ja&numrecs=20&archive=letter&hi=on&mode=&query=loan%20&queryid=&rec=11&start=11&tag=text#firstmatch>

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<http://www.masshist.org/ff/beta.php?id=PJA11d090>

<http://www.masshist.org/ff/beta.php?id=PJA11d207>

Ask students to read the 3 letters

Students will work with a partner to analyze the source

1. Who wrote these letters?
2. When were they written?
3. What do all three letters have in common?
4. Write one additional question about these letters.

Direct the discussion of why, John Adams expressed frustration in these letters? Ask students to look at the date and identify what important happening had just taken place in American History (revolution) Ask the students why was Adams trying to get the loan? For what did he need the money?

Distribute copies of the The Articles of Confederation, Articles 1-8. Ask students to complete questions in section B of the worksheet. Begin by reminding students that a confederation was our first type of government in the US. Ask them to read the articles and answer the following questions.

<http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/milestones/articles/text.html>

1. Why were the Articles of Confederation written?
2. List familiar phrases/words you find while reading.
3. Describe the Congress under the Articles.
4. What were some of the causes of the American Revolution? How do you think these causes influenced what our first government could and could not do?
5. How does the federal government under the Articles get money?

Discuss the answers to the questions. Discussion should include the ideas that the founding fathers constructed a loose confederation of states after the Revolution b/c of

fear of a strong national government. The Congress was the only body of the government(unicameral). Decisions were made using a one vote per state method. The Congress was able to decide all matters of war and foreign relations. The state legislatures would decide when and how much money to give the Congress to take care of national matters. The Articles had many weaknesses, along with the inability to tax, there was no court system

Direct students back to question #3 of the Adams letter (section A of worksheet). Why did Adams need money from Holland? To pay the debt. The other method, getting money from the states during the Articles, proved ineffective.

Distribute copies of the excerpts from Letter from Alexander Hamilton. http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/print_documents/v1ch5s2.html. Ask students to complete questions in section C of the worksheet.

1. What group(s) have that power under the articles? (state legislatures)
2. What does Hamilton propose be done? A convention to change the articles must be held.
3. Hamilton writes that the government group the holds which power will ultimately rule? (the government group that handles the money, power of the purse)
4. The delegates held a convention and did something much more radical that change the Articles, does anyone know what they did?

Explain to students that the convention that started out as one to change the Articles ended up being the Constitutional Convention, where the US Constitution was written.

D. Ask students to read Article I, Sec 8 of the US Constitution. Complete the questions in section D of the worksheet

1. What is the first power given to Congress in the Constitution? (taxation, talk about how b/c it is first it is the most important)
2. Would Hamilton agree with the way this document is written? (probably, strengthens the federal power and gives congress taxation powers)
3. Why do you think the power of taxation was not included in the Articles? (just fought a war to end unfair taxation)

Explain to students the delegates to the Constitutional Convention met in secret b/c they feared how people would react to the rewriting of the Articles.

Assessment – Formative:

Respond to the saying in paragraph form.

“In this world, nothing can said to be certain except death and taxes”

- Ben Franklin, 1789

- a. Do you agree with Franklin?
- b. Notice the date, 1789, why would he make such a statement?

Student's answers on the worksheet for The Quiet Revolution will also serve as a formative assessment.