

The Creation of the ConstitutionEssential Questions:

1. What was America's first form of government, and what were the basic characteristics?
2. What were the reasons the government was structured as it was under the Articles?
3. What were the priorities of the United States in the late 18th-century? What were the objectives of the major European nations of France, Great Britain, Spain, and the Netherlands at that time?
4. What problems occurred for the US as a direct result of the Articles of Confederation?
5. What compromises were reached at the Constitutional Convention?
6. How did the new US Constitution "solve" the problems, especially in foreign relations, that occurred under the Articles of Confederation?
7. Why was the US Constitution written?

Objectives:

1. Students will gather information about the Articles of Confederation. (Lesson 1)
2. Students will analyze the Articles of Confederation. (Lesson 1)
3. Students will determine the weaknesses of American government under the Articles of Confederation. (Lesson 1)
4. Students will interpret the Articles of Confederation, the 13 states, and the original Congress through word associations. (Lesson 1)
5. Students will recognize the significant factors of international relations during the 1780's. (Lessons 1 and 2)
6. Students will judge the ability of the US Congress under the Articles to participate internationally (Lesson 2)
7. Students answer questions about several primary and secondary source documents concerning politics and economics during the late 18th-century. (Lesson 2)
8. Students will synthesize information from several primary and secondary sources into discussion-question responses. (Lesson 2)
9. Students will detect that the United States could not effectively compete internationally under the Articles of Confederation. (Lesson 2)
10. Students will comprehend basic details about the Constitutional Convention. (Lesson 2)
11. Students will illustrate various political and economic circumstances before, during, and after the Constitutional Convention with political cartoons. (Lesson 2)
12. Students will review basic stipulations of the US Constitution. (Lesson 3)
13. Students will inspect photographs for reflections of government power in reality. (Lesson 3)
14. Students will read short descriptions of competing theories on the creation of the Constitution. (Lesson 3)
15. Students will analyze theories on the creation of the Constitution. (Lesson 3)
16. Students will participate in a Socratic Seminar. (Lesson 3)
17. Students will incorporate information about the Articles of Confederation and from primary and secondary sources into a 5-paragraph essay. (Lesson 3)

18. Students will generate a hypothesis as to the reasons for the creation of the Constitution, and defend that hypothesis, in a 5-paragraph essay. (Lesson 3)
19. Students will compile various assignments into a portfolio. (Lessons 1-3)

Standards: This unit complies with the National History Standards

<http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/>

And the Virginia Standards of Learning

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/history_socialscience/review.shtml

(Attachment B)

Materials:

- Smartboard®/whiteboard/chalkboard
- LCD projector (for images of Articles of Confederation, Constitution)
- Attachments for all 3 lessons
- art supplies for students to draw political cartoons

****NOTE:** The end portfolio assessment can be created and uploaded by students on class websites, such as Moodle. Documents can be accessed online, and the Smartboard ® with Smart Technology ® can be used to add more of a technological component, if the teacher desires. However all of the lessons can also be taught with minimal technology**

Procedures/Lessons:

1. Lesson One—Focus on the Articles of Confederation
 - a. KWL on the Articles of Confederation, Constitutional Convention, and Constitution
 - b. Discussion Questions and breakdown of the Articles of Confederation¹
 - c. Exit pass with word association
 - d. **Total Lesson Time: 75-90 minutes**
2. Lesson Two—Problems with the Articles
 - a. Primary Source Research and Analysis²
 - b. Notes on the Constitutional Convention
 - c. Constitution at a Glance
 - d. Political Cartoon
 - e. **Total Lesson Time: 90-120 minutes**
3. Lesson Three—Application of Constitutional Principles and Provisions
 - a. Analysis and Application of Constitutional provisions through modern photography³
 - b. Socratic Seminar
 - c. **Total Lesson Time: 80-100 minutes**

Assessment(s):

¹ www.constitution.org

² All primary sources cited in accompanying Annotated Bibliography (**ATTACHMENT C**)

³ All photographs from www.images.google.com; *Life* magazine photo collection

1. The primary assessment for this unit of study is a portfolio. (**Rubric Attachment A**) Students will collect work from each lesson, and either physically or digitally, turn it into a large portfolio on the creation of the Constitution. The smaller, more formative assessments include:
 - a. The guided reading questions on the Articles of Confederation
 - b. Exit Pass Lesson 1
 - c. Primary and Secondary Source Analysis Questions
 - d. Political Cartoon
 - e. Socratic Seminar Pre and Post Discussion Questions
 - f. 5-paragraph essay
2. Throughout the unit instructors should formatively assess students. There are ample opportunities for informal formative assessments, and the aforementioned elements of the portfolio are formal formative assessments.
3. A portfolio is used as the summative assessment for several reasons. First, it provides an organized way for students and teachers to hold on to all of this work. Secondly, it teaches older students, many of whom will be going to college soon, how to maintain their own assignments in a meaningful way. Thirdly, and most importantly, the portfolio adds an element of chronological importance to the events studied throughout the unit. The lessons have encouraged students to think about this time period thematically, and even from a critical standpoint. However, the chronology and order of things is important, too, and this portfolio can help students see how all of the studied events fall into some aspect of a cause and effect relationship.