

The Articles of Confederation (1777-1789)

Background:

During the Revolutionary War, the American colonies needed to coordinate their efforts against Britain. They created an emergency government to raise money for the war effort called **The Continental Congress**. After the Revolution the colonies were officially independent from Great Britain. They needed to create a system of government to run this new nation. The first system created was known as **The Articles of Confederation** and was adopted on November 15, 1777. In its final form, the Articles of Confederation were comprised of a preamble and 13 articles.

Approved by the last of the 13 American states, Maryland, in 1781, the Articles became the ruling document in the new nation. The Articles created a nation that was "a league of friendship and perpetual union."

Directions: Review the chart and complete the questions.

The Articles of Confederation	
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One branch of government: Congress, responsible for making national laws • Each state had one (1) vote in Congress • No executive (President) • No judicial branch
Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>9 of 13 states</i> had to approve a proposal before it could become a law • <i>All the states</i> had to agree to change an existing law
Money and Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Articles of Confederation could not collect taxes • The A of C had to ask the individual states for money • The A of C could print and borrow money • Each state could regulate trade with other states • Each state could tax its residents
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The A of C managed agreements with other countries and Native Americans • The Articles of Confederation could appoint military officers • Only the states could establish militias
Other	The A of C established <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a postal system • weights and measures • courts • consequences for piracy

1. Where did the Articles of Confederation place the most government power? (HINT look for repeated words). _____
2. Give two examples from the chart.
3. WHY do you think the first government of the United States was set this way?

NOTE: The following situations are NOT 100% accurate are similar to those that existed after the Revolution, with the Articles of Confederation.

Directions:

- Review each case study with your partner
 - Use the chart of the Articles from today's class and
 - Explain whether the Articles of Confederation could solve this problem (bullet point notes)
1. Leanne Keene, French ambassador, arrives from Paris to tell you France needs the money it lent the colonies during the Revolution immediately. Can the **Articles of Confederation** solve this problem? Why/Why not?
 2. Neil Thisse is a Loyalist who fled the colonies during the Revolution and has returned to reclaim his property in Dover, MA. According to the Treaty of Paris, he is entitled to his land. However, Massachusetts has passed a law that ignores the claims of former Loyalists. Charles appeals to the Articles for the return of his property. Can the **Articles of Confederation** solve this problem? Why/Why not?
 3. A group of poor farmers in Massachusetts, led by Taylor Coutts and John Sullivan is angered by war debts, bad harvests and high taxes. When their debt-ridden farms are taken by the bank, they march on the state capital in protest. Massachusetts sends their militia to try to stop them and appeals to Congress for assistance. Can the **Articles of Confederation** solve this problem? Why/Why not?
 4. Both New Hampshire and New York desire more territory for settlers within their states. New land would increase trade, profit and power for their individual states. They claim Vermont territory and appeal to the Articles to settle the dispute. Can the **Articles of Confederation** solve this problem? Why/Why not?
 5. Foreign countries do not respect American independence. Although the Treaty of Paris granted the United States all the land east of the Mississippi, Britain refuses to withdraw troops from the Ohio Valley. In addition, Spain closes New Orleans port to American farmers. Can the **Articles of Confederation** solve this problem? Why/Why not?
 6. Some individual states have abolished slavery in their constitutions. Confederation delegates Nevin Weinberg and Dani Kwatcher propose an amendment to abolish slavery in the entire country. Can the **Articles of Confederation** solve this problem? Why/Why not?