Creating the Constitution

Overview
In this lesson, students learn about the creation of the Constitution by reenacting key debates that influenced its design. In an Experiential Exercise, students take on the personas of delegates to the Constitutional Convention and debate three key issues: How should states be represented in the new government? Should slaves be counted as part of a state’s population? How should the national executive be elected? Afterward, students apply their learning in a Processing assignment.

Objectives
Students will
• explain how the limited powers of the Articles of Confederation created the need for a new constitution and a stronger central government.
• describe the backgrounds of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention, including their shared commitment to republicanism, to the liberal ideas of the Enlightenment, and to the principles embodied in their early state constitutions.
• debate and compromise on three key issues that emerged at the Constitutional Convention.
• explain how the Great Compromise, the three-fifths compromise, and the Electoral College were created at the Constitutional Convention.

Materials
• History Alive! The United States Through Industrialism
• Interactive Student Notebooks
• Graphic Organizer Placard 8
• Transparency 8
• Information Masters 8A and 8B (1 copy each)
• Student Handout 8A (1 copy, cut apart)
• Student Handout 8B (1 copy of each mask)
• portable radio
• candles
• “quill” pens (made by affixing artificial feathers to ballpoint pens)
• masking tape
Lesson 8

Preview

1. Review the Preview activity. This Preview allows students to feel what it is like to make a decision on which 9 of 13 groups with competing interests must agree—similar to the process the national government had to follow under the Articles of Confederation.

2. Divide the class into 13 mixed-ability groups. It is important to place students in exactly 13 groups to represent the 13 states that were represented in the national government under the Articles of Confederation.

3. Introduce the Preview. Call attention to the radio, and tell students that they will get to listen to music in class today. Tell them that each group will have one vote in deciding how to program the radio. Explain that the station and volume must be acceptable to 9—not just a simple majority—of the groups. (Note: If students question this rule, tell them that you want to make sure the radio is programmed to reflect the desire of most of the students.)

4. Circulate through the room and “rig” the activity. Tell groups they have two minutes to discuss how the radio should be programmed. While groups are talking, circulate through the classroom and pretend to monitor their discussions. Quietly tell 5 groups that they will earn extra credit (or other reward) if they do not vote for any station nominated by another group. Also tell them not to reveal that you encouraged them to do this. (Note: By rigging the activity in this manner, you will ensure that students experience the difficulty and frustration of having to make a decision on which 9 of 13 entities—with competing interests—must agree.)

5. Have groups vote on how to program the radio. Explain to students that you will use a modified parliamentary procedure to determine how the radio will be programmed:
   A. One group nominates a station and volume level at which the radio should be played.
   B. The nomination must be “seconded” by another group.
   C. There is discussion of the nominated station and volume level.
   D. There is a vote on the proposed station and volume level. It must be approved by 9 groups.
   E. If the proposal is rejected, the process is repeated.

Continue allowing students to vote on the programming until you think they have experienced the difficulties and frustration of the process. (Note: The activity may fail if the 5 groups do not adhere to your directions. This is a risk inherent in the activity. If it does fail in this way, explain your intentions to the students and modify the discussion that follows.)
6 Debrief the activity. Hold a class discussion. Ask the following questions:
- How did you feel as you tried to reach an agreement on programming the radio?
- Why couldn’t the class come to an agreement?
- What would have happened if the decision had been based on majority rule?
- What are the weaknesses of this type of decision-making system? What are the benefits?
- Why might a government institute this type of system?
- What do you think might happen in a government with this type of system?

7 Have students read Section 8.1 in *History Alive! The United States Through Industrialism*. Explain that the experience was designed to introduce them to the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation. In this lesson, they will learn about these weaknesses and the efforts of leaders to create a more effective government. Remind them that important terms appear in colored type (teal). Each term is defined in the Glossary. (Note: You may want to have students use the Prereading Handout on page xv of the lesson guide to conduct a prereading of the chapter.)

8 Have students read Section 8.2 and complete Preview 8 in their Interactive Student Notebooks. Guide them in completing the Preview activity, as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experienced the Weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom Experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class was divided into 13 groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each group of students had one vote.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students tried to program a radio.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The radio was never programmed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some students became dissatisfied, angry, and frustrated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articles of Confederation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress was composed of 13 states.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each state had one vote in Congress.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Congress dealt with many problems, such as how to develop the western lands acquired by the United States in the Treaty of Paris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress failed to resolve disputes between states over taxes and boundaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many citizens were concerned that the government was too weak.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Graphic Organizer**

Introduce Graphic Organizer Placard 8. Ask, What do you see here? What do you think happened in this room? What do you think would be challenging about creating a new constitution for the United States in 1787? Tell students that the drawing represents the Assembly Room at Independence Hall, where the delegates to the Constitutional Convention met. Explain that there are clues in the graphic organizer that they will use to understand events that led to the creation of the Constitution.

**Reading**

1. Introduce Reading Notes 8. Have students turn to Reading Notes 8 in their Interactive Student Notebooks. Ask them to identify each aspect of the Assembly Room shown on their Reading Notes. Tell students they will now annotate various aspects of the room—such as the broken window and the gavel on the desk—by reading about important events that led to the creation of the Constitution and recording notes. (Option: You may want to place students in pairs and have them work together to complete their Reading Notes.)

2. Have students read Section 8.3 and record notes. Ask students how they think the broken window corresponds to the topic in Section 8.3, Shays’s Rebellion. Have them explain their reasoning. Tell students that although Shays’s followers did not actually attack the convention, the rebellion shocked Congress into calling for a convention. Then, have students record notes on the reading by answering the question in Section 8.3. Use Guide to Reading Notes 8 to monitor their progress. (Note: This reading activity asks students to separate relevant from irrelevant information in each section as they answer a focused question in their Reading Notes. You may want to discuss this important analysis skill with your students.)

3. Have students read Section 8.4 and record notes. For Section 8.4, make sure that students understand how the gavel—which is used to call a meeting to order—corresponds to information about the opening of the Constitutional Convention.

**Experiential Exercise**

Before class, arrange the classroom and prepare materials. This activity has three phases: (1) Opening the Convention, (2) Debating Issues at the Convention, and (3) Signing the Constitution. The first and third phases will last approximately one class period, and the second phase will last approximately three. Arrange the classroom to create a modified version of the Assembly Room in Independence Hall. Follow these guidelines:

- Arrange delegates’ desks into 13 clusters, as shown in the classroom map.
- Place one desk and chair (where George Washington will sit) at the front of the classroom next to the overhead projector.
• Label the clusters of desks with state names to indicate where delegates should sit during the convention. Try to maintain the proportion of delegates per state shown in the classroom map. (Note: The desk(s) labeled Rhode Island will not be used during the activity. They are intended to represent the missing delegates from Rhode Island.)
• At each delegate’s desk, place a candle and “quill pen.” The candles do not need to be lit during the activity, but serve as a reminder that the delegates often met at night in the Assembly Room.
• Cut out the image from Information Master 8A: Back of Washington’s Chair and affix it to the backrest of the chair indicated in the diagram. (Note: You may wish to elevate the chair by placing a book under each leg.)
• Place a copy of Information Master 8B: Facsimile of the Constitution on the desk in front of Washington’s chair.

Phase 1: Opening the Convention

1 Introduce the activity. Tell students they are delegates to the Constitutional Convention. Explain that it is May 1787 and they have come to Philadelphia to resolve the problems created by the Articles of Confederation. Explain that each of them will take on the persona of an actual delegate who attended the Constitutional Convention.

2 Pass out the cards cut from Student Handout 8A: Role Cards for Delegates to the Constitutional Convention and the corresponding copy of Student Handout 8B: Mask for [name of delegate], and have students prepare for the convention. Direct students to sit in their designated desks and read their role card. Make sure students understand that they are responsible for taking on the persona of their assigned delegate and accurately representing his views on issues that will emerge at the convention. (Note: Delegates’ views on these issues have been simplified for the purpose of this activity.) Tell students to create a nametag for their delegate—including the name of the delegate in large letters, the state from which the delegate comes, and a simple visual that represents an aspect of the delegate’s personal background. Have students cut out and, if they choose, decorate the masks from Student Handout 8B. Have them affix the masks (using masking tape) so they can breathe, see, and speak through them.

3 Project Transparency 8: Assembly Room of Independence Hall and have delegates greet one another. Explain that the delegates generally greeted each other with formal phrases, such as, “I am heartily glad to see you, Mr. Madison” or “It is my pleasure to be in your company, Doctor Franklin.” Tell students to refer to one another in this manner during the activity to create a more authentic atmosphere. Then, have students circulate through the room and introduce themselves to delegates from other states. Encourage students to act out any personal characteristics of their assigned delegate.

4 Assume the role of George Washington and review the rules of order. Tell students that you will play the role of George Washington at the convention. Explain that, like Washington, you will maintain order during the discussions. Tell students that they must be raise their hands and be acknowledged by you before speaking during the convention.
Have delegates take a vow of secrecy and “secure” the Assembly Room. Tell students that some delegates have expressed concerns about being able to speak their minds freely at the convention. Have all students raise their right hands and repeat the following: I promise not to divulge to the public what is discussed at this convention. Explain that to ensure secrecy during the convention, you are posting a guard at the door and closing the windows. Have one student lock the classroom door, and another close any windows or curtains in the room. (Note: You may want to turn up the heater to remind students that closing the windows during the convention created uncomfortable working conditions for the delegates.)

Phase 2: Debating Issues at the Convention

1 Project Transparency 8 and introduce Issue 1. Use a gavel or similar item to call the delegates to order. Explain that to create a new constitution, the delegates must resolve a series of issues. The first issue is: How should states be represented in the new government? Explain that there are currently three possible resolutions:

Option A: The number of representatives a state sends to Congress will depend on the state’s population.
Option B: Each state will have equal representation in Congress, regardless of the state’s size.
Option C: The number of representatives a state sends to Congress will depend partially on the wealth of the citizens of the state.

2 Have students read Section 8.5 and take notes. Tell students to record notes in the corresponding space on their Reading Notes. You may want to have a few students share their responses with the class.

3 Have delegates discuss Issue 1. Tell students they must now represent the views of their assigned delegate on Issue 1. Have students read about their delegates’ views on Issue 1 on their role cards. Have them circulate throughout the room to find other delegates who share their views on Issue 1. Encourage students to discuss strategies for convincing other delegates to adopt their views. For example, delegates from states supporting Option A might agree to vigorously applaud after one of them addresses the convention.

4 Have delegates debate and vote on Issue 1. Explain that you will use a modified parliamentary procedure to have delegates vote on Issue 1, as follows:
- One “state” (group of students) nominates an option.
- The nomination is “seconded” by another state.
- The nominated option is discussed.
- The nominated option is voted upon. In order to pass, it must be approved by a majority of the states. (Note: You may need to explain the difference between a plurality and a majority.)
- If the option is rejected, the process is repeated. Encourage delegates to cite details from Section 8.5 to support their answers. Students should be unable to agree upon any of the three options if they accurately represent the views of their assigned delegates. Expect some students to become frustrated, but encourage them to stay in character. After a few failed votes, suggest that they may need to find a way to compromise.
5 Have delegates attempt to compromise on Issue 1. Explain that in order to create the Constitution, the delegates had to compromise on certain issues. Tell students to brainstorm ways that they can compromise on Issue 1. Explain that an effective compromise should satisfy most of the delegates. Use the voting procedure from Step 4 to discuss the compromises students suggest. (Note: It is not necessary for students to reach a compromise, only to experience the process.)

6 Have students read Section 8.6 and take notes in the corresponding space on their Reading Notes. Use the Guide to Reading Notes to monitor students’ work.

7 Repeat the process with Issues 2 and 3. Have students read Sections 8.7 and 8.8 to learn about Issue 2, and Sections 8.9 and 8.10 to learn about Issue 3. Introduce these options for each issue:

Issue 2: Should slaves be counted as part of a state’s population?
Option A: Count slaves as property to be taxed like other property.
Option B: Count slaves as people to determine representation in Congress.
Option C: Count slaves as both people for representation in Congress and property for taxation.
Option D: Do not count slaves as either people for representation or as property for taxation.

Issue 3: How should the national executive be elected?
Option A: Have the people directly elect the executive.
Option B: Have Congress elect the executive.
Option C: Have the state legislatures or governors elect the executive.
Option D: Have the people or state legislatures choose electors who will elect the executive.

Phase 3: Signing the Constitution

1 Project Transparency 8 and announce that it is the final day of the convention. Explain that the final draft of the Constitution has been written and it is time for the delegates to sign it. Tell students to review the information on their role card to see whether or not their delegate signed the Constitution. Explain that if their delegate did not sign, they must be prepared to share their delegate’s reasoning.

2 Have students read Section 8.11 and take notes. Tell students to record notes in the corresponding space on their Reading Notes.

3 Have delegates sign the “Constitution.” Tell students to come forward and trace over their delegate’s signature on Information Master 8B. If their delegate did not sign the Constitution, have them explain the reason to the class. Then, have them stand at the back of the classroom and pretend to scornfully watch the other delegates as they sign.
4 Debrief the experience. Hold a class discussion centering on these questions:
- How did it feel to act as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention?
- What parts of the convention did you enjoy the most?
- What parts of the convention did you enjoy the least?
- What was the most challenging part of acting as a delegate?
- Why was it important for the delegates to be able to compromise on certain issues?
- In what ways do you think your experience was different from that of the actual delegates? In what ways do you think your experience was similar?

5 Have students read Section 8.12 and take notes in the corresponding space on their Reading Notes. You may want to have students do this in class or as homework.

Processing
Have students complete Processing 8 in their Interactive Student Notebooks.

Investigating Primary Sources
Ask students to read “The Importance of State Constitutions” on page 433 of History Alive! The United States Through Industrialism and complete the corresponding assignment.

Assessment
Masters for assessment appear on the next four pages.

17. The bulleted points can provide a rubric for this item.

Online Resources
For information on the Constitutional Convention and the delegates, refer students to Online Resources for History Alive! The United States Through Industrialism at www.historyalive.com/historyalive. Resources at this site include Web links and enrichment essays and activities.

Options for Students with Special Needs
See page 346 for tips on adapting this lesson to meet the needs of
- English language learners.
- learners reading and writing below grade level.
- learners with special education needs.
- advanced learners.
Fill in the bubble beside the best answer to each question.

1. The Articles of Confederation did all of the following except
   - serve as the first plan of government for the United States.
   - form a loose union of the states.
   - divide power among three branches of government.
   - give Congress power to make war and peace.

2. Shays’s Rebellion is remembered today because it
   - threatened law and order in Massachusetts.
   - dramatized the money problems faced by poor farmers.
   - shocked Congress into calling for a Constitutional Convention.
   - showed how well the Articles of Confederation worked.

3. An important challenge facing the Constitutional Convention was how to balance the
   - needs of eastern and western states.
   - interests of large and small states.
   - rights of slaves and slaveholders.
   - demands of farmers and workers.

4. Both the Virginia and New Jersey Plans called for
   - three branches of government.
   - two houses of Congress.
   - an elected president.
   - an end to the slave trade.

5. The Great Compromise was primarily related to
   - representation in Congress.
   - election of the president.
   - selection of Supreme Court justices.
   - checks and balances.

6. James Madison is known as the “Father of the Constitution” because
   - he was the oldest and wisest of the delegates to the convention.
   - he took notes on everything said during the convention.
   - he studied modern and ancient governments to see what worked.
   - his influence on the Constitutional Convention was so great.

7. The Constitutional Convention gave the job of choosing a chief executive to
   - major political parties.
   - electors chosen by the states.
   - state legislatures and governors.
   - members of Congress.

8. Supporters of the new Constitution were known as
   - Republicans.
   - Patriots.
   - Anti-Federalists.
   - Federalists.
Use the graphs and your knowledge of social studies to answer the questions below.

9. Which states had fewer than 100,000 people in 1790?
   - New Hampshire, Georgia, Connecticut
   - Rhode Island, Delaware, Georgia
   - Delaware, New Jersey, South Carolina
   - Georgia, New Jersey, Rhode Island

10. Which of these states were most likely to favor representation in Congress based on population?
    - Massachusetts and Pennsylvania
    - New Hampshire and New Jersey
    - South Carolina and Connecticut
    - New York and Delaware

11. How did states on this graph want slaves to be counted in determining representation in Congress?
    - as three fifths of a person
    - the same as any other person
    - as property to be taxed
    - the same as cattle and horses

12. Which state stood to lose the most representatives in Congress if slaves were not counted in any way?
    - Maryland
    - North Carolina
    - South Carolina
    - Virginia
FAQs about the Constitutional Convention

Q. How were delegates to the Constitutional Convention chosen?
A. They were appointed by state legislatures.

Q. Did all those appointed as delegates attend the convention?
A. Nineteen did not. Some declined to attend; others agreed to attend but then failed to show up.

Q. When did the delegates assemble?
A. The meeting was called for May 14, 1787, but a quorum was not present until May 25.

Q. What was the average age of the delegates?
A. 42.

Q. What occupations did they represent?
A. Probably 34 out of the 55 delegates had studied law. In addition to the lawyers, there were soldiers, planters, educators, ministers, physicians, financiers, and merchants.

Q. How long did it take to frame the Constitution?
A. It was drafted in fewer than 100 working days.

Q. Who actually wrote the Constitution?
A. The records of the convention do not tell us who wrote any particular part of the Constitution.

13. Which statement about the delegates is not supported by the passage?
- They were appointed by state legislatures.
- They were middle-aged as a group.
- One third were ministers.
- More than half had studied law.

14. Of the men appointed as delegates, 19 were
- trained as doctors.
- older than average.
- late arrivals.
- no-shows.

15. The word quorum in the passage means
- a select group of the best people.
- the maximum number that may be admitted to a group.
- a majority of voting members.
- the minimum number needed to conduct official business.

16. The Constitution was drafted
- by Madison working at night.
- in under 100 working days.
- between June and July of 1787.
- by a committee of lawyers.
17. Pretend you are a teacher giving grades to the delegates of the Constitutional Convention. For each topic below, create a report card that includes the following:
   • A letter grade — A, B, C, D, or F — that represents how you would evaluate the compromise that the delegates agreed to.
   • A teacher comment that explains why you gave the delegates that grade.

**Report Card on the Great Compromise**

Grade ____

Teacher Comment:

**Report Card on the Three-Fifths Compromise**

Grade ____

Teacher Comment:

**Report Card on the Electoral College**

Grade ____

Teacher Comment:
Done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the seventeenth
Day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and forty-three and
of the Independence of the United States of America the Fifth.

We have hereunto subscribed our Names,

George Washington
Pennsylvania

James Wilson

John Dickinson

Richard Bassett

James McHenry

Delaware

Maryland

Virginia

North Carolina

We, the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.
Facsimile of the Constitution

Done by the unanimous consent of the States present the seventeenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven and of the Independence of the United States of America the first.

We have hereunto subscribed our Names.

J. Rutledge
Charles Cotesworth Pinckney
Charles Pinckney
Nevill Drayton

South Carolina

William Few
John Randolph
Abel Baldwin

Georgia

New Hampshire

Nicholas Gilman
Nathaniel Gorham
Rufus King

Massachusetts
Done by the unanimous Consent of the States present the seventeenth Day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven and of the Independence of the United States of America the third.

We have therefore subscribed our Names.

Connecticut

Mr. Saml. Johnson

Roger Sherman

Alexandar Hamilton

Wm. Livingston

David R. Birckley

New York

Mr. Paterson

Joel: Dayton

New Jersey

B. Franklin

Thomas Jefferson

Rob Morris

Pennsylvania

Geo. Clymer

Tho. Jefferson

Jas. Madison

James Wilson

G. Weir Moore
John Langdon  New Hampshire (small state)

Personal Background
You were born in New Hampshire in 1741. Your father, whose family came to the colonies sometime before 1660, was a prosperous farmer. As an adult, you spent time at sea before making your fortune as a merchant and trader. You were a strong Patriot, and you fought in the Revolutionary War. You also added to your wealth by building privateers (armed ships) for use against the British. As a politician, you have been speaker of the New Hampshire assembly, a delegate to the Continental Congress, and president of New Hampshire.

An optimistic and cheery man, you are an active speaker in the debates at the Constitutional Convention.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You firmly believe that all states should have an equal vote in the national legislature. You think that the legislature should have one house.
Issue 2: You believe that slaves should be counted for determining the taxes paid by a state, but not for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be elected by the national legislature.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.

Hugh Williamson  North Carolina (medium state)

Personal Background
You were born in Pennsylvania in 1735 to a large family. Your father was a tailor. A man of many talents, you studied to become a minister, but then taught mathematics, and studied medicine in Europe. Returning to Philadelphia, you practiced medicine and pursued other scientific interests. On a trip to England, you became close friends with Benjamin Franklin, a fellow scientist. You wrote a pamphlet encouraging English support of America’s complaints against Britain. Upon returning to America, you eventually settled in North Carolina, becoming a prosperous merchant as well as a doctor. During the Revolutionary War, you were surgeon general of the North Carolina state troops. After the war, you were elected to the state legislature and the Continental Congress.

A hard worker at the Constitutional Convention, you show keen debating skill.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe that states should be represented in the national legislature based on their population and wealth. You think that the legislature should have one house.
Issue 2: You believe that three fifths of the slaves should be counted only for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe that the national executive should be chosen by the state legislatures.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.
Elbridge Gerry

Personal Background
You were born to a wealthy family in Massachusetts in 1744. After graduating from Harvard College, you joined the family merchant and shipping business. You served in the colonial legislature and were an early Patriot. You helped transport goods donated by other colonies when the British closed Boston Harbor. In 1776, you became a delegate to the Continental Congress.

You are known for being somewhat nervous and very serious, without much of a sense of humor. Although you began the convention as a supporter of a strong central government, you fear military and political tyranny and you worry about protecting the rights of citizens under the new government.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe that states should be represented in the national legislature based on their population. You think that the legislature should have two houses.
Issue 2: You believe that slaves should be counted for determining the taxes paid by a state, but not for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be selected by the governors of the states.

Sign the Constitution?
No. You want a bill of rights and other changes to better protect liberty.

Rufus King

Personal Background
You were born in Massachusetts in 1755, the oldest son of a farmer and merchant. You graduated from Harvard College and served briefly as a general’s aide during the Revolutionary War. After the war, you became a lawyer. Politically active, you were a member of the Massachusetts legislature and the Continental Congress, and became known as a brilliant speaker and an opponent of slavery.

At 32, you are one of the youngest delegates. At first, you were not convinced that the Articles of Confederation should be greatly altered. But the debates are changing your mind, and you are becoming a supporter of a strong national government.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe states should be represented in the national legislature based on how much property their citizens hold. You think that the legislature should have two houses.
Issue 2: You believe slaves should not be counted for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature unless they are also counted in determining the state’s taxes.
Issue 3: You believe that the national executive should be chosen by a special group of electors selected by the people.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.
Nathanial Gorham
Massachusetts (large state)

Personal Background
You were born in 1738 to a middle-class family in Massachusetts. You received little formal education and worked as an apprentice to a merchant before starting your own business. During the Revolution, British troops destroyed much of your property, but you regained your wealth by raiding shipping as a privateer. You have served in the state legislature, the Continental Congress, and the Governor’s Council. You are now a judge.

At the Constitutional Convention, you attend every session. You are easygoing and friendly, and often speak out in debates.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe that states should be represented in the national legislature based on their population. You think that the legislature should have two houses.
Issue 2: You believe that three fifths of the slave population should be counted for determining both a state’s representation in the national legislature and its taxes.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be selected by the national legislature.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.

Roger Sherman
Connecticut (medium state)

Personal Background
You were born in Massachusetts in 1723. As a boy, you did a lot of reading when you weren’t helping your father with farming. Your father also taught you the cobbler’s (shoemaker’s) trade. He died when you were a young man, and you moved to Connecticut, where you bought a store and became a county surveyor. You also became a community leader, and you were elected to the colonial legislature. Even though you had not been trained in the law, you became a lawyer and a judge. You served in the Continental Congress, where you were appointed to the committees that drafted the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation. In 1784, you were elected mayor of New Haven.

A respected leader, you are known for your careful reasoning and skill in debate as well as your willingness to compromise.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You want a national legislature with two houses. In the lower house, states would be represented by population; and in the upper house, each would have an equal vote.
Issue 2: You oppose counting slaves for determining either representation in the national legislature or the taxes to be paid by a state.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be appointed by the national legislature.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.
Role Cards for Delegates to the Constitutional Convention

Oliver Ellsworth
Connecticut (medium state)

Personal Background
You were born in Connecticut in 1745. After graduating from the College of New Jersey, you studied law and became a prosperous lawyer. During the Revolutionary War, you helped supervise Connecticut’s war spending. You were also a member of the council of safety, which controlled military affairs for the state.

You are an active participant at the Constitutional Convention. It is your proposal, accepted by the convention, to refer to the government as the “United States” in official documents. Tall and dignified, you sometimes show a sharp temper.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe all states should have an equal vote in the national legislature. You think the legislature should have one house, but you are willing to compromise on this.
Issue 2: You believe that three fifths of the slaves should be counted for determining the taxes paid by a state.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be chosen by special electors who are selected by state legislatures.

Sign the Constitution?
No. You leave the convention before the signing, but you will support ratification.

William Samuel Johnson
Connecticut (medium state)

Personal Background
You were born in Connecticut in 1727. Your father was a well-known clergyman and college president. You are well educated and graduated from Yale. Without formal training in law, you became a prosperous lawyer. Before the Revolution, you served in the Connecticut militia and in both houses of the colonial assembly. In the early 1770s, you became a judge of Connecticut’s highest court. When the Revolution broke out, you found it hard to choose sides. At first you worked to end the dispute with Britain peacefully, and you refused to participate in the First Continental Congress. After the war, however, you became a popular and respected delegate in the Continental Congress.

You are cautious and dislike controversy.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe all states should have an equal vote in the national legislature. You think the legislature should have one house, but you are willing to compromise on this.
Issue 2: You believe that slaves should be counted the same as other people for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe the national executive should be elected by the state legislatures.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.
Alexander Hamilton
New York (large state)

Personal Background
You were born in 1757 in the British West Indies. As a youth, you showed great intelligence and talent. You lived with your mother, and after she died, people on your island raised money to send you to school in New York. However, your college studies were interrupted by the Revolution. Although you were not yet 20 years old, you wrote several pamphlets to support the Patriot cause. When war broke out, you became an army officer and quickly rose to become an assistant to General George Washington. After the war, you became a lawyer. You were elected to the Continental Congress, and you also served in the state legislature.

Charming, passionate, and ambitious, you are a leading supporter of a strong central government and a powerful nation.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe that states should be represented in the national legislature based on their population. You think that the legislature should have two houses.
Issue 2: You believe that three fifths of the slaves should be counted for determining both a state’s representation in the national legislature and the taxes to be paid by a state.
Issue 3: You believe the executive should be chosen by electors selected by the people.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.

Abraham Baldwin
Georgia (small state)

Personal Background
You were born in Connecticut in 1754. Your ambitious father, a blacksmith, went into debt to educate you and his other children. After attending a local village school, you graduated from Yale and became a minister. During the Revolutionary War, you served as a chaplain in the Continental Army. Afterward, you studied law and moved to Georgia, where you became a lawyer. You served in the state assembly and the Continental Congress.

At the Constitutional Convention, you initially favor representation in the Senate based upon property holdings. However, you worry about angering the small states and begin to favor equal representation by state. Other delegates find you likeable and reasonable.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe that states should be represented in the national legislature based on their property and wealth, but you are open to the argument that all states should have an equal vote. You think that the legislature should have one house.
Issue 2: You believe that slaves should be counted equally with other people in determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe that the national executive should be selected by special electors.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.
Role Cards for Delegates to the Constitutional Convention

Robert Yates
New York (large state)

Personal Background
You were born in New York in 1738. After being educated in New York City, you studied law and became a lawyer in Albany, New York. During the Revolution, you helped to draft the first constitution for New York State. You served on the state supreme court, where some people criticized you for your fair treatment of Loyalists.

You are a supporter of the rights of states. At first, you expected that the Constitutional Convention would simply improve the Articles of Confederation. You are concerned that the convention may go too far in forming a strong central government.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe that all states must have an equal vote in the national legislature. You think that the legislature should have one house.
Issue 2: You believe that three fifths of the slaves should be counted for determining the taxes paid by a state.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be chosen by the national legislature.

Sign the Constitution?
No. You quit the convention when it becomes clear that it will form a powerful new national government instead of simply revising the Articles of Confederation.

William Paterson
New Jersey (small state)

Personal Background
You were born in Ireland in 1745. When you were two years old, your family came to America and settled in New Jersey. Your father became a prosperous merchant and manufacturer of tin goods. You received a good education and graduated from the College of New Jersey. You studied law, and by the time of the Revolution you had become a lawyer. When war with Britain broke out, you became a leading Patriot in New Jersey, serving in government and as a militia officer. Beginning in 1776, you served for seven years as New Jersey’s attorney general. You then spent your time practicing law until you were chosen to represent your state at the Constitutional Convention.

Hardworking, serious, and formal, you are a strong supporter of the rights of small states.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You firmly believe that all states must have an equal vote in the national legislature. You think that the legislature should have one house.
Issue 2: You believe that three fifths of the slaves should be counted for determining the taxes paid by a state, but not for determining representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be elected by the national legislature.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.
Jonathan Dayton  
New Jersey (small state)

Personal Background
You were born in New Jersey in 1760. Your father was a storekeeper who was active in politics. You received a good education and graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1776. After college, you immediately entered the Continental Army. You became a captain by the age of 19 and were imprisoned for a time by the British. After the war, you returned home, studied law, and established a law practice. You also served in the state assembly.

At the Constitutional Convention, you faithfully attend convention sessions and take part in debates. You are seen as honest, but sometimes quick-tempered.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You firmly believe that all states must have an equal vote in the national legislature. You think that the legislature should have one house.
Issue 2: You believe that slaves should be counted for determining the taxes paid by a state, but not for determining representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be chosen by the national legislature, with each state having one vote.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.

David Brearley  
New Jersey (small state)

Personal Background
You were born in New Jersey in 1745, and come from an old English family. After attending the College of New Jersey for a time, you chose law as a career. A strong supporter of the Revolution, you were arrested by the British for treason and freed by a group of Patriots. In 1776, you took part in the convention that drafted New Jersey’s state constitution. During the Revolutionary War, you became a captain in the militia. In 1779, you were elected chief justice of the New Jersey supreme court. You are active in the Episcopal Church and helped to write its prayer book.

As a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, you faithfully attend the sessions and defend the rights of small states.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You firmly believe that all states must have an equal vote in the national legislature. You think that the legislature should have one house.
Issue 2: You believe that three fifths of the slaves should be counted for determining the taxes paid by a state, but not for determining representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be elected by the national legislature.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.
John Lansing, Jr.  
New York (large state)

Personal Background
You were born in New York in 1754. You became a lawyer, and during the war spent a year as military secretary to General Philip Schuyler. You are quite wealthy. In addition to your law practice, you own a large estate. As a politician, you have served several terms in the New York assembly and are currently the mayor of Albany.

You came to the convention with the idea of simply improving the Articles of Confederation. As the debates go on, you are concerned that the Constitutional Convention might go too far in forming a powerful central government.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe that all states must have an equal vote in the national legislature. You think that the legislature should have one house.
Issue 2: You believe that all slaves should be counted for determining state taxes.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be elected by the national legislature.

Sign the Constitution?
No. You quit the convention when it becomes clear that it will form a powerful new national government instead of simply revising the Articles of Confederation.

Gouverneur Morris  
Pennsylvania (large state)

Personal Background
You were born in 1752 to a wealthy family in New York. Early in life, you lost a leg in a carriage accident. You were well educated as a youth. After graduating from King’s College in New York City, you studied law and became a lawyer. When the Revolution began, many of your friends were Loyalists. Although you worried about mob rule, you sided with the Patriots. You served in the militia and helped to draft New York’s state constitution. You also served in the state legislature and the Continental Congress. In 1779, you moved to Philadelphia, where you again practiced law.

A colorful and forceful speaker, you are one of the most active speakers at the Constitutional Convention.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You think the national legislature should have two houses. In the first house, all states should have an equal vote. In the second house, representation should be based on the amount of property and wealth a state has, as well as the size of its population.
Issue 2: You oppose counting slaves when determining representation in the national legislature or the taxes to be paid by a state.
Issue 3: You believe that the national executive should be elected directly by the people, but you are willing to consider other options.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.
Benjamin Franklin  

**Pennsylvania (large state)**

**Personal Background**  
You were born in Boston in 1706. At 17, you moved to Philadelphia, where you published *The Pennsylvania Gazette* and *Poor Richard’s Almanac*. You became known for starting libraries, schools, and hospitals, and also achieved fame as a scientist and inventor. Before the Revolution, you served in Pennsylvania’s legislature and represented Pennsylvania and other colonies to the British government in London. After returning to Philadelphia, you served in the Continental Congress, helped draft the Declaration of Independence, and became the new nation’s postmaster general. As a representative to France, you helped convince the French government to support the Revolution. In 1785, you became president of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania.

Despite your advanced age and poor health, you faithfully attend sessions of the Constitutional Convention. Your wisdom, humor, and calming influence help delegates resolve bitter disagreements.

**Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention**

**Issue 1:** You believe that states should be represented in the national legislature based on their population. You think that the legislature should have one house.  
**Issue 2:** You oppose counting slaves when determining representation in the national legislature or the taxes to be paid by a state.  
**Issue 3:** You believe that the national executive should be elected directly by the people.

**Sign the Constitution?** Yes.

Nicholas Gilman  

**New Hampshire (small state)**

**Personal Background**  
You were born in New Hampshire in 1755 to a large and distinguished family. As a youth, you attended local schools and worked in your father’s general store. During the Revolutionary War, you enlisted in the Continental Army and soon became a captain. You served in the army throughout the war. After the war, you returned to helping your father in the store, but your main interest was politics. You were a delegate to the Continental Congress from 1786 to 1788.

**Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention**

**Issue 1:** You firmly believe that all states should have an equal vote in the national legislature. You think that the legislature should have one house.  
**Issue 2:** You believe that slaves should be counted for determining the taxes paid by a state, but not for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.  
**Issue 3:** You believe that the executive should be elected by the national legislature.

**Sign the Constitution?** Yes.
Role Cards for Delegates to the Constitutional Convention

George Read

Personal Background
You were born in Maryland in 1733, and grew up in Delaware. After studying law in Philadelphia, you returned to Delaware and became a lawyer. In 1765, you began a career in the colonial legislature that lasted more than a decade. As a delegate to the Continental Congress, you supported colonial rights, but were the only signer of the Declaration of Independence to vote against independence. You served on the state legislative council and presided over the Delaware constitutional convention. After a narrow escape from the British during the war, you served as president of Delaware and are now a judge.

At the Constitutional Convention, you attend sessions faithfully and defend the rights of small states. However, you also argue for a strong executive.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You strongly believe that all states must have an equal vote in the national legislature. You think that the legislature should have one house.
Issue 2: You believe that slaves should be counted only for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be chosen by electors selected by the people.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.

Gunning Bedford, Jr.

Personal Background
You were born to a prominent family in Philadelphia in 1747. You graduated from the College of New Jersey and studied law in Philadelphia. After becoming a lawyer, you moved to Delaware. During the Revolutionary War, you served in the Continental Army. Later, you were active in both state and national politics. You served in the state legislature, on the state council, and in the Continental Congress. In 1784, you became attorney general of Delaware.

A forceful and hot-tempered man, you are a very active member of the Constitutional Convention. You speak out strongly for the rights of small states. You warn that they might have to seek foreign alliances if the convention fails to honor their interests.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You strongly believe all states must have an equal vote in the national legislature. You think the legislature should have one house, but are willing to compromise on this.
Issue 2: You believe that slaves should be counted only for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe that the national executive should be elected directly by the people.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.
Luther Martin
Maryland (medium state)

Personal Background
You were born in New Jersey in 1748. After graduating from college, you moved to Maryland, where you taught school and studied law. An early supporter of independence, you became attorney general of Maryland and often brought legal charges against Loyalists. You fought with the Baltimore Light Dragoons during the Revolutionary War. Later, your law practice became one of the largest and most successful in the country.

At the Constitutional Convention, you are an emotional speaker who consistently defends states' rights and opposes a strong central government. You worry that individuals and states are putting their interests ahead of the common good.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe that all states must have an equal vote in the national legislature. You think that the legislature should have one house.
Issue 2: You believe that slaves should be counted only for determining the amount of taxes a state pays.
Issue 3: You want the executive to be chosen by electors selected by state legislatures.

Sign the Constitution?
No. You walk out of the convention because you believe that the Constitution gives the national government too much power compared to the states, and because you believe that the system of representation in the national legislature is unfair.

James McHenry
Maryland (medium state)

Personal Background
You were born in Ireland in 1753. After coming to America in 1771, you started an import business in Maryland. You continued your schooling and studied medicine for two years. During the Revolutionary War, you served as a surgeon and were captured by the British. After being freed, you rejoined the Continental Army and became secretary to General Washington. You began to devote yourself to politics. During the 1780s, you have been elected to both the Maryland Senate and the Continental Congress.

Quiet and sensible, you keep a private journal during the Constitutional Convention that will prove to be useful to historians in future years.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe that all states must have an equal vote in the national legislature. You think that the legislature should have one house.
Issue 2: You believe that three fifths of the slaves should be counted only for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be chosen by electors appointed by state legislatures.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.
Daniel Carroll

Personal Background
You were born in Maryland in 1730 to a wealthy Catholic family and went to school in Europe. After returning to America, you were a reluctant supporter of the Revolutionary War. As a wealthy planter, you took little part in public life until 1781, when you were elected to the Continental Congress, where you signed the Articles of Confederation. You have served in the Maryland Senate and are a friend of George Washington.

You faithfully attend sessions of the Constitutional Convention and give about 20 speeches during the debates.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe that states should be represented in the national legislature based on their population. You think that the legislature should have two houses.
Issue 2: You believe that three fifths of the slaves should be counted only for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe that the national executive should be elected directly by the people.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.

James Madison

Personal Background
You were born in Virginia in 1751 to a family of wealthy planters. Sickly as a youth, you received an excellent education from private tutors and private schools. After graduating from college, you returned to Virginia. You embraced the Patriot cause and became very politically active. You helped draft Virginia’s constitution, you served in the House of Delegates, and you represented Virginia in the Continental Congress. You wrote extensively about problems with the Articles of Confederation, and you were influential in the movement to call a Constitutional Convention.

At the convention, you work tirelessly for a strong central government. Although you are not a great speaker, you speak more than 150 times. You are the single most influential delegate, and your detailed journal is the best record of the convention.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You strongly believe that states should be represented in the national legislature on the basis of their population. You think that the legislature should have two houses.
Issue 2: You believe that three fifths of the slaves should be counted only for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be chosen by the national legislature. You firmly oppose having the executive elected directly by the people.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.
Edmund Randolph  

**Virginia (large state)**

**Personal Background**
You were born in Virginia in 1753. After attending college, you studied law. When the Revolution broke out, your father, a Loyalist, moved to England. You then lived with your uncle, Peyton Randolph, a prominent figure in Virginia politics, and became an aide to General Washington. At age 23, you helped adopt Virginia’s first state constitution. Continuing your political career, you served as mayor of Williamsburg, as Virginia’s attorney general, as a delegate to the Continental Congress, and as governor of Virginia.

Although you favor strengthening the central government, you worry about the national government—particularly the executive—becoming too powerful.

**Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention**

**Issue 1:** You believe that states should be represented in the national legislature based on their population. You think that the legislature should have two houses.

**Issue 2:** You believe that three fifths of the slaves should be counted only for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.

**Issue 3:** You believe the national executive should be chosen by the national legislature.

**Sign the Constitution?**
No. You are opposed to a one-person executive, which you fear could lead to monarchy.

George Mason  

**Virginia (large state)**

**Personal Background**
You were born in Virginia in 1725. Your father died when you were ten, and you lived with your uncle, John Mercer. Your education was shaped by your uncle’s huge library, one third of which concerned the law. One of the richest planters in Virginia, you became an important figure in your community, serving as a judge and in Virginia’s House of Burgesses. During the Revolutionary War, you helped form a new government. By the early 1780s, you grew disgusted with politics and retired for a time from public life.

At the Constitutional Convention, you speak frequently. Your approach is cool and reasonable, free of personal attacks. You worry about protecting individual rights and ensuring that the national government is truly representative.

**Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention**

**Issue 1:** You believe that states should be represented in the national legislature based on their population. You think that the legislature should have two houses.

**Issue 2:** You believe that three fifths of the slaves should be counted only for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.

**Issue 3:** You believe that the executive should be chosen by the national legislature.

**Sign the Constitution?**
No. You want the Constitution to include a bill of rights, and you fear that the new government either will become a monarchy or will be controlled by the wealthy few.
John Dickinson

**Personal Background**
The son of a prosperous farmer, you were born in Maryland in 1732. Later, your family moved to Delaware, where you were educated by private tutors. After studying law in Philadelphia and England, you became a prominent lawyer in Philadelphia and served in the Delaware and Pennsylvania assemblies. When the Revolution broke out, you looked for peaceful ways to resolve the conflict. At the Second Continental Congress, you refused to sign the Declaration of Independence. You withdrew from politics for a few years. Later, you were elected to Congress. You served as president of the Delaware Supreme Executive Council, as president of Pennsylvania, and as Delaware’s delegate to the Constitutional Convention.

**Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention**

**Issue 1:** You propose that the national legislature should have two houses. In the first house, all states should have an equal vote. In the second house, representation should be based on the amount of taxes a state pays to the national government.

**Issue 2:** You believe that slaves should be counted only for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.

**Issue 3:** You want each of the 13 states to nominate its “best citizen” for the national executive, and then have the national legislature choose from among the candidates.

**Sign the Constitution?** Yes.

William Blount

**Personal Background**
You were born in North Carolina in 1749, the oldest son of a large family, and received a good education. During the Revolutionary War, you enlisted as a paymaster in the North Carolina forces. After the war, you become active in politics and served in the North Carolina legislature and as a delegate to the Continental Congress.

You are absent from the Constitutional Convention for more than a month while you attend the Continental Congress. As the convention goes on, you support the Constitution only reluctantly. A fellow delegate describes you as “plain, honest, and sincere.”

**Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention**

**Issue 1:** You believe that states should be represented in the national legislature based on their population. You think that the legislature should have one house.

**Issue 2:** You believe that three fifths of the slaves should be counted only for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.

**Issue 3:** You believe that the executive should be elected by the national legislature.

**Sign the Constitution?** Yes.
Charles Cotesworth Pinckney

Personal Background
You were born in South Carolina in 1746. As a boy, you accompanied your father, a prominent planter, to England. You graduated from Oxford and then studied law and science. After returning to South Carolina in 1769, you practiced law and became an officer in the royal militia. You soon joined the Patriot cause and helped plan a temporary new government for South Carolina. During the Revolutionary War, you rose to the rank of colonel and also served in the state legislature. You spent nearly two years as a prisoner of the British.

You are a leading participant at the Constitutional Convention, speaking out for a powerful national government and defending the institution of slavery.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe that the national legislature should have two houses. In the lower house, states should be represented based on their population. In the upper house, each state should have one vote.
Issue 2: You believe that slaves should be counted equally with other people in determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be elected by the national legislature.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.

John Rutledge

Personal Background
You were born to a large family in South Carolina in 1739. You studied law in London and then returned to South Carolina, where you practiced law and made a fortune in plantations and slaves. A moderate Patriot, you tried to avoid a complete break with Great Britain in the years leading up to the Revolution. You served in the state legislature and the Continental Congress, and helped to reorganize the government of South Carolina. In 1779, you were elected governor. During the 1780s, you have again served in the state legislature, as a judge on a state court, and in the Continental Congress.

At the Constitutional Convention, you speak often and effectively, arguing for the interests of southern states. Always courteous, you are careful not to offend others.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe that states should be represented in the national legislature based on their wealth and population. You think that the legislature should have two houses.
Issue 2: You believe that slaves should be counted equally with other people in determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be elected by the upper house of the national legislature.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.
Role Cards for Delegates to the Constitutional Convention

James Wilson  
Pennsylvania (large state)

Personal Background
You were born in Scotland in 1741 or 1742, and you were educated at universities there. You came to America in 1765 and decided to study law. After becoming involved in Revolutionary politics, you wrote a pamphlet on the British Parliament that was widely read in both England and America. As a delegate to the Continental Congress, you were one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. During the war, you were a conservative Patriot who associated with the wealthy and powerful. As a lawyer, you defended the interests of Loyalists. You have been elected to Congress twice.

You are respected for your honesty and are very influential at the Constitutional Convention, where you are one of the most active speakers.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You strongly believe that states must be represented in the national legislature on the basis of their populations. You think that the legislature should have two houses.
Issue 2: You believe that three fifths of the slaves should be counted for determining a state’s representation in the national legislature as well as the taxes to be paid by a state.
Issue 3: You believe the national executive should be elected directly by the people, but you are willing to listen to other options.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.

William Few  
Georgia (small state)

Personal Background
You were born on a farm in Maryland in 1748. Your family was poor, and you received little schooling. After a move to North Carolina, one of your brothers was hanged as a result of a fight between frontiersmen and the royal governor, and the family farm was destroyed. The family then moved to Georgia. By this time, you had taught yourself law, and you became a lawyer in the city of Augusta. When the Revolutionary War began, you were an enthusiastic Patriot. You soon proved your ability as a leader and became a lieutenant colonel. You served in the state assembly and the Continental Congress.

You miss a good part of the Constitutional Convention while you are busy in Congress. However, you do cast important votes in favor of a strong national government.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention
Issue 1: You believe that states should be represented in the national legislature based on their population. You think that the national legislature should have one house.
Issue 2: You strongly believe that slaves should be counted equally with other people in determining a state’s representation in the national legislature.
Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be elected by the national legislature.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.
Mask for John Langdon
Mask for Rufus King
Mask for Oliver Ellsworth
Mask for William Samuel Johnson
Mask for John Lansing, Jr.
Mask for Gunning Bedford, Jr.
Mask for George Mason
Mask for William Blount
Read each section in *History Alive! The United States Through Industrialism*. Then answer the question in the corresponding box.

### 8.3 Shays’s Rebellion and the Need for Change

Why were many Americans concerned by the actions of Shays and his supporters?

Congress could not defend its arsenal against Shays and his followers. It seemed as if the nation were falling apart.

### 8.4 Opening the Constitutional Convention

What beliefs did the delegates share? What ideas divided them?

All the delegates believed that government had to protect peoples’ rights to liberty and equality, and that a republic was the best form of government.

They disagreed about which people were entitled to vote and to hold office. They were divided over which should have more power, the national government or the individual states.
8.5 Issue: How Should States Be Represented in the New Government?

How did the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan differ?

The Virginia Plan called for two houses of Congress. Representation in each house would be determined by population. The New Jersey Plan called for a single house of Congress. Each state would have an equal vote.

8.6 Resolution: The Great Compromise

What compromise did the delegates create to resolve the issue of state representation?

The Great Compromise called for two houses of Congress. In the first house, the House of Representatives, representation would be based on population. In the second house, the Senate, each state would have two senators elected by the state legislatures.
8.7 Issue: How Should Slaves Be Counted?

How did the views of delegates from northern states differ from those of delegates from southern states on this issue?

The North wanted slaves counted for taxation but not representation. The South wanted slaves counted for representation but not taxation.

8.8 Resolution: The Three-Fifths Compromise

What compromise did the delegates create to resolve this issue?

Three fifths of the slaves would be counted for both taxation and representation.

8.9 Issue: How Should the Chief Executive Be Elected?

Why didn’t the delegates agree on how the national executive should be chosen?

Some wanted the executive to be chosen by Congress, but others objected that this would make the executive a “flunky” of Congress. Some wanted the people to elect the executive, but others were afraid that people would only vote for candidates from their state. Finally, some wanted a group of electors from each state that would look beyond state interests.
8.10 Resolution: The Electoral College

What compromise did the delegates create to resolve this issue?

The executive would be elected by a special body called the Electoral College. Delegates to the Electoral College would be chosen by the states.

8.11 The Convention Ends

Why did some delegates refuse to sign the final draft of the Constitution?

Some feared that it gave the national government too much power and did not protect the rights of the people.

8.12 The Constitution Goes to the Nation

What were The Federalist Papers, and why were they written?

The Federalist Papers were articles written by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay urging ratification of the Constitution.