

Understanding the Articles of Confederation – Sample Answers

Directions: Read the directions carefully for each question. While you read, mark text with the symbol indicated that helps you answer the corresponding questions. After reading, use the specific text-based evidence to answer each question. Write your answers in complete sentences and in your own words.

What are the Articles of Confederation?

Evidence from Text	was the first government of the newly formed United States
Answer in complete sentences	The Articles of Confederation was the first government of the United States.

What is a confederation?

Evidence from Text	A confederation is a government system where power is located with the independent states and there is little power in the central government.
Answer in complete sentences	A confederation is a government where the states have more power than the central government.

What were the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation?

Evidence from Text	The Congress did not have the power to tax, so it could not pay for the army and navy needed to defend the nation. It also couldn't regulate the trade agreements states were making with other countries. The Congress could also not enforce any laws they passed because there was no central leadership to make sure that laws were being enforced in each state or a central judicial system to interpret laws or settle disputes between states. Finally, if any changes were to be made to the Articles of Confederation, unanimous approval from all 13 states was required.
Answer in complete sentences	Under the Articles of Confederation, the Congress could not tax, could not regulate trade, or enforce laws. There was no central leadership to enforce laws and there was no central judicial branch. It required unanimous approval of all 13 states in order to change any part of the articles.

What does the term debt mean? What does debt have to do with Shays's Rebellion?

Evidence from Text	money owed; A foreclosure is when a bank or other entity takes back property when taxes or debts are not paid. The farmers' land was threatened with foreclosure because they were promised that they did not have to pay taxes and other debts on their
Answer in complete sentences	Debt is money owed for something. Farmers in MA were told they did not have to pay back debt from the war, but this promise was not kept and their land was going to be taken away. The farmers rebelled and this was known as Shays's Rebellion.

How did Shays's Rebellion lead to the Constitutional Convention?

Evidence from Text	the situation made it clear that the national government did not have the ability to maintain order in this new nation; After Shays's Rebellion, Alexander Hamilton of New York organized a meeting in Philadelphia in 1787
Answer in complete sentences	Shays's Rebellion made it clear that the central government did not have the ability to keep order in the new nation. This causes Alexander Hamilton to organize a meeting.

What happened at the Constitutional Convention?

Evidence from Text	This meeting, called the Constitutional Convention, would eventually throw out the Articles of Confederation and draft the Constitution.
Answer in complete sentences	At the Constitutional Convention, the Articles of Confederation were thrown out and the Constitution was written.