

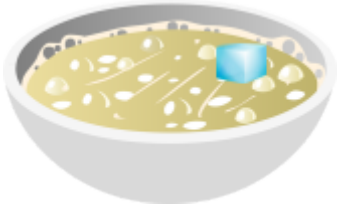


Advantages of a Federal System of Government-Sample Answers

The people of the United States have lived under many different systems of government. As colonies of the British Empire, Americans lived under a unitary system of government. King George III and his Parliament gave little to no say to the colonists. The colonists had no representation in Parliament and the King made all the decisions for his colonies. Here, the King and his Parliament were very authoritarian in their governance, favoring strict obedience to authority. This did not sit well with the colonists, and following their victory over the King, the Second Continental Congress implemented a confederal system of government. Under the Articles of Confederation, the newly created states held most of the governmental power. They were free to make decisions that benefited them and were not beholden to the national government. In fact, the national government was so weak in its governmental power, that it was beholden to the states to be able to carry out its functions under the Articles of Confederation. Under this confederal government, many problems arose that highlighted the inadequacies of the system and the inability of the states and the national government to effectively deal with them. Consequently, a convention was called to address these problems. What materialized was a new federal system of government. Outlined in the new U.S. Constitution, powers are shared between the national government and the states. Under this federal system, the national government has the power to do only those things which are expressly identified in the U.S. Constitution or inherent to it because of the functions it carries out. Under this same document, the states can do those things which are not mentioned in the U.S. Constitution or denied to them by it. This shared power structure highlights how federalism balances the powers of government between the Nation and the States.

Think of the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Based on the historical reading above, assign each *Goldilocks* image a system of government and explain.

This porridge is too hot!	This porridge is just right!	This porridge is too cold!
		
This is the unitary system of government because the national government has all the power and is too strong. The people's voices are not heard.	This is the federal system of government because it balances the power between the states and the national government. It promotes unity while allowing states to focus on individual needs. It helps balance and check power.	This is the confederal system of government because the national government is too weak. It has to rely on the states to agree. It can not make the states abide by national decisions. There is no unity to handle issues that arise.

Note: If a student flips unitary and confederal as which one is “too hot” and “too cold” that is not problematic.