

FEDERALISTS AND ANTI-FEDERALISTS

SS.912.CG.1.3 Explain arguments presented in the Federalist Papers in support of ratifying the U.S. Constitution and a republican form of government.

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2023 BENCHMARK UPDATES

- Updated from SS.912.C.1.4
 - Changed from “~~Analyze and categorize the diverse viewpoints presented by the Federalists and Anti-Federalists concerning ratification of the Constitution and the inclusion of a Bill of Rights.~~” to “Explain arguments presented in the Federalist Papers in support of ratifying the U.S. Constitution and a republican form of government.”
- Depth of Knowledge Changes within Benchmark
 - Changed from “Analyze and categorize” to “Explain”
- Addition of Benchmark Clarifications
 - Benchmark clarifications are an addition to the 2023-2024 high school civics and government benchmarks. Benchmark clarifications are listed in the lesson summary below.

Essential Teacher Content Background Information

[Teacher Content Notes Not Appropriate For Student Use]

This section addresses the following topics:

1. The Federalists, Anti-Federalists and the Bill of Rights
2. Key Arguments Favoring the New Federal Constitution
3. Key Arguments Opposing the New Federal Constitution
4. The Addition of the Bill of Rights as Compromise

1. The Federalists, Anti-Federalists and the Bill of Rights

It is a common misconception that the Framers of the U.S. Constitution were united in their efforts and desires to move past the Articles of Confederation and form a federal system that protected the nation from foreign and internal aggressors, and united the nation in their efforts to experience representative democracy, separation of powers, checks and balances and federalism.

In fact, those who attended the 1787 Constitutional Convention were divided along three dimensions in their opinion as to the best direction for government to take. The dominant perspective sought to retain the Articles of Confederation with some modification to address the concerns that weakened the Articles of Confederation. The year before the Constitutional Convention, in 1786, the Annapolis Convention included 12 delegates from five states (New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia) that unanimously called for a constitutional convention. That convention, which began in May 1787 and ended the following September 17, was originally called the “Meeting of Commissioners to Remedy Defects of the Federal Government.” Most of those who attended the May 1787 convention did so because they wanted to “remedy defects” and not restructure the government. A second, smaller (and, at first, secret) group were those who supported a restructuring of government that would shift power from the states to a shared power system between the national and state governments. This second group was led by Virginia delegate James Madison who was soon joined by fellow Virginian, General George Washington and Alexander Hamilton, the New York delegate who drafted the resolution calling for the constitutional convention in the first place. This third, and smallest group, were those who supported returning to status as British subjects. Their memories of the stability they experienced living under British rule were fresh enough that they preferred returning to a known system than pursuing an unknown system (proposed federal system) or fixing an unworkable system (Articles of Confederation).

The dominant conflict at the convention was between the Federalists (those supporting a new federal system) and the Anti-Federalists (those who wanted to retain the structure of the Articles of Confederation). One of the key dimensions of conflict was whether the new federal constitution should include a listing of rights that protected individuals from government abuse of power. The resolution of this conflict, discussed in detail below, was achieved with the Bill of Rights.

2. Key Arguments Favoring the New Federal Constitution

The group that favored the new federal Constitution was the Federalists. They made the following arguments favoring the new federal Constitution:

- A. The separation of powers and checks and balances system protected the people. No one group could control the other two.

- B. The Constitution lacked a specific enumeration of rights. This approach actually protected the people because a list of protected rights might suggest that rights that were not on the list could then be violated.
- C. The Constitution would more closely unite the states as one nation.
- D. A strong central government would foster the commercial growth of the new country.

3. Key Arguments Opposing the New Federal Constitution

The group that opposed the new federal Constitution was called the Anti-Federalists. They made the following arguments against the new federal Constitution.

- A. The Constitution gave too much power to the national government at the expense of the state governments.
- B. The Constitution lacked a specific enumeration of rights which was needed in order to protect the people from the national government.
- C. The Constitution would allow the national government to maintain an army in peacetime.
- D. The “necessary and proper” clause (also called the “elastic clause”) gave too much power to Congress. The “necessary and proper” clause is found in Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution. It allows Congress to do what it believes is “necessary and proper” in order to carry out its other responsibilities.
- E. The executive branch held too much power.
- F. The new constitution created a new and untested form of government
- G. The method selected for ratifying the Constitution violated the Articles of Confederation (the decentralized, state-centered government in place at the time that the Constitution was being debated)
- H. A country as large as the United States could not be controlled by one national government

4. The Addition of the Bill of Rights as Compromise

The most effective argument presented by the Anti-Federalists was the lack of a specific enumeration of rights. The American Revolution, in which the American people fought to defend their rights, had ended just 10 years earlier, and remained fresh in the minds of Americans. Americans feared that the newly formed and empowered national government might withhold those rights. The lack of a bill of rights became the centerpiece of the Anti-Federalists’ arguments against the new federal Constitution.

Article VII of the new constitution required that nine of the existing 13 state legislatures (or their conventions) ratify the document. This meant that several state governments, elected under a state-centered political system, had to be convinced that a shift in power to a shared system was in their best interests. The Anti-Federalists could take advantage of these circumstances, as it was the original purpose of the Second Continental Congress that began in May 1787, to retain the Articles of Confederation (provided that some fixes were made). However, the result of that process was a federal system. Put another way, most current state legislators expected that the Articles of Confederation would be retained, and likely supported the decentralized system, at least in principle. Anti-Federalists could capitalize on these state legislators’ concerns.

Lesson Summary

BENCHMARK			
SS.912.CG.1.3 Explain arguments presented in the Federalist Papers in support of ratifying the U.S. Constitution and a republican form of government.			
BENCHMARK CLARIFICATIONS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students will recognize that the Federalist Papers argued for a federal system of government, separation of powers and a representative form of government that is accountable to its citizens.Students will analyze Federalist and Anti-Federalist arguments concerning ratification of the U.S. Constitution and inclusion of a bill of rights.			
FLORIDA CIVIC LITERACY EXAM COMPETENCY CONNECTION			
Competency 2: Understanding of the United States Constitution and its application Competency 3: Knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-government			
OVERVIEW			
In this lesson, students will explore the arguments presented by the Federalists and Anti-Federalists in regards to elements of and ratification of the U.S. Constitution.			
ESSENTIAL QUESTION			
What were the main arguments of the Federalists and Anti-Federalists?			
GOVERNMENT CONTENT VOCABULARY			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Anti-Federalists, Anti-Federalist Papers, Articles of Confederation, Bill of Rights, constitutional republic, Federalists, Federalist Papers, federal system, limited government, ratify, representative government, separation of powers, U.S. Constitution			
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES			
Document analysis	Card sort	Citing evidence	Academic debate
MATERIALS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Federalists and Anti-Federalists slidesExcerpts from The Federalist PapersFederalist Papers Graphic OrganizerFederalist vs. Anti-Federalist Card SortNon-Stop LyricsHamilton: Non-Stop song/video (external link)Ratification and Bill of Rights Debate readingRatification Twitter DebateTweet Up activity sheet			

B.E.S.T. STANDARDS
<p>The grade in which this lesson is taught will determine the specific B.E.S.T. standards correlation. Thematically, this lesson aligns to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ELA.R.2.1 Structure• ELA.R.2.2 Central Idea• ELA.R.2.4 Argument

Suggested Student Activity Sequence & Pace

DAY	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE
DAY 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Display the first slide of the “Federalists and Anti-Federalists” slides. 2. Ask students if they can identify any of the individuals pictured. (James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay [left] / Patrick Henry, George Clinton, Richard Henry Lee [right]) As they will most likely not recognize these individuals, provide scaffolded clues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We all played a role as Founders of the nation ■ Some of us helped write the U.S. Constitution ■ We published papers on the topic of the Constitution ■ We were divided into two groups ■ We argued over the ratification of the U.S. Constitution 3. Remind students that after the creation of the U.S. Constitution, not everyone thought it was the perfect document ready for ratification. Those with strong opinions fell into one of two groups: Federalists or Anti-Federalists. 4. Project slide 2 and have students copy the key terms while you expand their understanding of the two sides. Teacher Note: Use the Essential Teacher Background Information to broaden discussion. 5. Project slide 3 and identify with students the main topics that the Federalists and Anti-Federalists argued about. Students should continue taking notes. 6. Explain to students that in this lesson, they will analyze these arguments in more depth, using the words of the Federalists and Anti-Federalists themselves. 7. Place students into pairs. 8. Provide students a copy of “Excerpts from The Federalist Papers” and a “Federalist Papers Graphic Organizer” 9. Working with their partner, students will read the provided excerpts and discuss the meaning, filling in their organizer as they read. 10. While pairs/small groups work, circulate the room to monitor for engagement and understanding. Teacher Note: As some of the 18th-century language of these excerpts can be difficult, it may even be helpful to invite a school-based literacy coach to team teach with you for this lesson if you have one. 11. Once students complete the task, lead a brief review, calling on a few students to share the arguments and evidence they found. Teacher Note: Use the provided answer key to help guide discussion. 12. Return to the “Federalists and Anti-Federalists” slides and project the quotes on slide 4. 13. Explain to students that these three quotes were stated by known Anti-Federalists. Review them as a class. 14. Either in a whole-class discussion, or an individual writing task, have students use their knowledge from the Federalist Papers gained today to explain how a Federalist may have responded to these arguments/sentiments.
DAY 2	<p>Planning Note: Prior to the start of class today, you will need to copy, cut, and organize the “Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists Card Sort”. Making class sets and placing them in envelopes</p>

makes them reusable from one class period to the next.

1. Begin the class by providing students a copy of the “Non-Stop Lyrics” from the musical Hamilton.
2. Review the questions at the top that students need to try and answer as they listen.
3. Play the song “[Hamilton: Non-Stop](#)” from the musical using this video and allow students to listen for answers to the questions.
Teacher Note: This is a purposefully selected excerpt and not the entire song. If you use the song from another link, please only play minutes 2:04 to 4:43 of the song.
4. Review answers first with a shoulder partner and then as a class.
5. Next place students in pairs or small groups.
6. Distribute the “Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists Card Sort” and provide students time to review the arguments they learned about yesterday by sorting the statements into two piles: Federalists or Anti-Federalists.
7. Review answers as a class.
8. Ask students: Out of all the components of the Constitution that the Federalists and Anti-Federalists argued about, what was the biggest point of contention? (Whether to include a Bill of Rights)
9. Explain to students that the number one issue standing in the way of ratification of the U.S. Constitution was the absence of a Bill of Rights. This will be the topic we analyze today.
10. Continuing in their pairs or small groups, pass out the “Ratification and Bill of Rights Debate” reading to students.
Teacher Note: These are excerpts from Federalist No. 84 and Anti-Federalist No. 84.
11. Students should work through the reading in their pairs/small group, highlighting, circling, or underlining the central arguments of each side. After they finish, they should analyze their work and on the back of the paper, craft a summary statement for each viewpoint.
12. Once students have completed the reading, discuss the arguments as a whole class.
13. Explain to students that you are going to finish today by taking everything they have learned about the Federalists and Anti-Federalists arguments over the course of the lesson and bring this debate into modern times.
14. Provide each pair/small group a copy of the “Ratification Twitter Debate”.
15. Remind students that back in the 1780s, the essays written by these two opposing groups had no limit on length....but what if they did?
16. As a whole class, read the mock Twitter exchange between Alexander Hamilton (Federalist) and George Mason (Anti-Federalist).
17. Give each pair/small group a “Tweet Up” activity sheet.
18. Using the handout, instruct students to craft one additional tweet for Hamilton and one additional tweet for Mason that represents their views on ratifying the Constitution.
19. As groups work, monitor for engagement and understanding.
20. Once students have created their tweets, call on a few students to come to the front of the room to represent Hamilton and a few more students to come up and represent Mason. They should line up opposite each other. Have the students share their tweets out loud, one at a time and alternating viewpoints to mimic a debate. (i.e. first a Hamilton tweet, then a Mason tweet, back to a different Hamilton tweet, etc.)

Government Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Definition
Anti-Federalists	a group of people in the early United States who opposed ratification of the U.S. Constitution because they feared a strong national government and a lack of protection for individual rights
Anti-Federalist Papers	a series of essays written to oppose ratification of the proposed U.S. Constitution
Articles of Confederation	the first constitution of the colonies, in effect from 1781 until 1787
Bill of Rights	the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution
constitutional republic	a form of government in which there is democratic voting, but governmental power is limited by the existence of a constitution that protects the rights of citizens
Federalists	a group of people in the early United States who favored the establishment of a strong national government and who worked for ratification of the U.S. Constitution
Federalist Papers	a series of essays written to explain and defend the proposed U.S. Constitution
federal system	a system of government in which power is shared between a national government and state/local governments
limited government	a government that has been limited in power by a constitution, or written agreement
ratify	the process of formally approving something
representative government	a type of government that allows people to vote and elect government officials to represent their beliefs and make decisions on their behalf
separation of powers	the structure of the federal government, according to the U.S. Constitution, that sets up three branches with their own distinct powers and responsibilities
U.S. Constitution	a document that set up the government for the United States, establishing it as a republic, with three branches

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Florida Department of Education: Florida Civic Literacy Exam Homepage](#)

Florida Department of Education's Civic Literacy Reading List

- *Federalist Papers* by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay
- *Notes on the Constitutional Convention* by James Madison
- *The Republic* by Plato

ANSWER KEYS

Sample Answers: Federalist Papers Graphic Organizer

Sample Answers: Federalists vs. Anti-Federalist Card Sort

Sample Answers: Hamilton: Non-Stop Questions

Sample Answers: Ratification and Bill of Rights Debate reading

SOURCES

Federalist No. 10: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-10-02-0178>

Federalist No. 51: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-10-02-0279>

Federalist No. 45: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-10-02-0254>

Federalist No. 84: <https://guides.loc.gov/federalist-papers/text-81-85#s-lg-box-wrapper-25493491>

Anti-Federalist No. 84: https://www.gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/inline-pdfs/AntiFedPapers_0.pdf

Brutus I: <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/brutus-i/>

Federal Farmer I: <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/federal-farmer-i/>

Hamilton: Non-Stop video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_YHVPNOHySk&t=5s

Day 2 lesson activities adapted from the K20 Center at the University of Oklahoma under Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License: <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/lesson/492>