The Constitutional Convention
Timeline of Events

- 1774 First Continental Congress
- 1775-1781 Second Continental Congress
- 1775-1783 Revolutionary War
- 1776 Declaration of Independence
- 1781 Articles of Confederation adopted
- 1781-1789 Confederation Government
- 1783 Treaty of Paris
- 1785 Mount Vernon Convention
- 1786 Annapolis Convention
- 5/25-9/17/1787 Constitutional Convention
- 1787-1790 Ratification of the Constitution
- 6/21/1788 9th state (New Hampshire) ratifies Constitution
- 4/30/1789 George Washington becomes President
- 1790 13th state (Rhode Is.) ratifies Constitution
I. The “Original Constitution”
The Articles of Confederation

- Why a **confederation** of states?

  - Founding fathers desired to avoid an authoritarian government from which they had just declared their independence from (a confederation style of government is about as far removed from an authoritarian government as one can get)
  - Under the Articles there was an unicameral legislature (chosen by state legislatures) & no federal executive or judiciary
  - State governments held most powers
II. Basic Weakness of the Articles of Confederation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No chief executive; the Congress worked through committees</td>
<td>No coordination of committees and no uniform domestic or foreign policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Basic Weakness of the Articles of Confederation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required nine of thirteen states to approve laws</td>
<td>Rarely delegates form all thirteen states in Congress at once; often voted as blocs of smaller states (5) vs. larger states (8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Basic Weakness of the Articles of Confederation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required all states to approve amendments</td>
<td>Never get agreement of all thirteen states, so Articles never amended</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## II. Basic Weakness of the Articles of Confederation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No power to levy or collect taxes; Congress could raise money only by borrowing or asking states for money</td>
<td>No reason for states to agree to requests; Congress always in need of money to fight the war, pay debts, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## II. Basic Weakness of the Articles of Confederation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No power to regulate interstate &amp; international commerce</td>
<td>Led to disputes between states and inability to regulate trade with foreign nations to protect American business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Basic Weakness of the Articles of Confederation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No power to enforce treaties</td>
<td>No power to force British to abide by the Treaty of Paris of 1783</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Basic Weakness of the Articles of Confederation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No power to enforce its own laws</td>
<td>Only advise and request states to abide by national laws</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## II. Basic Weakness of the Articles of Confederation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No national court system; state courts interpreted national laws</td>
<td>Difficult to get states to abide by state court decisions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. The Need for Revision

- Events highlighting the flaws in the Articles:
  - Shay’s Rebellion
  - Disputes between multiple states over currency exchange, interstate trade, and navigation

- **Annapolis Convention** - called to solve the economic problems facing the U.S.
  - Results:
    - Decision for revision of the Articles of Confederation
    - Revision led to a new constitution
IV. The Constitutional Convention

- The Convention lasted May 25-September 17, 1787
- The delegates knew that COMPROMISE would be necessary or the country would collapse
IV. The Constitutional Convention

B. The Framers:

1. Every state except Rhode Island sent delegates
2. 74 delegates elected to the Convention, 55 attended, 39 signed the Constitution
3. Notables include Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Madison known as the “Father of the Constitution” (Virginia Plan), Hamilton
IV. The Constitutional Convention

- Economic Motive Theories
  1. Some historians believed that the Framers supported the Constitution because they expected to economically benefit from it
  2. Recent research claims that state economic considerations outweighed personal considerations (ex. trade and slavery)
IV. The Constitutional Convention
Issue #1-Representation

- Differences between large & small states
- Without compromise sparsely populated states would not ratify

**Virginia Plan**

- Bicameral legislature
- Representation based on a state’s population
- Elected by citizens
IV. The Constitutional Convention
Issue #1-Representation

The New Jersey Plan

- Unicameral legislature
- Equal representation regardless of state population
  - Each state would have one vote
IV. The Constitutional Convention
Issue #1-Representation

The (Great) Connecticut Compromise

-Proposed a bicameral legislature with one house based on a state’s population to determine representation and the other house would have two members from each state
IV. The Constitutional Convention
Issue #2-Slavery

- The “dirty compromise” of the Constitutional Convention
- Argued as the greatest flaw of the document

1. The Three-Fifths Compromise
   - settled the issue of representation in the House by counting slaves as three-fifths of a person
IV. The Constitutional Convention
Issue #2-Slavery

2. The Commerce & Slave Trade Compromise
-allowed the slave trade to continue until 1808
-Congress was forbidden to tax exports but was granted to regulate interstate and foreign commerce
-most Northern delegates desired to end slavery however Southern states would not ratify the Constitution if done so
-Think COMPROMISE.
The Constitutional Convention
Issue #3-Other Compromises

- Legislative Branch Compromises
  - All bills regarding taxation must originate in the House of Representatives

- Executive branch agreements:
  - One chief executive v. multiple
  - Four year term in office
  - Using the Electoral College system to select a president

- Other Significant Constitutionally Related Compromises
  - All taxation related matters would originate in the House of Representatives
  - Adding a Bill of Rights (Amendments 1-10)
  - National laws are supreme to state law
V. The Ratification Process

- The delegates of the Constitutional Convention signed the document September 17, 1787
- Nine of the thirteen states had to ratify the Constitution at the state level in order for the document of become effective
- The great debate
  - Federalists were in favor of a strong federal government. The Federalists used the *Federalist Papers* to wage a public relations battle in favor of ratification outlining the positive aspects of proposed new government in print media
  - Anti-Federalists favored a weaker national government
Timeline of Events

- 1774 First Continental Congress
- 1775-1781 Second Continental Congress
- 1775-1783 Revolutionary War
- 1776 Declaration of Independence
- 1781 Articles of Confederation adopted
- 1781-1789 Confederation Government
- 1783 Treaty of Paris
- 1785 Mount Vernon Convention
- 1786 Annapolis Convention
- 5-9/1787 Constitutional Convention
- 1787-1790 Ratification of the Constitution
- 6/21/1788 9th state (New Hampshire) ratifies Constitution
- 4/30/1789 George Washington becomes President
- 1790 13th state (Rhode Is.) ratifies Constitution