

Making the Constitution: Federal Power



The Articles of Confederation were weak. But they were weak on purposes. The 13 states of the United States did not trust each other. They did not want a strong central government, like a king. They wanted these “United States” not the “United States.” So, there was a problem with the Constitution. Many people believed it gave too much power to the federal government.

Complete

1. The Articles of Confederation were weak because...

The Federal government is another word for the national government. Now, when we think federal government, we think Washington, DC. Back then, the federal government was very weak; the state governments were very strong. Many people liked it that way. They are called anti-federalists. They refused to ratify or pass the Constitution.

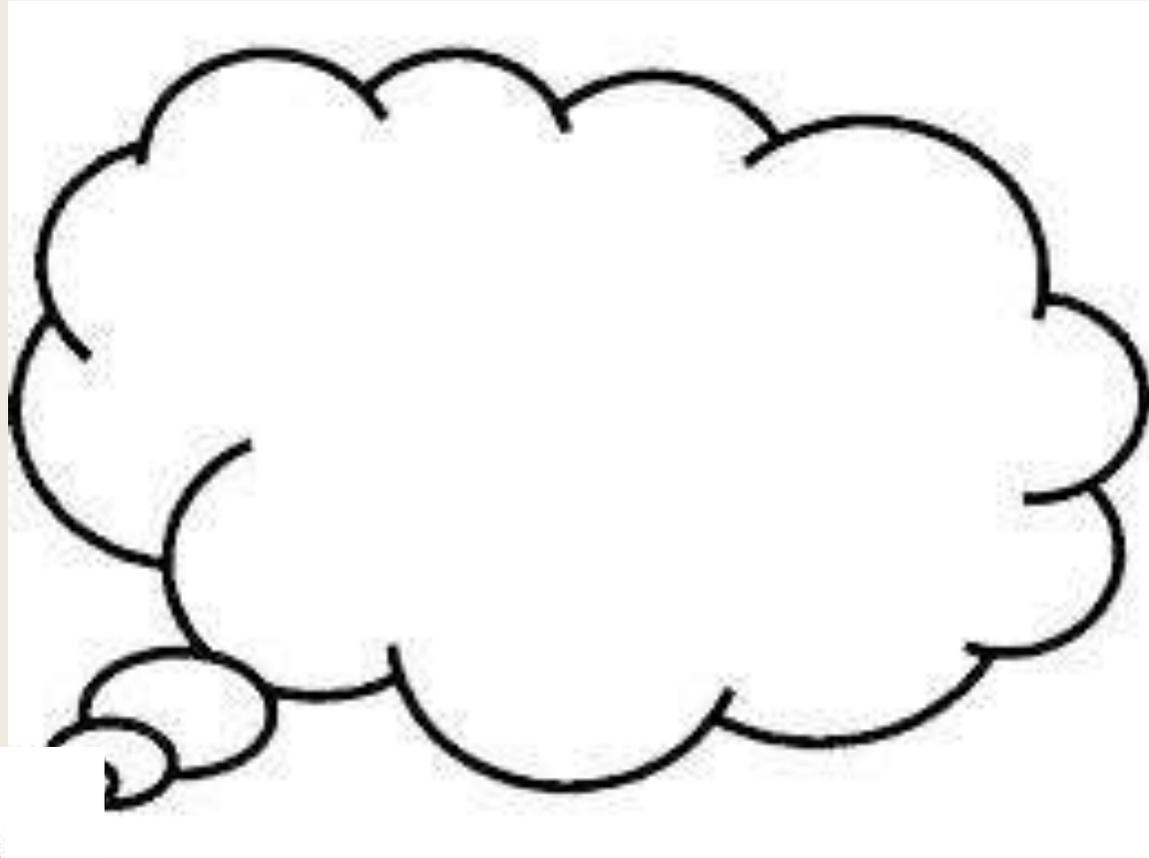
Complete

1. The federal government refers to the _____ government.
2. Nowadays, the federal government is very WEAK / STRONG.
3. During the Constitution period, the state government was WEAK / STRONG.
4. The people who liked strong state government were called _____.
5. Ratify means to _____ the Constitution.
6. The anti-federalists refused to _____ the Constitution.

The anti-federalists wanted the states to be strong. They wanted the federal government to be weak. They were afraid of the federal government. They trusted their state governments more. Why should they be afraid of the federal government? Well, the last “big” government they met was the British government. And... they didn’t treat people well. They didn’t protect natural rights.



What is George Mason, the anti-federalist, thinking?



But many people wanted a strong central government. These are the Federalists. They want a strong government to help the economy and solve problems that the states can't do. They say: How can America be powerful without a strong federal government? The Federalists believe that the Constitution is the answer for creating a strong federal government.



The two groups make two compromises so that they can ratify the Constitution. Ratify means to pass the Constitution. The anti-federalists refused to ratify the Constitution unless these compromises are made.

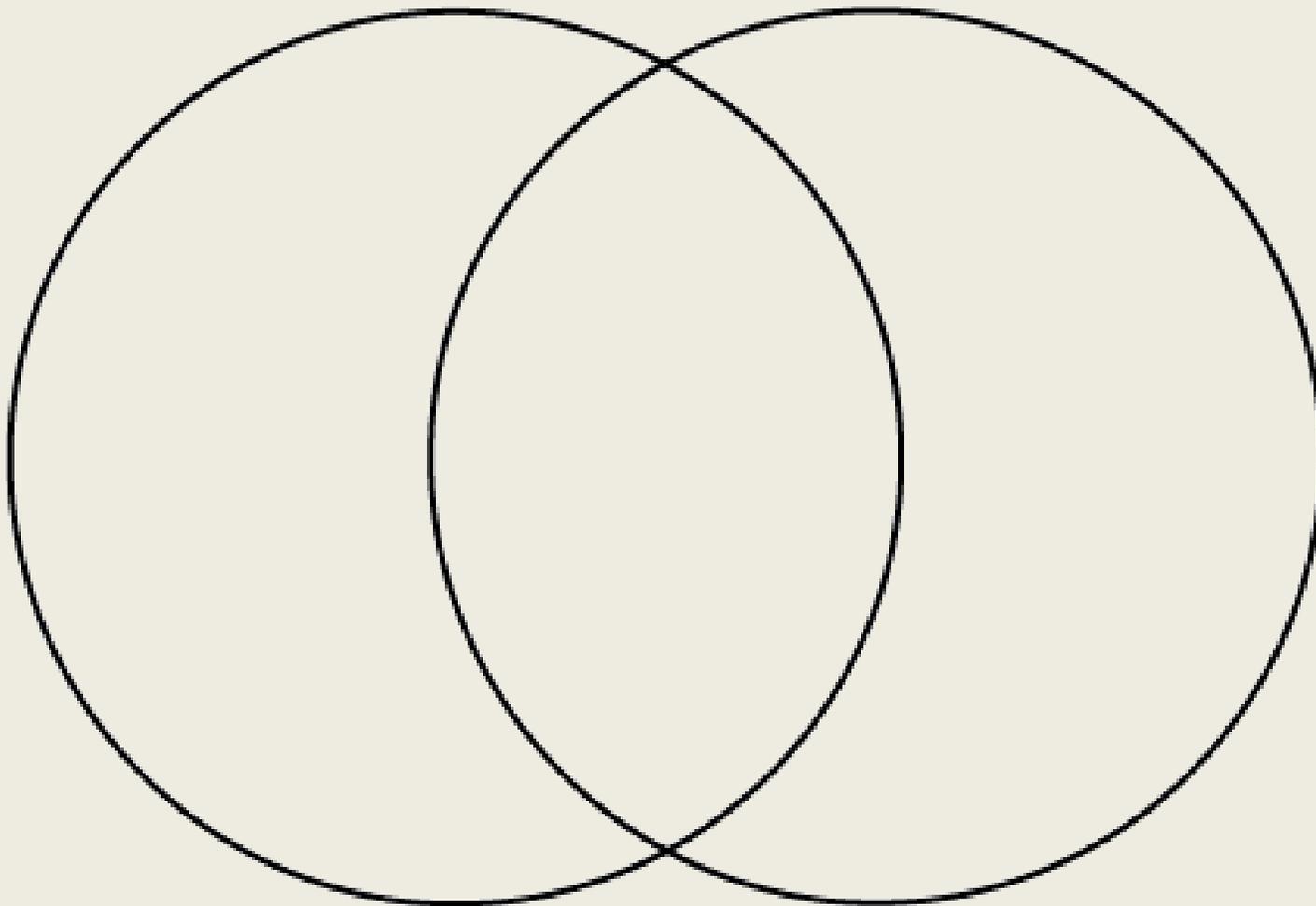


The first compromise is the idea of federalism. This is a way for the National government to share power with the State governments. So, there are some powers that the National government has, like declaring wars or making currency. Virginia can't declare war on Mexico, for example. They can't make their own money. But, there are some powers that the state governments have. Here is an example from this year. The states had to make the rules for how to deal with a patient with Ebola. Our president and Congress couldn't interfere. Then, there are overlapping powers. These are shared powers. Taxes is an example. The National government can levy taxes. The State government can levy taxes. They are shared. They are overlapping powers.

Complete

1. The first compromise is the system of _____, in which the states and the federal government share power.
2. Declaring war is a _____ power. Levying taxes is a _____ power. Health policy is a _____ power.

Label (Federal powers, State Powers, Shared Powers, taxes, declare war, make health policy.)



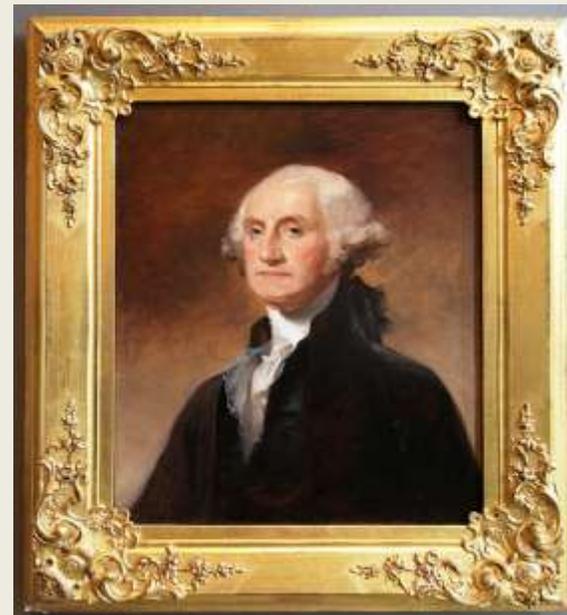
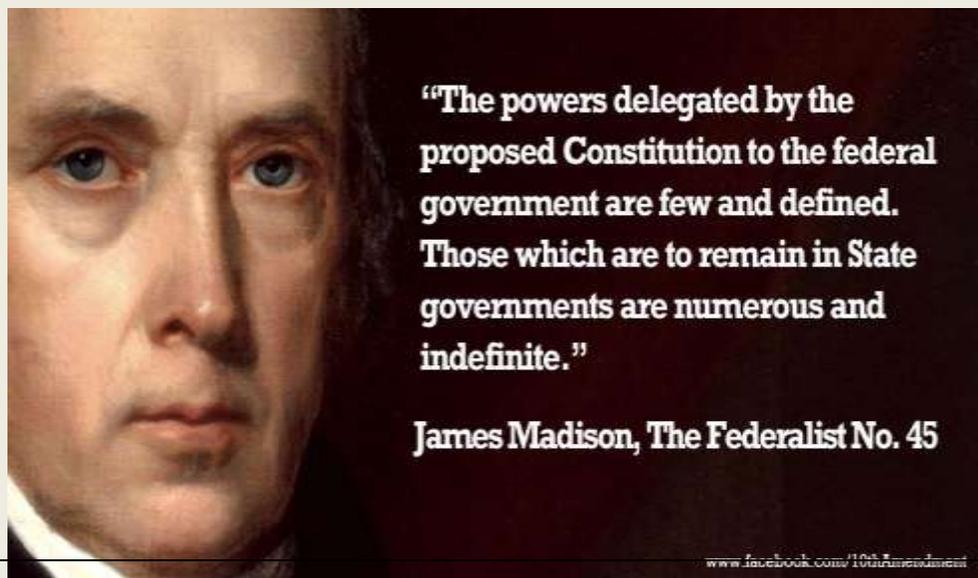
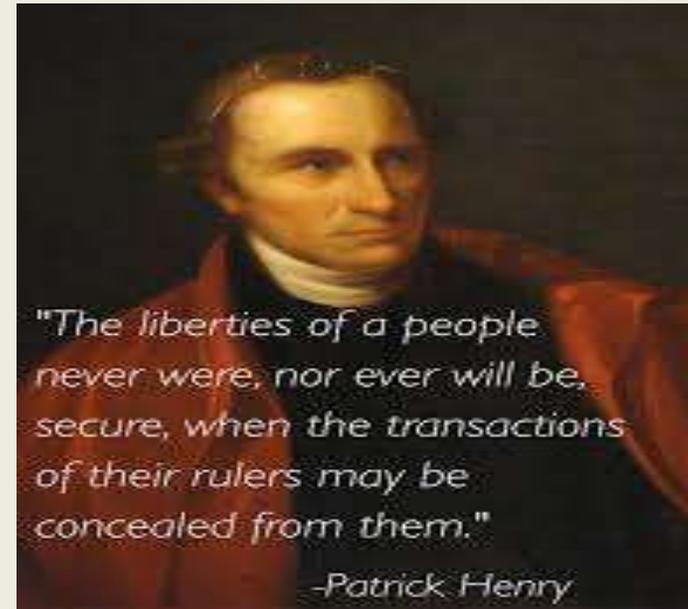
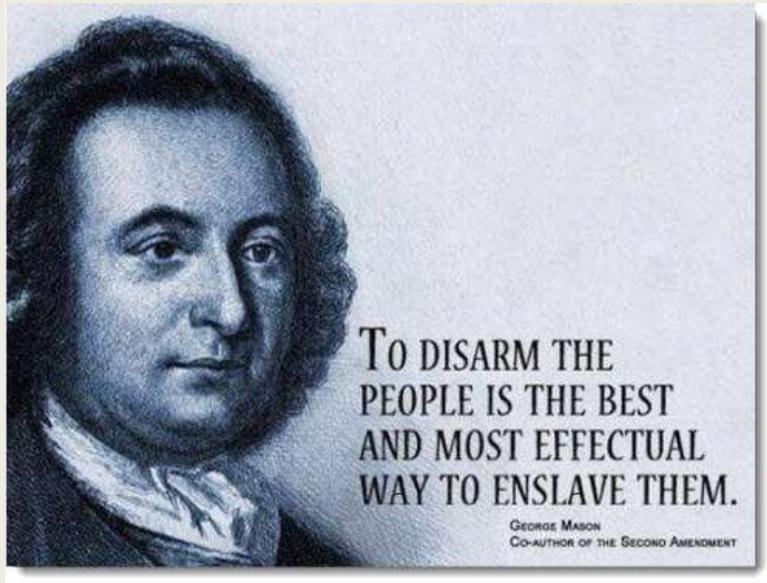
The other compromise is the Bill of Rights. The anti-federalists wanted the Bill of Rights or they wouldn't ratify the Constitution. The Bill of Rights was amended to the Constitution. Amend means to add. They added it to the Constitution. The Bill of Rights specifically lists rights that the national government can't violate. The government cannot violate Freedom of Speech, because this is in the First Amendment. Of course, over time, Americans and the government test these rights. Like, what is Free Speech? Can I say: "I am going to burn down the school?" Then, when I get arrested, say: "Sorry. First Amendment. Free Speech!" So, interpreting the Bill of Rights becomes the job of the judicial branch, or the Supreme Court.

Complete

1. The anti-federalists refused to ratify the Constitution without the _____.
2. The Bill of Rights is added or _____ to the Constitution.
3. Freedom of _____ is part of the Bill of Rights.
4. The job of interpreting the Bill of Rights is part of the _____
branches duties.

The anti-federalists finally accept the Constitution. These anti-federalists include George Mason and Patrick Henry. Remember: Patrick Henry said: "Give me Liberty or Give me Death" and George Mason is famous for his "Virginia Declaration of Rights." This became an inspiration for the Bill of Rights. The federalists include James Madison and George Washington.

Label (George Mason, Patrick Henry, George Washington, James Madison, federalist, antifederalist)





Now, complete
the federalism/bill
of rights activities.