

# CHAPTER SUMMARY *Activity* ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

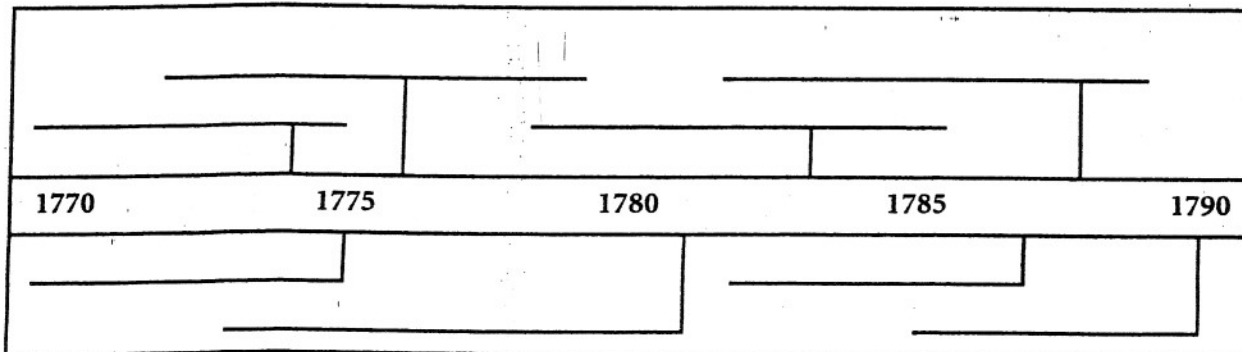


## Origins of American Government

**★ DIRECTIONS** Answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. What two especially important English political concepts greatly influenced the development of the United States? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the unintentional effect of the harsh tax laws passed by Parliament between 1763 and 1773? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What proposal, in modified form, became the basis for the Constitution? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What proposal broke the stalemate over representation by suggesting a Congress composed of a House of Representatives and a Senate? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What agreement determined the guidelines by which enslaved persons would be counted for purposes of taxation and representation? \_\_\_\_\_

**Organizing Information** Examine the following time line. Study the list of historical events below and review Chapter 2 to find the correct dates for each. Place each event in the appropriate space provided on the time line.



- Declaration of Independence signed
- First Continental Congress convenes
- Articles of Confederation take effect
- Second Continental Congress convenes
- New Hampshire ratifies the Constitution
- Constitutional Convention meets
- All 13 states have ratified the Constitution
- Great Britain recognizes American independence

**Critical Thinking** Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

6. Why do you think the founders stipulated that all laws concerning spending and taxation must originate in the House of Representatives?
7. Explain why you think the delegates to the Constitutional Convention were right or wrong in compromising on the slavery issue?

*10/10/11*

# CHAPTER SUMMARY



## Origins of American Government

### ★ THE COLONIAL PERIOD

English colonists who settled in America in the 1600s brought along two important political concepts: limited government and representative government. The Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights had established limited government. British colonists believed that their monarch ruled by their consent. They could not be deprived of life, liberty, or property, except according to law.

Each colony in North America set up a representative government, elected by the people.

However, only white men who owned property could vote. Though flawed, these governments' set precedents:

- a written constitution that guarantees basic rights and limits government powers,
- an elected legislature,
- the separation of powers between the executive (governor) and the legislature.

### ★ UNITING FOR INDEPENDENCE

Cordial relations between Great Britain and the colonies changed after 1763. War had ended the French threat to the colonies but had left Britain deeply in debt. The king expected the colonists to help repay that debt. Angry colonists protested Parliament's new taxes by boycotting British goods. In 1773 colonists dumped a shipload of tea into Boston harbor in protest. Parliament then passed laws to punish Boston. Furious colonists called these laws the Intolerable Acts.

The Intolerable Acts united the colonists against British authority. In 1765, nine colonies met in New York at the Stamp Act Congress—the first formal meeting to protest King George III's actions. A new sense of community prompted 12 colonies to send delegates to the First Continental Congress in 1774. Those delegates agreed to prohibit trade with Great Britain and to meet again in May 1775. By the time the Second Continental Congress met, the first battles of the Revolutionary War had been fought.

As hostilities escalated, an independence movement took root, and on July 4, 1776, the delegates approved the Declaration of Independence drafted by Thomas Jefferson. The Declaration has three parts:

- The preamble includes a statement of purpose and a description of basic human rights.
- The main body lists 27 grievances—specific ways in which the colonists believed that the king had violated their political liberties.
- The conclusion states the colonists' determination to separate from Great Britain.

Delegates to the Continental Congress signed the Declaration of Independence as representatives of individual states, in the sense of countries. Each state drafted its own constitution recognizing the people as the source of government and limiting government powers. Seven constitutions contained bills of rights.

### ★ THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

In 1781 the states set up a league of friendship, under the Articles of Confederation, which gave each state one vote in a congress that made laws and settled disputes. The Articles, however, had major flaws:

- Congress could not levy taxes or regulate trade.
- Congress could not compel a state to obey its decisions; there was no executive to enforce its laws.

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(continued)

## CHAPTER 2 SUMMARY CONTINUED

### THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION (continued).

- Amending, or changing the Articles, required the consent of every state, and unanimous agreement on any issue did not exist.

Weaknesses of the Articles led to severe problems. States quarreled over boundaries and interstate

commerce. The central government could not pay its debts. An economic depression led to a farmers' revolt. The resulting unrest frightened American leaders, so Congress authorized a convention of the states in 1787 for the purpose of "revising the Articles of Confederation."

### ★ THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Delegates from 12 states attended the Constitutional Convention. All favored limited and representative government, separation of powers among legislative, executive, and judicial branches, and a stronger national government.

Their mandate was to revise the Articles, but the delegates soon abandoned that charter to write a new constitution. They first considered the Virginia Plan, which had three components:

- a two-chamber legislature with the power to declare state laws unconstitutional
- a strong executive chosen by the legislature
- a national judiciary chosen by the legislature

This plan, in modified form, eventually became the basis for the Constitution. The small states, fearing domination by the large states, introduced the New Jersey Plan. It retained the one-chamber, one-vote-per-state legislature but gave it the power to tax and regulate trade. The plan also created a weak executive and national courts with limited powers. The delegates rejected those ideas and returned to considering Virginia's plan.

The Convention deadlocked over representation. Large states favored representation based on population, while the small states wanted equal representation regardless of population. The Connecticut Compromise broke the stalemate. It called for a Senate with two members from each state and a House of Representatives, with representation based on population. All revenue laws—those concerning spending and taxing—would originate in the House.

Debates over slavery and commerce led to more compromise. Southern states wanted enslaved persons to count for representation, but not for taxation. Northern states took the opposite position. Under the Three-Fifths Compromise, three-fifths of enslaved people would be counted for both taxation and representation. To satisfy the sectional interests of the North and the South, the delegates agreed that Congress could not ban the slave trade until 1808. They gave Congress the power to regulate foreign and interstate commerce, or trade among the states, but forbade it to tax exports.

In September 1787 the delegates sent the Constitution to the states for ratification. For the new Constitution to take effect, nine of the thirteen states had to approve it. The debate divided the public. Supporters of the Constitution, or Federalists, argued that only a strong national government could protect the nation from enemies and solve its internal problems. Opponents, or Anti-Federalists, feared a strong central government. They warned that without the protections of a Bill of Rights, the government could take away liberties won in the Revolution.

The Federalists promised that the new government would immediately add a Bill of Rights to the Constitution. This promise turned the tide in their favor. On June 21, 1788, New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify the Constitution, and it went into effect. By 1790 the new Constitution had the unanimous approval of the thirteen United States of America. It would continue to be the law of the land as the United States spread across the North American continent.