

The Constitutional Convention

Lesson #2 of the 1783-1812 Module

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Preamble of the Constitution begins with the phrase “We The People.”

How did the events and debates of the Constitutional Convention reflect or challenge this phrase?

OVERVIEW

On May 25, 1787, fifty-five delegates met in the old Pennsylvania State House, now known as Independence Hall, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The purpose of this Convention was to revise the Articles of Confederation and compensate for its shortcomings. However, the Convention ended with the United States Constitution, a new system of government, and this Convention became known as the Constitutional Convention.

On September 17, 1787, the United States Constitution, which laid out and dictated how the new system of government, was signed by twenty-seven of the fifty delegates of the Constitutional Convention. This document was presented to the states later that month, discussed, defended and debated and eventually ratified the next year.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, the students will be able to:

1. Knowledge
 - Recognize the importance of the Constitutional Convention
 - Discuss some of the compromises from the convention and how they were reflected in the Constitution.
2. Comprehension/Application/Analysis
 - Examine a primary source and analyze arguments for or against the ratification of the Constitution.
3. Evaluation
 - Consider how the phrase “We The People” from the Preamble of the Constitution was reflected or challenged in the proceedings of the Constitutional Convention and the ratification process.
 - Evaluate a Federalist or Anti-Federalist argument from the ratification period for the Constitution.

ACTIVITIES

1. Use the [Lesson's PowerPoint](#) to explore the context and history; the PowerPoint introduce an Essential Question and lays foundational knowledge about the Constitutional Convention and the drafting of the Constitution of the United States.
2. Let students choose a primary source/document to study from this list (included on their worksheets). The primary sources are all available on the [Lesson Plan Page](#), under the category "Primary Sources." This can be done in groups or individually.
3. Distribute the [primary source worksheet](#).
4. Students will read their selected primary source and fill out or discuss the questions.
5. Invite the students to share their findings or their reflections from Part 5 in a classroom discussion.

STANDARDS

Please visit the [Lesson Plan Page](#) and select the "Common Core and NCSS Standards for Social Studies" to view the details.

RESOURCES

[Visit the Lesson Plan Page](#) to find all resources in one convenient place. You'll find everything mentioned or linked in this Lesson Plan along with additional videos, articles, primary sources, and biographies.

Quick Links

- [PowerPoint](#)
- [Primary and Secondary Sources Worksheet](#)

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK/ASSESSMENT/ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Option 1: Biographies

Have the students select a historical person connected to the Constitutional Convention. (There are 6 biography articles already prepared on the [Lesson Plan Page](#)). The students will read the biography and make notes for the following topics. Students can write a short essay, share their findings verbally, or incorporate their findings into a larger class project that might include art, costumes, or props.

Key Life Events:

Identify and describe three key events or milestones in the life of the individual. How did these events shape or influence their character, achievements, or contributions?

Legacy and Impact:

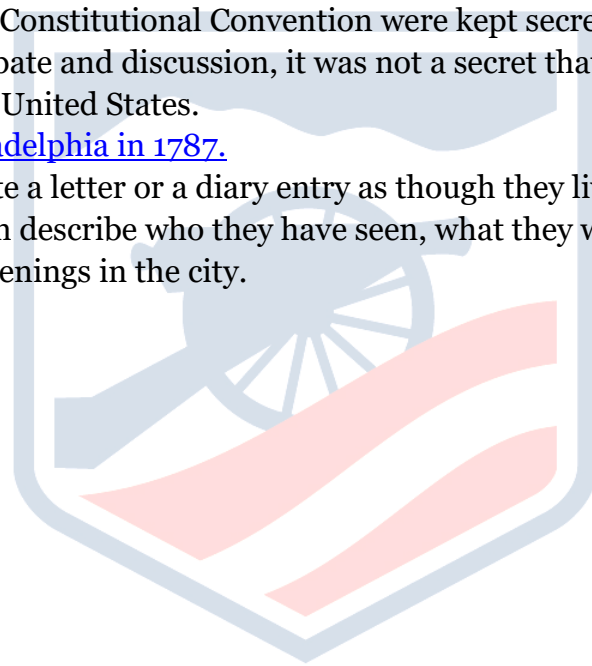
Reflect on the individual's lasting legacy and impact on society. What are the person's major contributions or accomplishments? Do you think these accomplishments were good? How have their actions influenced the course of history or inspired others?

Option 2: “Summer of the Constitution”

While the proceedings of the Constitutional Convention were kept secret during the summer of 1787 at the time to allow better debate and discussion, it was not a secret that 55 delegates were assembling to discuss government in the United States.

Read this article: [Philadelphia in 1787](#).

Have the students write a letter or a diary entry as though they lived in Philadelphia during the summer of 1787. Students can describe who they have seen, what they wonder about the convention and some of scenes and happenings in the city.



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