



Preamble to the U.S. Constitution

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish **justice**, insure **domestic tranquility** provide for the common defense, **promote** the general **welfare** and **secure** the blessings of **liberty** to ourselves and our **posterity**, do **ordain** and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

The Constitutional Convention May 1787



- The Constitutional Convention of May 1787 was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where delegates from 12 of the 13 states were present.
- The state of Rhode Island refused to send a delegate because it was afraid of losing its states' rights.
- The delegates worked for 4 months behind closed doors of the State House to draft a new document known later as the "Constitution."
- These delegates were selected by their states. They were educated, patriotic, and experienced men, ranging from the ages of 40 to 81. Benjamin Franklin was the oldest delegate.
- Some men were landowners and some were lawyers or judges.
- All delegates held at least one public office. This group is sometimes called the "Founding Fathers."
- There were no women or minorities.

The Constitutional Convention Delegates

- 55 delegates attended including...
- George Washington: president of the convention
- James Madison: the "father of the Constitution" who kept detailed notes of the meetings and suggested many of the ideas that led to the formation of a strong central government
- Alexander Hamilton: from NY, also believed in a strong central government
- Ben Franklin: used wisdom & humor to ease tensions during heated debates

Constitutional Compromises

On numerous occasions, a compromise, or agreement, had to be worked out between opposing groups as the Constitution was written.



Round #1: Large States vs. Small States

"We like the Virginia Plan,
representation in Congress is
based on POPULATION!!!!"

"We like the New Jersey
Plan where all states have
EQUAL representation."

RESULT

The Great Compromise

A Bi-cameral Legislature (two house Congress)

House of Representatives
Based on population

+

SENATE
Equal representation

=

?

Round #2: South vs. North

"When we count the people in a state, we should also count slaves towards a states population."

"Slaves should not be counted towards a states population, they have no rights as citizens."

RESULT
3/5th's Compromise

Every 5 slaves will be counted as 3 people towards a state's population.

*** How are people counted in a state?

Round #3: Slave Owners vs. Abolitionists

"Congress should not stop us from importing slaves into the U.S."

"We should have limits on the slaves that are brought into the U.S."

RESULT
Slave Trade Compromise

Congress will have the power to ban the slave trade in 20 years.
(1808)

Round #4: Southern Farmers vs. Northern Businessmen

"Congress should not tax imports & exports. We will have to pay higher prices for foreign goods & get less for our farm products."

"We want Congress to tax imports so that foreign goods will be more expensive than our homemade goods."

RESULT
Commerce (Trade)
Compromise

- Imports will be taxed (tariff)
- Exports will not be taxed

Round #5: Aristocrats (Upper Classes) vs. Democrats (Lower Classes)

"Common people cannot be trusted to choose good leaders. Voters should choose leading citizens to pick the country's leaders."

"We don't want a rich man's government. All U.S. leaders should be chosen directly by the voters."

RESULT
Election Compromise

- Electoral College: indirect election of the president

***Impeachment: way to remove the president