

Constitutional Convention Vocabulary Worksheet

Name: _____

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION VOCABULARY		
Site	Philadelphia	Father of the Constitution
State made	new	Three Fifth Compromise
Senate	judicial	Great Compromise
Term	House	Constitutional Convention
Virginia Plan	House of Representatives	James Madison

When 55 delegates from 12 states met in _____ (1) in May 1787, they intended to make changes in the Articles of Confederation. However, _____ (2), nicknamed _____ (3) convinced them that they needed a new plan of government. The meeting in Philadelphia that gave birth to the present US Constitution is now known as the _____ (4).

James Madison proposed a strong national government of three branches – the legislative, executive and _____ (5). Large and small states objected to the way the legislative branch would be organized under Madison's _____ (6) because the small states believed it was unfair. After much heated debate, the convention agreed to have two houses in the legislative branch. Each state would have _____ (7) members in the upper house, called the _____ (8). Members of the lower house, called the _____ (9) were to be based on the state's population.

The South wanted slaves to be counted for representation in the House of Representatives, but did not want them counted for purposes of _____ (10). The North did not want slaves to be counted for representation in the _____ (11), but did want them counted for taxation purposes. The debate was solved by the _____ (12). Another compromise concerning slaves, was that Congress would not outlaw the _____ (13) for another 20 years.

When the delegates signed the new constitution, it was submitted to the states for ratification. Three-fourths, or _____ (14) of the thirteen states were needed for ratification (approval).

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Constitutional convention vocabulary worksheet serves as an essential educational tool for students and educators alike, particularly when discussing the foundational principles and terminology associated with the United States Constitution. Understanding the vocabulary related to the constitutional convention is crucial for grasping the historical context and significance of the events that shaped American governance. This article will explore the importance of such worksheets, provide an overview of key terms, and suggest effective strategies for using them in educational settings.

Importance of a Vocabulary Worksheet

A vocabulary worksheet focused on the constitutional convention is invaluable for several reasons:

- Foundation of Understanding:** It helps students build a strong foundation of key terms that are vital for comprehending the discussions and debates that occurred during the constitutional convention in 1787.
- Engagement with Historical Content:** Engaging with the vocabulary encourages students to connect with historical content in a meaningful way. It aids in contextualizing the language used by the framers of the Constitution.
- Enhanced Critical Thinking:** By understanding the specific terms used during the convention, students can engage in critical discussions regarding the implications and interpretations of the Constitution.

4. Preparation for Advanced Studies: A solid understanding of vocabulary prepares students for more advanced studies in political science, history, and law, where such terms are frequently used.

Key Terms in the Constitutional Convention

To effectively utilize a constitutional convention vocabulary worksheet, it is essential to familiarize students with key terms that are fundamental to understanding the convention and the resulting Constitution. Below is a list of critical terms along with their definitions:

1. Federalism

- Definition: A system of government in which power is divided between a central authority and constituent political units (like states).
- Importance: Federalism was a central theme during the constitutional convention, as delegates debated the balance of power between the national and state governments.

2. Compromise

- Definition: An agreement reached by mutual concession, where each side makes sacrifices to achieve a joint goal.
- Examples: The Great Compromise and the Three-Fifths Compromise were pivotal in shaping the legislative structure and representation in Congress.

3. Ratification

- Definition: The formal approval of an agreement, treaty, or constitutional amendment.
- Significance: Ratification of the Constitution by the states was necessary for it to become law, leading to debates between Federalists and Anti-Federalists.

4. Bill of Rights

- Definition: The first ten amendments to the Constitution, which guarantee individual rights and liberties.
- Context: The inclusion of the Bill of Rights was a crucial concern for many delegates and became a focal point in the ratification debates.

5. Separation of Powers

- Definition: The division of government responsibilities into distinct branches to limit any one branch from exercising the core functions of another.
- Branches: The three branches are the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, each with its own powers and responsibilities.

6. Checks and Balances

- Definition: A system that ensures that no one branch of government becomes too powerful by providing each branch with the means to limit the powers of the others.
- Purpose: This system was designed to prevent tyranny and protect individual rights.

7. Delegate

- Definition: A person appointed or elected to represent others, especially at a conference or legislative assembly.
- Role in Convention: Delegates to the constitutional convention were responsible for debating and drafting the Constitution.

8. Great Compromise

- Definition: An agreement made during the constitutional convention that established a bicameral legislature with proportional representation in the House and equal representation in the Senate.
- Impact: This compromise was crucial in balancing the interests of both large and small states.

9. Three-Fifths Compromise

- Definition: An agreement that counted three out of every five slaves as part of the population for purposes of representation and taxation.
- Controversy: This compromise highlighted the contentious issue of slavery during the convention.

10. Articles of Confederation

- Definition: The first constitution of the United States, which created a weak federal government and was eventually replaced by the current Constitution.
- Failures: The weaknesses of the Articles prompted the need for a stronger federal government, leading to the constitutional convention.

Creating an Effective Vocabulary Worksheet

When creating a vocabulary worksheet focused on the constitutional convention, educators should consider the following components to enhance learning and retention:

1. Definitions and Context

- Provide clear definitions for each term.
- Include historical context or examples to demonstrate the significance of each term in the context of the constitutional convention.

2. Activities and Engagement

Incorporate engaging activities that reinforce vocabulary learning, such as:

- Matching Exercises: Match terms to their definitions.
- Fill-in-the-Blank: Use sentences that require students to fill in the correct vocabulary word.
- Crossword Puzzles: Create crossword puzzles using the vocabulary terms.
- Short Essays: Encourage students to write short essays or paragraphs using a set number of vocabulary words.

3. Visual Aids

- Include images, diagrams, or charts that illustrate key concepts or terms. For example, a chart showing the separation of powers among the three branches of government can help reinforce understanding.

4. Group Discussions

- Encourage group discussions where students can share their thoughts on the importance of each term and how it relates to the broader themes of the constitutional convention.

5. Assessment and Reflection

- Include a section at the end of the worksheet for students to reflect on what they have learned. This could involve writing about how their understanding of the Constitution has changed or what terms they found most challenging.

Conclusion

In summary, a constitutional convention vocabulary worksheet is a vital resource for educators and students that fosters a deeper understanding of the foundational terms and concepts associated with the creation of the United States Constitution. By focusing on key vocabulary, providing clear definitions, and incorporating engaging activities, educators can enhance students' comprehension of this pivotal moment in American history. Ultimately, mastering the vocabulary of the constitutional convention not only enriches students' historical knowledge but also equips them with the language necessary to engage in informed discussions about governance and civic responsibility.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a constitutional convention?

A constitutional convention is a gathering for the purpose of creating, revising, or amending a constitution.

What vocabulary terms are commonly associated with constitutional conventions?

Common vocabulary terms include 'delegates', 'ratification', 'amendments', 'federalism', and 'separation of powers'.

Why is understanding vocabulary important for a constitutional convention worksheet?

Understanding vocabulary is crucial as it helps participants accurately interpret discussions, proposals, and documents related to the convention.

What role do delegates play in a constitutional convention?

Delegates are representatives elected or appointed to discuss, propose, and vote on changes to the constitution.

What is the difference between a convention and a conference?

A convention specifically focuses on the creation or revision of a constitution, while a conference can cover a broader range of topics.

What does the term 'ratification' mean in the context of a constitutional

convention?

Ratification refers to the formal approval process required for a proposed amendment or new constitution to become law.

What is meant by 'federalism' in constitutional discussions?

Federalism is a system of government in which power is divided between a central authority and constituent political units, such as states.

How does 'separation of powers' relate to constitutional conventions?

Separation of powers is a principle that divides government responsibilities into distinct branches to prevent any one branch from gaining too much power.

What is typically included in a constitutional convention vocabulary worksheet?

A vocabulary worksheet may include definitions, examples, and practice exercises related to key terms and concepts of the constitutional convention.

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