

The Great Compromise Worksheet

Name _____ Date _____ Page 1

Constitutional Convention: The Great Compromise



Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

Heated Conflict

Thick, sweltering heat hangs in the elegant room in the heart of Philadelphia. Fifty-five men in wool suits have gathered for the Constitutional Convention in the summer of 1787. It is just ten years after the founding of the United States of America. Despite the record summer heat, the delegates keep the windows shut tight to protect their words from passers-by. There are two competing proposals on the table. The two sides are at a stalemate, and neither side wants to give in to the other. What they do next will shape American democracy into the one we know today.

Two Proposals

The delegates had one goal in mind: to improve or replace the Articles of Confederation. The Articles of Confederation, established in 1777, had set up a government that was a league of independent states. In the Confederation, states sometimes acted more like independent countries than a unified nation.

Two competing plans emerged to improve upon the groundwork laid by the Articles of Confederation in 1777: the Virginia Plan, written by James Madison and Edmund Randolph, and the New Jersey Plan, written by William Paterson.

The Virginia Plan	The New Jersey Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Proposed replacing the Articles of Confederation with a new government structureProposed a powerful central governmentProposed three branches of that government: executive, legislative, and judicialProposed that the new legislature, or Congress, would be bicameral, or made up of two housesProposed that the population of each state would determine the number of legislators, giving more power to larger statesProposed an executive branch with one leaderMain criticism: gave too much power to more-populated states	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Proposed modifying the Articles of Confederation rather than replacing themProposed establishing a stronger central government but keeping many state powers in placeProposed a unicameral legislature with only one houseProposed that each state in the unicameral legislature would get one vote, giving small and large states equal powerProposed an executive office led by a council rather than a single leaderMain criticism: gave too much power to less-populated states

The **Great Compromise worksheet** is an essential educational tool that helps students understand one of the most significant agreements in American history—The Great Compromise of 1787. This pivotal moment in the formation of the United States Constitution addressed the contentious debate between large and small states regarding representation in Congress. Utilizing a worksheet can guide learners through the complexities of this compromise, encouraging critical thinking and a deeper comprehension of the political climate of the time.

Understanding The Great Compromise

The Great Compromise, also known as the Connecticut Compromise, was proposed during the Constitutional Convention of 1787. The debate primarily revolved around how states should be represented in the new federal government. The larger states favored the Virginia Plan, which suggested representation based on population, whereas smaller states supported the New Jersey Plan, advocating for equal representation regardless of size.

Key Features of The Great Compromise

The Great Compromise effectively merged these two plans, leading to the establishment of a bicameral legislature. Here are the key features:

- **Bicameral Legislature:** Congress was divided into two houses—the House of Representatives

and the Senate.

- **House of Representatives:** Representation based on state population, allowing larger states to have more representatives.
- **Senate:** Equal representation for all states, with each state having two senators regardless of its population size.

This structure aimed to balance the interests of both large and small states, ensuring that all voices were heard in the legislative process.

Importance of The Great Compromise Worksheet

Using a Great Compromise worksheet in educational settings serves multiple purposes. It not only makes the learning process interactive but also encourages students to analyze historical documents, foster discussions, and develop their critical thinking skills.

Benefits of Using a Worksheet

Here are several benefits of incorporating a Great Compromise worksheet into the learning experience:

1. **Engagement:** Worksheets provide hands-on activities that promote student engagement and participation.
2. **Retention:** Writing and answering questions help students retain information better than passive learning methods.
3. **Critical Thinking:** Worksheets often include questions that require students to think critically about the implications of the compromise.
4. **Collaboration:** Group activities can be designed around the worksheet, encouraging collaboration and discussion among peers.

Components of a Great Compromise Worksheet

A well-designed Great Compromise worksheet typically includes various components that facilitate learning. Here are a few key elements that should be included:

1. Background Information

Providing students with context about the events leading up to the Great Compromise will help them grasp the significance of the agreement. This section can include:

- The Articles of Confederation and its weaknesses
- The different plans proposed at the Constitutional Convention
- The debates and conflicts between large and small states

2. Key Terms and Definitions

A glossary of key terms related to the Great Compromise is essential for students to understand the vocabulary of the period. Examples of terms to include are:

- Representation
- Bicameral
- Federalism
- Constitutional Convention

3. Questions and Activities

The heart of the worksheet should consist of questions and activities that challenge students to apply what they have learned. Suggestions for activities include:

- Short answer questions about the details of the compromise
- Debate prompts where students defend either the Virginia or New Jersey Plan
- Mapping out the legislative structure created by the compromise

Teaching Strategies with The Great Compromise Worksheet

Incorporating the Great Compromise worksheet into lesson plans can be enhanced by employing various teaching strategies. Here are some effective methods:

1. Group Discussions

After completing the worksheet, divide students into small groups to discuss their answers. This promotes peer learning and allows students to hear different perspectives on the significance of the compromise.

2. Role-Playing

Assign students different roles based on historical figures present at the Constitutional Convention. This immersive experience can help them understand the motivations behind the compromise and the stakes involved.

3. Integrating Technology

Utilize digital platforms for students to submit their completed worksheets or engage in collaborative online discussions. This can enhance their learning experience and make it more interactive.

Challenges in Understanding The Great Compromise

While the Great Compromise was critical in shaping the U.S. government, students may encounter several challenges when trying to understand its implications. Some common difficulties include:

1. Complexity of the Issue

The debates at the Constitutional Convention were complex, involving multiple interests and viewpoints. Students may struggle to grasp the nuances of the arguments presented by various states.

2. Historical Context

Understanding the historical context of the compromise, including the Articles of Confederation and

the political climate of the time, can be challenging for students with limited prior knowledge.

Conclusion

In summary, the **Great Compromise worksheet** is an invaluable resource for educators looking to teach students about one of the foundational agreements in American history. By engaging students through interactive activities, discussions, and critical thinking exercises, educators can foster a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in the formation of the United States government. The Great Compromise not only resolved a significant conflict but also laid the groundwork for the legislative structure that continues to serve the nation today.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Great Compromise and why is it significant?

The Great Compromise, also known as the Connecticut Compromise, was an agreement reached during the Constitutional Convention of 1787 that established a bicameral legislature in the United States. It combined aspects of both the Virginia Plan, which favored larger states with representation based on population, and the New Jersey Plan, which favored smaller states with equal representation. This compromise was significant as it helped to balance the interests of both large and small states, leading to the formation of Congress as we know it today.

How can the Great Compromise worksheet be used in an educational setting?

The Great Compromise worksheet can be used as a teaching tool to help students understand the historical context and implications of the compromise. It can include activities such as summarizing the key points of the compromise, comparing and contrasting the Virginia and New Jersey Plans, and analyzing the impact of the compromise on modern legislative processes. This hands-on approach aids in reinforcing students' understanding of the foundational principles of American government.

What key components should be included in a Great Compromise worksheet?

A Great Compromise worksheet should include sections for defining key terms, summarizing the Virginia and New Jersey Plans, outlining the main features of the compromise itself, and posing critical thinking questions that encourage students to analyze the effects of the compromise on the legislative process. Additionally, it may include diagrams or charts to visually represent the structure of the bicameral legislature.

What are some common misconceptions about the Great Compromise?

One common misconception is that the Great Compromise was solely about representation in Congress. While representation was a significant aspect, the compromise also addressed the balance

of power between different states and the federal government. Another misconception is that the compromise was immediately accepted without debate; in reality, it sparked intense discussions and disagreements among the delegates before it was ratified.

How does the Great Compromise relate to current issues in American politics?

The Great Compromise relates to current issues in American politics as it established the foundation for how representation works in Congress, which continues to be a topic of debate today. Issues such as gerrymandering, the Electoral College, and the representation of different populations reflect ongoing discussions about equity and fairness in the legislative process. Understanding the Great Compromise can help contextualize these contemporary issues and the historical roots of American governance.

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Explore our engaging 'The Great Compromise Worksheet' to enhance your understanding of this pivotal moment in U.S. history. Learn more and boost your knowledge today!

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