

## The Articles of Confederation Reading

**Directions: Use the text to complete the graphic organizer.**

<sup>1</sup> The Declaration of Independence helped create a new country. <sup>2</sup> This new country had to make laws for its citizens. <sup>3</sup> But, the colonies had a hard time working together. <sup>4</sup> England used to make most of the decisions. <sup>5</sup> Now, the Americans had to make them. <sup>6</sup> There would have to be a government in each state and one for the whole country. <sup>7</sup> In 1776, the Continental Congress worked on making a new government for the entire country while each state worked on their own constitutions.

<sup>8</sup> The Continental Congress members knew they couldn't write a constitution that everyone would love, but they had to try. <sup>9</sup> A constitution tells the laws of a nation. <sup>10</sup> Most people did not think of themselves as Americans, instead, they were loyal to their state. <sup>11</sup> Many people were afraid, they had just gotten their freedom from Britain and they didn't want another strong government.

<sup>12</sup> By 1777, the first constitution for America was finished. <sup>13</sup> It was called the Articles of Confederation. <sup>14</sup> The Articles started many new rules. <sup>15</sup> For example, each state had to send, at least, one person (representative) to Congress. <sup>16</sup> Each state had only one vote. <sup>17</sup> Congress could declare war, make money, and negotiate with other countries. <sup>18</sup> To many, this seemed like a lot of power but the States had more.

<sup>19</sup> Congress could introduce a bill, but nine of the thirteen states had to agree before it became a law. <sup>20</sup> It could not make rules about trade. <sup>21</sup> Congress owed other countries a lot of money. <sup>22</sup> They had borrowed money to help win the war, and now they could not pay this money back. <sup>23</sup> Congress had little power to raise money and could not collect taxes. <sup>24</sup> Congress could not make any money for itself. <sup>25</sup> If they needed money, they had to ask the states. <sup>26</sup> But, the states did not have to give it to them.

<sup>27</sup> The government was very weak under the Articles of Confederation. <sup>28</sup> There was no president, no one to make sure the laws were followed. <sup>29</sup> It was the job of the states to make sure laws were followed. <sup>30</sup> Ultimately, the new government did not make the "united states" become one strong country.

<sup>31</sup> Finally, in 1783, the American Revolution was over. <sup>32</sup> As the country began to recover and work to rebuild, many people started to believe the country might not survive. <sup>33</sup> The weakness of the Articles of Confederation did not help. <sup>34</sup> States started to argue. <sup>35</sup> Every state made different money and some states did not accept money from the other states. <sup>36</sup> There were no courts so there was no way to end the arguments.

<sup>37</sup> It was clear to many people, The Articles of Confederation were not working. <sup>38</sup> The government was weak and getting weaker. <sup>39</sup> States were in charge. <sup>40</sup> Congress could not force anyone to do what was needed for the country. <sup>41</sup> Soon, Congress would have to go back to work and write a new constitution so America could survive.

## Articles of Confederation Graphic Organizer

Confederation - an organization that consists of a number of parties or groups united in an alliance.

State Government Powers	National Government Powers
Weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation	