



Articles of Confederation

**It was not easy to write and agree upon a
constitution for the United States.**



Articles of Confederation

1. The Founders had to deal with a number of difficult questions.
 - a. What type of national government should they create?
 - i. **Weak or strong**
 - b. How much power should they give the national government?
 - i. Many people **feared giving too much power** to a central (national) government because of their experience under British rule.
 - ii. Another fear was that some states might have so much power in the national government that they could **dominate the others**.
 - a. Both of those fears influenced the organization of the first American government.

Articles of Confederation

- o **The Articles of Confederation created a loose friendship** between the 13 states.
 - o Enough to win the War for Independence.
 - o Enough to keep the states together as one country.
- o **Congress was given the power to:**
 - o **Declare War**
 - o **Make Peace**
 - o **Make Treaties**
 - o **Create an Army and Navy**
 - o **Coin and Borrow Money**
 - o **Admit New States**
 - o **Create Post Offices**

Articles of Confederation - Concerns

1. Because of their concerns over divided power **the Founders created a weak national government.**
 - a. Each state had **one vote** no matter how large its population.
 - b. The legislature, called the Confederation Congress, had **only one branch.**
 - c. There was **no executive branch** to carry out the laws passed by Congress.
 - i. Instead, the country was run by congressional committees.
2. The states **made sure that Congress was weak and its powers limited.**
 - a. The **states kept most of the power.**
 - i. Open action taken by Congress had to be with the consent (approval) and cooperation of the states.
 - b. **Nine of the thirteen states** had to approve any decision Congress made for it to become law.
 - c. **All thirteen states** had to agree to any change in the Articles of Confederation.

Articles of Confederation - Concerns



3. There were serious problems with the national government under the Articles of Confederation.
 - a. Congress had no money and **no power to tax** to get it.
 1. They had to rely upon voluntary contributions from the state governments.
 - i. But this system did not work because the states argued about their fair shares of governmental expenses.
 - ii. Some states refused to pay what they had agreed to pay.
 2. They believed **all states should use the same money**.
4. Congress had no power over the state governments and their citizens.
 - a. If individual citizens or a state government ignored a resolution passed by Congress, there was **no way to make them obey**.

Articles of Confederation - Problems

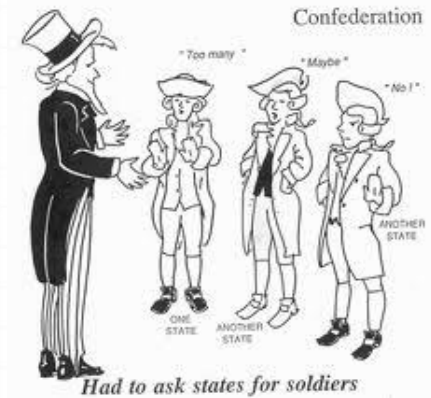


5. Congress **could not make** the states live up **to trade agreements** with other nations. Sometimes citizens refused to pay for goods they purchased from abroad.
 - a. This made people in foreign countries unwilling to trade with the United States.
6. Americans who had **supported the British** during the Revolution faced many hardships.
 - a. States refused to pay for property that had been taken from the Loyalists.
 - b. Debts owed to Loyalists from before the revolution were not honored after the war.
7. People argued that the state governments were **not protecting their property**.
8. They thought that **legal agreements** made in one state should be **honored throughout the nation**.
9. Many of these people began to think that **a strong national government** was needed to protect their property rights.

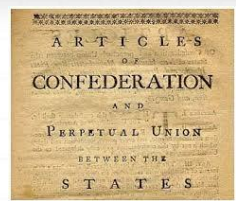
Summary

Weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation:

- Each state had only one vote
- Only one branch Congress
- Congress had no power to tax.
- Congress had no power to enforce its laws.
- There was no executive branch.
- Nine states had to approve any law before it could be passed.
- Thirteen states had to approve any changes to the Articles of Confederation.
- Congress could not force the states to meet military quotas.



Articles of Confederation - Achievements



- 1.** The national government under the Articles of Confederation was responsible for a number of **important achievements**.
 - a.** It successfully **waged the war** for independence against Great Britain.
 - b.** It **negotiated a peace treaty**, the Treaty of Paris, to end the American Revolution.
 - c.** It assured that each state **recognize the laws** of the other states.
 - i.** A marriage in one state would be valid in all other states.
 - ii.** A citizen could travel freely from one state to another.
 - iii.** Criminals who had crossed state borders could be sent back to the state in which they committed their crime.

Articles of Confederation - Achievements



2. It passed the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.
 - a. This was the most important law passed by Congress under the Articles.
 - i. It gave people in the northwestern lands the right to organize their own governments.
 - ii. Once they had done this they could ask to be admitted as new states with the same rights as the original thirteen states.
 - b. The law also provided for public education and forbid slavery.
 - c. The western settlers were guaranteed freedom of worship, the right to trial by jury, and due process of law.

The Articles

- **Despite their achievements:**
 - **without an executive,**
 - **Without the power to tax**
 - **without the ability to regulate trade**
- **Congress could not function effectively.**

The Solution

Call a convention with delegates from all states to revise the Articles of Confederation.

The Results:

The Constitution of the United States of America.

Check Your Understanding:

o **Answer the following questions.**

- 1. What type of national government did the Articles of Confederation create?**
- 2. Why did the colonists decide to create this type of government?**
- 3. What were 3 achievements under the Articles of Confederation and why were they important?**
- 4. What were 3 problems under the Articles of Confederation and why were they important?**