

The
Constitution
and the
Constitutional
Convention





Delegates

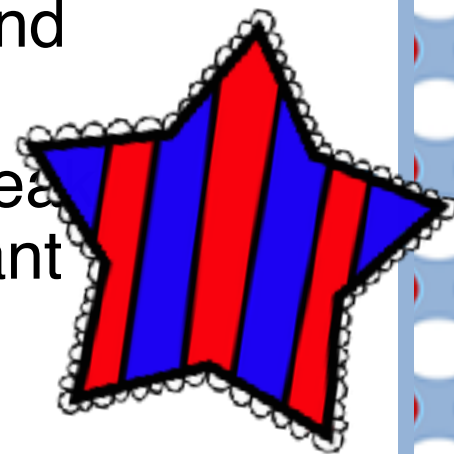
- Remember a delegate is someone who is chosen to speak for others, or to represent them. The delegates represented each of the states and consisted of:
 - Wealthy and educated landowners, business people, and lawyers
 - 8 of the individuals who signed the Declaration of Independence
 - 20 who owned slaves
 - 30 who had fought in the war against Britain
 - Lots of individuals who had served in congress or the state government
 - All white men .
- 55 delegates met in Philadelphia to discuss ways they could change the Articles of Confederation.
- These delegates came from each of the states except for Rhode Island.





Constitutional Convention

- This meeting was known as the constitutional convention.
- The goal of the convention was to change the Articles of Confederation because they did not give Congress enough power.
- Delegates agreed to keep their debates and discussions secret
- They wanted to ensure that they could speak openly with each other, and they didn't want to be influenced by people outside of the convention



Important Leaders



- There were some important delegates at the Constitutional Convention who had important roles during the convention including the following:
- James Madison
- George Washington
- Benjamin Franklin

James Madison

- Delegate from Virginia
- Member of Congress
- Wanted a new system of government
- Took notes during the convention
- His notes are how we know a lot about what was said and done at the convention.

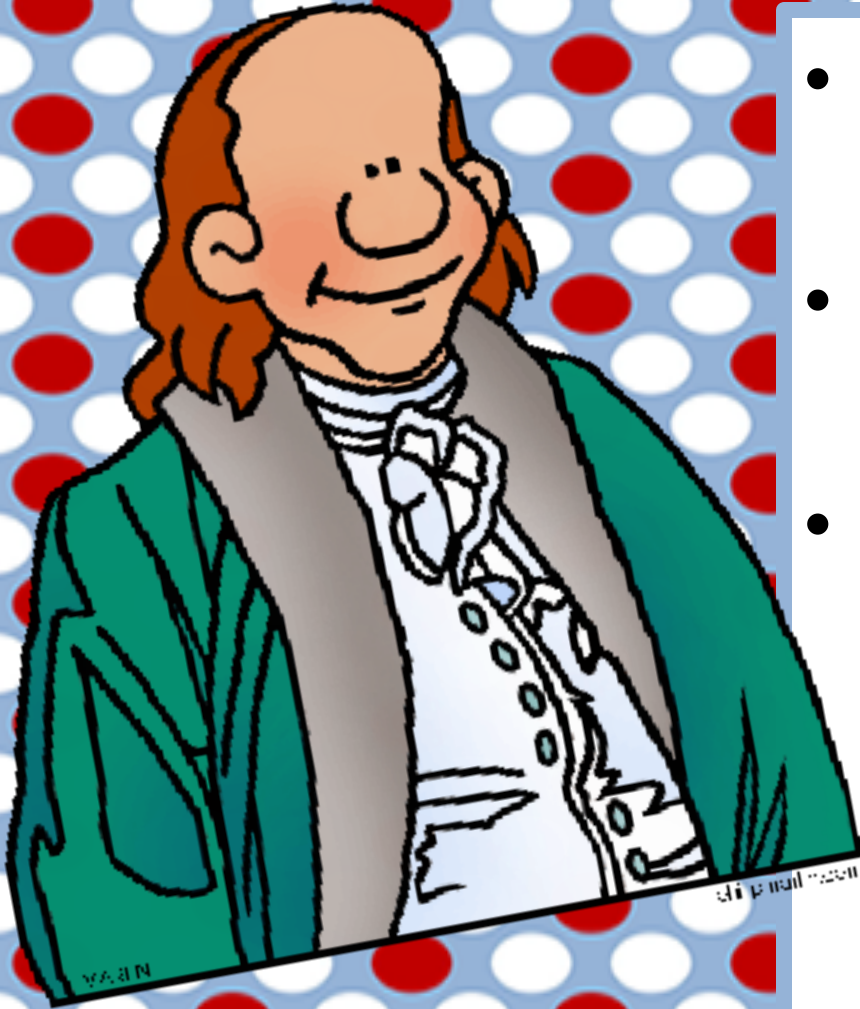


George Washington

- Also a delegate from Virginia
- Known as a hero of the Revolution
- Delegates elected him as the president of the convention



Benjamin Franklin



- Delegate from Pennsylvania
- Respected because of his wisdom
- Had served the United States in many ways for many years

Federal System

- Some of the delegates believed that a federal system was needed. Madison and Washington wanted this system.
- A **federal system** is a system in which the states share power with the central government. However, in a federal system, the central government would have more power than the states.



Republic

- Some delegates like Madison believed that a republic was the type of government that was needed in order to ensure that Congress is capable of maintaining order and protecting rights.
- A **republic** is a government in which the citizens elect leaders to represent them.



Virginia Plan



- James Madison's plan for a new government was known as the Virginia Plan.
- Edmund Randolph, governor of Virginia, described this plan to the delegates.
- The plan was that there would be a federal system in which the national government was made up of three different parts or branches.
 - Congress - would make the laws
 - A second branch would carry out the laws
 - Courts – would settle legal arguments
- Most state governments already had this system in place.
- Madison suggested that congress would be comprised of state representatives based on the state's population.
- In turn, large states would get more votes than small states.

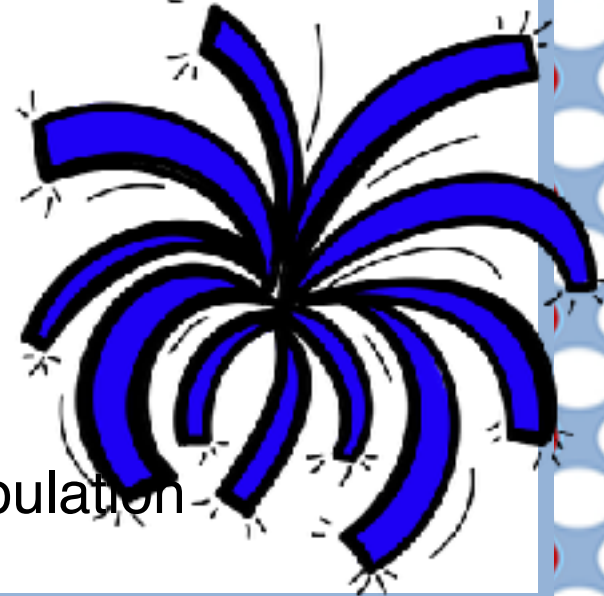


New Jersey Plan

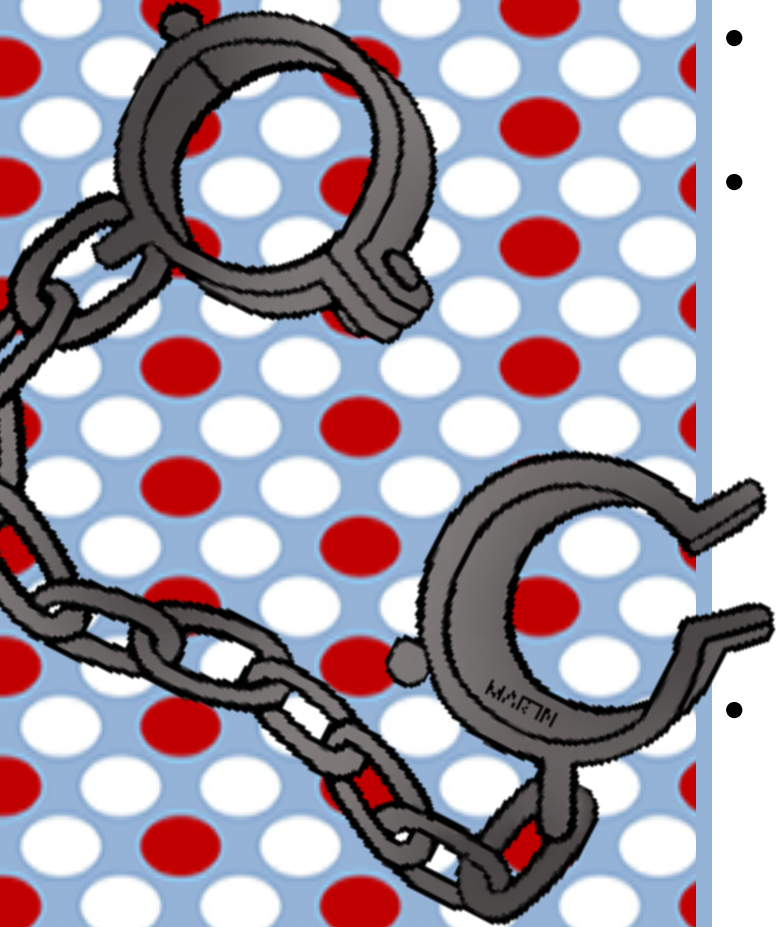
- The delegates accepted the Virginia Plan, however, the small states did not like that large states would get more votes than small states.
- In turn, the New Jersey Plan was created by these small states.
- The New Jersey Plan stated that each state would be given one vote.
- This would ensure that large states did not have more power than small states.

Great Compromise

- The delegates argued about the Virginia and New Jersey Plans.
- A **compromise** is when both sides give up something to settle a disagreement.
- A delegate from Connecticut name Roger Sherman came up with a solution. His solution became known as the Great Compromise.
- He stated that Congress could be divided into 2 parts or houses:
 - Senate – each state would have an equal amount of representatives
 - House of Representatives – the number of representatives in this house would depend on the state's population



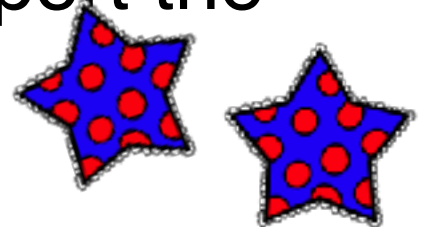
Slavery



- Slavery was another problem that the delegates wanted to discuss.
- Delegates argued about whether or not to stop allowing slaves to be brought into the U.S. However, southern delegates were against this. The southern delegates would not accept the constitution and the new system of government unless the slave trade would be continued.
- Also, southern delegates wanted to be able to count slaves in their state's population because it would give their state more representatives in Congress.

Three-Fifths Rule

- After arguing lots about the issues of slavery, another compromise was made.
- This compromise was known as the three-fifths rule.
- The rule stated that five slaves would only count as three free people.
- They also decided to continue the slave trade so that all states would support the new government and the Constitution.



The Constitution of United States



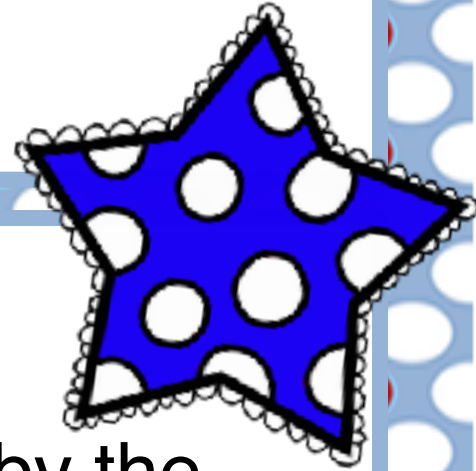
- After many hard weeks working on the new plan for their government, delegates signed a document known as the Constitution of the United States of America.
- They signed the final document on September 17, 1787.
- Since the Constitution is based on James Madison's Virginia Plan, he is known as the Father of the Constitution.

Ratifying the Constitution



- To **ratify** means to accept.
- In order for the Constitution to be used, they needed at least nine states to ratify it.
- Each state had representatives from the towns who met to decide whether or not to ratify the Constitution.

Federalists



- Supporters of the Constitution are called **Federalists**
- The Federalists were very surprised by the Constitution because they were not expecting a whole new system for their government.
- The Federalists were in charge of teaching the public about the new federal system and why it would be successful.
- James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay wrote essays called *The Federalists* to explain this.

Antifederalists

- People who did not support the new Constitution are called **Antifederalists**
- They did not want a federal system because they felt it would be a threat to their freedom.
- They thought that the Constitution should have a Bill of Rights, or a list of rights that individuals have.
- In turn, Federalists including James Madison said they would add the Bill of Rights to the Constitution.



Ratification

- The first state that ratified the Constitution was Delaware.
- The ninth state to ratify the Constitution was New Hampshire, and this made the Constitution the country's new laws.
- Eventually, all of the thirteen states ratified the Constitution.

