

# Chapter 7

# Creating a Republic

## 1776-1791

### What's Ahead

**Section 1**  
A Confederation of States

**Section 2**  
The Constitutional Convention

**Section 3**  
A More Perfect Union

**Section 4**  
Ratifying the Constitution

After the American Revolution ended, the new nation struggled to create a workable government. At first, the states were knit together only by a loose set of laws. When this central government proved too weak, representatives of 12 states gathered in 1787. They created a new framework for government: the Constitution of the United States.

During nearly four exhausting months of debate, the representatives hammered out a set of laws that would make the nation strong, yet protect the rights of the people. After fiery arguments in each state, the Constitution was finally approved. It lives on as the framework of our government today.

### Why Study History?

While the new nation was taking shape, American leaders were also creating many symbols and traditions. Today, as in the past, emblems such as the flag and the eagle bind the American people together. To focus on this connection, see the *Why Study History* feature, "National Symbols Unite Us," in this chapter.



### American Events

● **1777**  
Continental Congress completes the Articles of Confederation

● **1783**  
Treaty of Paris formally ends the American Revolution

1776

1780

1784

### World Events

▲ **1778 World Event**  
British Captain Cook becomes first European to reach Hawaii

▲ **1784 World Event**  
Emperor Joseph II forces Cze to use German language



# A Confederation of States

As  
You  
Read

## Explore

### These Questions

- What ideas guided the new state governments?
- What problems did the nation face under the Articles of Confederation?
- How did the Northwest Ordinance benefit the nation?

### Define

- constitution
- execute
- confederation
- ordinance
- economic depression

### Identify

- Articles of Confederation
- Land Ordinance of 1785
- Northwest Ordinance
- Shays' Rebellion

## SETTING the Scene

In 1776, the Declaration of Independence created a new nation made up of 13 independent states. The former colonies, though, had little experience working together. In the past, Britain had made the major decisions. Now, the Americans set about the business of establishing 13 state governments. Furthermore, they hoped to create a central government that all the states would follow.

## State Governments

In forming a government, most states wrote a constitution. A **constitution** is a document that sets out the laws and principles of a government. States created written constitutions for two reasons. First, a written constitution would spell out the rights of all citizens. Second, it would set limits on the power of government.

The new state governments were similar to the colonial governments. The states divided political power between an executive and a legislature. The legislature was elected by the voters to pass the laws. Most legislatures had an upper house, called a senate, and a lower house. All states except Pennsylvania had a governor who executed, or carried out, the laws.

Virginia limited government power by including a bill of rights in its constitution. A bill of rights lists freedoms that the government promises to protect. Virginia's bill of rights protected freedom of religion and freedom of the press. It also guaranteed citizens the right to a trial by jury. Other states followed Virginia's example and included bills of rights in their constitutions.

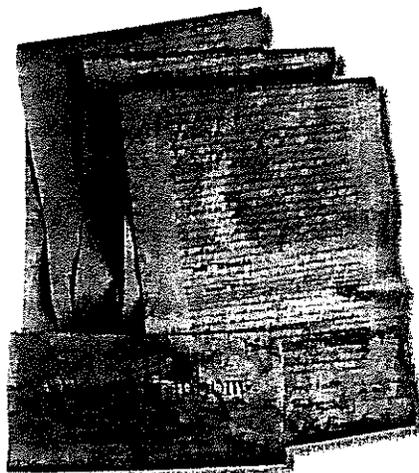
Under the state constitutions, more people had the right to vote than in colonial times. To vote, a citizen had to be white, male, and over age 21. He had to own a certain amount of property or pay a certain amount of taxes.

For a time, some women in New Jersey could vote. In a few states, free black men could vote. In no state did enslaved African Americans have the right to vote.

## A Weak Confederation

In 1776, as citizens were forming state governments, the Continental Congress was drafting a plan for the nation as a whole. Delegates believed that the colonies needed to be united by a central government in order to win independence.

It was difficult to write a constitution that all of the states would approve. They



Articles of Confederation





## Viewing HISTORY

### State Banknotes

During and after the American Revolution, each state issued its own money. The bills here came from Rhode Island and South Carolina.

★ What problems might arise due to the fact that each state issued its own money?

## Troubles for the New Nation

By 1783, the United States had won independence. The new nation faced many challenges, however. From 1783 to 1787, Americans had reason to doubt whether their country could survive.

### Conflicts between states

Despite its weaknesses, the Articles might have succeeded if the states could have put aside their differences and worked together. Many conflicts arose, however. New Hampshire and New York both claimed Vermont. Most states refused to accept the money of other states.

The Articles did not provide a way for states to settle such disputes. Noah Webster, a teacher from New England, warned:

“So long as any individual state has power to defeat the measures of the other twelve, our pretended union is but a name, and our confederation, a cobweb.”

## Money problems

As a result of borrowing during the Revolution, the United States owed millions of dollars to individuals and foreign nations. Since Congress did not have the power to tax, it had no way to repay these debts. Congress asked the states for money, but the states had the right to refuse. Often, they did.

During the Revolution, the Continental Congress solved the problem of raising funds by printing paper money. However, the money had little value because it was not backed by gold or silver. Before long, Americans began to describe any useless thing as “not worth a Continental.”

As Continental dollars became worthless, states printed their own paper money. This caused confusion. How much was a North Carolina dollar worth? Was a Virginia dollar as valuable as a Maryland dollar? As a result, trade became difficult.

## Other nations take advantage

Foreign countries took advantage of the confederation’s weakness. Britain, for example, refused to withdraw its troops from the Ohio Valley, as it had agreed to do in the Treaty of Paris. Spain closed its port in New Orleans to American farmers. This was a serious blow to western farmers, who depended on the port to ship their products to the East.

## Organizing the Northwest Territory

Despite its troubles, Congress did pass important ordinances, or laws, concerning the Northwest Territory, the name for lands lying north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi. The principles established in these laws were later applied to other areas of settlement.

### Townships and sections

The Land Ordinance of 1785 set up a system for surveying and settling the Northwest Territory. The law called for the territory to be surveyed and then divided into townships.

Each township would have 36 sections. A section was 1 square mile and contained 640

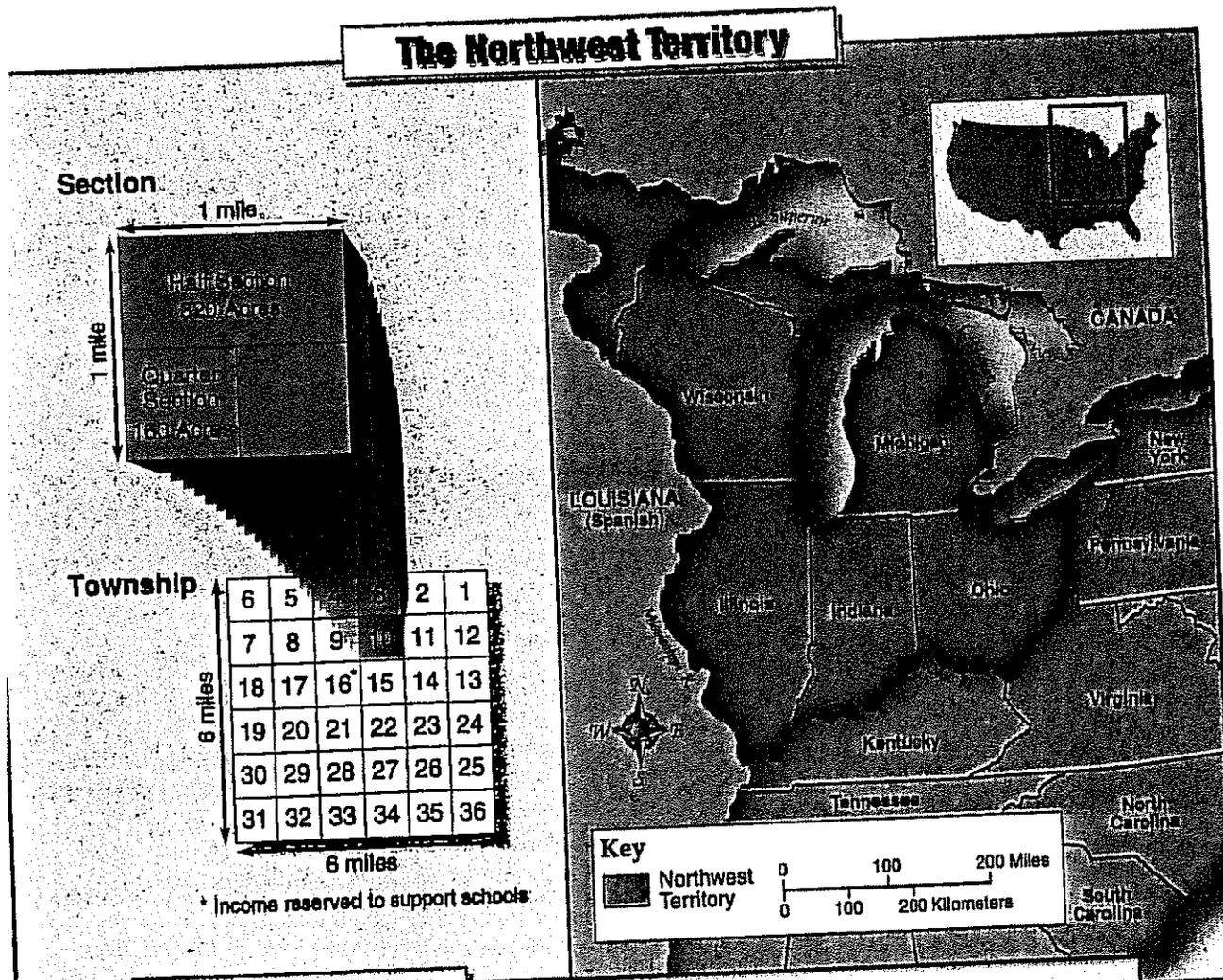
gress. (See the diagram below.) Congress planned to sell sections to settlers for \$640 each. One section in every township was set aside to support public schools.

### A plan for new states

Another law, passed in 1787, was the **Northwest Ordinance**. It set up a government for the Northwest Territory, guaranteed basic rights to settlers, and outlawed slavery there. It also provided for the vast region to be divided into separate territories in the future.

Once a territory had a population of 60,000 free settlers, it could ask Congress to be admitted as a new state. The newly admitted state would be "on an equal footing with the original states in all respects whatsoever."

The Northwest Ordinance was the finest achievement of the national government under the Articles. It provided a way to admit new states to the nation. It guaranteed that new states would be treated the same as the original 13 states. In time, the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin were created from the Northwest Territory.



### Geography Skills

In the 1780s, Congress set up a system for settling and governing the Northwest Territory.

- 1. Location** On the map, locate: (a) Ohio River, (b) Mississippi River, (c) Michigan, (d) Indiana, (e) Illinois, (f) Wisconsin, (g) Ohio.
- 2. Place** What was the size of (a) a township, (b) a section?
- 3. Critical Thinking** Did the state of Wisconsin have public education when it joined the Union? Explain.



# The Constitutional Convention

As You Read

## Explore These Questions

- How did the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan differ?
- How did the Great Compromise satisfy both large and small states?
- What compromises were made on the issue of slavery?

## Define

- legislative branch
- executive branch
- judicial branch
- compromise

## Identify

- Constitutional Convention
- James Madison
- Virginia Plan
- New Jersey Plan
- Roger Sherman
- Great Compromise
- Three-Fifths Compromise

## SETTING the Scene

An air of mystery hung over the Pennsylvania State House in Philadelphia during the summer of 1787. Philadelphians watched as the nation's greatest leaders passed in and out of the building. Eleven years earlier, some of the same men had signed the Declaration of Independence there. What was going on now? Susannah Dillwyn wrote to her father about the excitement:

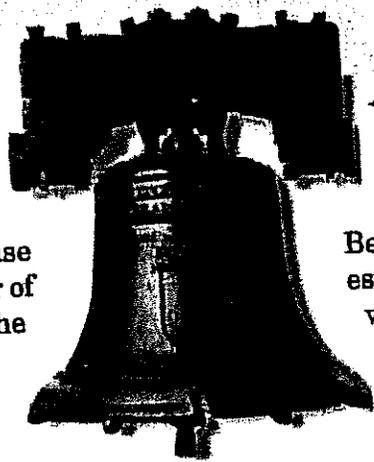
“There is now sitting in this city a grand convention, who are to form some new system of government or mend the old one. I suppose it is a body of great consequence, as they say it depends entirely upon their pleasure whether we shall in the future have a congress.”

What would this “grand convention” decide? No one knew. For almost four months, Americans waited for an answer.

## The Convention Opens

On May 25, 1787, the Constitutional Convention opened in Philadelphia. Every state except Rhode Island sent representatives. Their mission was to revise the Articles of Confederation.

The 55 delegates gathered for the convention were a remarkable group. At age 81,



◀ The Liberty Bell, a symbol of freedom, originally hung in the Pennsylvania State House.

Benjamin Franklin was the oldest delegate. He was wise in the ways of government and human nature. George Washington was a representative from Virginia. Washington was so well respected that

the delegates at once elected him president of the Convention.

Perhaps the best-prepared delegate to the Constitutional Convention was young James Madison of Virginia. For months, Madison had secluded himself on his father's plantation. There, he read many books on history, politics, and commerce. He arrived in Philadelphia with a case bulging with volumes of research.

Many delegates were young men in their twenties and thirties. Among them was Alexander Hamilton of New York. During the Revolution, Hamilton served for a time as Washington's private secretary. Hamilton despised the Articles of Confederation. “The nation,” he wrote, “is sick and wants powerful remedies.” The powerful remedy he prescribed was a strong national government.

When the Convention began, the delegates decided to keep their talks secret. They wanted to be able to speak their minds freely. They wished to explore issues and solutions without pressures from outside.



## Biography Roger Sherman

Roger Sherman was a shoemaker, shopkeeper, surveyor, lawyer—and one of the most respected early leaders of the United States. Thomas Jefferson once said that Sherman “never said a foolish thing in his life.” Sherman was one of only four people to sign both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. ★ What major contribution did Roger Sherman make to the Constitutional Convention?

To ensure secrecy, guards stood at the door. The windows were left closed to keep passersby from overhearing the debates. The closed windows made the room very hot, however. New Englanders in their woolen suits suffered terribly in the summer heat. Southerners, with clothing more suited to warm temperatures, were less bothered.

## Hopelessly Divided

Soon after the meeting began, the delegates decided to do more than revise the Articles of Confederation. They chose instead to write an entirely new constitution for the nation. They disagreed, however, about what form the national government should take.

## The Virginia Plan

Edmund Randolph and James Madison, both from Virginia, proposed a plan for the new government. This **Virginia Plan** called for a strong national government with three branches. The legislative branch would pass the laws. The executive branch would carry out the laws. The judicial branch, or system of courts, would decide if laws were carried out fairly.

According to the Virginia Plan, the legislative branch would consist of two houses. Seats in both houses would be awarded on the basis of population. Thus, in both houses, larger states would have more representatives than smaller ones. This differed from the Articles of Confederation, which gave every state, regardless of population, one vote in Congress.

## The New Jersey Plan

Small states objected strongly to the Virginia Plan. They feared that the large states could easily outvote them in Congress. In response, supporters of the Virginia Plan said that it was only fair for a state with more people to have more representatives.

After two weeks of debate, William Paterson of New Jersey presented a plan that had the support of the small states. Like the Virginia Plan, the **New Jersey Plan** called for three branches of government. However, it provided for a legislature that had only one house. Each state, regardless of its population, would have one vote in the legislature.

## The Great Compromise

For a while, no agreement could be reached. With tempers flaring, it seemed that the Convention would fall apart without adopting any plan. Finally, **Roger Sherman** of Connecticut worked out a compromise that he hoped would satisfy both large and small states. A **compromise** is a settlement in which each side gives up some of its demands in order to reach an agreement.

Sherman's compromise called for a two-house legislature. Members of the lower house, known as the House of Representatives, would be elected by popular vote. As



# Skills FOR LIFE

Critical  
Thinking

Managing  
Information

Communication

Maps, Charts,  
and Graphs

## Identifying Main Ideas

### How Will I Use This Skill?

Every day you get huge quantities of information—from print materials, radio, television, the Internet, and other sources. Sometimes, excessive details make it easy to miss the main point. Learning to identify main ideas saves you time and makes it easier to understand the information you receive.

### LEARN the Skill

When dealing with written information, such as in this textbook, use the structure that is provided. Take note of topic headings. In each paragraph, look for the main idea, usually found in a topic sentence at the beginning or end of the paragraph. Details and examples support the topic sentence. To identify main ideas, follow these steps.

- 1 Identify main topic headings and subtopic headings.
- 2 Identify the topic sentence found in each paragraph.
- 3 Identify the supporting details in each paragraph. Determine how each relates to the topic sentence.
- 4 Review the topic headings and main ideas of each paragraph to determine the main idea of the entire section or chapter.

### PRACTICE the Skill

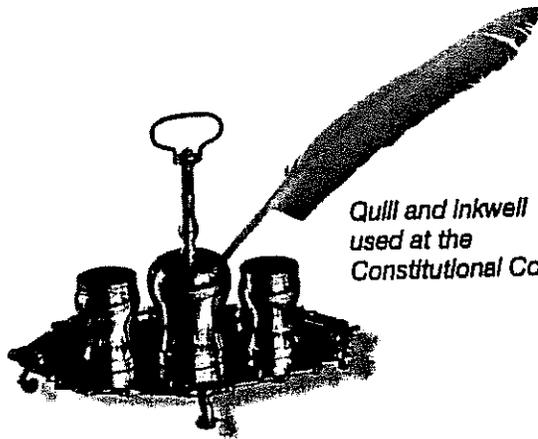
Review the subsection *Hopelessly Divided* on page 194.

- 1 Identify the two subtopic headings under *Hopelessly Divided*.

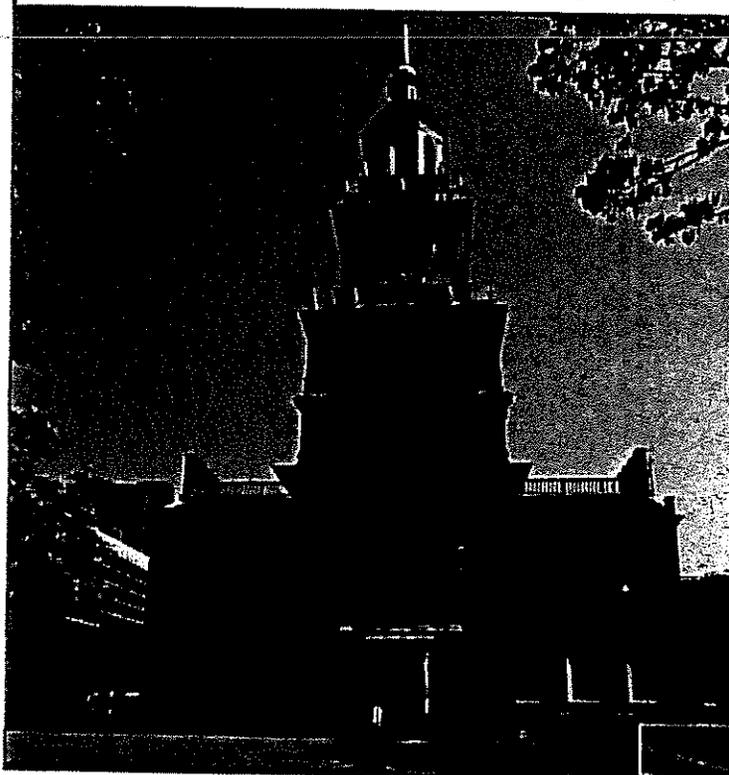
- 2 Identify the topic sentence of each of the five paragraphs in this subsection.
- 3 Identify two supporting details from the first paragraph. How does each support the main idea?
- 4 Review the main ideas of each paragraph. In your own words, restate the main idea of the entire subsection.

### APPLY the Skill

Our mailboxes are often stuffed with business letters. Choose a letter from today's mail. Using the skills that you have learned, determine the main idea.



*Quill and Inkwell  
used at the  
Constitutional Convention*



### Independence Hall

For many, the birthplace of the United States is the old Pennsylvania State House, known today as Independence Hall. Here, the Declaration of Independence was signed, the Articles of Confederation were approved, and the Constitution was adopted. The site is now part of a national park. Visitors to the park can tour the building, learn about the Constitution, and see the Liberty Bell.

★ To learn more about this historic site, write: Independence National Historical Park, 313 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106.

the larger states wished, seats in the lower house would be awarded to each state according to its population.

Members of the upper house, called the Senate, would be chosen by state legislatures. Each state, no matter what its size, would have two senators. This part of Sherman's compromise appealed to the smaller states.

On July 16, the delegates narrowly approved Sherman's plan. It became known as the **Great Compromise**. Each side gave up some demands to preserve the nation.

### Northern and Southern States Compromise

Just as there were disagreements between large and small states, there were also disagreements between northern and southern states. These disagreements concerned the issue of slavery. Would slaves be counted as part of a state's population? Would the slave trade continue to bring enslaved Africans into the United States?



▲ Chamber where the Constitution was debated

### The Three-Fifths Compromise

Southerners wanted to include slaves in the population count even though they would not let slaves vote. If slaves were counted, southern states would have more representatives in the House of Representatives. Northerners argued that since slaves could not vote, they should not be counted.

Once again, the delegates compromised. They agreed that three fifths of the slaves in any state would be counted. In other words, if a state had 5,000 slaves, 3,000 of them would be included in the state's population count. This agreement became known as the **Three-Fifths Compromise**.



# Ratifying the Constitution



## Explore

### These Questions

- What arguments did Americans raise for and against the Constitution?
- How can the Constitution be amended?
- What rights does the Bill of Rights protect?

### Define

- ratify
- amend
- due process

### Identify

- Federalist
- Antifederalist
- *The Federalist Papers*
- Bill of Rights

## SETTING the Scene

In homes and in town squares across the nation, Americans discussed the new Constitution. Many supported it. Many others did not. Its critics especially worried that the Constitution had no bill of rights. In Virginia, Patrick Henry sounded the alarm:

“ Show me an age and country where the rights and liberties of the people were placed on the sole chance of their rulers being good men, without a consequent loss of liberty! ”

Was a bill of rights needed? Did the Constitution give too much power to the federal government? In the fall of 1787, citizens began to debate the document sentence by sentence. The Convention had done its work. Now the states had to decide whether or not to ratify the new frame of government.

## The Constitution Goes to the Nation

The framers of the Constitution sent the document to Congress. With it, they sent a letter from George Washington, as president of the Constitutional Convention. In the letter, Washington described how the framers had struggled to make the Constitution meet the varied needs of the different states. He wrote:

“ In our deliberations, we kept steadily in view... the greatest inter-

ests of every true American. That [the Constitution] will meet the full and entire [approval] of every state is not perhaps to be expected; but each will doubtless consider that had her interest been alone consulted, the consequences might have been... disagreeable or [harmful] to others. ”

Washington warmly endorsed the document and called on Congress to support it. It was his belief, he said, that the Constitution would “promote the lasting welfare of that country so dear to us all, and secure her freedom and happiness.”

The framers of the Constitution had set up a process for the states to decide on the new government. At least 9 of the 13 states had to **ratify**, or approve, the Constitution before it could go into effect. In 1787 and 1788, voters in each state elected delegates to special state conventions. These delegates then met to decide whether or not to ratify the Constitution.



## Connections With Science

Today, the Constitution is publicly displayed. For protection against damage due to light, insects, and impurities in the air, each page is in a glass case filled with helium. Levels of light and humidity are carefully controlled.

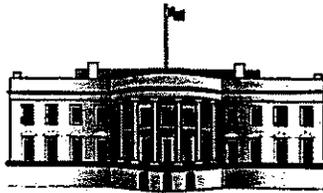


## Separation of Powers



### Legislative Branch (Congress)

**Passes laws**  
Can override President's veto  
Approves treaties and presidential appointments  
Can impeach and remove President and other high officials  
Creates lower federal courts  
Appropriates money  
Prints and coins money  
Raises and supports the armed forces  
Can declare war  
Regulates foreign and interstate trade



### Executive Branch (President)

**Carries out laws**  
Proposes laws  
Can veto laws  
Negotiates foreign treaties  
Serves as commander in chief of the armed forces  
Appoints federal judges, ambassadors, and other high officials  
Can grant pardons to federal offenders



### Judicial Branch (Supreme Court and Other Federal Courts)

**Interprets laws**  
Can declare laws unconstitutional  
Can declare executive actions unconstitutional

#### Chart Skills

The Constitution set up three branches of government. Each of the branches has its own powers.

- 1. Comprehension** (a) Who heads the executive branch? (b) What is the role of the legislative branch?
- 2. Critical Thinking** Based on this chart, describe the relationship between the judicial branch and the executive branch.



## Electing the President

The framers of the Constitution wanted to ensure that the President would not become too strong. Some feared that a President elected directly by the people might become too independent of Congress and the states.

Others opposed direct election because they worried that voters would not know a candidate from outside their area. In the late 1700s, news traveled slowly. New Englanders would probably know little about a candidate from the South. A candidate from Pennsylvania might be unknown to voters in Vermont or Georgia.

As a result of these concerns, the Constitution calls for an electoral college. It is made up of electors from every state. Every

four years, the electors vote for the President and Vice President of the United States.

The framers of the Constitution expected that the electors would be well informed and familiar with the national government. They believed that such people would choose a President and Vice President wisely.

## Checks and Balances

The Constitution set up a system of checks and balances. Under this system, each branch of the federal government has some way to check, or control, the other two branches. The system of checks and balances is another way in which the Constitution limits the power of government. (See the chart on page 220.)

of power between the states and the national government is called federalism.

### **Federal powers**

The Constitution spells out the powers of the federal government. For example, only the federal government can coin money or declare war. The federal government can also regulate trade between the states and with other countries.

### **State powers**

Under the Constitution, states have the power to regulate trade within their borders. They decide who can vote in state elections. They also have power to establish schools and local governments.

In addition, the Constitution says that those powers not clearly given to the federal government belong to the states or the people. This point pleased people who were afraid that the federal government might become too powerful.

### **Shared powers**

The Constitution lists some powers that are to be shared by federal and state governments. Both governments, for example, can build roads and raise taxes.

The framers of the Constitution had to decide how the state governments and the federal government would settle disagreements. They did so by making the Constitution "the supreme law of the land." This means that the Constitution is the final authority in any dispute between the states and the federal government.

## **Separation of Powers**

The framers of the Constitution set up a strong federal government. However, they also took steps to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful. James Madison said that this was necessary in order to prevent tyranny:

“The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether one, a few, or many... may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.”

To prevent such a tyranny, the framers relied on Montesquieu's idea of separation of powers. In the Constitution, they created three branches of government and then defined the powers of each.

### **The legislative branch**

The legislative branch of government is Congress. Its main function is to make laws. Congress consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Members of the House are elected for two-year terms. Senators are elected for six-year terms.

Under the Constitution, voters in each state elect members of the House of Representatives. Delegates to the Constitutional Convention wanted the House to represent the interests of ordinary people.

At first, the Constitution provided for senators to be chosen by state legislatures. In 1913, this was changed. Today, senators are elected in the same way as House members.

Article 1 of the Constitution sets out the powers of Congress. These include the power to collect taxes and to regulate foreign and interstate trade. In foreign affairs, Congress has the power to declare war and to "raise and support armies."

### **The executive branch**

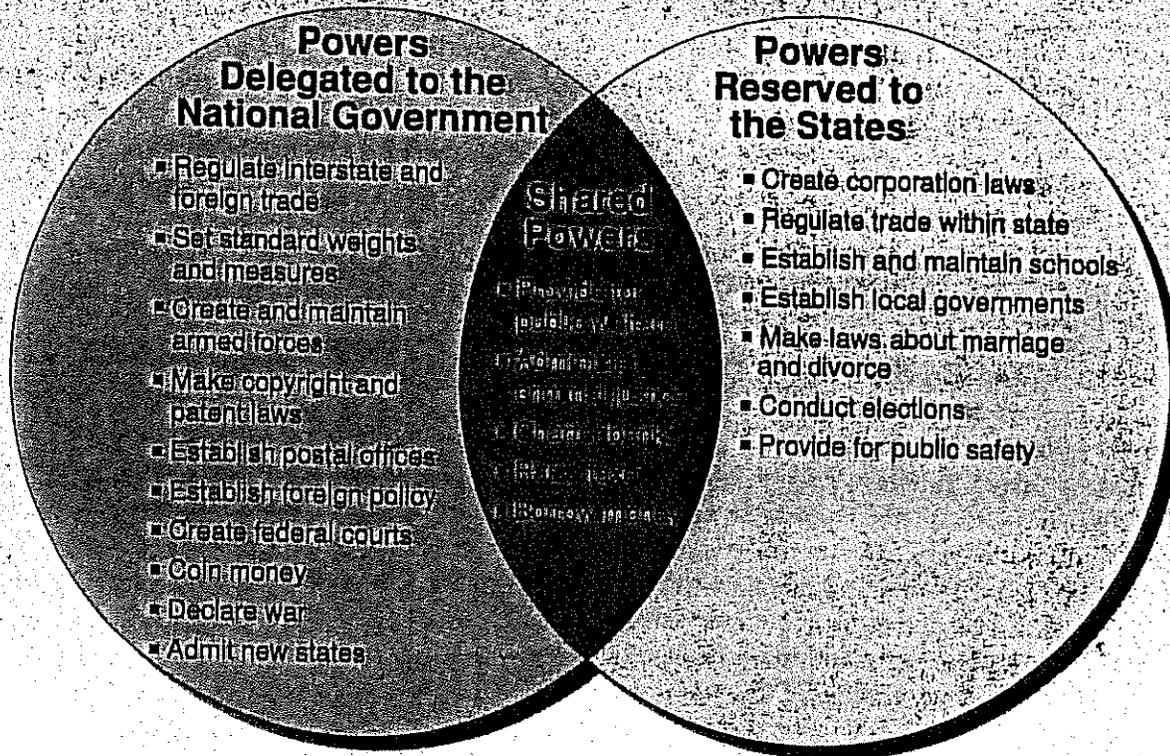
Article 2 of the Constitution sets up the executive branch of government. It is headed by the President. The executive branch also includes the Vice President and any advisers appointed by the President. The President and Vice President serve four-year terms.

The President is responsible for carrying out all laws passed by Congress. The President is also commander in chief of the armed forces and is responsible for directing foreign relations. Over the years, the power of the presidency has greatly increased.

### **The judicial branch**

Article 3 of the Constitution calls for a Supreme Court. The article also allows Congress to set up other federal courts. The Supreme Court and other federal courts hear cases that involve the Constitution or any laws passed by Congress. They also hear cases arising from disputes between two or more states.

## The Federal System



### Graphic Organizer Skills

The system of federalism divides power between the national government and state governments.

- 1. Comprehension** (a) List two powers shared by national and state governments. (b) List two powers reserved to the states.
- 2. Critical Thinking** Why do you think the power to create and maintain armed forces was delegated to the federal government?



Locke's ideas were popular among Americans. The framers of the Constitution wanted to protect people's natural rights and limit the power of government. They saw the Constitution as a contract between the people and their government.

In 1748, the French thinker Baron de Montesquieu published *The Spirit of the Laws*. He urged that the power of government be divided among three separate branches: the legislative, executive, and judicial. This idea, known as the separation of powers, was designed to keep any person or group from gaining too much power.

Montesquieu stressed the importance of the rule of law. The powers of government, he

said, should be clearly defined. This would prevent individuals or groups from using government power for their own purposes. In the Constitution, the framers set out the basic laws of the nation, defining and limiting the powers of the government.

## A Federal System

The framers had to decide how to divide power between the national government and the states. Under the Articles of Confederation, states had more power than Congress. Under the Constitution, states delegated, or gave up, some of their powers to the national government. At the same time, the states reserved, or kept, other powers. This division

bodies—the House of Lords and the House of Commons.

In the Magna Carta, King John was also forced to recognize that citizens had legal rights. One of the most important of these was the right to a trial by jury:

“No freeman shall be arrested or imprisoned or dispossessed or... in any way harmed... except by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land.”

In 1689, the **English Bill of Rights** went further in limiting the monarchy and protecting the rights of citizens. The document said that parliamentary elections would be held regularly. It reaffirmed the right to a trial by jury, while protecting people from excessive fines and cruel or unjust punishment. It allowed citizens to bear arms. It also affirmed the right of habeas corpus, the idea that no person could be held in prison without first being charged with a specific crime.

### The American experience

Americans enjoyed a long tradition of elected representative government. In 1619, the Virginia colonists set up the **House of Burgesses**. Eventually, each of Britain's thirteen American colonies had its own representative legislature.

Another American tradition was having written documents that clearly identified the powers and limits of government. In 1620, the Pilgrim leaders at Plymouth drew up and signed the **Mayflower Compact**, the first document of self-government in North America. They agreed to “combine ourselves together in a civil body politic” in order to establish “just and equal laws.” Each of the 13 colonies had a written charter granted by the monarch or Parliament.

The framers of the Constitution also drew on their own experiences. They were very familiar with the workings of the Second Continental Congress, the Articles of Confederation, and their own state governments. Much that went into the Constitution came from either the Articles or from one of the state constitutions.

## The Enlightenment

The Constitution was also based on the ideas of the European **Enlightenment**. Enlightenment thinkers believed that people could improve society through the use of reason. Many of the Constitution's framers had read the works of Enlightenment thinkers, such as John Locke and the Baron de Montesquieu (MOHN tehs kyoo).

In 1690, **John Locke** published *Two Treatises on Government*. In it, he stated two important ideas.

First, Locke declared that all people had natural rights to life, liberty, and property. Second, he suggested that government is an agreement between the ruler and the ruled. The ruler must enforce the laws and protect the people. If a ruler violates the people's natural rights, the people have a right to rebel.



### **Biography** Baron de Montesquieu

Montesquieu studied European, Chinese, and Native American governments. His ideas influenced the framers of the Constitution to divide government power among three separate branches. He said that “government should be set up so that one man need not be afraid of another.” ★ Why do you think the framers of the Constitution did not want to place all power into a single branch of government?



## The slave trade

There was another disagreement over slavery. By 1787, some northern states had banned the slave trade within their borders. They urged that the slave trade be banned in the entire nation. Southerners warned that such a ban would ruin their economy.

In the end, the two sides compromised once more. Northerners agreed that Congress could not outlaw the slave trade for at least 20 years. After that, Congress could regulate the slave trade if it wished. Northerners also agreed that no state could stop a fugitive slave from being returned to an owner who claimed that slave.

## Signing the Constitution

As summer drew to a close, the weary delegates struggled with other difficult questions. How many years should the President, head of the executive branch, serve? How should the courts be organized? Would members of Congress be paid?

Finally, on September 17, 1787, the Constitution was ready. Gathering for the last time, delegates listened quietly as Benjamin

Franklin rose to plead that the document be accepted:

“I doubt... whether any other Convention... may be able to make a better Constitution... I cannot help expressing a wish, that every member of the Convention, who may still have objections to it, would with me, on this occasion, doubt a little of his own infallibility, and... put his name to this instrument.”

One by one, delegates came forward to sign the document. Of the 42 delegates remaining in Philadelphia, 39 signed the document. Edmund Randolph and George Mason of Virginia, along with Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts, refused to sign. They felt that the new Constitution gave too much power to the national government.

The Constitution required each state to hold a state convention to decide if the plan for the new government should be accepted. Once 9 of the 13 states endorsed it, the Constitution would go into effect. Before that occurred, the new Constitution was discussed and debated in all the states.

## ★ Section 2 Review ★

### Recall

1. **Identify** (a) Constitutional Convention, (b) James Madison, (c) Virginia Plan, (d) New Jersey Plan, (e) Roger Sherman, (f) Great Compromise, (g) Three-Fifths Compromise.
2. **Define** (a) legislative branch, (b) executive branch, (c) judicial branch, (d) compromise.

### Comprehension

3. Why did New Jersey and other small states oppose the Virginia Plan?
4. (a) How did the Great Compromise satisfy large states? (b) How did it satisfy small states?
5. What compromise did the North and South reach on the slave trade?

### Critical Thinking and Writing

6. **Defending a Position** James Madison said that “no Constitution would ever have been adopted by the Convention if the debates had been made public.” Do you agree or disagree? Defend your position.
7. **Predicting Consequences** Some historians refer to the issue of slavery as the Constitutional Convention’s “unfinished business.” How do you think the issue of slavery would continue to divide North and South in the years after the Convention?



**Activity Writing a Letter** You are the editor of a Philadelphia newspaper in 1787. Decide whether you agree or disagree with the Convention’s decision to keep its talks secret. Explain your viewpoint in a letter to the delegates of the Constitutional Convention.



# A More Perfect Union



## Explore

### These Questions

- What ideas helped shape the Constitution?
- How did the framers of the Constitution divide power between the national government and the states?
- How did they limit the power of government?

## Define

- republic
- separation of powers
- federalism
- electoral college
- checks and balances
- bill
- veto
- override
- impeach

## Identify

- Magna Carta
- English Bill of Rights
- House of Burgesses
- Mayflower Compact
- Enlightenment
- John Locke
- Montesquieu

## SETTING the Scene

Jonathan Smith, a Massachusetts farmer, wanted to learn the results of the Constitutional Convention. During Shays' Rebellion, he had seen how weak government could lead to violence and tyranny. Smith noted:

“When I saw this Constitution, I found that it was a cure for these disorders. It was just such a thing as we wanted. I got a copy of it and read it over and over. I had been a member of the convention to form our state constitution, and had learnt something of the checks and balances of power; and I found them all here. I formed my own opinion, and I was pleased with this Constitution.”

The framers of the Constitution had designed a **republic**, a government in which citizens rule themselves through elected representatives. The Constitution outlined a new government that would be strong. At the same time, it protected the people from excessive power in government. As Smith hoped, it also prevented any one branch of government from becoming too powerful.

## Origins of the Constitution

The framers of the Constitution were well-educated men. They were familiar with the traditions of British and American gov-

ernment. Many of them had read the latest works of Europe's leading political philosophers. In creating the Constitution, the framers made good use of their rich knowledge and experience.

## British government

As you learned in Chapter 3, the **Magna Carta** limited the power of English rulers. The Magna Carta contained two basic ideas that helped to shape both British and American government. First, it stated that English nobles had certain rights—rights that were later extended to other classes of people as well. Second, the Magna Carta made clear that English monarchs themselves had to obey the law.

When King John signed the Magna Carta, he agreed not to raise taxes without first consulting the Great Council of nobles and church officials. Eventually, the Great Council grew into the representative body known as Parliament. Parliament consisted

## Connections With Civics

Benjamin Franklin admired the government formed by Indian nations in the Iroquois League. The nations in the League governed their own affairs, but joined together for mutual defense.

## Heated Debate

In every state, heated debates took place. Supporters of the Constitution called themselves **Federalists**. They called people who opposed the Constitution **Antifederalists**.

### The Federalist position

The Federalists argued that the Articles of Confederation had produced an excessively weak central government. It had placed the nation in grave danger because it left too much power with the individual states. Disputes among the states, Federalists said, had made it too difficult for the Confederation government to function.

According to the Federalists, the Constitution gave the national government the authority to function effectively. At the same time, it still protected the rights of the individual states.

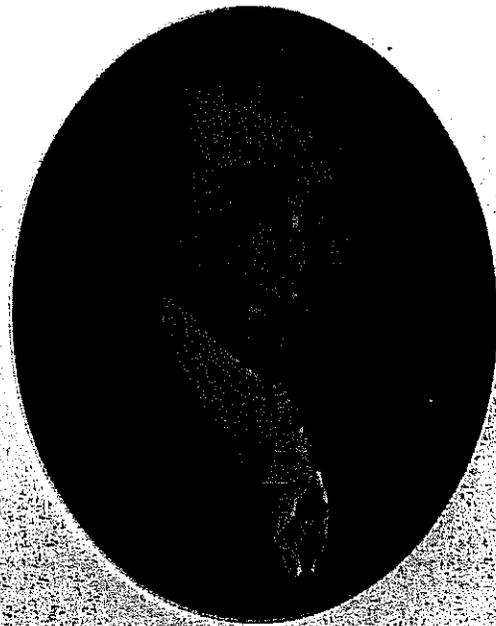
Among the best-known Federalists were James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay. They wrote a series of essays, called *The Federalist Papers*, defending the Constitution. They used pen names, but most people knew who they were. Today, *The Federalist Papers* remains one of the best discussions of the political theory behind the American system of government.

### The Antifederalist position

Antifederalists opposed the Constitution for many reasons. They felt that it made the national government too strong and left the states too weak. They thought that the Constitution gave the President too much power. Patrick Henry was among those who voiced such concerns:

“This Constitution is said to have beautiful features, but... they appear to me horribly frightful... Your President may become king... If your American chief be a man of ambition and abilities, how easy is it for him to render himself absolute!”

Most people expected George Washington to be elected President. Antifederalists admired Washington, but they warned that future Presidents might lack Washington's



## Biography James Madison

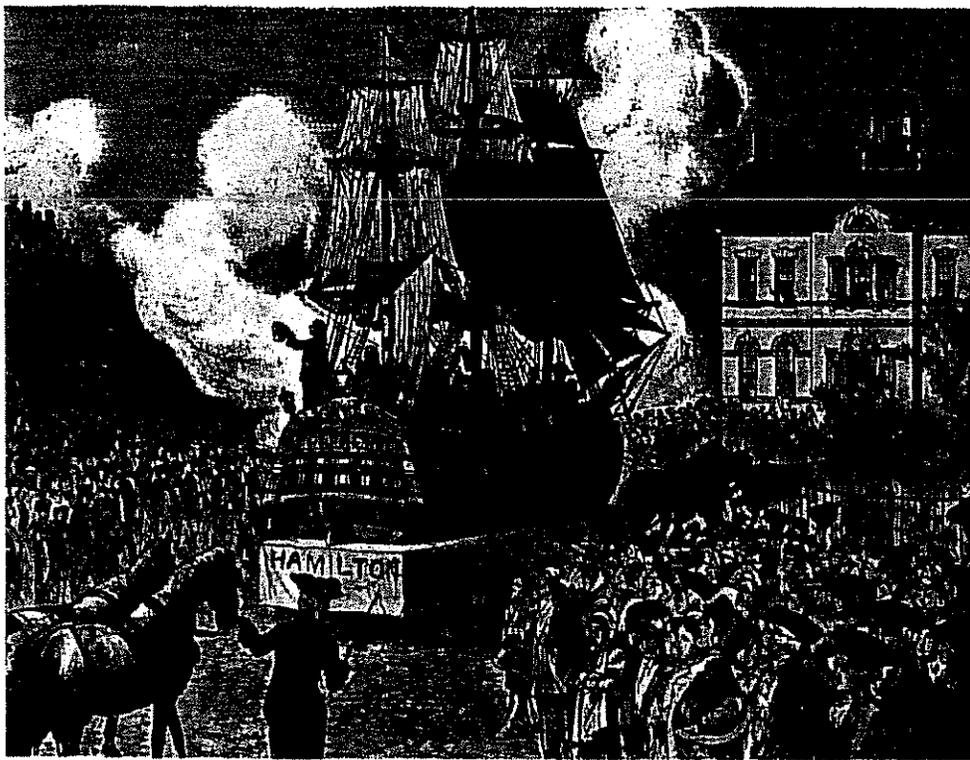
Historians call James Madison the “Father of the Constitution” because much of the document was based on his ideas. When the Constitution was being debated, Madison was only in his 30s. He went on to serve the nation as a member of Congress, as Secretary of State, and as the fourth President of the United States. ★ Was Madison a Federalist or an Antifederalist?

honor and skill. For this reason, they said, the office should not be too powerful.

### Need for a bill of rights

The chief argument used by Antifederalists against the Constitution was that it had no bill of rights. Americans had just fought a revolution to protect their freedoms. They wanted a bill of rights in the Constitution that spelled out basic freedoms such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

Federalists replied that the Constitution protected citizens very well without a bill of rights. Anyway, they argued, it was impossible to list all the natural rights of people. Antifederalists responded that if rights were not written into the Constitution, it would be easy to ignore them. Several state conventions refused to ratify the Constitution unless they received a firm promise that a bill of rights would be added.



## Viewing HISTORY The Nation Celebrates

When the Constitution was ratified, celebrations were held across the nation. Shown here is a celebration parade in New York City. The three-masted ship on the float represented the "ship of state." ★ Why do you think Alexander Hamilton's name is displayed so visibly?

### The States Vote to Ratify

One by one, states voted to ratify the Constitution. Delaware was the first, in December 1787. In June 1788, New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify. The new government could now go into effect.

Still, the future of the United States remained in doubt. It was important that all the states support the Constitution. However, New York and Virginia, two of the largest states, had not yet ratified the plan. In both states, Federalists and Antifederalists were closely matched.

In Virginia, Patrick Henry strongly opposed the Constitution. Henry charged that the document gave the government too much power. "There will be no checks, no real balances in this government," he cried. In the end, however, Washington, Madison, and other Virginia Federalists prevailed. In late June, Virginia approved the Constitution.

In New York, the struggle went on for another month. At last, in July 1788, the state convention voted to ratify. North Carolina ratified in November 1789. Rhode Island was the last state to approve the Constitution, finally doing so in May 1790.

### The Nation Celebrates

Throughout the land, Americans celebrated the news that the Constitution was ratified. The city of Philadelphia set its festival for July 4, 1788. At sunrise, church bells rang. In the harbor, the ship *Rising Sun* boomed a salute from its cannons. Horses wore bright ribbons, and bands played popular tunes.

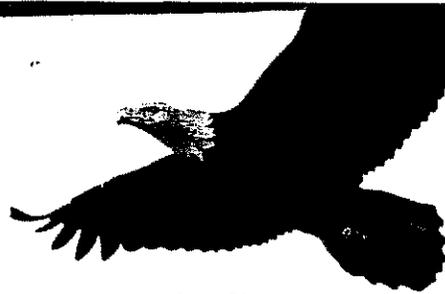
A festive parade filed along Market Street, led by soldiers who had fought in the Revolution. Thousands cheered as six colorfully outfitted horses pulled a blue carriage shaped like an eagle. Thirteen stars and stripes were painted on the front, and the Constitution was raised proudly above it.

That night, even the skies seemed to celebrate. The northern lights, vivid bands of color, lit up the sky above the city. Benjamin Rush, a Philadelphia doctor and strong supporter of the Constitution, wrote to a friend: "Tis done. We have become a nation."

### Adding a Bill of Rights

Americans voted in the first election under the Constitution in January 1789. As

# Why Study History?



## Because National Symbols Unite Us

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### Historical Background

The Constitution changed loose alliance of states into a more unified nation. It takes more than a document, however, to create a nation. Shared ideals and symbols also help to bring people together. In 1782, the bald eagle was declared a symbol of the United States by Congress.



The presidential seal

Today, the eagle and other symbols appear on the Great Seal of the United States and on the Seal of the President of the United States. On both seals, the American eagle holds an olive branch representing peace and a bundle of arrows representing military readiness. In its beak, it holds a scroll with the Latin phrase "*E pluribus Unum*." These words, which mean "Out of many, one," are our nation's motto. They refer to the union of states and to the union of the diverse American people.

### Connections to Today

Almost 200 years after Congress declared it an American symbol, the American bald eagle was in serious trouble. Only about 400 breeding pairs of eagles remained in the lower 48 states. Hunting, loss of habitat, and pollution were some causes of the decline. In the 1960s, President John F. Kennedy made an urgent appeal. "The fierce beauty and proud independence of this great bird aptly symbolize the strength

and freedom of America," he said, "and we shall have failed a trust if we allow the eagle to disappear."

The nation took action. Congress banned the use of DDT, an insecticide that damaged the birds' eggs. Also, it declared the eagle an endangered species. This step prohibited the hunting of eagles and protected their habitat. By the mid-1990s, the eagle population had recovered.

### Connections to You

The bald eagle is only one of the emblems that represent you and all citizens of the United States. The foremost symbol of the nation is the American flag. Others include the Liberty Bell, the Statue of Liberty, and Uncle Sam. Such images have a long and interesting history as symbols of our nation.

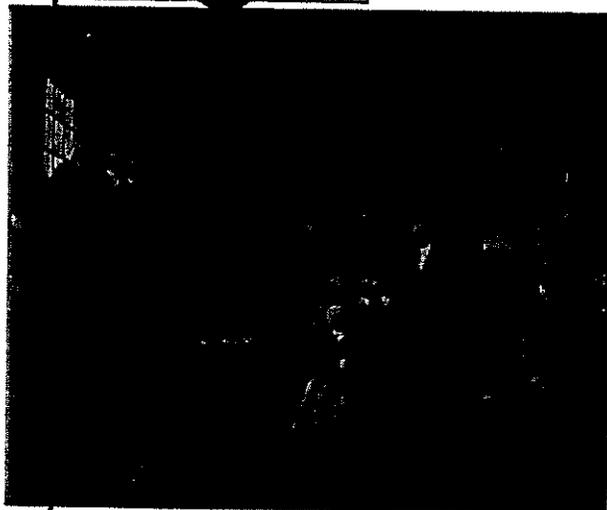
- 1. Comprehension** (a) Why was the bald eagle endangered in the 1960s? (b) How did government help the eagle to recover?
- 2. Critical Thinking** Why do you think Congress chose the eagle as a symbol of the United States?

### *Activity*

**Researching and Writing**  
Conduct research to learn about the origins and meaning of the American flag, the Liberty Bell, or other symbols of the United States. Write an essay summarizing your findings.

## Linking Past and Present

Past



Present



### Trial by Jury

*Trial by jury is part of the nation's English heritage. Yet in colonial times, British officials sometimes suspended jury trials. Therefore, many Americans wanted the new Constitution to guarantee this right. The members of a jury promise to give an impartial verdict based on evidence. ★ Turn to the Reference Section and read the Sixth Amendment. List three rights guaranteed to Americans accused of crimes.*

expected, George Washington was elected President, while John Adams was chosen Vice President.

The first Congress was made up of 59 representatives and 22 senators. It met in New York City, which was chosen as the nation's first capital. The first Congress quickly turned its attention to adding a bill of rights to the Constitution.

### The amendment process

The framers had set up a way to amend, or change, the Constitution. They did not want people to make changes lightly, however. Thus, they made the process of amending the Constitution fairly difficult.

To start the amendment process, an amendment must be proposed. This can be done in two ways. Two thirds of both houses of Congress can vote to propose an amendment, or two thirds of the states can request special conventions to propose amendments.

Next, the amendment must be ratified. Three fourths of the states must approve the amendment before it becomes part of the Constitution.

In the more than 200 years since the Constitution was adopted, only 27 amendments have been approved. Ten of those amendments were added in the first years after the Constitution was ratified.

### The first 10 amendments

The first Congress proposed a series of amendments to the Constitution of the United States in 1789. By December 1791, three fourths of the states had ratified 10 amendments. Those 10 amendments became known as the **Bill of Rights**.

James Madison, who wrote the amendments, insisted that the Bill of Rights does not give Americans any rights. People already have the rights listed in the amendments. They are natural rights, said Madi-



