

Lesson Outline: The Critical Period

Introduction

- Overview: Transition from the Treaty of Paris to the Critical Period.

Key Concepts from the Critical Period

1. Opportunities Post-Revolution:

- Expansion into western territories (west of the Appalachians).
- Social changes, including erosion of class distinctions.
- New governance systems: Independent state governments with bicameral legislatures and elected governors.

2. Expansion of Voting Rights:

- **Five Changes in Voting Rights:**
 - **Lowered property ownership requirements.**
 - **Elimination of religious restrictions.**
 - **Increased local control and participation.**
 - **Distinction from European systems.**
 - **Broader representation through the influence of "no taxation without representation."**
- Clarification: Women's and black men's voting rights in the early republic.

Common Misconceptions About America's Foundations

1. Addressing Misconceptions:

- America's foundations were not entirely racist or misogynistic.
- Examples of women's and black men's participation in early voting systems.

2. Historical context:

- Explanation of how later restrictions led to suffrage movements.
- Importance of examining the full scope of history.

The Articles of Confederation

1. Purpose and Structure:

- First union of states as a confederation.
- States maintained sovereignty; the central government was a partnership.
- Overview of Congress under the Articles.

2. Challenges Under the Articles:

- Difficulty in passing measures or amendments.
- Lack of executive and judicial branches.
- Inability to tax, leading to financial struggles.

3. Shays' Rebellion:

- Farmers' uprising in Massachusetts.
- Economic struggles and lack of federal power.
- Wake-up call for the weaknesses in the Articles.

4. Northwest Ordinance of 1787:

- Key achievement of the Articles.
- Provided for new states in the Northwest Territory.
- Guarantees: Freedom of religion, trial by jury, public education, and prohibition of slavery.

Conclusion

Multiple Choice Questions

- 1. The Treaty of Paris primarily accomplished which of the following for America?**
 - A. Established a national constitution**
 - B. Secured independence from Great Britain**
 - C. Granted voting rights to all citizens**
 - D. Abolished slavery**
- 2. What is the term used to describe the period immediately following the American Revolution?**
 - A. Reconstruction Era**
 - B. Revolutionary Era**
 - C. Critical Period**
 - D. Confederation Period**
- 3. One significant opportunity during the Critical Period was:**
 - A. Abolition of all taxes**
 - B. Expansion into western territories**
 - C. Centralization of government power**
 - D. Immediate creation of a federal constitution**
- 4. Which of the following is NOT a change in voting rights during the Critical Period?**
 - A. Lowering property ownership requirements**
 - B. Eliminating religious restrictions**
 - C. Allowing women to vote without property ownership**
 - D. Expanding local control and participation**
- 5. The Articles of Confederation:**
 - A. Created a strong central government**
 - B. Gave each state one vote regardless of size**
 - C. Established an executive branch**
 - D. Required only a simple majority to pass measures**
- 6. What was a major weakness of the Articles of Confederation?**
 - A. It prohibited state governments from collecting taxes.**
 - B. It lacked an executive and judicial branch.**
 - C. It restricted states from forming their own governments.**
 - D. It banned foreign trade entirely.**
- 7. Shays' Rebellion highlighted which issue under the Articles of Confederation?**
 - A. Lack of federal military power**
 - B. Disputes over slavery**
 - C. Conflict between northern and southern states**
 - D. Imbalance in representation**

8. **The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 guaranteed all of the following EXCEPT:**
 - A. Freedom of religion
 - B. Trial by jury
 - C. Prohibition of slavery in the Northwest Territory
 - D. Universal suffrage for all citizens

 9. **Which state granted voting rights to "all inhabitants" in its 1776 constitution, allowing some women to vote?**
 - A. Massachusetts
 - B. New Jersey
 - C. Pennsylvania
 - D. Vermont

 10. **Which of the following is true about black men voting in early America?**
 - A. Black men were universally barred from voting.
 - B. Voting rights for black men were tied to property ownership.
 - C. Black men could vote only in New England states.
 - D. Voting rights for black men were unrestricted until the Civil War.
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Answer Key

1. **B – Secured independence from Great Britain**
2. **C – Critical Period**
3. **B – Expansion into western territories**
4. **C – Allowing women to vote without property ownership**
5. **B – Gave each state one vote regardless of size**
6. **B – It lacked an executive and judicial branch**
7. **A – Lack of federal military power**
8. **D – Universal suffrage for all citizens**
9. **B – New Jersey**
10. **B – Voting rights for black men were tied to property ownership**

Discussion Questions for Middle School

1. **What were some of the opportunities and challenges faced by the United States during the Critical Period? How did these shape the development of the new nation?**
2. **Why do you think property ownership was such an important factor in voting rights during this time? Do you think it was fair? Why or why not?**
3. **The Articles of Confederation created a weak central government. Why do you think the states wanted it that way? What problems did this cause?**
4. **How did the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 contribute to the growth of the United States? Why was its prohibition of slavery significant?**
5. **Do you think the changes in voting rights after the Revolution made America more democratic? Why or why not? What lessons can we learn from these changes?**