



AMERICAN GOVERNMENT



LESSON 24

OUTLINE

CONSTITUTION OVERVIEW 4 OF 4

1. Introduction

- Timeline of key events in the drafting and ratification of the Constitution.
- May 25, 1787: Congress convenes a convention to amend the Articles of Confederation.
- September 17, 1787: 38 of the 41 delegates sign the proposed Constitution.
- Article VII: Requires nine of thirteen states to ratify the Constitution for it to become legally binding.

2. Ratification Process and Challenges

- The Constitution was sent to the states for ratification, but not all states were on board.
- Delaware became the first to ratify on December 7, 1787, followed by Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, and Connecticut.
- The major concern: ensuring the central government would not consume state sovereignty, leading to debates between Federalists and Anti-Federalists.
- Another key issue: safeguarding religious liberty, as some colonies had experienced religious persecution under theocratic rule.

3. The Anti-Federalists' Concerns

- Anti-Federalists feared the central government might evolve into a monarchy or oppressive system.
- Anti-Federalists pushed for protections to limit federal power and secure state sovereignty and individual rights.
- Federalists, led by James Madison, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton, defended the Constitution and wrote the Federalist Papers under pseudonyms.

4. The Great Debate and Massachusetts Compromise

- The debate over the Constitution ultimately led to the creation of the Bill of Rights.
- Massachusetts Compromise: Agreement to add a Bill of Rights to address concerns about state sovereignty and individual liberties.
- Four more states ratified the Constitution, bringing the total to nine, allowing the Constitution to become legally binding.



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5. Creation of the Bill of Rights

- James Madison drafted 17 amendments, 12 were sent to the states, and 10 were ratified as the Bill of Rights on December 15, 1791.
- The Bill of Rights was designed to prevent the central government from abusing its powers and to protect individual and state rights.

6. Preamble of the Bill of Rights

- The preamble of the Bill of Rights highlights the purpose: to prevent the abuse of powers and extend public confidence in the government.
- It establishes the amendments as further declarations and restrictions on federal authority.

7. Overview of the Bill of Rights

- First Amendment: Freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition.
- Second Amendment: Right to keep and bear arms.
- Third Amendment: Protection against the quartering of soldiers.
- Fourth Amendment: Protection against unreasonable searches and seizures.
- Fifth Amendment: Right to due process, protection against self-incrimination, and double jeopardy.
- Sixth Amendment: Right to a fair trial, including a speedy trial and trial by jury.
- Seventh Amendment: Right to due process in civil cases.
- Eighth Amendment: Protection against excessive fines and cruel and unusual punishment.
- Ninth Amendment: Acknowledges that rights not listed in the Constitution still belong to the people.
- Tenth Amendment: Reserves powers not delegated to the federal government to the states or the people.



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Conclusion

- timeline and key event- After a convention was held on May 25, 1787, to amend the Articles of Confederation, a new Constitution was proposed on September 17, 1787, and sent to the states for ratification. Nine of the thirteen states were required to ratify the Constitution for it to become law.
- However, many states were concerned about the central government's potential to overpower the states and demanded further protections for state sovereignty and individual rights. This led to the creation of the Bill of Rights, which was added after the Massachusetts Compromise convinced reluctant states to ratify the Constitution.
- James Madison drafted 17 amendments, of which 10 were ratified as the Bill of Rights by December 15, 1791. These amendments protected key rights like freedom of speech, religion, and due process, while also ensuring that powers not given to the federal government were reserved for the states and the people.



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Discussion/essay questions

1. Constitutional Ratification:

- Why did some states initially refuse to ratify the Constitution? What concerns did they have about the central government?
- How did the Massachusetts Compromise play a role in securing the necessary number of states to ratify the Constitution?

2. Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists:

- What were the primary concerns of the Anti-Federalists regarding the potential for the central government to become too powerful?
- How did the Federalist Papers aim to address these concerns? Do you think the arguments provided were convincing?

3. Creation of the Bill of Rights:

- Why was the Bill of Rights added to the Constitution? Do you agree with the idea that the Constitution alone was not enough to protect individual and state rights?
- How does the Bill of Rights ensure a balance between federal authority and state sovereignty?

4. Key Amendments:

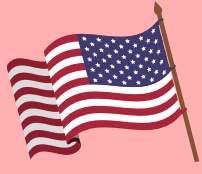
- Which amendment in the Bill of Rights do you think is the most important for protecting individual freedoms today, and why?
- How do the Ninth and Tenth Amendments help maintain a system of limited government in the U.S.?

5. Preamble of the Bill of Rights:

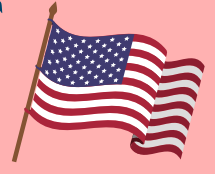
- The preamble of the Bill of Rights emphasizes preventing "misconstruction or abuse of its powers." How does this reflect the fears of the Anti-Federalists? Do you think these concerns are still relevant today?

6. The Ratification Debate:

- How did the debates between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists shape the final form of the Constitution and Bill of Rights?
- What lessons can modern-day lawmakers learn from the way the Constitution was debated, drafted, and amended?



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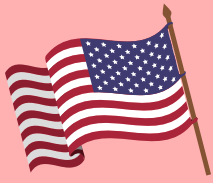
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NAME _____

Multiple Choice

1. What was the main purpose of the convention that began on May 25, 1787?
 - A) To draft the Bill of Rights
 - B) To create a new government without state involvement
 - C) To amend the Articles of Confederation
 - D) To write the Federalist Papers
2. Why were some states hesitant to ratify the Constitution?
 - A) They wanted more power for the federal government
 - B) They were concerned about the central government consuming state sovereignty
 - C) They wanted the president to have more power
 - D) They believed the Constitution was too complex
3. What was the Massachusetts Compromise?
 - A) A deal that ended the war for independence
 - B) An agreement that a Bill of Rights would be added if states ratified the Constitution
 - C) A treaty between the federal government and the states
 - D) A law granting more power to the judiciary
4. How many amendments were originally proposed by James Madison to form the Bill of Rights?
 - A) 10
 - B) 12
 - C) 17
 - D) 9
5. What is the significance of the Ninth and Tenth Amendments?
 - A) They limit the power of state governments over the people
 - B) They grant the president the authority to amend the Constitution
 - C) They ensure all rights not listed belong to the people, and powers not delegated to the federal government are reserved for the states
 - D) They outline the process for ratifying new states into the Union



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6. Which group of individuals wrote the Federalist Papers to defend the Constitution?
 - A) The Anti-Federalists
 - B) James Madison, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton
 - C) George Washington and Thomas Jefferson
 - D) The British Parliament

7. Why was the Bill of Rights added to the Constitution?
 - A) The Constitution needed corrections after being ratified
 - B) It was necessary to appease states concerned about individual liberties and state sovereignty
 - C) The founders wanted to limit the president's power
 - D) The Constitution was deemed too long without it

8. Which of the following rights is protected by the First Amendment?
 - A) Right to bear arms
 - B) Freedom of speech and religion
 - C) Protection from cruel and unusual punishment
 - D) Right to a jury trial in civil cases

9. What was the primary concern of the Anti-Federalists during the ratification debates?
 - A) The federal government would be too weak
 - B) The federal government would grow too powerful and infringe on state sovereignty
 - C) There were not enough protections for foreign trade
 - D) The president would not have enough power

10. What year were the first ten amendments, known as the Bill of Rights, ratified?
 - A) 1787
 - B) 1790
 - C) 1791
 - D) 1789



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ANSWER KEY

1. C
2. B
3. B
4. C
5. C
6. B
7. B
8. B
9. B
10. C