# Constitutional Convention Overview Notes

Recognize and analyze the significance of the Convention, its major debates and compromises, and key individuals; the struggle for ratification by Federalists and Anti-Federalists and the addition of the Bill of Rights.

### Who, What, When, Where, and Why?

- Who- delegates from each state
- What- met to search for ways to improve the Articles of Confederation
- When- 1787
- Where- Philadelphia
- Why- Many Americans thought the national government was too weak (Remember Shays' Rebellion??)

# Important People

- JamesMadison
  - "Father of theConstitution"



# Important People

George Washington

 Did not want to attend the Convention

 Saw the need for a strong national government

 Elected President of the Convention and later was elected President of the US



# Important People

- George Mason
  - Very outspoken
  - Felt the final copy gave too much power to the national government and he refused to sign it
  - Anti-Federalist



#### Others-

- Ben Franklin
- Roger Sherman
- James Wilson
- William Paterson
- Alexander Hamilton
- Edmund Randolph

# Who was missing?

- Thomas Jefferson- he was in France
- John Adams- he was in England
- Rhode Island- were suspicious of the meeting, still liked the AOC
- Women, Native Americans, and African Americans were not represented.

## Major Debate One-Representation

• Small states (equal representation- New Jersey Plan)vs. large states (proportional representation-Virginia Plan)

#### Resolved!

- Great Compromise-
  - Congress would have 2 houses (bicameral), the Senate and the House of Representatives
  - House- proportional representation
  - Senate- equal representation

# Major Debate 2- Tariffs and Slavery Northern states vs. Southern States

- I. What's a tariff?
- 2. North- diverse economy, center for shipping and trading, had to compete with the British, thought tariffs were necessary and would make people buy American goods
- 3. South- agriculture, shipped goods to Europe, thought tariffs would make their products harder to sell

# Major Debate 2-Slavery and tariffs

- Most Northern states had officially ended slavery
- The South depended on slavery (think about their economy!)



#### Resolved!

- Congress can place tariffs on goods, and regulate trade (the South compromised fairly easily b/c the North agreed to their slavery demands)
- The national government could not end the slave trade before 1808
- 3/5 Compromise- threefifths of slaves would count toward representation (more votes!)
- Fugitive Slave clauseescaped slaves had to be returned if caught (even in a state without slavery)

#### Fundamental Principles of the Constitution

- Popular sovereignty people have the final authority in the government
- Consent of the governed-permission of the people
- <u>Separation of powers-</u> 3 branches (Legislative, Executive, and Judicial)share the power in the national government
- Checks and balances- prevent one branch from gaining too much power
- <u>Federalism</u>- states and the national government share power

#### Federalists and Anti-Federalists

- Federalistssupported the newconstitution
- Anti-Federalists did not



Federalist	Anti-Federalist
Supporters of the Constitution	Did not support the Constitution
James Madison, George Washington, Ben Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay	Felt it gave too much power to the national government
Madison, Hamilton, and Jay wrote the Federalist papers-essays that argued for the new Constitution	Felt it did not protect individual rights
	George Mason, Patrick Henry, Samuel Adams

## Bill of Rights

- Added to protect citizens' rights
- Some states only ratified the Constitution because they were promised a BoR would be added
- First 10 amendments to the Constitution

# The Constitution is a Living Document and has survived over 200 years!

