

A More Perfect Union

Lesson 1 The Articles of Confederation

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why do people form governments?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. **What kind of government was created by the Articles of Confederation?**
2. **What process allowed new states to join the union?**
3. **In what ways was the Confederation government weak?**

Terms to Know

bicameral having two separate lawmaking organizations

republic a government in which citizens rule through elected representatives

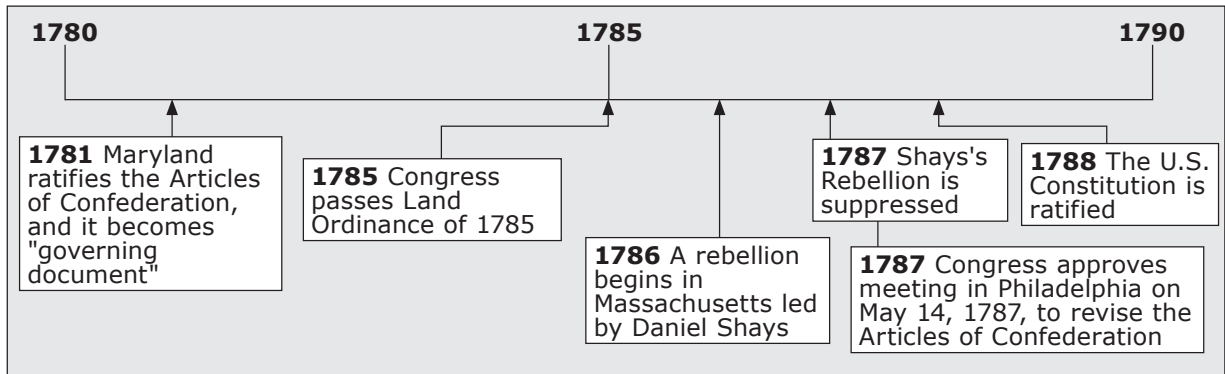
ordinance law

depreciate lose value

Where in the world?



When did it happen?



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Lesson 1 The Articles of Confederation, *Continued*

The Making of a Republic

In May 1776, the Continental Congress asked each state to set up its government. Each state wrote a constitution. A constitution is a plan of government.

Americans did not want to give too much power to one ruler or one branch of government. State constitutions solved that problem. They split the power between the governor and legislature. The governor had less power than the legislature. Most states set up two-house, or **bicameral**, legislatures. This divided the power even more.

Americans had to set up a national government, too. Americans wanted their country to be a **republic**. In a republic, citizens elect people to represent them and make decisions based on what they want.

People could not agree on what powers the national government should have. Americans felt the central government should have only the power to fight wars and to deal with other countries.

In 1776 the Second Continental Congress had a group of people make a plan for a central government. This group created the Articles of Confederation. The Articles called for a weak central government. They also let states keep most of their powers. Congress accepted the Articles of Confederation in November, 1777.

The Articles of Confederation gave Congress certain powers, but there were important powers that Congress did not have. For example, if Congress needed to raise money or an army, it had to ask the states. The states did not have to say yes.

Powers of Congress Under The Articles of Confederation	
Congress had these powers:	Congress did NOT have these powers:
manage foreign affairs	control trade
keep up armed forces	force citizens to join army
borrow money	impose taxes
issue money	

The central government did not have a chief executive. A chief executive is an official, such as a president or a governor. A chief executive is the leader of the government and has the job of carrying out the laws. All states had to approve the Articles of Confederation. The Articles could

 **Mark the Text**

- Underline the meaning of a *constitution*.

 **Analyzing**

- What might be one result of state constitutions that limited the power of the governor?

 **Mark the Text**

- Circle the meaning of *republic*.

 **Listing**

- What were three weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation?



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Lesson 1 The Articles of Confederation, *Continued*

 **Reading Check**

5. How many votes did each state have in the new Congress?

 **Mark the Text**

6. Underline how a western district could apply to become a state.

 **Reading Check**

7. What did the Northwest Ordinance say about slavery?

not be changed unless all states agreed to change it. Each state had one vote.

The states also did not agree on what to do with land in the West. Some states believed land west of the Appalachian Mountains belonged to them. Maryland did not want to approve the Articles until other states gave up claims to this land. The states finally agreed and approved the Articles. On March 1, 1781, the Articles of Confederation became the government of the United States of America.

The new national government was weak. This made it difficult for the government to handle the nation's problems. Congress could not pass a law unless 9 states voted for it. Congress also did not have the power to change the Articles of Confederation. Any plan to change the Articles needed to be approved by all 13 states.

Even so, America's government did some important things. America made a peace treaty with Britain. It expanded foreign trade. It set up plans for people to settle lands to the west.

Policies for Western Lands

The Articles of Confederation did not tell how to add new states. Settlers were already living west of the Appalachian Mountains. This was outside the United States. Western settlers wanted to form new states and join the Union. Congress needed to give people a way to settle the Western lands and form new states.

In 1785, the Confederation Congress passed an **ordinance**, or law, about western lands. This law set up a way to divide and then sell the western lands. Land was divided into townships. Land in the township was divided into smaller sections. These sections were sold to settlers.

In 1787, the Northwest Ordinance created the Northwest Territory. This territory included lands north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River. The lands were divided into three to five smaller territories. A territory could apply to become a state when 60,000 people lived there. New states would have the same rights as the original 13 states. Settlers had a bill of rights. They had freedom of religion and trial by jury. The bill of rights said there could be no slavery in the Northwest Territory.

The Land Act of 1800 was passed to make it easier for people to buy land in the Northwest Territory. Some settlers did not have all of the money needed to buy land.

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Lesson 1 The Articles of Confederation, *Continued*

The Act made it possible for people to pay for the land over a period of four years.

Problems at Home and Abroad

The national government had problems paying its bills. By 1781, American dollars, called Continentals, had **depreciated**, or lost value. They were worth almost nothing. The War for Independence left the Continental Congress with a large debt. Congress did not have the power to raise taxes to pay these debts.

In 1781, Congress created a department of finance, led by Robert Morris. Morris made a plan to charge a 5 percent tax on goods brought in from other countries to help pay the debts. All 13 states had to approve Morris' plan for it to pass, but Rhode Island voted no. The plan did not pass.

The new government faced other problems. The British did not let Americans trade in the West Indies and other British areas. British soldiers were still in several important forts in the Great Lakes region.

The American government had problems with Spain, too. Spain controlled Florida and lands west of the Mississippi River. Spain wanted to stop America's growth in Spanish territory. In 1784, Spain closed the lower Mississippi River to American shipping. Western settlers could no longer use the river for trade.

It became clear that the Confederation was not able to deal with major problems. Americans came to agree that their new country needed a stronger government.

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Check for Understanding

What kind of government was created by the Articles of Confederation?

List three problems the Confederation government faced in its relations with other countries.

? Analyzing

8. Why did Robert Morris's plan to pay the country's war debts fail?

✓ Reading Check

9. Why did Spain close the lower Mississippi River to American shipping in 1784?



10. Glue a three-tab Foldable behind a two-tab Foldable along the anchor tabs to cover *Check for Understanding*. Write *Articles of Confederation* on the anchor tab. Label the two-tabs—*Strengths*, *Weaknesses*. Label the three-tabs—*Problems at Home*, *Problems with Britain*, and *Problems with Spain*. Write two words or phrases you remember about each.

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Lesson 2 Forging a New Constitution

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do new ideas change the way people live?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *What problems did the government face under the Articles of Confederation?*
2. *How did leaders reshape the government?*
3. *What compromises were reached in the new Constitution?*

Terms to Know

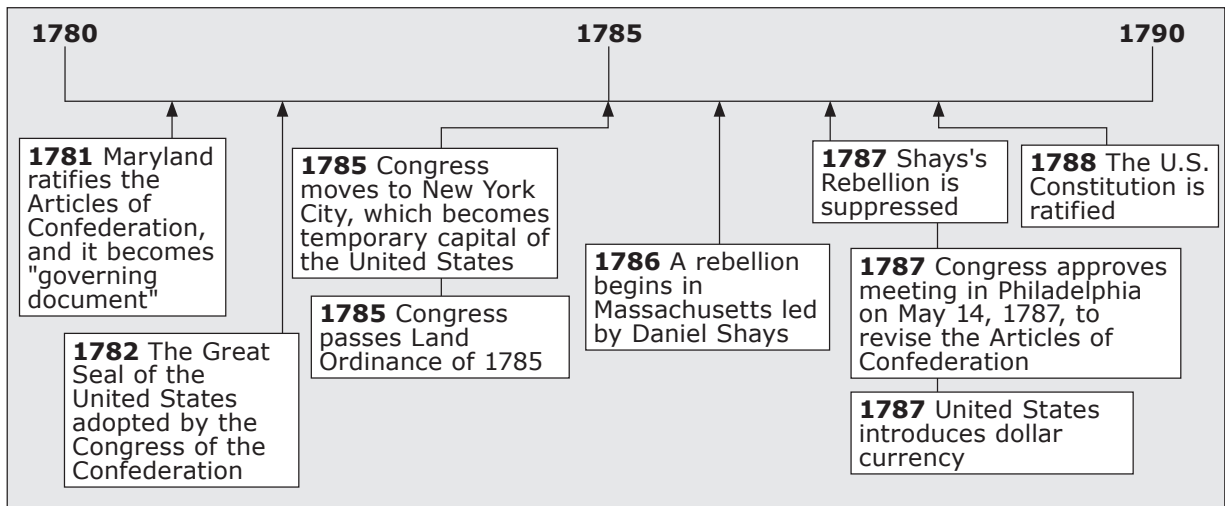
depression a period when economic activity slows and unemployment increases

manumission when a slaveholder frees an enslaved person

proportional having the proper size in relation to other objects or items

compromise an agreement between two or more sides in which each side gives up some of what it wants

When did it happen?



What do you know?

In the first column, answer the questions based on what you know before you study. After this lesson, complete the last column.

Now...		Later...
	What was Shays's Rebellion?	
	What was the Constitutional Convention?	
	What was the Great Compromise?	

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Lesson 2 Forging a New Constitution, *Continued*

The Need for Change

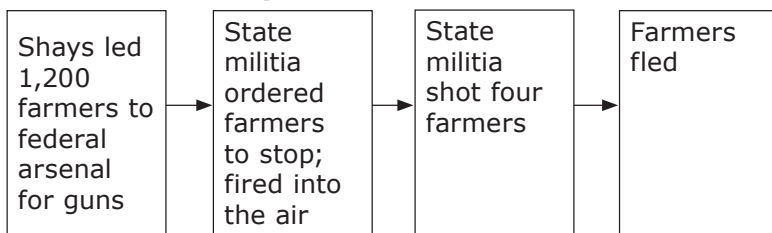
The Articles of Confederation created a weak national government. This made it difficult for the government to deal with the nation’s problems. The United States went through a **depression** after the American Revolution. A depression is a period of time when business slows down and many people lose their jobs.

The government had little money. The money it had was used to pay debts, or money owed, to foreign countries. There was not enough money in the United States.

The slow economy meant farmers sold less of their goods. Some farmers could not pay taxes and other debts. As a result, state officials took over their land and put many of them in jail. Farmers grew angry over this treatment.

In 1787, Daniel Shays led a group of angry farmers to a weapons storehouse in Springfield, Massachusetts. The farmers wanted to take guns and bullets. The state militia ordered the farmers to stop. They fired their guns into the air. The farmers did not stop. The militia fired again and killed four farmers. Shays and his followers ran away. The rebellion ended. Americans were worried that the government could not prevent violence.

Shays’s Rebellion of 1787



The American Revolution was based on freedom. This caused some Americans to believe that slavery should be outlawed. Several northern states began passing laws to end slavery. Free African Americans faced discrimination even in states that did not have slavery. They were not allowed to go to many public places. Few states gave them the right to vote. The children of most free African Americans could not go to school with white children.

Some slaveholders freed their slaves after the American Revolution. Virginia passed a law that encouraged **manumission**, the freeing of individual enslaved persons. The number of free African Americans grew in that state. Even with these efforts, slavery was still a key part of life in Southern states. Southern plantations depended on



Mark the Text

- Underline the meaning of *depression*.



Reading Check

- Why did farmers in Massachusetts rebel in 1787?



Identifying

- Name three ways in which free African Americans faced discrimination.



Defining

- What was *manumission*?

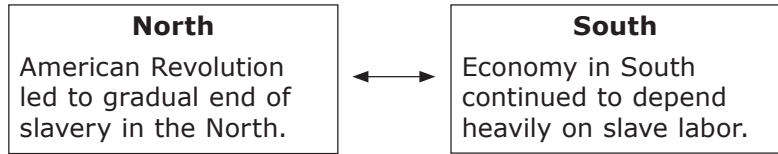


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Lesson 2 Forging a New Constitution, *Continued*

slave labor. Many white Southerners were afraid that their economic system would die without slavery. The issue of slavery began to divide Northerners and Southerners.

The American Revolution and Slavery



The Constitutional Convention

The American Revolution had not created a united country. Some leaders liked strong, independent state governments. Other leaders wanted a strong national government. They wanted to change the Articles of Confederation. Two of these leaders were James Madison and Alexander Hamilton.

In September 1786, Hamilton called for a convention in Philadelphia to talk about trade issues. He also suggested that people at the convention should talk about how to change the Articles of Confederation.

The convention began in May 1787. George Washington and Benjamin Franklin were among those who attended. This helped people trust the convention's work. Trust was important because the convention's purpose was to create an entirely new constitution. The delegates chose George Washington to lead the meetings.

Edmund Randolph of Virginia surprised the delegates at the convention. He proposed a plan created by James Madison, called the Virginia Plan. The Virginia plan would set up a strong national government. It would create a government with three branches. There would be a two-house legislature, a chief executive chosen by the legislature, and a court system.

The plan also called for the number of members in both houses of the legislature to be **proportional**. The number of members would be based on each state's population. States with more people would have more representatives than states with fewer people.

Delegates from small states were against the Virginia Plan. They wanted all states to have equal representation. They supported the New Jersey Plan. Under the New Jersey plan, the legislature would be a one-house legislature. Each state would have one vote in the legislature.



Analyzing

5. Why was it important for the American people to trust the work of the Constitutional Convention?



Identifying

6. How many representatives would each state have under the Virginia Plan?



Reading Check

7. Why did New Jersey's delegates object to the Virginia Plan?

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Lesson 2 Forging a New Constitution, *Continued*

Agreeing to Compromise

The delegates agreed to create a new constitution based on the Virginia Plan. The delegates still needed to deal with the issue of representation.

Roger Sherman came up with an agreement called the Great Compromise. A **compromise** is an agreement between two or more sides. Each side gives up some of what it wants. The Great Compromise called for a two-house legislature. Each state would have two members in the Senate. The number of members in the House of Representatives would be based on the size of each state's population.

Southern states wanted to count enslaved people as part of their population. This would raise their population. It would give them more seats in Congress, and it would raise their taxes. Northern states did not want the South to count its enslaved people. The delegates agreed to the Three-Fifths Compromise. Each enslaved person would count as three-fifths of a free person. Northerners also agreed not to block the slave trade until 1808.

George Mason wanted more protection for citizens' rights. He asked for a bill of rights to part of the Constitution. Many delegates felt that the Constitution already protected people's rights.

On September 17, 1787, the delegates gathered to sign the new Constitution. The Constitution was then sent to the states for approval. The new Constitution would take effect when 9 of the 13 states approved it.

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Check for Understanding

List the three branches of government created by the new Constitution.

What two things did the delegates disagree about that forced them to make compromises?

Reading Check

8. What compromises were made on the issue of slavery?

FOLDABLES®

9. Place a two-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover *Check for Understanding*. Write the title *Continental Convention* on the anchor tab. Label the two tabs—*Agreed* and *Disagreed*. Recall and write about issues of agreement and disagreement. Use your notes to help answer the *Check for Understanding*.



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Lesson 3 A New Plan of Government

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do governments change?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *From where did the Framers of the Constitution borrow their ideas about government?*
2. *How does the Constitution limit the power of the government?*
3. *How was the Constitution ratified?*

Terms to Know

federalism sharing power between the federal and state governments

legislative branch lawmaking branch of government

executive branch branch of government headed by the president

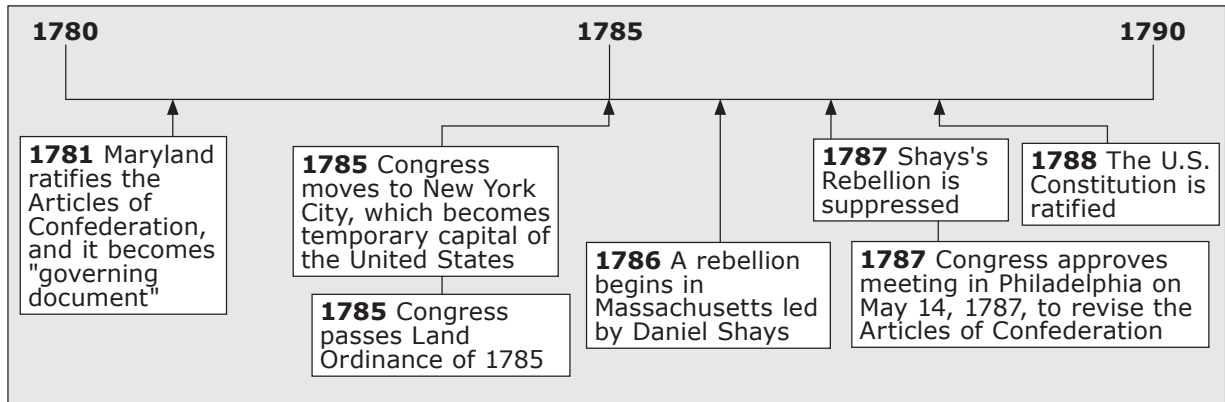
Electoral College group chosen by each state to vote for president and vice president

judicial branch branch of government made up of courts that settle questions of law and disagreements

amendment a change, correction, or improvement added to a document

checks and balances system in which the branches of government can limit each others' powers

When did it happen?



What do you know?

In the first column, answer the questions based on what you know before you study. After this lesson, complete the last column.

Now...		Later...
	What gave American delegates some of their ideas for the Constitution?	
	What are the three branches of government?	
	What does it mean to ratify the Constitution?	

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Lesson 3 A New Plan of Government, *Continued*

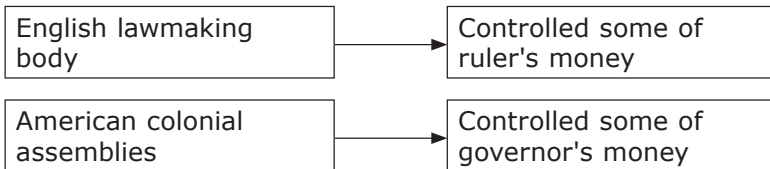
The Constitution's Sources

The delegates in Philadelphia created a new constitution. The delegates liked ideas from European political groups and writers. Some of these ideas are in the Constitution.

Even though Americans broke away from Britain, they still respected many British traditions. Traditions are cultural ideas and practices. Individual rights are part of the British system. The Framers of the Constitution felt it was important to have individual rights.

An English law, the Magna Carta, limited the power of the king or queen. He or she had to accept the laws of the lawmaking body. The lawmaking body paid for wars and the royal government. American colonies worked the same way. American lawmaking bodies controlled their colonies' funds. They also had some control over colonial governors.

Magna Carta as a Model



The British also came up with the English Bill of Rights in 1689. Many Americans liked the idea of having a bill of rights. Some felt that a bill of rights needed to be included with the Constitution.

The Framers of the Constitution believed in the ideas of some European writers. Two of these writers were John Locke and Baron de Montesquieu (MAHN • tuhs • KYOO).

The English writer, Locke, believed that all people have natural rights. These rights include the rights to life, liberty, and property. Locke wrote that government is based on an agreement, or contract. This agreement is between the people and the ruler. The Constitution would also be a contract. It would limit the government's power. This would help protect people's natural rights.

Montesquieu was a French writer. He believed that the government's power should be divided and balanced. This would make it difficult for one person or group to have too much power. The Framers of the American Constitution carefully described and divided the powers of government.

The Articles of Confederation had given most power to the states. The Constitution changed this. States had to



Marking the Text

- Underline the sources, or starting places, of many ideas in the Constitution.



Identifying

- According to Locke, what are the three natural rights that all people have?

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Lesson 3 A New Plan of Government, *Continued*



Identifying

3. List three powers the U.S. Constitution gives to the states.



Reading Check

4. What is federalism?



Marking the Text

5. Circle the three branches of government.



Defining

6. What is the Electoral College?

give up some of their powers to the federal, or national, government. The Constitution was set up so federal and state governments share power. This is called **Federalism**.

The Constitution gave new powers to the federal government. It could tax, manage trade, control the supply of money, form an army, and declare war. The federal government could pass laws it decided were “necessary and proper.”

The Constitution let states keep some important powers. The states could still control trade inside their borders. They had the power to set up local governments and schools. States also made laws about marriage and divorce.

The Constitution allows some powers to be shared by the federal and state governments. Both the federal and state governments may tax their citizens. Both governments may arrest and punish criminals.

The Constitution is the supreme, or highest, law of the land. Any disagreement between the federal government and the states was to be settled by the federal courts. They make decisions based on what the Constitution says.

Government Structure

The Framers of the Constitution divided the federal government into three branches. These are the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The first three articles, or sections, of the Constitution explain the powers and tasks of these branches of the federal government.

Article I says the **legislative** (LEH•juhs•lay•tiv) **branch**, or lawmaking branch of the federal government is Congress. Congress has two parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives. Congress's powers include such tasks as deciding how much taxes will be, minting coins, and controlling trade.

Article II describes the **executive branch**. The president is in charge of this branch. The president's job is to carry out the nation's laws. A group called the **Electoral** (ee•lehk•TAWR•uhl) **College** elects the president and vice president. Its members are called electors. Electors are chosen by the voters of each state.

Article III describes the **judicial** (joo•DIH•shuhl) **branch**, or the court system. The Supreme Court is the top court in the nation. Congress sets up federal courts under the Supreme Court. Federal courts make decisions

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Lesson 3 A New Plan of Government, *Continued*

on cases that have to do with the Constitution, with federal laws, and with problems between states.

The Framers built in a system of **checks and balances**. Each branch of government has ways to check, or limit, the power of the others. This way, no branch can have too much control in the government.

Debate and Adoption

The Constitution could take effect after nine states ratified, or approved, it. People who supported the Constitution were called Federalists. James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay were among the Federalists. They wrote a set of essays, called the Federalist Papers. The Federalist Papers explained and defended the Constitution.

People who did not like the new Constitution were called Anti-Federalists. They were afraid that a strong national government would take away freedoms. Anti-Federalists wanted local governments to have more power.

By June 21, 1788, the ninth state ratified the Constitution. That meant the new government could go into effect. New York and Virginia, the two largest states, still had not approved the Constitution.

People worried that the new government would not succeed if those states did not ratify the Constitution. Virginia ratified after it was promised that there would be a bill of rights **amendment**. The Bill of Rights was added in 1791. New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island also ratified the Constitution.

Check for Understanding

Explain the principle of Federalism.

Why is the system of checks and balances important?

Reading Check

7. How is power divided among the branches of government?

Reading Check

8. Why was it important that the largest states ratify the constitution?

FOLDABLES®

9. Place a three-tab Venn diagram Foldable along the line to cover Check for Understanding. Write *A New Plan for Government* on the anchor tab. Label the tabs—*Federal Government*, *Shared Powers*, and *State Government*. On both sides of the tabs, list facts about each to compare the federal and state governments. Use your notes to help answer the questions below the tabs.

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