The Constitution: Origins, Compromise, and Exclusion

First & Last Name: _____ Date: _____

CENTRAL QUESTION

How can a founding document create liberty while preserving unequal power?

Learning objective

Analyze four source sets, evaluate evidence and limitations, and defend a civic judgment through interdisciplinary inquiry.

Demonstration of learning

Complete the daily evidence tasks, earn a score on 15 multiple choice items, and write a source based RACE response using the 19 point rubric.

Standards and task alignment

NJSLS Social Studies: 6.1.8.CivicsPI.3.b; 6.1.8.CivicsPD.3.a. Applied in daily analysis and the final civic judgment. NJSLS ELA (2023): RI.CR.6.1 (evidence), RI.CI.6.2 (central ideas), W.AW.6.1 (argument), SL.PE.6.1 (discussion). National CCSS: RH.6-8.1, RH.6-8.2, RH.6-8.7; WHST.6-8.1 and WHST.6-8.9. NJSLS / CCSS Math: 6.RP.A.3 (ratios and percent); Science, technology, arts, history, and civic participation are integrated through the named tasks; no additional science or arts code is claimed.

Five lesson sequence

Days 1 to 4: read, annotate, analyze, collaborate, and write. Day 5: 15 question assessment and extended RACE response. Each lesson is designed for 40 minutes; teacher notes provide timing and supports.

Academic vocabulary

constitution: framework of government; ratification: formal approval; compromise: agreement involving concessions; federalist: supporter of ratification; amendment: constitutional change; apportionment: allocation of representatives

Source integrity

Readings are original Ma’at instructional syntheses. Exact historical excerpts are marked. Classroom datasets and scenarios are labeled; they are not historical records or actual government budgets. Source references appear on page 13.

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DAY 1

Source A | From confederation to a new framework

Do Now

Why might a shared government struggle if it cannot reliably collect revenue?

[1] The Articles of Confederation created a union in which states retained substantial authority. Congress lacked an independent power to tax people directly and depended on state contributions. Decisions and amendments faced demanding approval rules. These limits made collective financing and action difficult. Disagreements over public debts, trade, and state authority helped bring delegates to Philadelphia in 1787.

[2] The Constitution proposed a different national framework. Article I authorized Congress to tax and regulate interstate commerce. Article II established an executive branch; Article III established a Supreme Court and permitted Congress to create lower federal courts. The proposal strengthened national institutions while placing their powers in separate branches.

[3] A stronger government could address problems that the confederation struggled to solve, but greater capacity raised fears of abuse. The core disagreement was not simply government versus no government. It concerned which powers should exist, where those powers should be located, and how they should be limited. Those questions still guide close reading of the Constitution.

Annotation task: underline a central claim; box one civic term; mark one detail as evidence; add a question where evidence or authority needs clarification.

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