

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Test Date Friday, 3/27/15 Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Our New Nation (Government) Study Guide

These are VERY detailed... overall understanding is the goal for the test... NOT trying to memorize all the details. Please try to understand the concepts so you can "figure" out the answers. Remember our class discussions and examples!

- **Vocabulary to know:**
  - Republic - a government in which the power to govern comes from the people, not a king
  - Constitution - a set of laws or principles that governs a state or nation
  - ratify - to formally approve
  - Bill Of Rights - the first ten amendments to the Constitution
  - political party - a group of people who hold certain beliefs about how government should be run
  - compromise - an agreement in which each side gives in a little
  - executive branch - the part of government that carries out/enforces laws (president)
  - legislative branch - the part of government that makes/writes laws (congress)
  - judicial branch - the part of government that decides the meaning of the laws (supreme court)
  - bill - an officially suggested law
  - federalism - a system of government that divides powers between the national and state governments
  - amend – change
  - amendment - a correction, revision, or improvement
  
- **People to Know:**
  - Benjamin Franklin - Served as convention's elder statesman; helped draft the new U.S. Constitution
  - James Madison - "Father of the Constitution"; helped plan the new U.S. Constitution
  - George Washington - elected leader of the Constitutional Conventions and then eventually the first President of the United States of America
  
- **Concepts to Know – definitions – when, where, what; *focus on historical aspects!*:**
  - Articles of Confederation – the very first written constitution of the United States; Gave the new government many responsibilities, but no power to enforce nor carry out the rules; this constitution gave many strong powers to each of the states and not a lot to the one central government running the country. It expected each state to cooperate, but when they did not, the one central government had no power, no army, to resolve the problems.
  
  - Constitutional Convention – after fights and chaos breaking out in some states, each state sent representatives to *Philadelphia, PA* to discuss the problems with the country. They originally met to change the Articles of Confederation to give the federal government enough power to "fix" the problems for each state... they realized it could not be fixed and instead *chose to rewrite a brand new constitution*. They needed a strong central (federal) government, a way to easily make changes to the laws when they needed and money for the federal government to run.

- **U.S. Constitution** – the supreme law of the land; this is our plan for our government. It is the law of our land, as well as, instructions for how to setup and run our government. The U.S. Constitution was written when the Articles of Confederation fail to establish a peaceful United States. The Constitutional Convention met, created a committee to scrap the old Articles of Confederation and write a new constitution. James Madison is considered the main author... all the writers are considered “Framers” of the U.S. Constitution because it was written such that it could be changed by new “authors” as our country’s needs change.
- **Bill of Rights** – the first 10 amendments of the U.S. Constitution; *it protects the personal rights of all citizens*; no federal or state laws can go against or take away these rights (10<sup>th</sup> amendment is specific to giving the states some power vs. federal powers) – the Bill of Rights are still Amendments, just special ones.

- **What were the 6 problems of the Articles of Confederation?**

1. There was no one leader for the country.
2. There was no way for dealing with other countries; No One person represented America to other countries, because of the disagreements among the states.
3. No way to pay of the Government’s debt. The government hoped the states would volunteer money to help pay off the debt.
4. Could not levy (impose or collect) taxes to help pay for the government to run.
5. There was no court system to settle arguments between states.
6. Because all 13 states had to agree to changes, it was almost impossible to change the Articles of Confederation.

- **What were the issues that lead to the writing of a new constitution?**

- After the Revolutionary War, people were having problems with having enough money to live... to buy seeds to grow crops, trading with other states, and the high taxes that the states were imposing to pay the debt from the war. Groups of people rebelled; one famous rebellion was Shay’s Rebellion in Massachusetts. Courts were being broken into because farmers were losing their homes and farms from debt. *The federal government was not strong enough and had no army to stop the rebellion.* These problems caused each state to call a representative and hold a Constitutional Convention to discuss these problems, as well as the problems with the federal government itself. *We needed a strong central government!*

- **Why was the United States Constitution written?**

Articles of Confederation were not working and it was too hard to rework them... it took all 13 states to vote unanimously to change it... so they wrote a whole new plan called the Constitution.

- **What is it? What are the parts of it? What does it mean? How does it reflect our ideals? How did it solve the problems of the Articles of Confederation?**

- US Constitution is the supreme law of our land... it is the actual laws and directions for how our government is set up and runs
- **Part I: Preamble** - What we believe as a people...
- **Part II: Amendments** - actual laws of our land - 1<sup>st</sup> 10 are nicknamed Bill of Rights
- **Part III: Articles** – spells out how each branch of our government is set up and the powers each branch has, the powers the states have, how the constitution should be changed etc. ---essentially how our government should run
- **Part IV: Signatures**

- **What happened at the Constitutional Conventions? What were the decisions made?**
    - Decided a new constitution was needed -changing the Articles of Confederation would not be enough
    - Decided on:
      - **Need for leader** - elected George Washington King... he declined and went for a Presidency instead
    - As the constitution was being written and the plans for how a government was going to be made... several problems were solved by these decisions
      - **Great Compromise** – small vs. big - two house legislative (*how to have fair representation of all people in the country... should states with more people be given more representatives? Or should all states have equal representatives... but then the states with less people – really have more of a say in the government... (remember one of the reasons we had the war was taxation without representation)*)
        - Problem solved with this compromise... Senate will have 2 reps regardless of size of state; House of Representative will have representative based on population within that state
      - **Three-Fifth Compromise** – states with slaves, wanted the slaves to be counted for government representative purposes... other states did not...
        - Every 5 slaves counted as 3 people for representative / government counting purposes
      - **Slave Trade Compromise** – they couldn't make a decision about the slave trade... so the decision was to make a decision in 20 years.
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- **What is the Bill of Rights? Why was it included in the US Constitution?**
  - **Bill of Rights** – the first 10 amendments of the U.S. Constitution; it protects the personal rights of all citizens; no federal or state laws can go against or take away these rights (10<sup>th</sup> amendment is specific to giving the states some power vs. federal powers) – the Bill of Rights are still Amendments, just special ones.
  - It was included in the US Constitution because the leaders remembered why they fought the war! They fought for their personal freedoms and rights... so they wanted to make sure these rights would always be protected in the government. Remember, when the going got tough, King George said “oh well” - Intolerable Acts etc..
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- **What were the five freedoms guaranteed in the First Amendment. – you must know these**
  - Freedom of Religion
  - Freedom of Assembly (to meet with groups of people to discuss whatever you would like... as long as it falls within the laws)
  - Freedom of Press
  - Freedom to Petition the Government (make a request for a change to the government / laws)
  - Freedom of Speech (as long as it does not violate others' rights)

- Name the three branches of the federal government and describe the main role of each.

Executive

(President)

*Enforces the Law*

Approves/vetoes laws

Appoints justices

Grants pardons

Makes treaties

Legislative

(Congress)

*Makes the Laws*

Passes laws/may override vetoes

May impeach justices/president

Approves treaties

Judicial

(Supreme Court)

*Interprets the Laws*

Decides if laws are constitutional

Decides if executive actions are constitutional

Interprets treaties

- What are some ways for you to be a good citizen?
  - Follow the laws
  - Participate in government
  - Support your community, state, and country leaders
  - Respect public property
  - Participate in community events
  - Be knowledgeable about events in our community, country, and world
- Review the Preamble.
- Practice the 4 New Nation Quizlets.
- Review your study file.
- Have your parents quiz you and sign your study guide.