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Introducing the New America's Legacy Book!

Dear Educator:

We are happy to share a complementary copy of our updated *America's Legacy* book, a redesigned and updated version of our popular textbook. This full-color, 50-page booklet includes the text of the U.S. founding documents, including the Constitution, Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence—plus, it covers the elements of good citizenship, discusses the three branches of government, and includes excerpts of great American speeches. If you would like to order more books for your students, they are available for \$2.50 a piece. The order form is below. Thank you for your participation in SGAP.

AMERICA'S FIRST CONSTITUTION

Articles of Confederation

Before the Constitution was written in 1787, the 13 states that formed the United States were not truly united because our country was following the principles of the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union.

THIS HISTORICAL DOCUMENT was written in 1777 and came into force in 1781, after being ratified by all 13 states. The Articles of Confederation served as a transition between the Revolutionary War and the Constitution.

The Articles of Confederation formed a confederation of states with an extremely limited and weak central government. In a confederation, the vast majority of political power rests with the local governments, and the central government has very little power.

A glaring upside of the Articles was to preserve the independence and sovereignty of the states. This was also in theory, but in practice it was invariable because each state thought of itself as its own little country. The federal government did not have much power.

Independence Hall

Independence Hall — located in Philadelphia — is an important historic landmark in the United States. Major events toward Independence were taken there by delegates of the thirteen original states during the American Revolution. Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson.

- The Declaration of Independence was signed in this building on July 4, 1776.
- Independence Hall was also the site where the American flag was first unveiled in 1777.
- In 1781, the Articles of Confederation meeting at 13 British soldiers were confined here.
- In 1787, the U.S. Constitution was drafted in this building.

Construction of Independence Hall, originally known as the State House of the Province of Pennsylvania, started in 1772. The brick Georgian building with a Federal Revival inside was completed in 1796.

The inside was badly damaged in 1862 for the centennial anniversary celebrations. The original wall, which was the Liberty Bell is housed in separate pavilion.

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

Think It Through

Critical-Thinking Questions

- Visit <https://www.archives.gov> to read the full text of the Articles of Confederation. Do you think the United States could have survived as a nation under this governing document? Why or why not?
- What are two problems in the Articles of Confederation that made it a poor governing document?
- Article IV of the Articles of Confederation reads: "The United States in Congress assembled shall never engage the war, nor enter into any Treaty or Alliance, nor shall they regulate the value thereof, nor borrow money on the credit of the United States, nor appropriate money, nor grant a Comander in Chief of the Army or Navy, unless one State assent be given?" Why would it be difficult to have an effective government under this article?
- Under the Articles of Confederation, the state governments were stronger than the national government. Do you think this would make governing difficult for the federal government? Why or why not?

Historical Documents that Led to Creation of U.S. Government

1789	1787	1776	1787	1787	1791
English Magna Carta (Baronum Libertates)	English Bill of Rights	U.S. Declaration of Independence	U.S. Articles of Confederation	U.S. Constitution	U.S. Bill of Rights

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