



Student Governmental Affairs Program (SGAP)
 2435 N. Central Expressway, Suite 300
 Richardson, TX 75080-2753
 Phone: 1-800-806-7427
 Email: brittany.glenn@sgap.org
 Fax: 214-342-9186
 Website: https://sgap.org

Order the SGAP 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

Under the Articles of Confederation, the central government was essentially a "weak" government that had very little power or control. The federal government could not collect taxes, could not regulate interstate trade, and could not regulate foreign trade. Congress could not declare war, but the states could refuse to send soldiers. The country did not have a common currency, nor did it have a chief executive (such as a president) to lead the way.

The Articles of Confederation's greatest weakness was that it had no direct origin in the people themselves. It recognized only state sovereignty. Therefore, each state had to collect its own taxes, issue currency and provide for its own militia.

By the time the Articles of Confederation were the nation's "baby step" toward adopting a more robust Constitution now created, a stronger second constitution without learning from the mistakes of the first.

THIS HISTORICAL DOCUMENT was written in 1777 and came into force in 1781, after being ratified by all 13 states.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.

THIS COMMEMORATIVE STAMP was issued by the United States Postal Service in 1977, on the 200th anniversary of the drafting of the Articles of Confederation in 1777.

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION
 Think It Through

Critical-Thinking Questions

- Visit www.us1776.org 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 of Alliance, nor shall they regulate the value thereof, nor borrow money on the credit of the United States, nor appropriate money, nor grant a Commodity or 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?

INDEPENDENCE HALL

Independence Hall — located in Philadelphia — is an important historical landmark in the United States. Major events toward Independence were taken there by delegates of the thirteen original states of 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 granting all 13 British colonies were ratified 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 structure built with 1.4 million bricks was completed in 1786.

The inside was badly damaged in 1793, but the reconstruction was completed in 1876 for the centennial anniversary celebrations. The original wall, which was the Liberty Bell is housed in separate pavilion.

FREEDOM FACT

The Articles of Confederation were sent to the states to be ratified in 1777 but were not ratified by all 13 states until 1781. Some states took a long time to ratify the Articles because they were involved in border disputes with other states.

22 ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

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