

## **Constitution Day: Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists**

Adapted from the Stanford History Education Group's "Federalists and Anti-Federalists" Lesson Plan

<https://sheg.stanford.edu/history-lessons/federalists-and-anti-federalists>

### **Introduction**

In this lesson, students will study the debate between Federalists and Anti-Federalists over the ratification of the Constitution, with a focus on representation in Congress. Students will be asked to analyze two primary sources, evaluate a position, debate with their peers, and write a short statement defending their position with evidence from the provided sources. The notes, primary sources, and graphic organizer have been adapted from the Stanford History Education Group's "Federalists and Anti-Federalists" Lesson Plan, as cited above. This lesson is a great introduction to the ideas covered in the "Federalist No. 10."

### **Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks Content Standards**

Grade 8: United States and Massachusetts Government and Civic Life

Topic 2: The development of the United States government

*Supporting Question: How did the framers of the Constitution attempt to address issues of power and freedom in the design of the new political system?*

2-8. Identify the various leaders of the Constitutional Convention and analyze the major issues (e.g., *distribution of political power, rights of individuals, representation and rights of states, slavery*) they debated and how the issues were resolved.

2-9. Compare and contrast key ideas debated between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists over ratification of the Constitution (e.g., *federalism, factions, checks and balances, independent judiciary, republicanism, limited government*).

### **United States History I**

Topic 1: Origins of the Revolution and the Constitution

*Supporting Question: How did events of the Revolutionary period inform the ideas in the Constitution?*

1-8. Describe the Constitutional Convention, the roles of specific individuals (e.g. Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, George Washington, Roger Sherman, Edmund Randolph), and the conflicts and compromises (e.g., compromises over representation, slavery, the executive branch, and ratification).

### **Guiding Questions**

1. What types of governments did Federalists and Anti-Federalists prefer?
2. How should the people of the United States be represented in Congress?
3. How many people should one district in the House of Representatives encompass?

4. How fair and effective is the current system of representation in the United States Congress?

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Students will be able to identify the Federalist and Anti-Federalist positions on representation during the ratification of the Constitution.
2. Students will be able to analyze primary source documents.
3. Students will be able to debate the Federalist and Anti-Federalist positions on representation.
4. Students will be able to evaluate two opposing positions on the nature of popular representation in government orally and in writing.

### **Materials**

1. Sticky notes
2. White board
3. Computer and digital projector
4. Constitution Day: Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists PowerPoint
5. Constitution Day: Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists primary source document excerpts
6. Constitution Day: Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists graphic organizer
7. Constitution Day: Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists student debate handout
8. Constitution Day: Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists post-debate paragraph

### **Assessments:**

1. Graphic organizer
2. Post-debate paragraph

### **Key Terms to Know and Identify:**

- 1) Ratify: to give formal consent, making a document official
- 2) Representative: a member of the House of Representatives who advocates for the people of their district
- 3) House of Representatives: the lower house of Congress. Representation allotted to states based on population
- 4) Senate: the upper house of Congress. Representation allocated equally to all states (2 Senators per state)
- 5) Constitution of 1787: the document that provides the legal framework for the United States government
- 6) Yeoman: a small landowning farmer
- 7) Tyranny: cruel and oppressive rule
- 8) Direct Democracy: people vote on laws and policies themselves
- 9) Representative Democracy: people vote for delegates (representatives) to vote on laws and policies on their behalf

**Estimated Time:** 120 minutes

**Grade Level:** 8 - 12

**Lesson Procedures:**

Activator: (Slide 2)

1. Before students arrive, write the following numbers on the board, outside of the display area of the PowerPoint:
  - a. 1,000
  - b. 15,000
  - c. 30,000
  - d. 100,000
  - e. 500,000
  - f. 1,000,000
2. Display slide 2 of the “Constitution Day: Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists” PowerPoint to on the projector.
3. As they arrive, greet students and provide each student with a 3” x 5” sticky note.
4. Display the following question (slide 2 of the lesson PowerPoint) on the board: *how many people should be represented by one person in Congress? Please choose one of the following answers and briefly defend your answer.*
5. Ask students to answer the question and attach their sticky note to the board under the appropriate number.
6. Read student responses aloud to the class. Ask students to clarify and/or expand open their answers as necessary.
7. Inform students that this issue was a major controversy during the ratification of the Constitution, and that they will be debating this topic today among small groups.

Student Inquiry Development (Slides 3 - 6)

1. Present the guiding questions on slide 3 to the class.
2. Reiterate the question from the activator: *how many people should be represented by one person in Congress?*
3. Present and discuss the information on slides 4 and 5.
4. In pairs, ask students to generate three to five follow-up questions that build upon the central question above. Ask students to categorize questions as “closed” (those that can be answered with a “yes,” “no,” or simple one word answer) and “open” (those that cannot be answered with a “yes,” “no,” or simple one word answer).
5. Discuss follow-up questions as a class. As you discuss the questions, ask students to:
  - a. Prioritize the sustainability of the questions for deeper research/inquiry
  - b. How the questions could be used in preparation of the upcoming debate

Lecture/PowerPoint/Video/Brief Discussion (Slides 7 - 13)

1. Present slides 7- 13 of the accompanying PowerPoint presentation.
2. Background lecture should include talking points on the following:

- a. In 1787, a Constitutional Convention was called to discuss amending the *Articles of Confederation*, the first document organizing the government of the United States.
- b. It soon became clear that the delegates needed to draft an entirely new document, what would become the *Constitution*, the document that still structures the federal (national) government of the United States today.
- c. One of the most contentious debates was over how representatives from each state should be chosen for the national legislature (Congress). More populous states wanted representation based on population, and less populous states wanted equal representation for each state.
- d. The Great Compromise (a combination of the New Jersey and Virginia plans) solved this problem. Congress (the national legislature) would have two houses. The lower house, to be called the House of Representatives, would have representation based on population. The upper house, to be called the Senate, would have equal representation (two members from every state, regardless of population).
- e. After the Constitution was written, it needed to be ratified (approved) by nine states. During this process, a fierce debate emerged.
- f. The two primary camps in the debate were the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists. The Federalists believed in a strong central government, with one representative per 30,000 people, and believed the Constitution should be ratified as written. Anti-Federalists were concerned the Constitution did not protect the rights and liberties of the people and the states. They also believed representatives should be elected by smaller groups of people, and that states should have more power than the central government.
- g. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay were Federalists who collectively authored 85 articles, collectively known as the "Federalist Papers," under the pseudonym "Publius." Important Anti-Federalist writings were published by Thomas Jefferson, "Brutus," and "Cato."
- h. Today, you will be reading excerpts from the debate over ratification in New York. New Hampshire was the ninth state to ratify the Constitution on June 21, 1788, legally establishing the new government. However, as a large and politically diverse state, New York's ratification was seen as necessary for the success of the new Constitution. The debate over ratification in New York was arguably the most heated of any state. Melancton Smith was an Anti-Federalist delegate to the Constitutional Convention from New York. Alexander Hamilton was a Federalist delegate to the Constitutional Convention from New York, and one of the authors of "The Federalist Papers."
- i. New York ratified the Constitution on July 26, 1788, thereby solidifying the new government. While the Anti-Federalists may have lost the battle over ratification in New York, their arguments helped bolster the cause of the Bill of Rights, eventually added to the Constitution as Amendments 1 - 10 in 1791.

- j. The result: the Constitution was ratified by all thirteen states, but with the promise that a *Bill of Rights* be included to protect the rights and liberties of the people and the states. On December 15, 1791, the Bill of Rights was officially ratified, adding Amendments 1 - 10 to the Constitution. Some of the protections in the Bill of Rights include freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right to a trial by a jury of peers, and the protection against unreasonable search and seizures. However, the debate over how power should be divided between the federal and state governments has been a constant throughout U.S. history, and is still a source of contention today.

#### Primary Source Document Analysis (Slides 14 and 15)

1. Pre-teach “the key terms to know and identify” on slide 14 using 7-step process
2. Assign students to small groups (ideally 4 students each) and provide all students with a copy of the primary sources and corresponding graphic organizer. (slide 15)
3. Inform students that they should utilize partner-reading. This is particularly helpful for English Language students.
4. Ask students to complete the graphic organizer within their assigned groups

#### Small Group Debates and Final Paragraph (Slides 16 - 18)

1. Assign each small group a position and provide all students with a copy of the Student Debate Handout. Inform students that they will have ten minutes with their group to prepare for the debate, using the primary documents, graphic organizer, and lecture notes as sources. Remind students to utilize the inquiry questions they developed earlier in the lesson to help guide their arguments, as well as the questions on slide 16.
2. Pair small groups to debate one another.
3. Monitor debates. Students should be given at least 10-15 minutes to debate.
4. At the end of the allotted time given to the debates, ask the groups debating each other to arrive at a consensus. Discuss as a class.
5. Ask all students to write one paragraph using evidence from the texts and reasoning from the debate to defend an argument. Students may choose to defend either side of the debate, regardless of their group’s consensus. (slide 17)

#### Lesson Extension

This lesson provides a great introduction to the ideas discussed in the “Federalist Papers #10.”