

Constitutional Convention - US History

Name _____

Rationale: In order to truly understand the troubles of the framers of the constitution, we will to step into their shoes and experience the process for ourselves through a simulated Constitutional Convention.

Goal: The main goal for this simulation is NOT for you to come up with solutions to the constitutional problems you encounter, but rather to accurately reflect the character you are portraying. Your grade will be *primarily* contingent on your ability to accurately reflect your character AND / OR the state they represented.

Step One: Jump into the past, assume a role of a delegate

You will each assume a particular role for this convention. You will be responsible for conducting research on your assigned individual to better understand his political philosophies and determine where he would stand on particular issues. You will NOT be able to find everything you want to know about the character. You MUST make some inferences based on what you know and the state they are from. The characters are as follows:

1. *George Washington- Virginia
2. Ben Franklin- Pennsylvania
3. *James Madison- Virginia
4. Elbridge Gerry- Massachusetts
5. George Mason- Virginia
6. Gouveneur Morris- Pennsylvania
7. *Roger Sherman- Connecticut
8. John Rutledge- South Carolina
9. Alexander Hamilton- New York
10. Luther Martin- Maryland
11. Rufus King- Massachusetts
12. John Dickenson- Delaware
13. Nicholas Gilman- New Hampshire
14. John Lansing Jr.- New York
15. William L. Pierce- Georgia
16. William Blount- North Carolina
17. Oliver Ellsworth- Connecticut
18. James McHenry- Maryland
19. *James Wilson- Pennsylvania
20. Richard Dobbs Spaight- North Carolina
21. Charles Pinckney- South Carolina
22. *William Livingston- New Jersey
23. George Read- Delaware
24. John Blair- Virginia
25. John Langdon- New Hampshire
26. Jonathan Dayton – New Jersey

3. **Representation of the people- The Virginia Plan:** James Madison will present this plan to the convention and provide a short rationale.

Representation of the people- The New Jersey Plan: The delegate from New Jersey will present this plan to the convention and provide a short rationale.

Every other delegate needs to prepare a statement for the convention regarding which plan they would prefer and why.

Representation of the people- The Great Compromise: Roger Sherman of Connecticut will present this plan to the convention and provide a short rationale.

4. **Slavery and the Slave Trade:** Each delegate must prepare a statement to the convention detailing their views on the government's role regarding the issue of slavery in terms of representation and taxation. The focus of discussion will concern the role of slaves in determining **representation** in the government. After each delegate has given their statement, James Wilson will present the 3/5 compromise and rationale to the convention.

5. **The rights of the individual:** Each delegate must prepare a statement to the delegation regarding the rights of the individual. You will need to determine how your character would feel about protecting the rights of the individual versus protecting government from the “tyranny of the majority.” Is a Bill of Rights necessary in this constitution? Will checks and balances sufficiently limit the government?

Step Four: The Convention

George Washington will serve as the presiding officer of the convention and will be responsible for ensuring that the convention follows a respectable format.

You need to have a **name placard** for your character so everyone knows who you are.

The format will follow the order of the research detailed above. ***Each person will be responsible for speaking at least once during each topic to present their statements.*** Washington will regulate a short open discussion period to allow for rebuttals and reactions; it’s up to **YOU** to ensure that your voice is heard. At the conclusion of debate for each topic, the convention will take a quick vote to make a decision. Ideally, this vote will follow the path of history.

Your grade: You will be graded on the following points:

1. Accurate completion of the delegate analysis-profile *-handwritten or typed, double-spaced*
2. Prepared statements for each of the debate topics *-fill out this packet regarding EACH topic*
3. Participation on topics during the convention *-be prepared to speak on each issue*