The Ratification Debate

Read and compare arguments about the Constitution.

SS24.6.11b "Summarize the arguments favoring and opposing ratification of the Constitution of the United States."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two reasons supporters favored ratification and circle two reasons opponents rejected it so you can compare their arguments.

A New Plan for Government

1 In 1788, a printer in Virginia could sell newspapers filled with arguments about a new plan of government. Under the Articles of Confederation, Congress could ask states for money, but it could not collect taxes directly. It also had trouble settling trade disputes among states. The proposed Constitution would give a new national government the power to tax and to regulate trade among states. Before the plan could take effect, conventions in nine states had to approve, or ratify, it. Voters and delegates asked whether these changes would solve problems or create new ones.

2 Supporters of ratification, called Federalists, said a stronger national government could collect the money needed to pay debts and protect the country. It could also set common rules for trade between states, instead of leaving states to argue. They pointed to the Constitution's separate branches of government. Congress would make laws, the president would carry them out, and courts would judge cases. Federalists argued that these divisions, along with each branch's ability to limit the others, would keep any one part of the new government from gaining too much power.

3 Opponents, called Anti-Federalists, feared that a distant national government might ignore local needs and take power from the states. They warned that its power to tax could burden ordinary people. They also noted that the proposed Constitution did not list specific protections for freedoms such as speech and religion. Federalists replied that the government had only the powers granted by the Constitution, but many opponents wanted a written bill of rights. Some supporters promised to add one after ratification. The first ten amendments, known as the Bill of Rights, were added in 1791.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Summarize how Federalists thought the Constitution would fix two problems under the Articles of Confederation.

2. How did Federalists argue that the new government's power would be kept in check?

3. Summarize two Anti-Federalist concerns about the national government.

4. How did the two sides disagree about protecting freedoms, and what did some supporters promise?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence conversation between a Federalist and an Anti-Federalist, with each speaker talking twice. Have them respond to each other and use at least two different details from the passage to show why they disagree about ratification.

ANSWER KEY

The Ratification Debate

GRADE 6 · SS24.6.11b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two reasons supporters favored ratification and circle two reasons opponents rejected it so you can compare their arguments. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Summarize how Federalists thought the Constitution would fix two problems under the Articles of Confederation.	**The national government could collect taxes to pay debts and set common rules for trade between states.**
2	How did Federalists argue that the new government's power would be kept in check?	**Separate branches would have different jobs, and each branch could limit the others.**
3	Summarize two Anti-Federalist concerns about the national government.	**They feared it could ignore local needs and take power from the states, and that its taxes could burden ordinary people.**
4	How did the two sides disagree about protecting freedoms, and what did some supporters promise?	**Anti-Federalists wanted written protections for freedoms. Federalists argued that the government had only the powers granted by the Constitution, but some supporters promised to add a bill of rights.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Federalist: A national government that can collect taxes could pay the country's debts. Anti-Federalist: But that tax power might burden ordinary people. Federalist: Separate branches could prevent any one part of the government from gaining too much power. Anti-Federalist: Those limits still do not list protections for freedom of speech and religion.

For question 3, also accept the lack of listed protections for freedoms as an Anti-Federalist concern. For the conversation, accept other accurate details from the passage if both speakers give reasons and respond to each other.