

From Weak to Strong

Trace how problems under the Articles shaped the Constitution.

SS.7.CG.1.7 "Explain how the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation led to the writing of the U.S. Constitution."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB In each bold numbered pair, underline the weakness in the Articles of Confederation and circle the Constitution response that addressed it.

Why Delegates Wrote a New Plan

- ① After independence, the Articles of Confederation created a loose union of states. In **Pair 1**, each state had one vote in Congress, even though state populations differed greatly. This made many people question whether Congress represented the people fairly. The Constitution answered this concern with a House of Representatives whose seats are based on population, while also keeping equal state votes in the Senate. In **Pair 2**, changing the Articles required approval from all thirteen states. The Constitution allowed amendments when two-thirds of Congress proposes them and three-fourths of the states approve.
- ② Congress under the Articles could ask states for money, but it could not levy national taxes. In **Pair 3**, this weakness left the national government short of funds to pay debts or provide for common needs. The Constitution gave Congress power to levy taxes. In **Pair 4**, Congress also could not regulate trade among the states or with other nations. States set competing trade rules, which hurt business and cooperation. The Constitution gave Congress power to regulate interstate and foreign commerce, creating national rules for trade.
- ③ The Articles had no separate executive leader to carry out congressional laws and no national court system to settle disputes about those laws. In **Pair 5**, Congress depended on state officials to follow its decisions. The Constitution created a president to enforce federal laws and a federal judiciary to interpret them. Trouble also showed the danger of a weak national government. During Shays' Rebellion in Massachusetts, 1786 and 1787, the national government struggled to respond because it lacked money and reliable troops. These problems helped persuade delegates to write the Constitution in 1787.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the one-vote-per-state rule raise concerns about fair representation, and how did the Constitution respond?

2 Why was changing the Articles difficult, and what amendment process did the Constitution create instead?

3 Explain how the lack of tax and trade powers weakened Congress under the Articles. What powers did the Constitution give Congress to address these problems?

4 How did Pair 5 make federal laws difficult to carry out, and what two parts of government did the Constitution create to address this problem?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write 3 or 4 sentences explaining why delegates needed a new Constitution. Use two numbered pairs from the passage. For each pair, state the weakness and the Constitution power or rule that addressed it.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

In each bold numbered pair, underline the weakness in the Articles of Confederation and circle the Constitution response that addressed it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the one-vote-per-state rule raise concerns about fair representation, and how did the Constitution respond?	States with very different populations had equal votes, so Congress did not seem to represent people fairly. The Constitution created a House of Representatives with seats based on population.
2	Why was changing the Articles difficult, and what amendment process did the Constitution create instead?	Changing the Articles required every state to agree. The Constitution allows amendments when two-thirds of Congress proposes them and three-fourths of the states approve.
3	Explain how the lack of tax and trade powers weakened Congress under the Articles. What powers did the Constitution give Congress to address these problems?	Without tax power, Congress lacked money for debts and common needs. Without trade power, states made competing rules. The Constitution gave Congress power to levy taxes and regulate interstate and foreign commerce.
4	How did Pair 5 make federal laws difficult to carry out, and what two parts of government did the Constitution create to address this problem?	Congress depended on state officials to follow its decisions. The Constitution created a president to enforce federal laws and a federal judiciary to interpret them.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Articles gave each state one vote, so Congress did not represent people equally. The Constitution created a House based on population, giving larger states representation that reflected their size. Because the Articles also could not regulate trade, states used competing rules, so delegates gave Congress power over interstate and foreign commerce to build a more effective national government.

Accept accurate cause-and-effect explanations that connect an Articles weakness to the specific Constitution response in the passage. For the open response, students must use two distinct numbered pairs and explain why the changes strengthened the national government.