

Constitution Challenges

Trace conflicts and compromises at the Constitutional Convention.

SS4H2 "Analyze the challenges faced by the framers of the Constitution."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each sentence that tells about a weakness, conflict, or disagreement. Circle the name of each compromise or solution so you can see how delegates tried to solve hard problems.

Hard Choices in Philadelphia

- ① In 1787, delegates met in Philadelphia to improve the weak government created by the Articles of Confederation. Under the Articles, Congress could ask states for money but could not collect taxes. It also could not easily control trade between states. States sometimes argued over trade rules and money. Many delegates believed the nation needed a government strong enough to solve shared problems.
- ② Delegates also disagreed about representation in Congress. Large states wanted more representatives because they had more people. Small states feared that large states would control every decision. The Great Compromise created two houses of Congress. In one house, each state received the same number of senators. In the other house, a state's number of representatives depended on its population.
- ③ Another hard disagreement involved slavery. Southern delegates wanted enslaved people counted when deciding a state's representatives, but not fully counted for federal taxes. Northern delegates objected because enslaved people could not vote. The Three-Fifths Compromise counted three out of every five enslaved people for both representation and direct taxes. This agreement helped delegates finish the Constitution, but it protected slavery and caused lasting injustice.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Why did the power to collect taxes matter to delegates who wanted to solve shared problems?

2 How did large states and small states see representation differently?

3 Explain how the Great Compromise answered concerns from both large and small states.

4 Why was the disagreement about slavery hard to settle? Use two details from the passage.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Imagine you are a delegate facing a new disagreement. Coastal states want Congress to pay for lighthouses, but inland states do not want to pay. Write exactly two sentences, one that explains the conflict and one that proposes a fair compromise.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each sentence that tells about a weakness, conflict, or disagreement. Circle the name of each compromise or solution so you can see how delegates tried to solve hard problems. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did the power to collect taxes matter to delegates who wanted to solve shared problems?	Congress could ask for money but could not collect taxes, so it lacked a dependable way to raise money for national needs.
2	How did large states and small states see representation differently?	Large states wanted more representatives because they had more people. Small states feared large states would control decisions.
3	Explain how the Great Compromise answered concerns from both large and small states.	It created two houses of Congress. One gave every state the same number of senators, and the other based representatives on population.
4	Why was the disagreement about slavery hard to settle? Use two details from the passage.	Southern delegates wanted enslaved people counted for representation but not fully for taxes. Northern delegates objected because enslaved people could not vote.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Coastal states want safer ports, while inland states worry that their tax money will pay for something they use less. Congress could collect a small tax from all states and use it for lighthouses that help trade across the nation.

Accept answers that connect each conflict to different state or regional interests and explain how a compromise tried to address both sides. For the open response, accept any realistic compromise that clearly considers both coastal and inland states.