A First Union

How the Articles helped the states unite and showed what needed to change

5.SS.4.3 "Explain the significance of the Articles of Confederation as the transitional form of government."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways the Articles helped the states act as one country, circle two limits on Congress, and number the sentence that best explains why the Articles were a step toward a new plan.

The Country's First Plan

1. In 1776, the thirteen colonies declared independence from Britain. They had fought against a king, so many people feared giving another national government too much power. The states needed a way to act together during the Revolutionary War. Their first national plan, the Articles of Confederation, took effect in 1781. It joined the states in a union while leaving most power with each state.

2. Under the Articles, each state had one vote in Congress, no matter its size. Congress could make decisions about war and foreign relations. After the war, it approved the Northwest Ordinance, which set rules for creating new states from western lands. These actions showed that the states could work together as one country, even though their national government was weak.

3. But Congress could not collect taxes directly from people. It had to ask states for money, and states did not always send enough. Congress also could not control trade between states. Leaders saw that the union needed a stronger national government to solve shared problems. In 1787, delegates wrote the Constitution. The Articles mattered because they kept the states together and revealed what the next plan needed to change.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did leaving most power with the states help people accept the Articles as their first national plan?

2. How did Congress's actions under the Articles show that the states could work as one country?

3. How did the rule about taxes show a need to change the country's first plan?

4. Why might the problem with trade between states have led leaders to write a new plan?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are a delegate in 1787. In four sentences, invent a problem the states might face, propose one change to the Articles that would help solve it, and explain why the Articles were still an important first step.

ANSWER KEY

A First Union

GRADE 5 · 5.SS.4.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways the Articles helped the states act as one country, circle two limits on Congress, and number the sentence that best explains why the Articles were a step toward a new plan. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did leaving most power with the states help people accept the Articles as their first national plan?	**Many people feared a powerful national government after fighting against a king. The Articles let states join a union while keeping most power.**
2	How did Congress's actions under the Articles show that the states could work as one country?	**Congress could make decisions about war and foreign relations, and it approved rules for creating new states from western lands.**
3	How did the rule about taxes show a need to change the country's first plan?	**Congress could not collect taxes directly and had to ask states for money. States did not always send enough.**
4	Why might the problem with trade between states have led leaders to write a new plan?	**Congress could not control trade between states, so leaders saw a need for a stronger national government to solve shared problems.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Imagine a border fort needs food, but several states ignore Congress's request for money. I would let Congress collect taxes so it could buy supplies without waiting for the states. The Articles gave the states a way to work together as one country. This change would help their union solve problems the first plan could not.

Accept a plausible invented problem and a change that addresses a limit described in the passage. The response should also explain how the Articles helped unite the states before the Constitution.