A Difficult Bargain

Representation, compromise, and the debate over ratification

9-12.GOV.4 "Analyze the Constitutional Convention of 1787, including the Great Compromise and the ensuing debate over ratification between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the two competing plans for representation, circle the convention's solution, and number one Federalist and one Anti-Federalist argument. Use your marks to trace how one debate led to another.

From Convention to Ratification

1. In May 1787, delegates met in Philadelphia to revise the Articles of Confederation, which gave Congress no power to tax people directly. Many delegates soon proposed a new Constitution instead. Large states favored the Virginia Plan: representation in Congress based on population. Small states preferred the New Jersey Plan: each state would have an equal vote. Each side feared losing influence if the other plan won. The disagreement threatened to stop the convention.

2. The Great Compromise gave each side part of what it wanted. In the House of Representatives, states would receive seats based on population. In the Senate, every state would have two seats. A proposal would need approval from both chambers to become law. This arrangement allowed delegates from large and small states to continue their work, but agreement at the convention did not make the Constitution law. The states still had to decide whether to ratify it.

3. Federalists urged ratification. They argued that the new national government could solve problems the government under the Articles could not, while the Constitution divided power among branches. Anti-Federalists worried that the new government would grow too powerful and that the Constitution did not list protections for individual rights. The Great Compromise addressed the states' competing demands for representation, but it did not settle those concerns. Supporters promised amendments protecting rights, and the Bill of Rights was ratified in 1791.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did the Virginia and New Jersey Plans put large and small states in conflict?

2. How did the Great Compromise give each side part of what it wanted?

3. Why did agreement on representation at the convention not end the debate over the Constitution?

4. How did the promise of amendments respond to an Anti-Federalist concern?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence exchange at a state ratifying convention. Have a Federalist use the Great Compromise to support ratification, an Anti-Federalist raise a different concern, and a moderator suggest a response.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the two competing plans for representation, circle the convention's solution, and number one Federalist and one Anti-Federalist argument. Use your marks to trace how one debate led to another. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did the Virginia and New Jersey Plans put large and small states in conflict?	**The Virginia Plan tied representation to population, favoring large states. The New Jersey Plan gave states equal votes, protecting small states' influence.**
2	How did the Great Compromise give each side part of what it wanted?	**House seats were based on population, while every state received two Senate seats.**
3	Why did agreement on representation at the convention not end the debate over the Constitution?	**The states still had to ratify it, and Anti-Federalists raised concerns about national power and the lack of listed rights.**
4	How did the promise of amendments respond to an Anti-Federalist concern?	**Promised amendments protecting individual rights addressed the concern that the Constitution did not list those protections.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Federalist: The Great Compromise gives small states an equal voice in the Senate, so I support ratification.
Anti-Federalist: That bargain does not protect freedom of speech from a stronger national government.
Moderator: A promise to add a bill of rights could address that concern.

Accept accurate explanations in students' own words. For the exchange, look for a correct link between the compromise and ratification, a distinct Anti-Federalist concern, and a relevant response.