A Republic Debated

Weigh arguments about power, representation, and liberty

9-12.GOV.5 "Evaluate the arguments presented in the Federalist Papers, particularly Essay 10 and Essay 51, and evaluate the arguments in the Anti-Federalist Papers."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the main claim in each of the three arguments. Circle a supporting reason for each claim, then write W beside a weakness or tradeoff for each argument.

How Could a Republic Protect Liberty?

1. In 1787, imagine a coastal state where merchants want a tariff on imported goods, while shoppers and farmers fear higher prices. The conflict helps explain James Madison's argument in Federalist No. 10. A faction is a group driven by a shared interest that may harm the rights of others or the public good. Madison argued that removing the causes of factions would require suppressing liberty or making everyone think alike. Instead, he favored a large republic with elected representatives. Its many interests would make it harder for an unjust majority to unite. Yet a larger republic might also make representatives less familiar with local needs.

2. In Federalist No. 51, Madison turned from competing groups to the structure of government. He argued that people in power cannot be trusted to limit themselves. Dividing national authority among Congress, the president, and the courts gives each branch ways to resist the others. A president can veto a bill, for example, and Congress can override a veto with enough votes. State governments also share power with the national government. These checks can block a rushed law that favors one group, but they can also delay a law needed urgently. Madison accepted this friction as a safeguard against concentrated power.

3. An opponent writing as Brutus argued that the proposed Constitution gave the national government too much room to grow. Its power to tax, combined with the necessary and proper clause and the supremacy clause, could weaken state governments. Brutus also argued that representatives of a vast republic would struggle to know local conditions, so citizens might not trust them. This challenges Madison's claim that size protects liberty: the same distance that makes an unfair majority harder to organize might make rulers harder to hold accountable. Yet Brutus did not fully show why smaller states would protect minorities from powerful local factions.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does Madison argue in Federalist No. 10 that a large republic protects liberty? What weakness of that argument does the passage identify?

2. Does the veto example strengthen Madison's argument in Federalist No. 51? Explain how it could protect liberty and name one cost.

3. Madison and Brutus draw different conclusions about a large republic. How does Brutus turn Madison's point about size into a warning?

4. Madison says state governments share power with the national government. Does that fully answer Brutus's concern about national power? Use evidence from the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Congress considers a national limit on how much water farms may take from rivers that cross state lines. In five or six sentences, choose which argument from Federalist No. 10, Federalist No. 51, or Brutus is most useful for judging the proposal, explain its reasoning, present a counterargument from another essay, and respond using a detail of the proposal.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the main claim in each of the three arguments. Circle a supporting reason for each claim, then write W beside a weakness or tradeoff for each argument. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Madison argue in Federalist No. 10 that a large republic protects liberty? What weakness of that argument does the passage identify?	**Many interests make it harder for an unjust majority to unite, but representatives in a large republic may know less about local needs.**
2	Does the veto example strengthen Madison's argument in Federalist No. 51? Explain how it could protect liberty and name one cost.	**Yes. A veto can stop a rushed bill that favors one group, though checks can also delay an urgently needed law.**
3	Madison and Brutus draw different conclusions about a large republic. How does Brutus turn Madison's point about size into a warning?	**Madison says many interests make an unjust majority harder to organize. Brutus warns that distance also makes it harder for representatives to know local conditions and for citizens to trust them.**
4	Madison says state governments share power with the national government. Does that fully answer Brutus's concern about national power? Use evidence from the passage.	**No. Brutus argues that national taxing power, together with the necessary and proper and supremacy clauses, could weaken states despite that division of power.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would take Brutus's warning most seriously when judging the proposed water limit. Farmers in dry regions may face costs that distant representatives do not understand, even if the rule helps downstream cities. Madison's Federalist No. 10 offers a counterargument: a large republic includes many interests, so one group may struggle to impose an unfair rule. Still, a variety of interests does not ensure lawmakers know how the limit affects each region. Brutus's concern about local knowledge remains important when judging this proposal.

Accept any of the three arguments as the strongest if the student explains its reasoning, fairly presents an argument from a different essay, and responds with a detail about the proposed water limit. Evaluations may differ from the sample.