Making Government Work

How early leaders turned the Constitution into a working government

8.H.7 "Identify and explain the steps taken during the Washington administration and the First and Second Congresses of the United States to establish a stable and lasting federal government."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one action by the First Congress and one by the Second Congress, then circle one action Washington took. Beside each mark, write a few words explaining how it helped the new government work.

From Plan to Practice

1. At the start of Washington's presidency in 1789, the Constitution was a plan, not a working government. The First Congress created the departments of State, Treasury, and War so officials could handle foreign affairs, money, and defense. Washington appointed leaders for these departments and asked them for advice. The same Congress passed the Judiciary Act of 1789, which set up district and circuit courts below the Supreme Court. Washington appointed federal judges. These steps gave national laws people to carry them out and courts to settle disputes.

2. Still, a government needed both public trust and enough money to pay its bills. The First Congress proposed amendments that became the Bill of Rights after the states ratified them in 1791. These protections limited federal power and helped answer fears that citizens might lose freedoms. Congress also adopted Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton's plan to pay federal debt and take on state debts from the Revolutionary War. By honoring those debts, the government aimed to gain lenders' trust and make it easier to borrow in the future.

3. The Second Congress kept building the system people would use. Its Post Office Act of 1792 set rules for a national mail service, helping news and government messages travel between distant places. Its Coinage Act of 1792 created a federal mint and set standards for U.S. coins, making money more consistent. Washington signed these laws, turning Congress's decisions into policies. A person might see a federal coin, send a letter, or meet a federal judge. Each ordinary encounter showed that the new government could do more than write a Constitution.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the First Congress and Washington work together to make the executive branch function?

2. What did the Judiciary Act establish, and why did the new government need it?

3. How did the First Congress address two different reasons people might distrust the new government?

4. How did the Second Congress make the federal government useful in everyday life? Explain both laws named in the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence letter to a neighbor in 1792 who thinks the federal government cannot serve people far from the capital. Use one action by the First Congress and one by the Second Congress, and explain Washington's role and how the two actions work together.

Making Government Work

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one action by the First Congress and one by the Second Congress, then circle one action Washington took. Beside each mark, write a few words explaining how it helped the new government work. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the First Congress and Washington work together to make the executive branch function?	**The First Congress created the State, Treasury, and War departments. Washington appointed their leaders and asked them for advice.**
2	What did the Judiciary Act establish, and why did the new government need it?	**It established district and circuit courts below the Supreme Court, giving the federal government courts to settle disputes.**
3	How did the First Congress address two different reasons people might distrust the new government?	**It proposed rights protections to answer fears about lost freedoms and adopted a debt plan to show lenders the government would honor its debts.**
4	How did the Second Congress make the federal government useful in everyday life? Explain both laws named in the passage.	**The Post Office Act set rules for national mail service, helping messages travel. The Coinage Act created a mint and coin standards, making money more consistent.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear neighbor, the First Congress set up district and circuit courts, so disputes over federal laws could be heard outside the capital. The Second Congress set rules for a national mail service, so news and government messages could travel across distant places. Washington signed the mail law and appointed federal judges, helping these plans become real. Together, courts and a mail network could make the federal government useful and dependable far from its capital.

For the marking job and letter, accept any accurately explained actions from the named Congresses and Washington. The letter should connect the two congressional actions to the neighbor's concern, not simply list them.