Lessons for Liberty

How earlier struggles shaped the Constitution and Bill of Rights

USG.2.1 "Analyze how colonial, revolutionary, and Founding Era events helped to inform the Framers on the design, ratification, and implementation of the United States Constitution (1787) and the Bill of Rights (1791)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three problems people faced before ratification, circle a response to each problem, and give each linked pair the same number.

What the Framers Learned

(1) In 1765, Parliament passed the Stamp Act, a tax on printed materials in the colonies. Colonists protested because they elected no members of Parliament to vote on it. When the Framers wrote the Constitution, they required bills for raising revenue to begin in the House of Representatives, whose members voters elect directly. Colonial officials also used broad search orders called writs of assistance. The Bill of Rights later protected people against unreasonable searches and required warrants to describe the places to be searched and the things to be seized.

(2) During the Revolution, the Declaration of Independence argued that governments get their authority from the consent of the governed. After independence, the Articles of Confederation left Congress unable to collect taxes directly and created no national court system. States often failed to provide the money Congress requested. At the 1787 convention, the Framers gave the new Congress power to tax and provided for a federal judiciary. They aimed to make national decisions workable while still limiting power through elected representatives.

(3) Ratification brought another test. Critics of the proposed Constitution feared that a stronger national government might threaten individual freedoms because the document listed few explicit protections. Supporters promised amendments to secure those rights, helping win support in key state ratifying conventions. After ratification, the first Congress created lower federal courts in 1789, putting the judiciary plan into practice. It also proposed rights amendments. States ratified ten of them in 1791, creating the Bill of Rights and putting written limits on federal power.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did two different colonial experiences lead to two different protections?

2. How did two weaknesses under the Articles of Confederation shape the Constitution?

3. How did concerns during ratification affect the Bill of Rights?

4. How did Congress put one part of the Constitution into practice in 1789?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 65 to 85 word speech to a voter in 1788. Weigh the danger of a national government that is too weak against the danger of one that is too powerful, using one colonial experience and one problem under the Articles; then recommend an action that could build trust after ratification.

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three problems people faced before ratification, circle a response to each problem, and give each linked pair the same number. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did two different colonial experiences lead to two different protections?	**Protests against the Stamp Act helped shape the rule that revenue bills begin in the elected House. Broad colonial searches helped shape protections against unreasonable searches and requirements for specific warrants.**
2	How did two weaknesses under the Articles of Confederation shape the Constitution?	**Because Congress could not tax directly and there was no national court system, the Constitution gave Congress taxing power and provided for a federal judiciary.**
3	How did concerns during ratification affect the Bill of Rights?	**Critics feared a stronger national government without explicit protections for freedoms. Supporters promised amendments, and ten rights amendments were ratified in 1791.**
4	How did Congress put one part of the Constitution into practice in 1789?	**Congress created lower federal courts, putting the Constitution's plan for a federal judiciary into practice.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our old Congress could not collect taxes directly, so it struggled to get money when states failed to pay. The new Congress needs that power, but colonial protests against the Stamp Act show why taxes need a public voice. Starting revenue bills in the elected House helps. I would also urge Congress to propose clear protections against unreasonable searches. That step would answer fears of unchecked national power and help citizens trust the new government.

Accept other accurate links between events and constitutional choices. The speech should explain both risks, use the required evidence, and recommend a plausible action after ratification.