Deals and Disagreements

Judge what compromise solved and what it left unresolved

USG.2.2 "Explain the concept of compromise and evaluate its application during the Constitutional Convention."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the two compromises in the passage, underline what each one settled, and circle one unfair result of each.

Bargaining in Philadelphia

1 In 1787, delegates met in Philadelphia to design a new national government. They disagreed about how states should be represented in Congress. Delegates from large states favored the Virginia Plan, which tied representation to population. Small-state delegates backed the New Jersey Plan, which gave each state an equal vote. A compromise asks opposing sides to accept part of what they want in order to reach an agreement. Neither plan alone could satisfy both groups.

2 The Connecticut Compromise created two chambers of Congress. In the House of Representatives, a state's population would determine its number of seats. In the Senate, each state would have two senators. Large states gained more House seats, while small states kept equal standing in the Senate. This bargain helped delegates move forward, but it did not give every citizen equal influence over Senate representation. A person in a small state would have more influence there than a person in a large state.

3 Another bargain concerned slavery. Delegates from slaveholding states wanted enslaved people counted toward House representation, although those people could not vote. Some other delegates objected to increasing slaveholding states' political power this way. The Three-Fifths Compromise counted three out of every five enslaved people when assigning House seats and direct taxes. It enabled an agreement but increased slaveholding states' representation while denying enslaved people political rights. A deal can settle a dispute without being fair to everyone affected.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Connecticut Compromise combine the two plans?

2. Why might a small-state delegate accept the Connecticut Compromise, even without equal representation in the House?

3. What did the Three-Fifths Compromise settle, and which states gained political power?

4. Why does reaching an agreement not prove that the Three-Fifths Compromise was fair?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine delegates disagree about who should set rules for trade between states: Congress or each state. In three or four sentences, propose a compromise, explain what each side gains, and identify one possible drawback.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number the two compromises in the passage, underline what each one settled, and circle one unfair result of each. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Connecticut Compromise combine the two plans?	**It based House seats on population, as large states wanted, and gave states equal representation in the Senate, as small states wanted.**
2	Why might a small-state delegate accept the Connecticut Compromise, even without equal representation in the House?	**The state would still have equal representation in the Senate.**
3	What did the Three-Fifths Compromise settle, and which states gained political power?	**It set how enslaved people would be counted for House seats and direct taxes. Slaveholding states gained representation.**
4	Why does reaching an agreement not prove that the Three-Fifths Compromise was fair?	**It increased slaveholding states' representation while enslaved people were denied political rights.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Congress could set basic rules for trade between states, while states could set rules for business within their borders. Supporters of national rules would get a shared system for trade across state lines. Supporters of state control would still make decisions about business inside their states. One drawback is that people might disagree about whether a particular business activity crosses state lines.

Accept different workable trade compromises if the response explains a gain for each side and a plausible drawback. For the marking task, accept circles around the unequal Senate influence and the denial of political rights to enslaved people.