

From Articles to Action

Trace how weaknesses in one plan led to a stronger national government.

7.4b "The lack of a strong central government under the Articles of Confederation presented numerous challenges. A convention was held to revise the Articles, the result of which was the Constitution..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each phrase that shows a weakness of the Articles of Confederation. Number the Constitution's features that gave the national government more power.

Why the Government Changed

- ① After independence, the states joined under the Articles of Confederation. The new nation had a Congress, but Congress could not collect taxes directly from citizens. It had to ask states for money. Congress also could not regulate trade between states or with other countries. States could issue money and made many decisions on their own. Changing the Articles required every state to agree, so fixing problems was extremely difficult. The national government had little power to carry out its decisions.
- ② These limits caused serious political and economic troubles. Without dependable tax money, Congress struggled to pay debts from the Revolutionary War or support a national army. States sometimes taxed goods from neighboring states, which hurt trade. In 1786 and 1787, farmers in Massachusetts, including Daniel Shays, protested debts and taxes. The uprising, called Shays' Rebellion, frightened many leaders. It showed that the national government could not quickly raise forces to restore order. Many Americans concluded that the Articles needed major change.
- ③ In 1787, delegates met in Philadelphia at the Constitutional Convention. Although the meeting was first meant to revise the Articles, the delegates wrote a new Constitution. It created a democratic republic, in which citizens elect representatives to make many government decisions. The Constitution gave Congress power to tax and regulate commerce. It also created an executive branch to carry out laws and a judicial branch to interpret them. Power was divided among branches and shared with state governments. The stronger national government could act, while limits on its power protected liberty.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why did Congress struggle to pay war debts and support a national army under the Articles?

2 How did states taxing goods from neighboring states show an economic problem under the Articles?

3 What did Shays' Rebellion show many leaders about the national government?

4 Name two powers or features in the Constitution that made the national government stronger. Tell what each one could do.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a four-sentence recommendation to a delegate at the Constitutional Convention. Explain one problem under the Articles, name one constitutional change that could address it, and explain why this change would still protect liberty in a democratic republic.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each phrase that shows a weakness of the Articles of Confederation. Number the Constitution's features that gave the national government more power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Congress struggle to pay war debts and support a national army under the Articles?	Congress could not collect taxes directly and had to ask the states for money.
2	How did states taxing goods from neighboring states show an economic problem under the Articles?	The state taxes hurt trade between the states because Congress could not regulate commerce.
3	What did Shays' Rebellion show many leaders about the national government?	It showed that the national government could not quickly raise forces to restore order.
4	Name two powers or features in the Constitution that made the national government stronger. Tell what each one could do.	Answers may include Congress could tax, Congress could regulate commerce, an executive branch could carry out laws, or a judicial branch could interpret laws.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would support a new Constitution because Congress could not collect taxes under the Articles. Giving Congress the power to tax would help the nation pay debts and support its defense. Citizens would still elect representatives to make many decisions. Dividing power among branches would limit the stronger government and protect liberty.

Accept accurate cause-and-effect explanations based on the passage. For the open response, look for one Articles weakness, a matching constitutional response, and an accurate explanation of representation or limits on power.