States Join Forces

Read how the first national government shared power with the states.

5.C.4.3.A "Identify the Articles of Confederation as a loose alliance of states."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show states kept power, and circle two things Congress could do. Use your marks to decide why the Articles formed a loose alliance.

A Plan for Thirteen States

1. In 1781, the thirteen states began using the Articles of Confederation as their first written plan for a national government. The states had just fought to become independent from Britain. Many leaders feared giving too much power to a new central government. Under the Articles, each state kept most powers to govern itself. The states joined together for some shared work, but they did not become one tightly controlled unit.

2. The Articles created a Congress where each state had one vote, no matter its size. Congress could make treaties with other countries and manage a war. Yet Congress could not collect taxes directly from people. It had to ask state governments for money, and states could refuse. Congress also could not set rules for trade between the states. Those limits made it hard to solve problems that crossed state borders.

3. Picture a shipment of cloth moving from one state to another. The states might set different trade rules, and Congress could not order them to follow a single rule. If Congress needed money to pay soldiers, it depended on states to send funds. This system was a loose alliance: the states worked together through Congress, but the national government had limited power over them.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the voting rule in Congress give each state a voice in the alliance?

2. Why did asking states for money show that Congress had limited power over them?

3. If two states wanted different trade rules, why could Congress not make them use the same rule?

4. A student says the Articles made a powerful central government. Do you agree? Give two details from the passage that support your answer.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a shared problem for two states that is not about trade or paying soldiers. In three sentences, describe the problem, explain how a limit on Congress's power could affect it, and show why the Articles formed a loose alliance.

ANSWER KEY

States Join Forces

GRADE 5 · 5.C.4.3.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show states kept power, and circle two things Congress could do. Use your marks to decide why the Articles formed a loose alliance. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the voting rule in Congress give each state a voice in the alliance?	**Each state had one vote, no matter how large or small it was.**
2	Why did asking states for money show that Congress had limited power over them?	**A state could refuse to send money, and Congress could not collect taxes directly from people.**
3	If two states wanted different trade rules, why could Congress not make them use the same rule?	**Under the Articles, Congress could not set rules for trade between states.**
4	A student says the Articles made a powerful central government. Do you agree? Give two details from the passage that support your answer.	**No. States kept most powers to govern themselves, and Congress could not collect taxes directly from people.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Two states disagree about paying to repair a bridge they both use. Congress asks each state for money, but one state refuses and Congress cannot collect taxes directly. This shows the Articles formed a loose alliance because the states kept power over their own money.

Accept different passage details when they accurately show that states kept power while Congress had limited authority. For Part 3, the invented problem must be distinct from trade and paying soldiers.