War and Words

How the first national government helped the states act together

5.C.4.3.B "Explain the importance of the Articles of Confederation to wage a war and conduct foreign diplomacy."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways Congress could help wage war, circle two ways it could conduct diplomacy, and number one limit that made state help necessary. Your marks should show why working together mattered.

One Congress, Thirteen States

1 By 1781, the thirteen states were fighting Britain in the Revolutionary War. They needed to act together, but each state also made many of its own decisions. The Articles of Confederation, the nation's first written plan for government, gave the states a shared Congress. Delegates from the states could meet there and make decisions for the war. Without a shared way to act, organizing a united effort would have been much harder.

2 Under the Articles, Congress could direct the war, appoint military leaders, and ask states for soldiers and supplies. Congress could also borrow money to help pay war costs. Yet it could not force states to give money through taxes or send troops. In 1781, American forces under George Washington and French forces trapped a British army at Yorktown. That victory depended on cooperation among American troops, the states, and France.

3 Fighting was only part of winning independence. Congress could send diplomats to speak for the United States and make treaties with other nations. France had joined the American side before the Articles took effect in 1781, and French support continued afterward. In 1783, American diplomats reached a peace treaty with Britain that recognized the United States as independent. The Articles gave Congress a way to speak for all the states in those talks.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did the states need a shared Congress to help wage the war?

2. Congress could ask states for soldiers and supplies. Why did it still need the states to choose to help?

3. France joined the American side before the Articles took effect. How could Congress still help the states work with France under the Articles?

4. How did the Articles help the states seek peace with Britain, and why did the 1783 treaty matter?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a state leader says, "Congress can pay for the army without our help." Write a three-sentence reply that asks the state to take one specific action. Explain why Congress needs that help and how it could also support peace talks.

ANSWER KEY

War and Words

GRADE 5 · 5.C.4.3.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways Congress could help wage war, circle two ways it could conduct diplomacy, and number one limit that made state help necessary. Your marks should show why working together mattered. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did the states need a shared Congress to help wage the war?	**Congress gave the states a way to make decisions together and organize a united war effort.**
2	Congress could ask states for soldiers and supplies. Why did it still need the states to choose to help?	**Congress could not force states to send troops or give money through taxes.**
3	France joined the American side before the Articles took effect. How could Congress still help the states work with France under the Articles?	**Congress could speak for the United States through diplomats and coordinate the war while French support continued.**
4	How did the Articles help the states seek peace with Britain, and why did the 1783 treaty matter?	**The Articles let Congress speak for all the states and make treaties. The 1783 treaty recognized the United States as independent.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Please send wagonloads of flour to our soldiers. Congress can direct the war, but it cannot tax your state to pay for supplies. A well-supplied army could give our diplomats a stronger position when they seek peace with Britain on behalf of all the states.

Accept other specific requests for state support, such as sending troops or money. The reply should accurately connect Congress's limited power to wage war with its ability to conduct peace talks for the states.