Inside the Convention

Two leaders, different roles in shaping the Constitution

5.C.5.2 "Identify the role of leaders of the Constitutional Convention, including its president George Washington and the influence of James Madison, known as the "Father of the Constitution.""

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show how Washington helped the Convention. Circle two details that show how Madison influenced its work.

Who Helped Shape the Constitution?

1. In May 1787, delegates from the states met in Philadelphia to fix the nation's weak system of government. They soon decided to plan a new Constitution instead. George Washington was chosen to be president of the Constitutional Convention. He led the meetings and helped keep them orderly. Washington spoke little during debates, but his presence gave the gathering respect and helped people trust its work.

2. James Madison arrived with careful ideas about how a stronger national government might work. He helped develop the Virginia Plan, which called for three branches of government. The plan also proposed a Congress with two houses and representation based on population. Delegates debated this plan, changed parts of it, and used some of its ideas in the Constitution. Madison also kept detailed notes of their discussions.

3. The two leaders helped in different ways. Washington guided the Convention as its president, while Madison shaped its ideas through plans and debate. Neither man wrote the Constitution by himself. Madison is often called the "Father of the Constitution" because his ideas strongly influenced the final document. His notes also helped later generations learn what happened at the meetings, which were closed to the public.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What did Washington do as president of the Constitutional Convention?

2. How did Washington help the Convention even though he spoke little during debates?

3. Name two ideas in the Virginia Plan that Madison helped develop.

4. Why is Madison called the "Father of the Constitution" even though he did not write it alone?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A museum display says, "George Washington wrote the Constitution." Write a three-sentence replacement label that corrects this claim, explains what Washington and Madison each did, and shows how their roles differed.

ANSWER KEY

Inside the Convention

GRADE 5 · 5.C.5.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show how Washington helped the Convention. Circle two details that show how Madison influenced its work. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What did Washington do as president of the Constitutional Convention?	**He led the meetings and helped keep them orderly.**
2	How did Washington help the Convention even though he spoke little during debates?	**His presence gave the gathering respect and helped people trust its work.**
3	Name two ideas in the Virginia Plan that Madison helped develop.	**It called for three branches of government and a two-house Congress with representation based on population.**
4	Why is Madison called the “Father of the Constitution” even though he did not write it alone?	**His ideas strongly influenced the final Constitution.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

George Washington did not write the Constitution by himself; he led the Convention's meetings and kept them orderly. James Madison helped develop the Virginia Plan, whose ideas influenced the Constitution. Washington guided the meetings, while Madison helped shape the plan for the new government.

Accept accurate descriptions of Washington's leadership and Madison's influence in students' own words. For the museum label, look for a clear correction of the claim and a distinction between the two roles.