Three Ways to Lead

Read how different leaders shaped the Constitutional Convention.

8.C.3.2.B "Describe the role of leaders at the Constitutional Convention, including its President George Washington, the influence of James Madison, and the contributions of Roger Sherman."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB For each leader, underline one action he took and circle one effect it had on the Convention. Write the same number, 1, 2, or 3, beside each matching action and effect.

Leadership in Philadelphia

1. In the summer of 1787, delegates gathered in Philadelphia to fix the nation's weak government, but they soon began planning a new Constitution. George Washington, already famous for leading the army during the Revolution, was chosen to preside over the meeting. He guided the sessions as president of the Convention, not as president of the United States, an office that did not yet exist. Washington spoke little during debates. His steady presence and public reputation gave the difficult meeting a respected leader as delegates argued behind closed doors.

2. James Madison arrived with detailed notes on earlier governments and a plan for a stronger national government. He helped shape the Virginia Plan, which called for a legislature with representation based on state population. Delegates from larger states favored this approach, while smaller states feared losing their voice. Madison spoke often, studied competing ideas, and kept careful records of the debates. His preparation and arguments influenced what delegates considered, even though they did not adopt every part of his plan. His notes later became a major source for understanding the meeting.

3. Roger Sherman of Connecticut saw that the fight over representation could stop the Convention. Delegates from large states wanted seats based on population; many from small states wanted each state to have an equal vote. Sherman helped propose a compromise: states would have representation based on population in the House of Representatives, but each state would have an equal voice in the Senate. This arrangement, called the Connecticut Compromise, offered both sides part of what they wanted. It helped the delegates continue building a national government with two legislative chambers.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What was Washington's role at the Convention, and how did his presence help the meeting?

2. How did Madison's preparation and ideas influence the delegates' work?

3. How did Sherman's proposal address the disagreement between large and small states?

4. How were Madison's and Sherman's contributions to the debate over representation different?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are writing a brief newspaper report in 1787. In four sentences, explain how Washington, Madison, and Sherman each helped the Convention move forward and how their different contributions worked together. Do not quote the passage.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 8 · 8.C.3.2.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

For each leader, underline one action he took and circle one effect it had on the Convention. Write the same number, 1, 2, or 3, beside each matching action and effect. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What was Washington's role at the Convention, and how did his presence help the meeting?	**Washington presided over the sessions. His reputation and steady presence gave the meeting a respected leader.**
2	How did Madison's preparation and ideas influence the delegates' work?	**Madison helped shape the Virginia Plan, spoke often, and studied competing ideas. His preparation and arguments influenced what delegates considered.**
3	How did Sherman's proposal address the disagreement between large and small states?	**It gave states representation based on population in the House and an equal voice in the Senate, offering each side part of what it wanted.**
4	How were Madison's and Sherman's contributions to the debate over representation different?	**Madison helped shape a plan based on state population. Sherman helped propose a compromise that used population in one chamber and equal state representation in the other.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Philadelphia's delegates faced the hard task of forming a new government. Washington gave their meetings a respected leader while they argued. Madison brought a prepared plan and ideas that pushed debate about national power and representation. Sherman's compromise eased the dispute over state votes, allowing delegates to keep working on a two-house Congress.

Accept accurate paraphrases that distinguish Washington's leadership of the sessions, Madison's influence on debate, and Sherman's compromise on representation. For Part 3, look for four original sentences that connect their different contributions.