Deals in Philadelphia

Read how the Convention's decisions shaped the new government.

8.C.3.2 "Analyze the significance of the Constitutional Convention on the formation of a new organization for national government. Identify the relationship between the principles established in the Declaration of Independence and the government..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three decisions the delegates made. For each one, circle a nearby phrase that shows a problem, competing interest, or ideal the decision affected.

Building a New Government

1 In 1787, delegates met in Philadelphia because the Articles of Confederation left the national government too weak to raise money or settle disputes among states. They wrote a new Constitution with three branches and powers shared between national and state governments. The Declaration of Independence had argued that governments gain their authority from the consent of the governed and should protect people's rights. The Constitution put those ideas into a working system through elected lawmakers, but it did not extend political equality to everyone. George Washington presided over the Convention, helping delegates keep order.

2 James Madison's Virginia Plan proposed representation in Congress based on population, giving large states more seats. The New Jersey Plan called for equal state representation, protecting small states. Roger Sherman helped shape the Great Compromise: a House based on population and a Senate with two members per state. This created a bicameral, or two-chamber, Congress. The delegates also chose an Electoral College to select the president. Electors, chosen under state rules, would cast votes for president, giving states a role while avoiding a direct nationwide vote that some delegates distrusted.

3 Representation raised a question: would enslaved people count toward population? The Three-Fifths Compromise counted three out of every five enslaved people for House seats and direct taxes, increasing slaveholding states' political power without granting them votes. The Constitution's Fugitive Slave Clause required the return of people who escaped slavery, even from states that had ended it. States could maintain, restrict, or abolish slavery, but Congress could not ban the importation of enslaved people before 1808. These deals avoided ending slavery and exposed a gap between the Declaration's ideals and the government.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the government designed at the Convention put a principle from the Declaration into practice, and where did it fall short?

2. How did Madison's Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan differ, and how did the compromise Sherman helped shape settle their dispute?

3. How did the slavery-related agreements increase slaveholding states' power and protect slavery in states that had ended it?

4. Why did delegates choose electors instead of a direct nationwide vote for president?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are a delegate reporting to people in your state. In four sentences, recommend whether to support the new Constitution. Explain how one part of the government reflects the Declaration's ideas, weigh one trade-off in choosing national leaders or representing states, and address a conflict between the slavery agreements and those ideas.

ANSWER KEY

Deals in Philadelphia

GRADE 8 · 8.C.3.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three decisions the delegates made. For each one, circle a nearby phrase that shows a problem, competing interest, or ideal the decision affected. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the government designed at the Convention put a principle from the Declaration into practice, and where did it fall short?	**Elected lawmakers put the idea of consent into practice, but the Constitution did not extend political equality to everyone.**
2	How did Madison's Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan differ, and how did the compromise Sherman helped shape settle their dispute?	**The Virginia Plan based representation on population; the New Jersey Plan gave states equal representation. The Great Compromise created a population-based House and a Senate with two members per state.**
3	How did the slavery-related agreements increase slaveholding states' power and protect slavery in states that had ended it?	**Counting three-fifths of enslaved people increased slaveholding states' House seats without giving those people votes. The Fugitive Slave Clause required their return even from states that had ended slavery.**
4	Why did delegates choose electors instead of a direct nationwide vote for president?	**Electors gave states a role in choosing the president and avoided a direct nationwide vote that some delegates distrusted.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would not support the Constitution without changes to protect more people's rights. Elected lawmakers reflect the Declaration's idea that government gets its authority from the people. Giving every state two senators protects small states, but it also gives their residents more influence per person than residents of large states have. The slavery agreements deny enslaved people political equality and help preserve slavery, which conflicts with the Declaration's ideals.

For the marking job, accept any three accurate decision-and-reason or decision-and-effect pairs supported by the passage. For the final task, accept either recommendation if all three required connections are accurate.