The Ratification Case

Read the arguments for adopting the Constitution

8.C.3.3.A "Identify major reasons advocating for the adoption of the Constitution of the United States of America as expressed by leading Federalists James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each Federalist's name. Underline at least one reason each gave for adopting the Constitution so you can compare their arguments.

Three Voices for Ratification

1. In 1787 and 1788, Americans argued over whether states should ratify the Constitution. James Madison, writing as a Federalist, warned that factions, groups driven by a shared interest, could trample the rights of others. He argued that a large republic would include many interests, making it harder for one faction to dominate. Voters would also choose representatives to make laws. Madison supported dividing power among branches so each could resist abuses by the others. To him, these features offered stronger protection for liberty than the weak national government under the Articles of Confederation.

2. Alexander Hamilton also wanted the states to ratify. Under the Articles of Confederation, Congress struggled to raise money because it could request funds from states but could not directly tax people. Hamilton argued that the Constitution would give the national government reliable ways to collect taxes and pay the nation's debts. It would also allow Congress to regulate trade among states, instead of leaving states to create conflicting rules. With steadier money and clearer trade rules, Hamilton believed the country could strengthen its defenses and build a more dependable economy.

3. John Jay focused on dangers beyond the country's borders. He feared that separate states might quarrel with foreign nations or be played against one another by them. Writing in support of ratification, Jay argued that one national government could speak for all the states in negotiations and make more consistent decisions about war and peace. A united country, he believed, would have more influence when facing other nations. In a divided country, a dispute involving one state could pull its neighbors into conflict, even if they had not chosen it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did Madison think a large republic would make it harder for one faction to dominate?

2. What reason did Madison give for dividing power among branches?

3. Which two powers did Hamilton want the national government to have, and why did he support them?

4. Why did Jay argue that a united country would be better able to deal with other nations?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are speaking at a state convention deciding whether to ratify the Constitution. Write four or five sentences supporting ratification, using reasons from two different Federalists and explaining how each addresses a different concern.

ANSWER KEY

The Ratification Case

GRADE 8 · 8.C.3.3.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each Federalist's name. Underline at least one reason each gave for adopting the Constitution so you can compare their arguments. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Madison think a large republic would make it harder for one faction to dominate?	**A large republic would include many interests, making it harder for one faction to gain control and harm others' rights.**
2	What reason did Madison give for dividing power among branches?	**Each branch could resist abuses by the others, helping protect liberty.**
3	Which two powers did Hamilton want the national government to have, and why did he support them?	**Hamilton supported the power to collect taxes to pay debts and strengthen defenses, and the power to regulate trade among states to prevent conflicting rules and support the economy.**
4	Why did Jay argue that a united country would be better able to deal with other nations?	**One national government could speak for all the states, make consistent decisions about war and peace, and have more influence abroad.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Fellow delegates, our state fears that powerful groups might silence smaller groups. Madison argued that a large republic would bring many interests together, making it harder for one faction to dominate. We also worry that a foreign nation could push our state around. Jay argued that a united country could speak for all the states in talks with other nations, so I support ratification.

Accept accurate paraphrases of the Federalists' reasons. For Part 3, look for reasons attributed to two different Federalists and a clear connection between each reason and a distinct concern.