The Ratification Debate

Compare competing arguments about the proposed Constitution

8.C.3.3.C "Compare major arguments regarding ratification of the Constitution of the United States of America as found in Federalist Papers #1, #10, #51, and #84 to Anti Federalist publications under the pen names of Cato and Brutus."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one argument from each numbered Federalist Paper, circle a related warning from Cato or Brutus, and give each pair the same number to show which arguments address the same issue.

What Would Protect the New Republic?

1 In 1787, Americans debated whether to approve the proposed Constitution. Writing as Publius, Alexander Hamilton opened *Federalist No. 1* by asking whether people could choose a government through careful thought rather than leave their fate to chance and force. He argued that the plan deserved a fair hearing because the union's future was at stake. A writer called Cato also urged readers to examine the plan carefully, but feared that its strong national government, especially its president, might threaten liberty. Both called for judgment, yet they weighed the danger differently.

2 How could a large republic handle disagreements? In *Federalist No. 10*, James Madison argued that a large republic could make it harder for a dangerous faction, a group pursuing its own interests at others' expense, to gain control. Many interests would compete, and elected representatives could filter public views. Brutus reached nearly the opposite conclusion. In his first essay, he warned that a republic spread across a vast area could not represent its people well. Representatives would be too distant to know local needs, and national power could overwhelm state governments.

3 Who would keep the new government from abusing its power? In *Federalist No. 51*, Madison argued that separate branches should have ways to resist one another, making power check power. Brutus doubted such safeguards would stop the national government from expanding. The writers also disagreed about individual rights. In *Federalist No. 84*, Hamilton argued that a federal bill of rights was unnecessary because the Constitution gave the national government only listed powers. Brutus argued that clear protections for rights were needed because national officials might use their broad powers against the people.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the arguments in Federalist No. 1 and Cato's writing both call for judgment, and what danger did each writer emphasize?

2. Why did Madison and Brutus reach different conclusions about the size of the proposed republic?

3. Compare Madison's argument in Federalist No. 51 with Brutus's warning about national power.

4. Why did Hamilton and Brutus disagree about whether the Constitution needed a federal bill of rights?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are a delegate deciding how your state should vote. In one paragraph, compare arguments from two numbered Federalist Papers with arguments from both Cato and Brutus, then recommend ratification or rejection and explain your reasoning.

ANSWER KEY

The Ratification Debate

GRADE 8 · 8.C.3.3.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one argument from each numbered Federalist Paper, circle a related warning from Cato or Brutus, and give each pair the same number to show which arguments address the same issue. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the arguments in Federalist No. 1 and Cato's writing both call for judgment, and what danger did each writer emphasize?	**Both urged careful examination. Hamilton stressed the stakes for the union, while Cato warned that a strong national government, especially its president, might threaten liberty.**
2	Why did Madison and Brutus reach different conclusions about the size of the proposed republic?	**Madison argued that many competing interests in a large republic would make it harder for one faction to take control. Brutus argued that a vast republic would leave representatives too distant to understand local needs.**
3	Compare Madison's argument in Federalist No. 51 with Brutus's warning about national power.	**Madison argued that branches could check one another's power. Brutus doubted those safeguards would prevent the national government from expanding its power.**
4	Why did Hamilton and Brutus disagree about whether the Constitution needed a federal bill of rights?	**Hamilton argued that a bill of rights was unnecessary because the national government had only listed powers. Brutus argued that clear protections were needed to guard against misuse of broad national powers.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would advise my state to ratify the Constitution, but only after a serious debate. In Federalist No. 1, Hamilton asks people to judge the plan carefully; Cato agrees that judgment matters but fears the president could become too powerful. I take that warning seriously, yet I think rejecting the plan is a larger risk to the union. Federalist No. 10 argues that a large republic can keep one faction from taking over. Brutus worries that representatives in such a republic will lose touch with local needs. I would accept that risk because competing interests can limit any one group's control.

Accept either recommendation if the student accurately compares two numbered Federalist Papers with arguments from both Cato and Brutus and explains a reason for the choice.