

Who Raised the Money?

Use a firsthand document and a later account to answer a U.S. history question

Name: _____ Date: _____

Part 1 - Read and investigate the sources

History question: Why could it be difficult for the national government to get money for national needs under the Articles of Confederation?

Read both sources. A source is not automatically better just because it is old. Think about who made it, when it was made, and what information it can provide.

Source A - Articles of Confederation, Article VIII

Continental Congress; adopted 1777, ratified 1781. This is an excerpt from the governing document created during the period.

“All charges of war, and all other expenses ... for the common defence or general welfare ... shall be defrayed out of a common treasury, which shall be supplied by the several States ... the taxes for paying that proportion shall be laid and levied by the authority and direction of the legislatures of the several States.”

Source B - “Congress Under the Articles”

Worksheet Team classroom account, 2026. This later account adapts information from the National Archives.

Congress could conduct diplomacy and declare war, but it could not directly tax individuals. To pay national expenses, it depended on money supplied by the states. This could make it harder to collect money when the national government needed it.

Source	Is it primary or secondary? Why?	Copy a short detail that helps answer the history question.
Source A		
Source B		

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Part 2 - Evaluate, choose, and explain

2. Evaluate usefulness. Complete the organizer. A useful source has a reason connected to this question. A limitation is something the source cannot tell you well.

Source	Why is it useful for this question?	One limitation or reason to check another source
Source A		
Source B		

3. Write an evidence-based answer. In 4-6 sentences, answer the history question. State a claim, use one detail from Source A and one detail from Source B, and explain how the details support your claim. Name the sources in your writing.

4. Decide: Which source would you use first to learn the exact rule about taxes? Circle one: Source A / Source B

Explain your choice.

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Teacher key and companion - setup, materials, and script

Materials and setup: Print and supply all student pages, keeping teacher-key pages separate. Students need pencils and may use a highlighter. All source text is supplied in Part 1; no web access is needed. Display the history question or read it aloud. This task uses a public-domain excerpt from the Articles of Confederation and a clearly labeled original classroom adaptation.

Teaching script (read aloud): “Today you will use two sources to answer one question about the Articles of Confederation. Do not choose a source just because it is primary. Ask: Who made it? When? What can it tell us about this question? Source A comes from the time of the Articles. Source B was written later and summarizes information. Your final answer needs evidence from both.”

After students read, say: “Put a box around words in Source A that show who collected taxes. Underline the sentence in Source B that explains the challenge. Then explain what each source can and cannot do.” Do not supply the answers before students write.

Observation method: As students work, use a roster with three marks: E = copied or accurately paraphrased relevant evidence from each source; V = gave a source-specific usefulness/limitation reason; C = made a claim connected to both pieces of evidence. Prompt only with: “Which words show that?” or “How does that detail answer the question?” Note students who label source types but do not use content for a brief conference.

Source credits: National Archives, *Articles of Confederation* (1777; ratified 1781), <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/articles-of-confederation>. Source B is an original Worksheet Team classroom adaptation based on the National Archives overview, created 2026.

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Answer key and scoring notes

1. Source classifications and evidence

A: Primary source. It was created as the governing document during the Articles period. Relevant evidence includes that the common treasury “shall be supplied by the several States” and that state legislatures would lay and collect taxes.

B: Secondary source. It was written in 2026 after the events and explains earlier history. Relevant evidence includes that Congress “could not directly tax individuals” and depended on money from states.

2. Evaluation organizer - acceptable responses

A useful: It gives the actual rule about who was to raise taxes, so it is strong evidence for the exact policy.

Limitation: Its formal language may not explain effects, such as whether states paid quickly or why collecting money was difficult.

B useful: It plainly summarizes Congress's limit and connects dependence on states to the difficulty of collecting money. Limitation: It is a later summary, not the original rule; students should check the original document for exact wording and details.

3. Sample evidence-based answer

It could be difficult for the national government to get money because the states, not Congress, were responsible for raising taxes. Source A says the common treasury was to be supplied by the states and that state legislatures would levy taxes. This shows Congress did not collect those taxes itself. Source B explains that Congress could not directly tax individuals and depended on states for money. Together, the sources show that national expenses depended on state action.

4. Decision

Source A is the stronger first choice for learning the exact tax rule because it is the original governing document. Source B is still useful for a clear explanation of the rule's likely challenge.

Scoring guide: 4 = accurate classifications; relevant evidence from both; source-specific usefulness and limitation; clear claim using both sources. 3 = mostly accurate with one weak explanation or incomplete evidence connection. 2 = some correct source information but relies mainly on labels or one source. 1 = unsupported claim, inaccurate source use, or little completion. Accept equivalent wording. Do not require students to claim that primary sources are always more valid.