

Constitution Builders

Compare how James Madison and George Mason shaped the Constitution and its protections.

5.3 "History. The student understands the significant individuals who contributed to the creation of the U.S. Constitution and the government it established..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each detail about James Madison's contributions and circle each detail about George Mason's contributions so you can compare their roles.

Two Voices at the Convention

- ① During the Constitutional Convention of 1787, James Madison came prepared with ideas about a stronger national government. He introduced the Virginia Plan, which proposed three branches of government and representation based on state population. Delegates used the plan as a starting point for debate. Madison also took detailed notes, helping people understand what happened during the meetings.
- ② Madison did more than offer a plan. He spoke for the Constitution during the ratification debate and joined Alexander Hamilton and John Jay in writing essays called *The Federalist*. These essays explained why the new Constitution should be approved. Once the new government began, Madison introduced proposed amendments that became the Bill of Rights, protecting important individual freedoms.
- ③ George Mason also shaped the convention. Earlier, he wrote much of Virginia's Declaration of Rights, which said people have basic rights. At the convention, Mason wanted a bill of rights in the Constitution. He believed the final document did not protect people well enough, so he refused to sign it. His objections helped build support for adding the Bill of Rights.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What did Madison's Virginia Plan propose?

2 How did Madison help people support the Constitution, and what did he introduce after the new government began?

3 Why did George Mason refuse to sign the Constitution?

4 How were Madison's and Mason's contributions different?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a three-sentence museum label about Madison and Mason. In the first two sentences, give one accurate contribution from each man. In the third sentence, explain how their actions helped shape the new government.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each detail about James Madison's contributions and circle each detail about George Mason's contributions so you can compare their roles. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What did Madison's Virginia Plan propose?	It proposed three branches of government and representation based on state population.
2	How did Madison help people support the Constitution, and what did he introduce after the new government began?	He helped write The Federalist essays, which explained why the Constitution should be approved. He later introduced proposed amendments that became the Bill of Rights.
3	Why did George Mason refuse to sign the Constitution?	He believed the final document did not protect people well enough because it did not include a bill of rights.
4	How were Madison's and Mason's contributions different?	Madison proposed a plan for the new government and supported the Constitution. Mason pushed for a bill of rights and objected to signing the Constitution without one.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

James Madison offered the Virginia Plan and helped explain why the Constitution should be approved. George Mason pressed for a bill of rights and objected when the Constitution did not include one. Their different actions helped shape the Constitution and the rights added to the new government.

Accept equivalent descriptions of Madison's Virginia Plan, Federalist essays, and proposed amendments. For Mason, accept that he wanted stronger protection of individual rights, supported a bill of rights, and refused to sign the Constitution because it lacked one.