

Compromise Under Pressure

Analyze how Convention delegates settled disputes over representation and slavery.

8.4.D “analyze the issues of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, including the Great Compromise and the Three-Fifths Compromise.”

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each sentence that states a disagreement at the convention. Write **1** beside each sentence that gives an effect of the Great Compromise, and write **2** beside each sentence that gives an effect of the Three-Fifths Compromise.

Difficult Agreements in Philadelphia

- ① In Philadelphia in 1787, delegates met to revise the weak Articles of Confederation, but they soon faced major disagreements. Large states supported the Virginia Plan, which called for representation based on population. Small states supported the New Jersey Plan, which called for equal representation for every state. Small-state delegates feared that a population-based legislature would let large states control national laws. The dispute threatened to break up the convention before delegates could create a stronger national government.
- ② Delegates adopted the Great Compromise, also called the Connecticut Compromise. It created two houses of Congress with different rules for representation. In the House of Representatives, each state's number of members would depend on population. In the Senate, every state would have two members. This plan gave large states influence in the House and protected small states from being outvoted in the Senate. It helped delegates reach agreement on the structure of Congress and made national lawmaking possible without either side receiving everything it wanted.
- ③ Delegates also argued over whether enslaved people would be counted when determining a state's representation and direct taxes. Southern states wanted to count enslaved people, while many northern delegates objected because enslaved people had no political rights. The Three-Fifths Compromise counted three fifths of a state's enslaved population for representation and direct taxes. This increased the political power of slave states in Congress while leaving enslaved people without freedom or citizenship. The compromise helped secure support for the Constitution, but it did not end the conflict over slavery.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan propose different ways to give states representation?

2 How did the Great Compromise respond to the concerns of both large and small states?

3 What did the Three-Fifths Compromise count, and what political effect did it have?

4 Why did the compromises help the Constitution move forward while still leaving a serious conflict unresolved?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a three-sentence recommendation as a Convention delegate about one compromise. State whether you would support or oppose it, then explain one benefit and one cost of that compromise.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each sentence that states a disagreement at the convention. Write **1** beside each sentence that gives an effect of the Great Compromise, and write **2** beside each sentence that gives an effect of the Three-Fifths Compromise. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan propose different ways to give states representation?	The Virginia Plan called for representation based on population. The New Jersey Plan called for equal representation for every state.
2	How did the Great Compromise respond to the concerns of both large and small states?	It gave large states representation based on population in the House of Representatives and gave every state two senators, protecting small states in the Senate.
3	What did the Three-Fifths Compromise count, and what political effect did it have?	It counted three fifths of a state's enslaved population for representation and direct taxes. It increased the political power of slave states in Congress.
4	Why did the compromises help the Constitution move forward while still leaving a serious conflict unresolved?	The compromises helped delegates reach agreement and secure support for the Constitution. The conflict over slavery continued, and enslaved people remained without freedom or citizenship.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would oppose the Three-Fifths Compromise. It could help delegates agree on the Constitution, but it gives slave states more representation even though enslaved people have no political rights. It leaves slavery and the denial of freedom unresolved.

Accept accurate explanations that connect each compromise to the competing interests it addressed and to its effects. For the open response, accept either position when the student gives a historically supported benefit and cost.