

The New Nation

*Revolution and the New
Nation (1754–1815)*



Uniting the states

The Constitution

Ruling the new nation

Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

Icons: For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will learn about the problems facing the 13 colonies after the Revolutionary War and be able to answer these key questions:

- What was the first government system in the United States of America?
- How successful was this system? Why?
- What were the key divisions between different states?



Looking back timeline



Use this timeline to recap key historical events and contextualize the creation of a new nation. Either press on a date or drag the pointer along the timeline to find out information about what happened in each year.

Press **start** to begin.

start





Following the victorious conclusion to the Revolutionary War, Americans had an opportunity to join together to form the government of a new and ideal nation.



The 13 colonies wanted to replace British sovereignty with a united **republic** – a governing system where representatives rule on behalf of the people. Initially, it was highly uncertain whether this system of government would work in the U.S.



What difficulties do you think this system would have?





After the Revolutionary War, the 13 colonies became **states**, but many remained averse to joining together under a powerful centralized government.

They had rebelled against Britain to throw off such a power and they were used to being distinct, self-governing units.



The states started creating their own **constitutions**, affirming their separate identity and their individual interests.

This lack of desire for unity was the key challenge facing this new nation.

How do you think the state constitutions differed?



First attempt at unity



The **Founding Fathers** of the 13 states needed to prove that they were capable of governing themselves.

Fill in the blanks in the following text about their first attempt at unity.

Press **start** to begin.

start





In addition to the issue of states' power, there were many questions that the Articles of Confederation had to deal with.

One issue was what type of representation should be used in the Congress of Confederation, the new national government.

Some argued that representation should be weighted based on the population of each state.

Yet, the Articles of Confederation stipulated that every state would have only one vote.



Which states would benefit from this decision?



The Articles left the national government with no power to tax, or levy duties on foreign or inter-state trade. It could request money from the states, but they rarely complied.

With no fixed income, Congress had no way of paying the debts incurred during the Revolutionary War.

Congress was unable to pay the salaries of soldiers in the Continental Army and actually fled from them before settling in New York.



What other difficulties did Congress have?

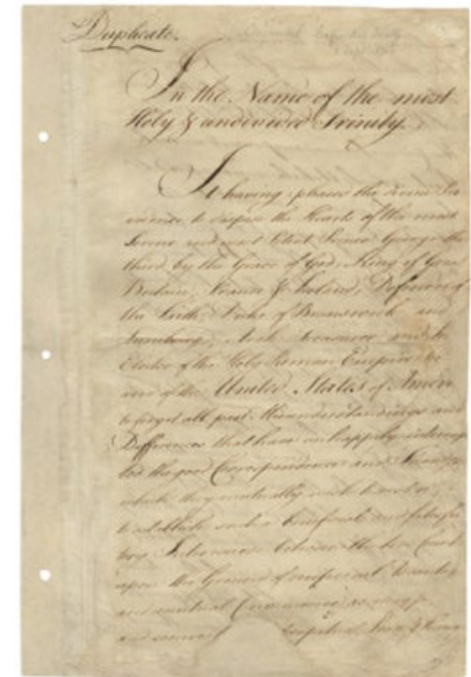


The Articles did allow Congress to declare war, negotiate peace and manage all foreign affairs.

However, Congress's ability to be effective in foreign policy was severely hindered by its inability to raise an income.

As it was struggling to fund a national navy and army, Congress could not deter acts of foreign aggression. So, it could not:

- enforce the Treaty of Paris and force British troops to leave frontier forts
- respond effectively to Spain closing the Mississippi River in 1784.





One of the greatest achievements of the new national government was its actions concerning the Western lands.

Press **start** to learn more.

start





Weakness and instability



The Articles of Confederation created a national government for the 13 states, but many of the articles resulted in this government being weak and ineffective.

Adapting the Articles was extremely difficult because it required every state's approval. Since Congress lacked power, many states did not send their delegates to vote on pressing issues. These signs of weakness, were vulnerabilities that this new nation could not afford to show domestically and internationally.



How would you improve the Articles of Confederation?





How much can you remember about the powers given to Congress as a result of the Articles of Confederation?

Drag each statement to the correct place, depending on whether it refers to something that Congress has or has not got the power to do.
Press **start** to begin.

start

