

The New Nation

Part One



Part One

Part Two

Part Three

Thematic Icons



Economics



Geography



Historical concepts



Government

Icons



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page

For more instructions, see the *User Guide*.







Following the victory in 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 the British government with a united **republic** – a system where representatives rule on behalf of the people. At first, it was highly uncertain whether this system of government would work in the U.S.

What difficulties did the new nation have?



After the Revolutionary War, the 13 colonies became **states**. Some states were wary about joining together under a powerful central government.



The states were used to governing themselves, and had rebelled against Britain to free themselves from one such government.

The states created their own constitutions, showing their separate identities and interests.

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





In 1781, the **Articles of Confederation** became law. This document was the first constitution of the United States.

Among other things, the Articles determined the relationship between the states and the central government.

One important issue was how the states would be represented in the new national government.

The Articles of Confederation decided that every state, even those with a small population, would have one vote each.





The Articles left the national government with no power to raise money through taxes or duties. It could request money from the states, but they rarely agreed to the demands.

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

This resulted in the **Newburgh Conspiracy** in 1782–83.

An officers' movement in the Continental Army put pressure on Congress to honor their monetary commitments to their soldiers.



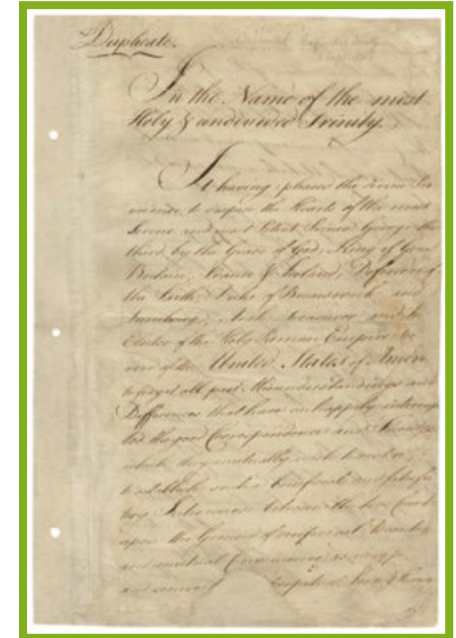


The Articles allowed Congress to declare war, negotiate peace and manage all foreign affairs.

However, Congress could not carry out its foreign policy because of its inability to raise an income.

Congress could not fund a national navy and army. 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.



The Articles of Confederation created a national government for the 13 states, but this government was weak and ineffective.

Since Congress lacked power, many states did not vote on pressing issues. Other nations saw the United States as weak, and many Americans believed the government could not protect their interests. These signs of weakness were something that this new nation could not afford to show domestically and internationally.



How would you improve the Articles of Confederation?



Powers of Congress summary



