

Ratification of the United States Constitution

Explain the ongoing impact of political negotiation and compromise at the Constitutional Convention on the development of the constitutional system.

1. Who was emboldened by the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation to call for a new constitutional convention?

- a. Elite
- b. Small farmers
- c. Urban merchants
- d. Military leaders

2. The most pressing need at the constitutional convention in Philadelphia in 1787 was

- a. The central government would need to be stronger
- b. State governments would need to pay their fair share
- c. The issue of slavery would need to be resolved
- d. Foreign policy issues threatened national security

3. Compromise between the original 13 colonies in 1787 would prove to be difficult. There were numerous differences. Despite the political, economic and regional differences the 13 colonies could all agree on needing a

- a. Weaker national president
- b. Weaker military industrial complex
- c. Stronger national bank
- d. Stronger functioning central government

4. The United States Constitution would never have succeeded had it not been for the Great Compromise. This compromise resulted in a bicameral legislature. What fundamental issued divided the convention?

- a. Northerners versus southerners
- b. Urban citizens versus rural citizens
- c. Big states versus small states
- d. Internationalists versus isolationists

5. Slavery was protected in the Articles of Confederation based upon the principle of

- a. Executive prerogative
- b. State sovereignty
- c. Individual agency
- d. Equal protection

6. The new U.S. constitution would endanger state powers once given under the Articles of Confederation. Compromises with respect to slavery would be necessary if the new constitution was to be ratified. This can be clearly seen in all of the following provisions EXCEPT

- a. Three-fifths formula when counting slaves for apportioning representation
- b. Legal importation of slaves until 1807
- c. Fugitive slave laws
- d. Federal compensation for voluntary manumission

7. Compromises at the Philadelphia constitutional convention in 1787 were necessary in order to assure ratification. Some important issues were left unresolved. It is for this reason, perhaps, that the escape hatch found in Article V was included. What did Article V provide for?

- a. A route to return to the Articles of Confederation
- b. A means to breach the original charter and thus beginning anew
- c. A means of amending and changing the original constitution
- d. State legislatures were given the power to veto Presidential acts

8. The formal amendment process, changing the language of the U.S. Constitution, has been used sparingly. This is true, in part, because of the difficulty of the amendment process. Two-thirds of _____ must propose a change and three-fourths of _____ must ratify.

- a. State legislatures; Congress
- b. Congress; State legislatures
- c. State legislatures; the Supreme Court
- d. Congress; the Supreme Court

9. The "Great Compromise" made at the constitutional convention in 1787 was settled by the inclusion of

- a. An energetic president
- b. A bicameral legislature
- c. Slave states in the south
- d. An independent judiciary

10. When changing the U.S. Constitution there is a two-step process. Amendments would need to be proposed and ratified. The central government was empowered to propose changes and state governments were empowered to ratify changes. What foundational principle is evident in the formal amendment process?

- a. Separation of powers
- b. Checks and balances
- c. Federalism
- d. Judicial review

11. The debates that were widespread during the period of ratification in 1787 and 1788 still continue today. When a strong central government was called for in response to the attacks of September 11 one can still hear the echoes of

- a. The Federalists
- b. The Anti-Federalists
- c. The Tories
- d. The mercantilists

12. The debates that were widespread during the period of ratification in 1787 and 1788 still continue today. When Tea Partiers take to the streets complaining about the growth of an imperial presidency one can still hear echoes of

- a. The Federalists
- b. The Anti-Federalists
- c. The Tories
- d. The mercantilists

13. The debates that were widespread during the period of ratification in 1787 and 1788 still continue today. When the federal government began to encourage and mandate centralized educational goals like “Common Core” in order to reform public schools one can still hear echoes of

- a. The Federalists
- b. The Anti-Federalists
- c. The Tories
- d. The mercantilists

14. When president Ronald Reagan (R) called government the problem and not the solution and when president Bill Clinton (D) said “the era of big government is over” they were drawing upon a common theme expressed early in our political history by

- a. The Federalists
- b. The Anti-Federalists
- c. The Tories
- d. The mercantilists

15. In the ratifying debates Federalists argued for

- a. A stronger central government
- b. Maintaining stronger local governments
- c. Direct democracy
- d. Stronger alliances with France

16. In the ratifying debates Anti-Federalists argued for

- a. A stronger central government
- b. Maintaining stronger local governments
- c. Direct democracy
- d. Stronger alliances with England

Critical Thinking Prompt

How many formal amendments have been added to the U.S. Constitution? What are the advantages and disadvantages of bringing about change through formal amendments? Is there an issue today that would best be solved through a formal constitutional amendment? Explain.