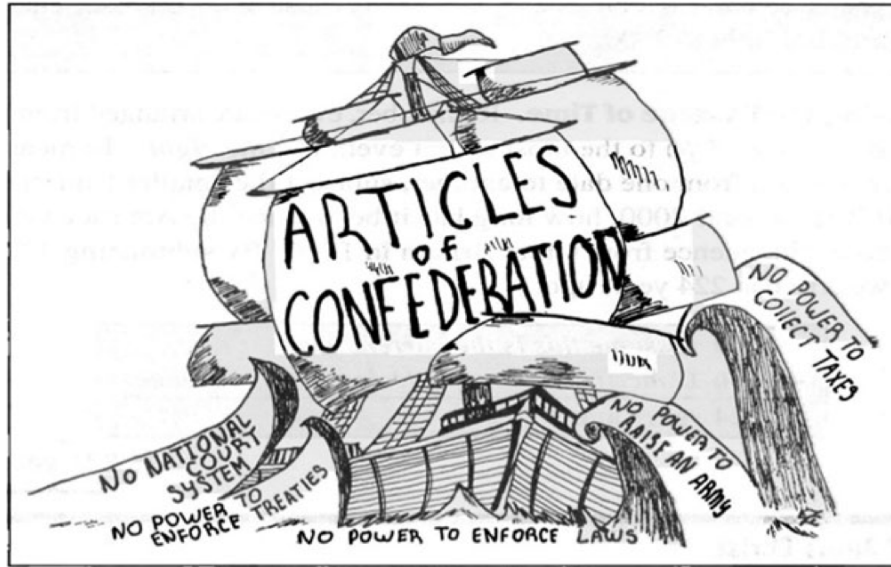
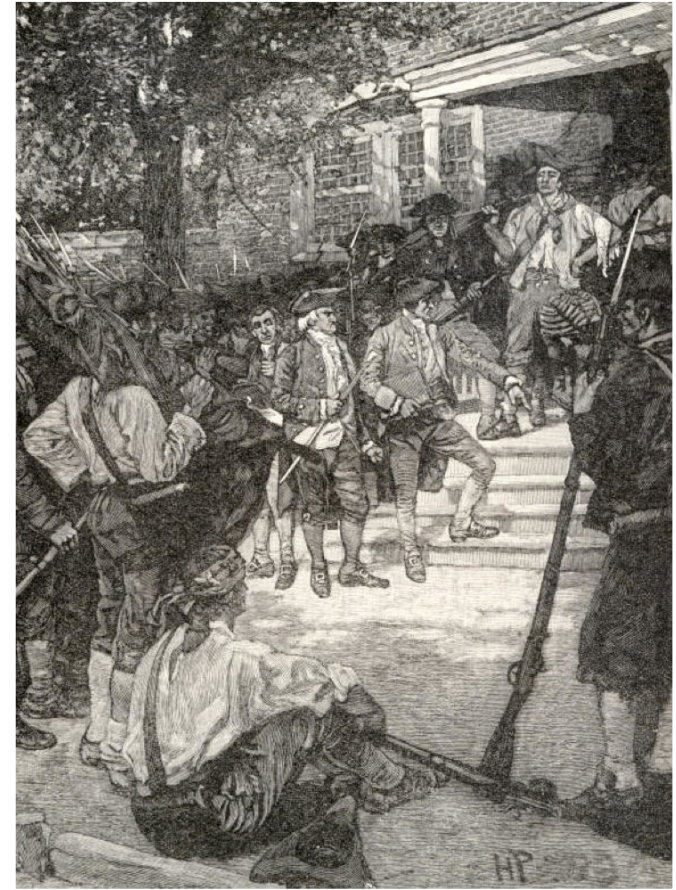


SSUSH5: INVESTIGATE SPECIFIC EVENTS AND KEY IDEAS THAT BROUGHT THE ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION



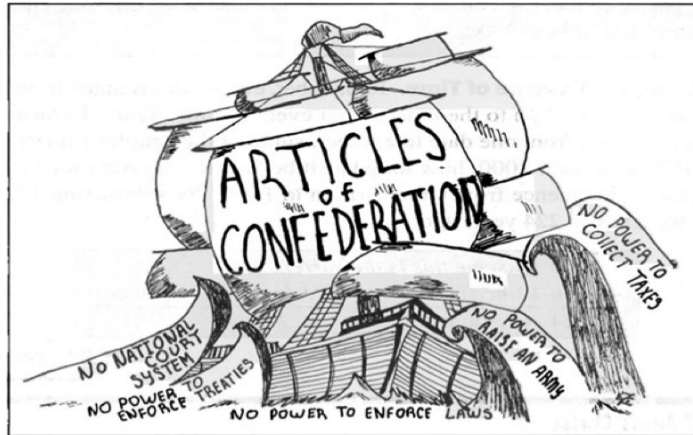
"Rough Sailing Ahead?"



ELEMENT B: Evaluate how weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation and Daniel Shay's Rebellion led to a call for a stronger central government.

Weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation

- ❑ The Articles of Confederation were written during the American Revolution and adopted by Congress in 1777.



"Rough Sailing Ahead?"



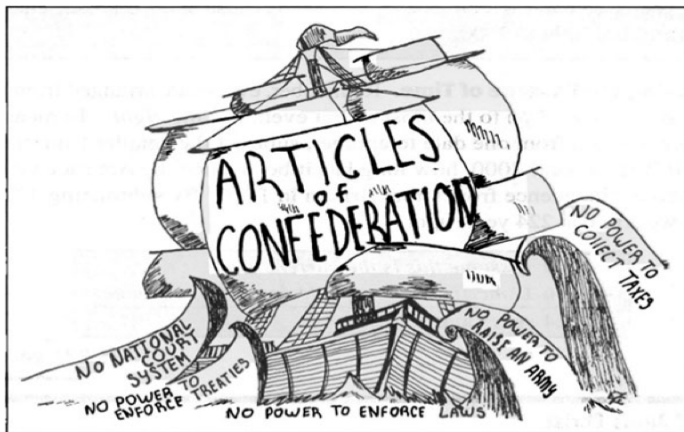
- The new government structure reflected Americans' fear of a powerful federal government.
 - The Articles gave individual states more power than the national government, which resulted in conflicts among the states that came to threaten the existence of the nation.
 - The political weakness of the United States and its potential for collapse left it vulnerable to attack by foreign countries and convinced many influential Americans to support a Constitutional Convention.
- ❑ Shays' Rebellion in 1787 was an event that lay bare the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation.
 - In particular, the absence of an executive branch, the inability of the federal government to mandate taxes, unregulated commerce, and the lack of a national currency were structural weaknesses that crippled the new nation.

Weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation

- ❑ The federal government that was established by the Articles of Confederation consisted of simply a Congress.
 - Each state had one vote, regardless of the number of delegates representing each state.
 - Nine of the thirteen state votes were required for laws to be passed by the Congress.
 - However, there was no executive or judicial branch to enforce Congress's laws. This was a serious flaw in the structure of the government.
 - In an effort to avoid any possibility of monarchical rule, the federal system of the Articles of Confederation lacked the ability to compel states to act in a way that would have made the loose confederation of states more of a productive union.
 - Taxation had been a contentious issue between England and the colonies.
 - Colonists were accustomed to paying taxes levied by their own local assemblies.
 - The British taxes implemented after the French and Indian War were met with stiff resistance due to a lack of colonial representation in Parliament.
 - Under the Articles of Confederation, citizens paid taxes to their own states. The most the confederation government could do to raise revenue was to ask the states for donations.
 - If a state did not comply or did not meet the requested amount, the Articles of Confederation did not empower any federal body to make the states honor the request. Not only was the United States government heavily in debt from the Revolutionary War, but so too were the individual states. As a result, very little money was coming into the federal government.
 - The federal Congress's lack of taxation power was a critical weakness of the Articles of Confederation that left the new nation dangerously close to failure at the outset.



Weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation



"Rough Sailing Ahead?"



- ❑ The states were operating independently of one another and often in direct competition with one another during the early years after the Revolutionary War.
- ❑ The federal government under the Articles of Confederation did not have the power to regulate commerce or establish a national currency.
 - Both of these issues hampered the ability of the new United States to prosper economically since the states were each acting independently.
- ❑ All of these weaknesses negatively impacted the nation. Changes to correct the structural flaws, however, would not be easy to achieve.
 - Unanimous agreement by the thirteen states was required to amend the Articles of Confederation.
 - With the states acting more as individual entities rather than a true confederation, it was unlikely to get all thirteen to agree on any policy change.
 - After a few years of trying to make the system work, it was becoming increasingly apparent that changes would have to be made if the United States was to last.
- ❑ Political leaders became motivated to finally seek change in the governing structure with the outbreak of Shays' Rebellion, which they felt set a dangerous precedent for mob rule.

Shay's Rebellion



- ❑ Daniel Shays led more than a thousand farmers who, like him, were burdened with personal debts caused by the state's economic problems stemming from Revolutionary War debt.
 - Shays and his men tried to seize a federal arsenal in Massachusetts but were turned back by the Massachusetts Militia.
 - This was just one of many protests that debt-ridden farmers made during this period.
 - Without the power to tax, America's weak government could not repair the national economy.
- ❑ The weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation, as emphasized by the events surrounding Shays' Rebellion, led prominent figures such as George Washington, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and others to call for a convention in Philadelphia to address the problem.
 - In May 1787, George Washington was elected president of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, where he and the Founding Fathers created a federalist form of government for the United States.
 - The earlier fears of concentrating too much power into the hands of one individual or central government had given way to fears of the United States' growing vulnerability. Change was indeed needed.
 - The question was how to get thirteen independent states, with varying demographics and goals, to agree to one framework that shifted more power to the federal government.

