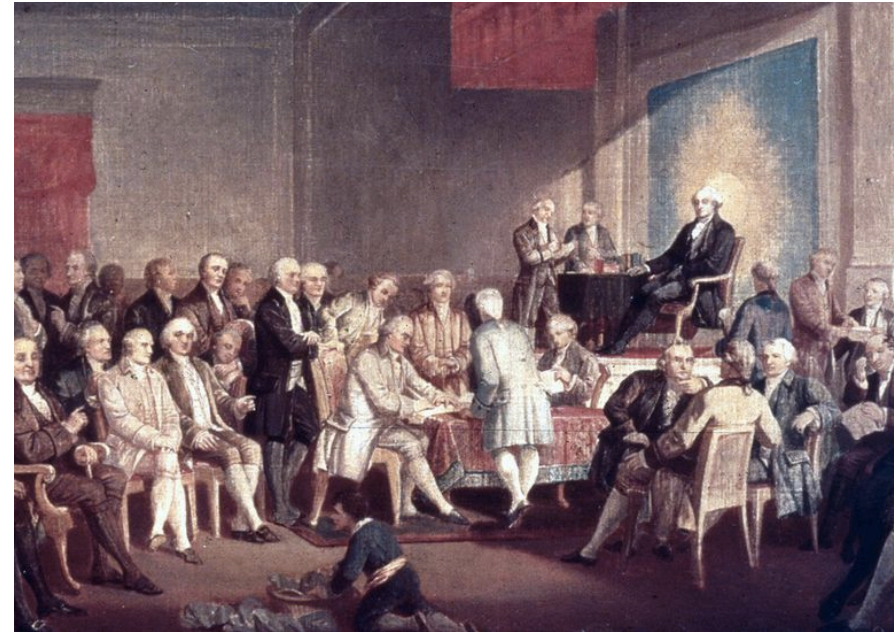
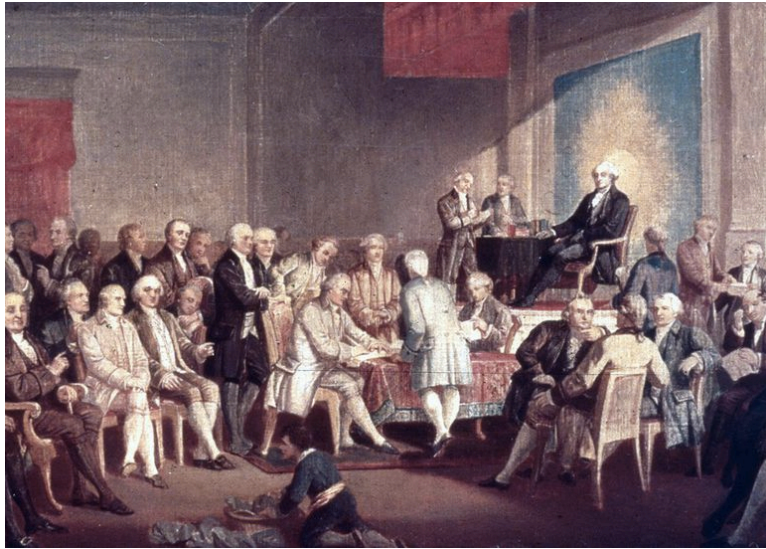


SSUSH5: INVESTIGATE SPECIFIC EVENTS AND KEY IDEAS THAT BROUGHT THE ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

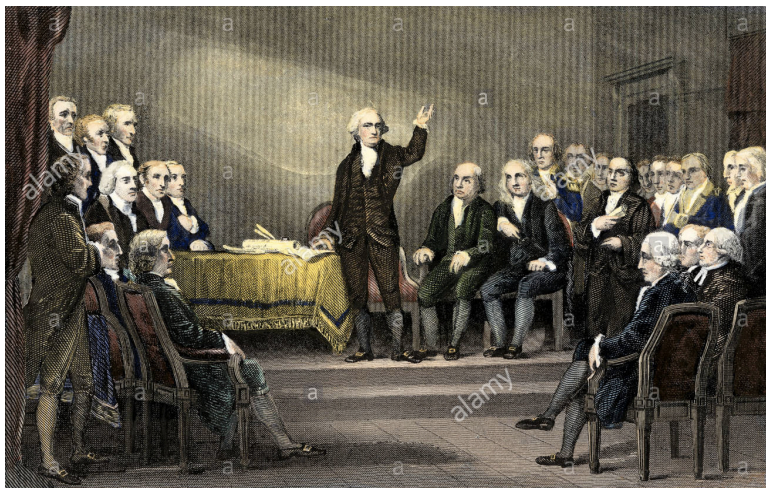


ELEMENT C: Explain the key features of the Constitution, including the Great Compromise, limited government, and the Three-Fifths Compromise.

US Constitution's Key Features



- ❑ The new United States Constitution was written by state delegates who met in Philadelphia from May through September of 1787 at the Constitutional Convention.
 - The original purpose of the convention was to revise the flawed Articles of Confederation but soon the decision was made to create a new government structure.
 - The proceedings were kept private among the delegates until the details had been worked out and a final draft was ready to be sent to the states for ratification.
 - The group of fifty-five delegates chose George Washington to preside over the convention.
 - Throughout the summer of 1787, the delegates debated contending plans for the new government framework that pitted groups of states against one another.
- ❑ The compromises that were negotiated during the Constitutional Convention became the basis for the United States Constitution.



US Constitution's Key Features

- ❑ Despite the fact that most delegates to the Constitutional Convention believed the government designed by the Articles of Confederation had to be replaced, many still feared a strong central government.

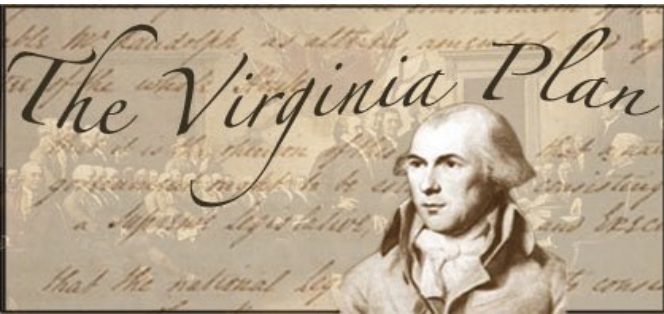
- To reassure people that the new government would not be too powerful, the framers of the Constitution created a limited government with divided powers.



- The framers were greatly influenced by the ideas of the famed French political thinker Charles de Montesquieu.
- Powers were divided in two ways within the new government.
 1. First, power was divided between national and state governments.
 2. Second, power in the federal government was shared between three branches.
 - The power of the executive branch was weakened because it was shared with the legislative and judicial branches.
 - For example, the legislature can override a presidential veto of a bill, and the Supreme Court can rule that a bill signed by the president is unconstitutional.
- This safeguard against an abuse of power gives each branch of government a way to check and balance the power of the other branches.
- Even though the delegates uniformly believed in the limited government approach to creating the new government structure, there were significant issues that divided them when deliberating the details.

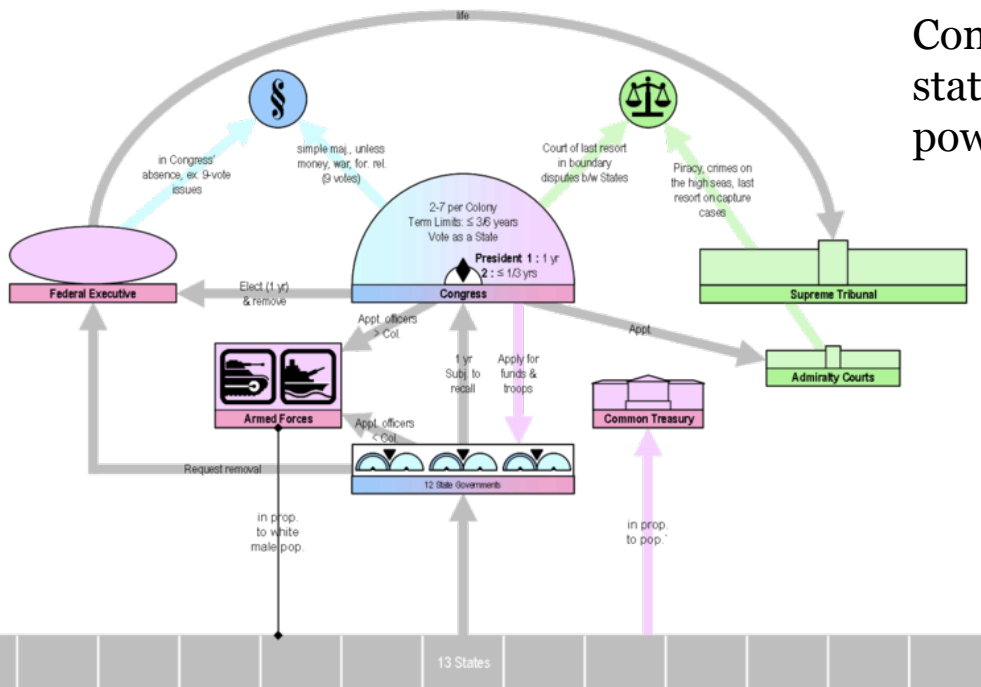
Virginia Plan

- ❑ One great issue facing the delegates to the Constitutional Convention was how to apportion representation in the new government's legislature.
 - Under the Articles of Confederation, each state had one vote, which put each state on equal footing regardless of population.
 - States with large populations wanted more influence in the government and supported James Madison's proposal known as the Virginia Plan.
 - Under Madison's proposed government plan, representation in the nation's legislature would be proportional to each state's population.
 - Thus, states like Virginia would have greater representation and voting power in the federal legislature.
 - Virginia's population in 1797 was the largest of any state with approximately 692,000. The next closest state in terms of population was Pennsylvania with approximately 494,000.
 - Virginia, and other large states, believed it was appropriate for them to have a stronger voice in making policy than a small state like Delaware, with a population of only 59,000 people.



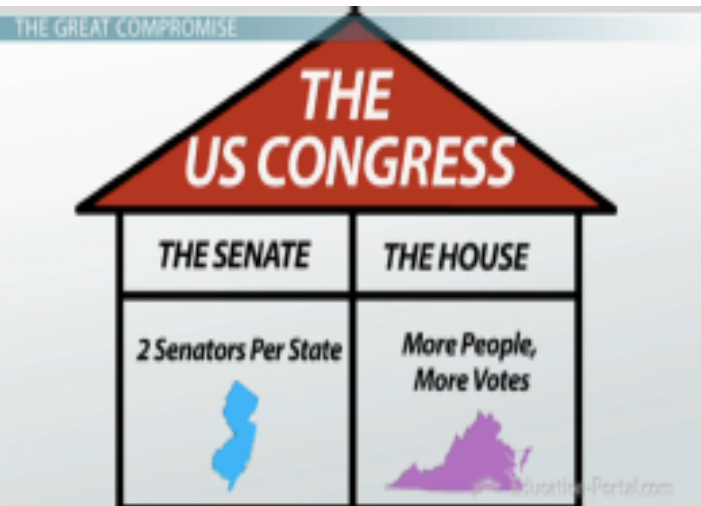
New Jersey Plan

- ❑ States with smaller populations were reluctant to abandon the equality they had with larger states under the structure of the Articles of Confederation.
 - To counter Madison's Virginia Plan, the small states supported the New Jersey Plan that featured a legislative branch in which all states were equally represented.
 - Essentially, the New Jersey Plan would have maintained the government structure from the Articles of Confederation but expanded the powers Congress would have over the states.
 - The result of the two proposals was a divided Constitutional Convention in which the large states and small states both vied for legislative power.



The Great Compromise

- ❑ Compromise was essential for the Constitutional Convention to succeed in satisfying the contending viewpoints on the framework for a new government.
- ❑ Delegates to the Constitutional Convention settled the issue of representation in Congress by approving the Great Compromise.
 - This compromise helped "save" the Constitution by settling the dispute between states with large populations and states with small populations.
 - The compromise called for the creation of a legislature with two chambers, a bicameral legislature.
 1. There would be a House of Representatives in one chamber, with representation based on population.
 2. The second chamber would be a Senate, with equal representation for all states.
 - Proposed legislation had to achieve a majority vote by both chambers of the legislature before being passed on to the newly created executive branch to be signed into law.



Issue of Slavery and The Three-Fifths Compromise

- ❑ Another divisive and controversial issue that confronted delegates at the Constitutional Convention was slavery. Though slavery existed in all the states, southern states depended on slave labor because their economies were based on producing cash crops.
- ❑ When it became clear that states with large populations might have more representatives in the new national government, states with large slave populations demanded to be allowed to count their slaves as a part of their population.
 - Northern states resisted. Both sides compromised and agreed to the provisions of the Three-Fifths Compromise in the final plan for the new government.
 - The Three-Fifths Compromise allowed states to count three-fifths of their slaves when calculating their entire population.
 - Also, to protect the practice of slavery, states with large numbers of slaves demanded that the compromise include provisions for the new government to allow for the continuation of the slave trade for 20 years and for northern states to return runaway slaves to their owners.
 - The deliberations and negotiations concerning the key issues of representation, limited government, and slavery lasted through the summer of 1787.
 - Thirty-nine of the fifty-five delegates signed the final draft of the new United States Constitution on September 17, 1787.
 - The proposed Constitution was then sent to each state for ratification at state conventions.

