

THE NEW  
CONSTITUTION  
WAS  
OFFICIALLY  
RATIFIED ON  
JUNE 21, 1788

Short Answer

Type Answer  
Here

1. What year was the  
Convention held?

2. Which state did  
not send a  
representative?

3. Who wrote the  
Virginia Plan?

4. How many people  
in the Senate  
represent one state?

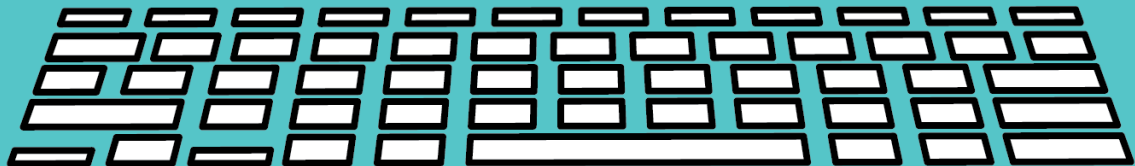
5. Which was the first  
state to ratify the  
Constitution?

6. Which was the last  
state to ratify the  
Constitution?

7. How many years is  
a presidential term?

8. In what state was  
the Convention  
held?

Short Answer	Type Answer Here	Fill in the Blank	Type Answer Here
1. What year was the Convention held?		9. George ____ was chosen to lead the convention.	
2. Which state did not send a representative?		10. Delegates decided Congress should have ____ houses.	
3. Who wrote the Virginia Plan?		11. The Articles of ____ served as America's first constitution.	
4. How many people in the Senate represent one state?		12. Another founding father was ____ Hamilton.	
5. Which was the first state to ratify the Constitution?		13. Congress has the Senate and the House ____.	
6. Which was the last state to ratify the Constitution?		14. ____ College was proposed, debated and eventually approved.	
7. How many years is a presidential term?		15. James Madison is considered the "____ the Constitution".	
8. In what state was the Convention held?		16. The New ____ Plan was written by William Paterson.	



## CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

The Constitutional Convention was held in May of 1787 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Delegates from 12 of the 13 states were represented. Rhode Island chose not to send a representative because it was fearful of losing state power. The purpose of the Constitutional Convention was to revise the Articles of Confederation. The Articles of Confederation served as America's first constitution. Unfortunately, the Articles had several weaknesses and delegates agreed that there were also changes needed.

After some debate it became clear that there were too many problems with the Articles of Confederation. The representatives decided to throw out the Articles of Confederation and create a brand new constitution. Most of the convention debates were held in secret so that state representatives would feel comfortable sharing their opinions.

George Washington was chosen to lead the convention. James Madison is considered the "Father of the Constitution" because many of his ideas were incorporated in the new plan of government. Other "Founding Fathers" included Benjamin Franklin, Gouverneur Morris and Alexander Hamilton.

One major goal of the Constitutional Convention was to create a powerful central government that would not take away state or individual rights. Members of the convention agreed that a "national government ought to be established, consisting of a supreme Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary."

Delegates would decide whether to split executive powers between three persons or just one single person. They also had to determine how to elect the president, how long his term would be and if he could be reelected. Alexander Hamilton suggested that a President should be elected by the people and serve for life. Eventually, delegates agreed that a President should serve a four year term.

Many delegates did not trust the people enough to allow them to directly choose the next president. An Electoral College was proposed, debated and eventually approved. This means the people of each state

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would choose their electors. The electors would then meet and vote for the next President. The electors would vote for two people. The person with the most votes would be President, and the second-most votes would be Vice President. If no one received a majority vote, the House of Representatives would choose the next President.

Delegates began to disagree over representation and the legislature. Larger states wanted their votes to count more than smaller states because they had more people living there. Small states like New Jersey feared their vote would be ignored and outnumbered by largely populated states. Two plans regarding state representation were proposed to the delegates.

The Virginia Plan, written by James Madison, suggested the number of representatives in Congress should be based on the population of a state. Larger states supported this plan. This plan also suggested a stronger central government with two houses of Congress.

The New Jersey Plan, written by William Paterson, said that each state should have the same number of representatives, regardless of population. Smaller states supported this plan. This plan also called for stronger state government and only one house of Congress.

The delegates decided that the new legislature (Congress) should have two houses, the House of Representatives and the Senate.

After much debate, Oliver Ellsworth and Roger Sherman from Connecticut came up with "The Great Compromise". The Senate would have equal number of representatives (two) from each state, regardless of population. The House of Representatives would have representation based on population. The delegates agreed on a little of what they wanted. Compromises were also discussed regarding commerce and the slave trade. Back then, enslaved persons were not allowed to vote. There were over 550,000 enslaved persons. The question was: should enslaved persons be counted as a part of a state's population? They agreed that enslaved persons would be counted as 3/5 of a person for the total number. Meaning every five enslaved persons would count as three free persons. This became known as the Three-Fifths Compromise.

In order for the Constitution to be accepted, 9 out of 13 states needed to ratify or approve it. The first state to ratify the constitution was Delaware. The last state was Rhode Island in May of 1790.

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