

The Articles of Confederation (1777-1789)

Background:

During the Revolutionary War, the American colonies needed to coordinate their efforts against Britain. They created an emergency government to raise money for the war effort called *The Continental Congress*. After the Revolution the colonies were officially independent from Great Britain. They needed to create a system of government to run this new nation. The first system created was known as *The Articles of Confederation* and was adopted on November 15, 1777. In its final form, the Articles of Confederation were comprised of a preamble and 13 articles.

Approved by the last of the 13 American states, Maryland, in 1781, the Articles became the ruling document in the new nation. The Articles created a nation that was "a league of friendship and perpetual union."

Directions: Review the chart and complete the questions.

The Articles of Confederation	
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One branch of government: Congress, responsible for making national laws • Each state had one (1) vote in Congress • No executive (President) • No judicial branch
Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>9 of 13 states</i> had to approve a proposal before it could become a law • <i>All the states</i> had to agree to change an existing law
Money and Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Articles of Confederation could not collect taxes • The A of C had to ask the individual states for money • The A of C could print and borrow money • Each state could regulate trade with other states • Each state could tax its residents
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The A of C managed agreements with other countries and Native Americans. • The Articles of Confederation could appoint military officers • Only the states could establish militias
Other	<p>The A of C established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a postal system • weights and measures • courts • consequences for piracy

1. Where did the Articles of Confederation place the most government power? (HINT look for repeated words). _____
2. Give two examples from the chart.
3. WHY do you think the first government of the United States was set this way?

The Division of Supreme Power

Can the government function if it does not have supreme power?

- *What type of government was established by the Continental Congress?
- *Did the Continental Congress give more power to the States or the Federal government?
- *Why was this system adopted?
- *Why do Americans fear "BIG" government?

Weaknesses of the Articles...

Weakness	Why it was a problem?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

Why did the Articles FAIL?

How did this jeopardize the new nation's sovereignty?