



## The Articles of Confederation

*Aim: How did the Articles of Confederation govern the United States?*

### **DO NOW:**

**READ THE PASSAGE BELOW AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW IN COMPLETE SENTENCES!**

### Devising a Plan

People are social beings. They cannot survive and prosper unless they live together in groups or communities. Communities in turn need rules about how their members should behave to maintain peace and order. They also need some authority to enforce the rules and settle disputes. The organization set up to protect the community and enforce its rules is known as government.

After declaring independence in 1776, the Continental Congress formed a committee to write a plan of government for the country. The result of that committee's work was our first national constitution, the Articles of Confederation. It was not easy to create a government that the states could agree on. It took five years before every state ratified, or passed, the new constitution.

Under the Articles of Confederation, the national government successfully conducted the war against Britain and accomplished some important tasks. Despite its successes, however, there were serious problems with the Articles of Confederation.

*Questions:*

1) What is the purpose of government?

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2) Why did the Continental Congress create the Articles of Confederation?

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3) What does it mean to ratify?

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4) Why do you believe it took five years for the states to agree or ratify the Articles of Confederation?

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5) What type of government does the United States have today?

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Directions: Read and analyze the passage and chart below and answer the questions that follow in complete sentences!

## The Articles of Confederation (1777-1789)

### Background:

During the Revolutionary War, the American colonies needed to collaborate 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."

### The Articles of Confederation

Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One branch of government: Congress, responsible for making national laws</li><li>• Each state had one (1) vote in Congress</li><li>• No executive (President)- Could not enforce national laws</li><li>• No judicial branch (Courts)- could not settle disputes between the states</li></ul>
Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 9 of 13 states had to approve a proposal before it could become a law</li><li>• All the states had to agree to change an existing law</li></ul>
Money & Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Articles of Confederation could not collect taxes</li><li>• The Articles of Confederation had to ask the individual states for money</li><li>• The Articles of Confederation could print and borrow money</li><li>• Each state could regulate trade with other states</li><li>• Each state could tax its residents</li></ul>

Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Articles of Confederation managed agreements with other countries and Native Americans</li><li>• The Articles of Confederation could appoint military officers but had no military</li><li>• <i>Only</i> the states could establish militias</li></ul>
Other	The Articles of Confederation established <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A postal system</li><li>• Weights and measures</li><li>• Courts</li><li>• Consequences for piracy</li></ul>

*Questions:*

1) Where did the Articles of Confederation place the most governmental power?

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2) Give two examples from the chart.

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3) Why do you think the first government of the United States was set up this way?

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