

Introduction to the
Articles of Confederation

Directions: Complete vocabulary chart. Then, describe the powers of state governments below.

constitution	
bicameral	
republic	
petition	
ordinance	
depreciate	

The Power/Organization of State Governments under the Articles of Confederation

1. Generally, only white men over 21 who paid their taxes and owned property could vote.
 - a. Some states allowed free African American males.

2. State constitutions
 - a. Some states held onto their colonial charters of establishment.

3. Most states had bicameral legislatures.
 - a. Some had unicameral legislatures.

4. States limited the power of the governor (chief executor).
 - a. Some replaced governors with an executive council of 12 members.

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Thirteen Independent States (pgs. 192-193)

The independence of the 13 states made it difficult to address certain problems.

- Britain ignored the Treaty of Paris.
 - Kept soldiers at posts on American frontier
- Each state organized their government and adopted a *constitution*. (May 1776)
 - CT & RI kept colonial charters until 1780.

How state governments were organized:

- Preventing abuses of power with multiple branches of government
 - Legislative branch - *Bicameral* legislatures made up of elected representatives (most powerful branch)
 - Executive branch - Governors or 12-member councils

Forming a Republic (pgs. 193-195)

Creating the Articles of Confederation:

- States agreed that the government should be a *republic*.
- A committee drafted a plan (the Articles of Confederation) that was approved by the Second Continental Congress.
 - The plan gave each state freedom and independence.
 - Under the plan, the central government was called the Confederation of Congress (which was unicameral).

Power of central government under the Articles:

- They had the power to/for:
 - Foreign relations
 - Establish an army
 - Borrow money
 - Issue currency (money)
- They did not have the power to/for:
 - Tax states
 - Force people to join army
 - Regulate trade
- Congress had to rely on states to contribute money or troops.
- Congressional committees took the place of chief executive (president).

Officially becoming the “United States” (March 1, 1781)

- 13 states approved of the Articles of Confederation.
 - Each state had 1 vote.
- All states agreed to give up land claims west of the Appalachian Mountains.

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New Land Policies (pgs. 195-196)

- Population west of the Appalachian Mountains was growing and settlers wanted to form states and join the union.
- The Articles had no rules for adding new states.
- (1784) Self-governing districts within the Western territory could *petition* for statehood when their population equaled that of the smallest state.

What was the Northwest Ordinance?

- (1785) Congress passed an *ordinance* that divided lands north of the Ohio River into townships.
- Lands north of the Ohio River and East of the Mississippi River became the Northwest Territory under the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.

Rules in the Northwest Territory

- Can petition for statehood once population reached 60,000
- Congress had to approve state's constitution
- Protected settlers' rights
 - Freedom of religion
 - Trial by jury
 - Banned slavery and involuntary servitude (first in the U.S.)

Trouble on Two Fronts (pgs. 197-198)

The Confederation's Financial Problems

- Problems with Britain and Spain over land and trade issues
- Money printed (1781) during the Revolutionary War *depreciated* in value and was almost worthless.
- Congress and the states printed money without gold or silver to back it up.
- Congress did not have the authority to collect taxes from states.
- Congress was in debt to other countries and many citizens that lent money for the war effort.

Failing to Enforce the Treaty of Paris of 1783

- British would not leave their forts east of the Mississippi River
 - Great Lakes region
- British merchants prevented Americans from trading in the West Indies and other markets.
- Spain blocked American shipping/trade on the lower Mississippi River (1784)
 - Agreement reached for limited American trade (1786)