

Name _____

The Blueprint of Unity

Long ago, when the United States was just beginning to shape its destiny, there existed a document called the Articles of Confederation. Imagine this document as the first blueprint of unity for the newly formed nation.

The Articles of Confederation were created in 1777 during the American Revolutionary War. They served as the first constitution of the United States, holding the states together like threads in a quilt. The primary goal of this document was to establish a framework for a loose union of states, ensuring that each state retained its independence while working together for common interests.

Under the Articles, the central government was quite weak compared to the individual states. There was no president or executive branch to enforce laws. Instead, a unicameral legislature called the Congress of the Confederation held the most power. Each state, regardless of its size or population, had only one vote in this Congress.

One of the major strengths of the Articles was its ability to bring the states together during times of crisis, such as the Revolutionary War. However, its weaknesses soon became apparent. The central government lacked the authority to collect taxes or regulate trade between states, leading to financial instability and economic disputes.

Furthermore, making amendments to the Articles required unanimous approval from all thirteen states, making it extremely difficult to enact changes. This rigidity hindered the effectiveness of the government and highlighted the need for a stronger federal system.

In 1787, recognizing the limitations of the Articles of Confederation, delegates from the states gathered in Philadelphia to draft a new constitution. This resulted in the creation of the United States Constitution, which replaced the Articles and established the framework for the government still in use today.

While the Articles of Confederation ultimately proved inadequate, they laid the groundwork for the development of American democracy. They taught valuable lessons about the balance of power between states and the central government, shaping the nation's path toward a more perfect union.



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Multiple Choice Questions

1. What was the main purpose of the Articles of Confederation?
 - A) To ensure that each state remained independent
 - B) To establish a strong central government
 - C) To elect a president for the United States
 - D) To regulate trade between states
2. Which branch of government held the most power under the Articles of Confederation?
 - A) Executive
 - B) Military
 - C) Judicial
 - D) Legislative
3. What was a weakness of the Articles of Confederation?
 - A) The central government had the power to collect taxes.
 - B) Each state had multiple votes in the Congress of the Confederation.
 - C) Amendments to the Articles required unanimous approval from all states.
 - D) The Articles provided a strong framework for economic stability.
4. Why did the states gather in Philadelphia in 1787?
 - A) To declare independence from Britain
 - B) To draft a new constitution
 - C) To negotiate treaties with foreign countries
 - D) To discuss trade agreements between states
5. What document replaced the Articles of Confederation?
 - A) The Declaration of Independence
 - B) The Magna Carta
 - C) The United States Constitution
 - D) The Bill of Rights