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| Teaching with Primary Sources | chssp icon |
| *A historical investigation question requires students to interpret a lesson’s historical content in order to make their own claims.*Lightbulb, plug and globe graphic | RationaleThe Library of Congress produced a primary source set of documents related to the Constitution to help students “experience” the event. Students can look at the original set, which includes maps, and images of the places the events occurred as well as examples of how the constitution has been memorialized and referenced in later times. Students can then go into depth by engaging in closer reading of the seven documents in this pared down set and using one of the questions below to guide their inquiry (one document has been added from the *Documents from the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention* collection.)   |
| Historical Investigation Question(s)What do these documents reveal about the process of writing of the Constitution? ORWhat story do the documents tell about the process of writing the constitution?How do these documents reflect the debate, argument, and compromises that were necessary to establish the constitution?What were the important considerations in deciding how to govern the nation in 1783? |
| Standards**5.7 Students describe the people and events associated with the development of the U.S. Constitution and analyze the Constitution's significance as the foundation of the American republic.**  1. List the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation as set forth by their critics.  2. Explain the significance of the new Constitution of 1787, including the struggles over its ratification and the reasons for the addition of the Bill of Rights. **8.2 Students analyze the political principles underlying the U.S. Constitution and compare the enumerated and implied powers of the federal government.**  |
| Adapted from Making a New Nation (Macmillan McGraw Hill) pg. 447On May 25, 1787, delegates representing 12 states met at a convention held in Philadelphia. Only Rhode Island did not send any delegates. Its residents feared that the convention would weaken the power of small states.The delegates to this convention were white men who owned property. More than half were lawyers. Many important patriots did not play a role at the convention. Thomas Jefferson was in France and John Adams was in England. George Washington was elected president of the convention, but neither he nor Benjamin Franklin contributed much. The delegates voted to meet in secret to keep anyone outside from listening to what they said.Most of the delegates expected to fix the Articles of Confederation. James Madison believed that this could not be done. He arrived in Philadelphia with a plan for a strong national government and was able to convince most of the delegates to vote against fixing up the Articles of Confederation. Instead, they began work on a new plan of government. The meeting in Philadelphia became known as the Constitutional Convention because it worked to produce a constitution for a new nation government. Secondary Source |

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| Primary Sources |
|  | **Excerpt from the Diary of George Washington, May-June, 1787**Jackson, Donald and Dorothy Twohig, eds. 1979. *The Diaries of George Washington. Vol. V. July 1786-December 1789*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia. <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mgwd&fileName=mgwd/gwpagewd05.db&recNum=254>1 |
|  | **Newspaper Article, 28, May, 1787**Newspaper Articles and Notices Printed in 1787 During the Constitutional Convention in Phila. 28 May 1787. Prints and Photographs Online Catalog, Library of Congress. <http://loc.gov/pictures/item/2002705836/> 2 |
|  | **Hamilton's Notes for a Plan of Government, 18, June, 1787**Hamilton, Alexander. 1787 *Alexander Hamilton Papers LC-MSS-24612-14*. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mcc:@field%28DOCID+@lit%28mcc/018%29%29> 3 |
|  | **Washington’s Letter to Congress, 17, Sept, 1787**Gales, Joseph. 1834. The Debates and Proceedings in the United States Congress Vol. 1. Washington: Gales and Seaton.<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/ac001/intro3.html> 4 |
|  | **Jefferson Tallies State Ratifications of “Rights”, 1788** Jefferson, Thomas. 1788. “Tabulation of State Votes on Amendments to the Constitution,” 1789–1791. Manuscript document. Thomas Jefferson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress Washington, D.C.<http://myloc.gov/Exhibitions/creatingtheus/BillofRights/DemandforaBillofRights/Pages/SlObjectList.aspx> 5 |
|  | **Jefferson’s Notes on the Constitution, 1788** Jefferson, Thomas. n.d. *Notes on the United States Constitution.* The Thomas Jefferson Papers Series 1. General Correspondence. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mtj1&fileName=mtj1page010.db&recNum=677> 67 |
|  | **Order of procession, in honor of the Constitution of the United States, 1788**Order of procession, in honor of the Constitution of the United States, 1788. New York: Shipton and Mooney. Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Washington D.C. <http://memory.loc.gov/service/rbc/bdsdcc/237a1/0001.jpg> Also see <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/newnatn/usconst/order.html> |
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