



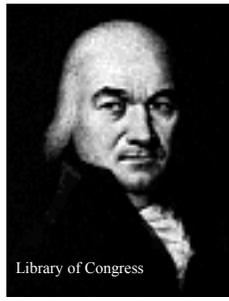
Library of Congress

George Mason



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John Lansing, Jr.



Library of Congress

Ellsworth Oliver



Teaching Guide

SEGMENT 10, WEBISODE 2

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



Segment Overview

The Revolutionary War established a new nation based on a then-radical concept: government would ensure the democratic rights of its citizens. America was a historic first in the western world, a nation where “all men are created equal...(and) are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness...” Our founders established a nation whose citizens are free to practice any religion; to speak or write without fear of punishment; and to vote. They wrote a constitution marked by a careful balance of power between three branches of government.

But the dream was tarnished by the failure of the founders to ensure the rights of all citizens by abolishing slavery. The issue would remain a thorn in the nation’s flesh for another eighty years, and Americans black and white would pay a fearsome price to purge this injustice from their land.

Fifty years after writing the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson reflected on the new nation he had helped birth: “All eyes are open, or opening to the rights of man....the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of god...” The United States of America would continue to work to secure the rights of all its citizens, and by its example would ignite flames of liberty around the world.

Teacher Directions

1. Distribute one copy of the Student Sheet: *Government Scramble* to each learning team.
2. Tell the students that they may have encountered these terms before. Some of them sound alike and all of them apply to government, but what exactly do they mean? Students cut apart the definitions and match each word to its correct definition.

republic — representatives elected by the people participate in government

democracy — all the people participate directly in government

confederation — a union in which the individual states retain more power than the central government

federation — a union in which the central government has more power than the states

monarchy — one person rules, and the power to rule is inherited.



Let's Discuss

Let's Discuss, Cont.



History Sleuth

dictatorship — one person or party has all the power of government
autocracy — one authority has all the power of government
aristocracy — a small group of privileged people participate in government

3. Ask the students

- Which forms of government seem most alike?
- Which terms describe the United States government?

Teacher Directions

1. Ask the students the following questions

- Was the Constitution perfect? Why or why not?
- What were some of its faults according to the men who wrote it?
- Did every one agree about its strengths and its faults?

2. Make sure the students understand the following points in discussing the questions.

No one at the time of its writing considered the Constitution perfect. Every point was debated and re-debated, and much of the finished document was the result of compromises. Some thought the Constitution should put an end to slavery, or at least to the importation of slaves. Some thought the central government had too much power at the expense of the states and some thought the states retained too much power. Some thought that the Constitutional Convention should have rewritten the Articles of Confederation rather than drafting a whole new document.

3. Inform the students that the men who wrote the Constitution did the best possible job that they could do at the time. They knew that in the future, the Constitution might need some changes, but they did not want to make changing it too easy.

4. Direct students' attention to Article V of the Constitution. The text of the Constitution is available in *A History of US, Sourcebook and Index*, page 58, or in *From Colonies to Country*, page 194, or on the web site The Constitution of the United States @ <http://www.nara.gov/exhall/charters/constitution/constitution.html>. Article V details the process by which an amendment can be made to the Constitution. Ask students how easy they think this process is.

5. Direct students to look at the end of the Constitution to see the first ten amendments that were added in 1791, only four years after writing of the Constitution and two years after its ratification by nine states, making it law.

6. Tell students that these first ten amendments, written by James Madison, are the Bill of Rights.

7. Read and discuss the Bill of Rights, asking students to express each amendment in a brief sentence in their own words.

Note to the Teacher: Students, in their small teams, may develop brief skits to illustrate those rights that lend themselves to acting out.

Teacher Directions

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *They Refused to Sign*
2. Explain to the students that some of the men who attended the Constitutional Convention and participated in its debates refused to sign the finished document.
3. Students in their small teams read and discuss the information on the Student Sheets.
4. Ask the students.
 - What would you have done if you had been a delegate to the Constitutional Convention and disagreed with what the finished document said or did not say?
 - What might be some alternative to leaving the convention or not signing?

Teacher Directions

1. Discuss the following information with your students.

When the United States became a free nation, the freedom did not extend to all people. Even in the northern states, enslavement of African Americans continued past the time that Thomas Jefferson wrote the famous words “all men are created equal.” Here is a timetable of freedom for African Americans.

1777— Vermont’s constitution prohibited slavery.

1780— Pennsylvania passed a gradual emancipation law.

1783— Massachusetts and New Hampshire law cases removed the judicial sanction of slavery

1784— Connecticut and Rhode Island passed gradual emancipation laws

1787— Congress prohibited slavery in territories north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi.

1799— New York passed a gradual emancipation law.

1804— New Jersey passed a gradual emancipation law.

Even with the emancipation laws, slavery did not end officially in New York until 1827, and in 1860, New Jersey had more enslaved people than Delaware, a slave state.



What do you
Think?



Moving Toward
Freedom



Connections

2. Students make an illustrated timeline using the information they just discussed.

Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

Research — Students research the process by which an amendment is made to the Constitution.

Research — Students research how many amendments have been added to the Constitution in its over two hundred twenty-year history. What amendment was passed and then repealed? Students create a Jeopardy-like game about the amendments.

Art — Students illustrate the rights granted to American citizens in the Bill of Rights.

Reading/Art — Students read biographies of the founders of our nation and create a poster for each.

They Refused To Sign



George Mason

George Mason was a background man. If you were making a list of the founders of our nation, would his name appear on your list? He didn't even sign the Constitution. And yet, he made great contributions to that document, and to the beginnings of our nation.

One of the richest planters in Virginia, George Mason took an active part in that state's politics. He was a justice of the Fairfax County Court and a member of the House of Burgess. He wrote forceful documents against the Stamp Act and the Boston Port Act, which closed the Boston harbor after the Boston Tea Party.

Perhaps most important, he drafted the *Virginia Declaration of Rights*. Thomas Jefferson drew from this document when he wrote the *Declaration of Independence*. The Treaty of Paris that ended the Revolutionary War also drew from George Mason's work, *Extracts from the Virginia Charters*. At the Constitutional Convention, George Mason spoke often. So why did he not sign? Because he strongly believed that the document should include a bill of rights. When James Madison wrote the Bill of Rights, he used Mason's *Virginia Declaration of Rights* as a model.



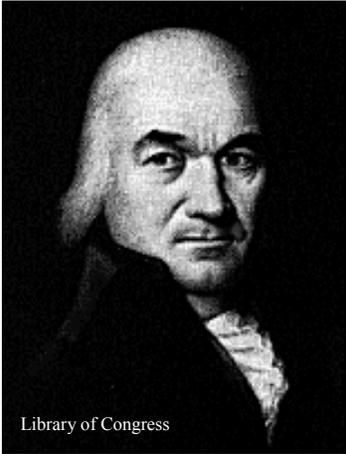
John Lansing, Jr.

John Lansing, Jr. had very firm ideas about what the Constitutional Convention should do. He believed it should redraft the Articles of Confederation. When he realized that the delegates planned to, in his opinion, overstep their bounds with a new Constitution, he left. The idea of consolidating the United States into one central government horrified him, and he worked hard to keep New York from ratifying the finished document.

Feeling as he did, his public career after the formation of the new nation remained as it had been before, in the service of his state. In his forty years of service, he filled a seat in the New York assembly for six terms and was mayor of Albany, the state capital. He sat for eleven years as a justice in the New York

Supreme Court, three as the chief justice. In retirement he was a state chancellor and regent of the University of New York.

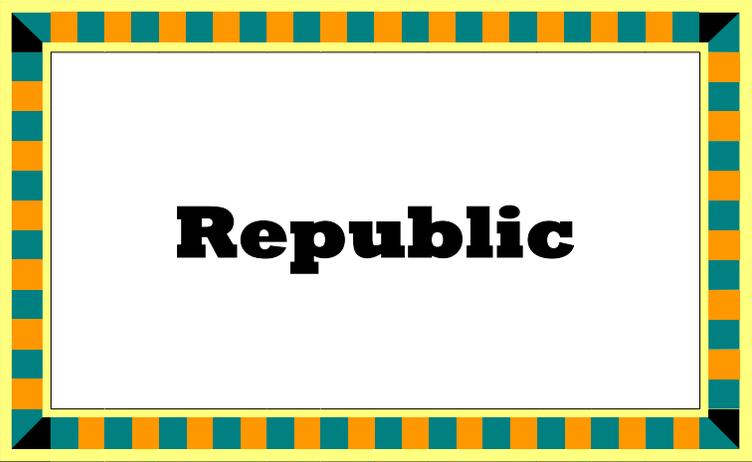
Of all the delegates to the Constitution Convention, John Lansing died the most mysterious death. On his way to mail some letters in New York City in 1829, he disappeared. No trace of him was ever found.



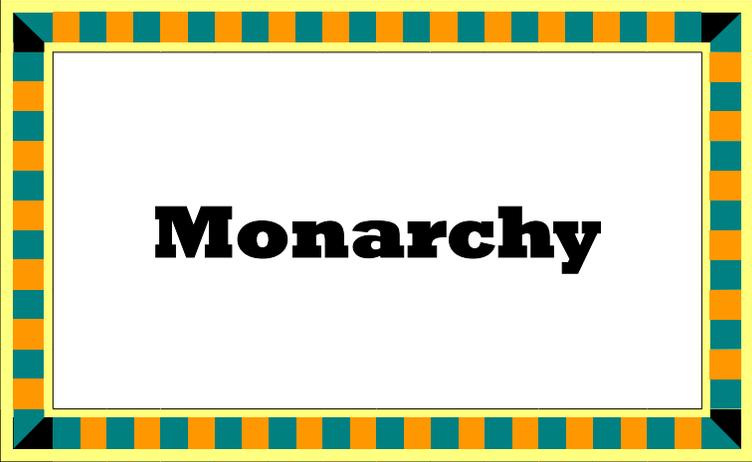
Ellsworth Oliver

Ellsworth Oliver studied to become a minister but ended up practicing law, and like many lawyers of the time, he became involved in politics. He represented Connecticut in the Continental Congress and supervised the state's efforts in the Revolutionary War. The citizens of Connecticut sent him to the Constitutional Convention. There he proposed the name for the new country, the United States.

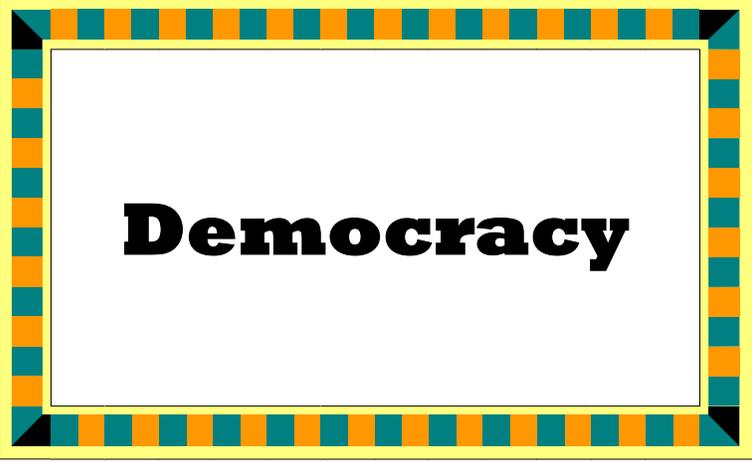
Although Ellsworth Oliver served on the committee that wrote the final draft of the Constitution, he refused to sign the document, opposing the end to international slave trade. However, he worked toward his state's ratification. As a senator from Connecticut, Oliver drafted the measures that brought the last two original states, North Carolina and Rhode Island, into the Union. He topped off his long political career as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and as a commissioner to France.



Republic



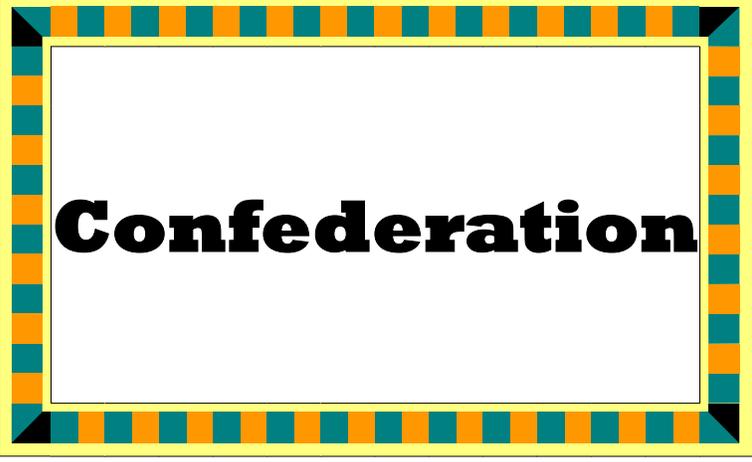
Monarchy



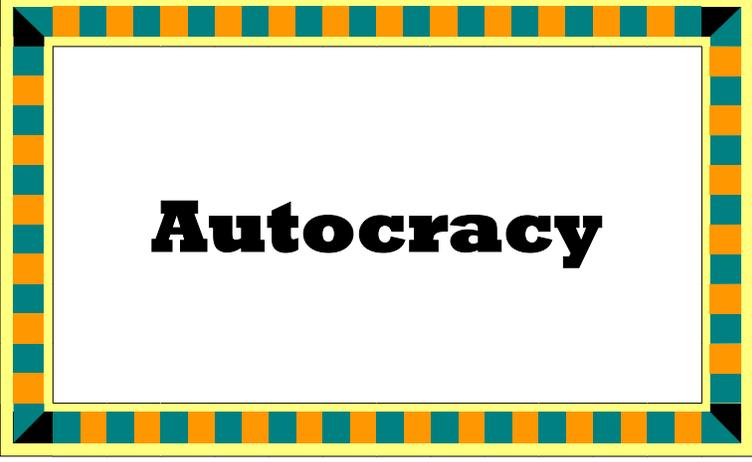
Democracy



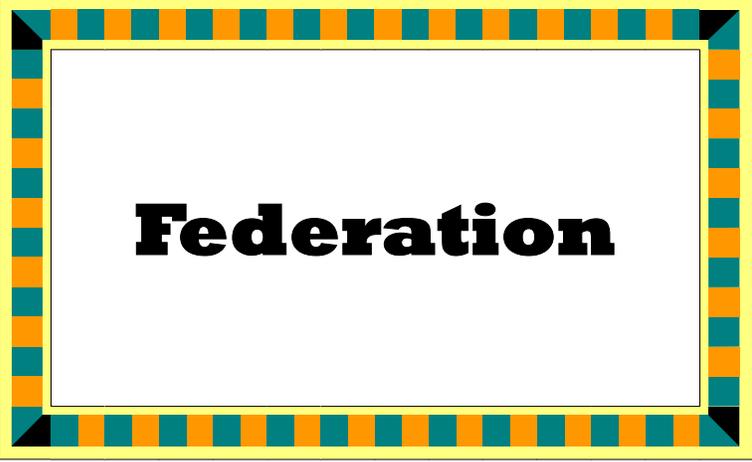
Dictatorship



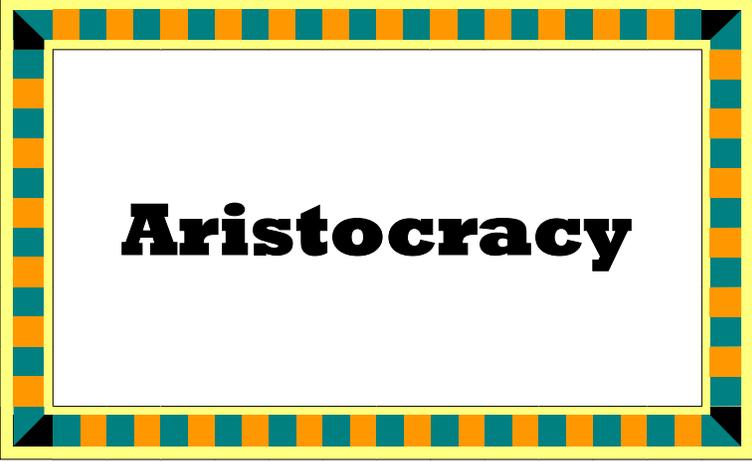
Confederation



Autocracy



Federation



Aristocracy

**All the people
participate directly
in government**

**One person or party
has all the power of
government**

**A union in which the
central government
has more power than
the states**

**Representatives
elected by the
people participate
in government**

**A small group of
privileged people
participate in
government**

**A union in which
the individual states
retain more power
than the central
government**

**One person rules,
and the power to
rule is inherited**

**One authority has
all the power of
government**