



## Teaching Guide

### SEGMENT 5, WEBISODE 2

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



#### Segment Overview



#### Let's Discuss

The Articles of Confederation created a union in which the states had the power to pursue their own self-interests, and the central government had no power to control them or to conduct its own business. Some thought the solution to the problem lay in rewriting the articles. But those who favored drafting a new document prevailed when the Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787. Rhode Island did not send a delegation. Some prominent figures from past gatherings did not attend; some did not sign the finished document. The delegates who did attend ranged in age from twenty-three year old Edmund Peyton of Virginia to eighty-one year old Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania. They chose George Washington to preside. James Madison, the diminutive, soft-spoken, intellectual giant from Virginia, guided the convention with the presentation of his Virginia Plan, the result of much study, thought, and consultation he had done before the delegates met. Much of this plan remained intact through the months of secret debate, voting and re-voting. On September 17, 1787, thirty-nine of the fifty-five delegates signed the document that would launch a new nation and a new government: a government of “We the People.”

#### Teacher Directions

##### Activity One

1. Create the following situation with the students in their small teams.
  - Tell the students that they are going to represent the new states and hold an election on an important matter.
  - Separate one or two teams into individual students and give each student a slip of paper to represent a ballot. Leave one or two teams intact and give one ballot to each team.
  - Combine the remaining teams and give that group one ballot. (Be sure to have enough individual students so that they cannot possibly lose the election.)
2. Ask the students to cast their ballots for who will have a week of no homework, the individual students or the larger groups of students.
3. When the balloting is complete, ask the students how they feel about the election process. Was it fair? Why or why not? Tell the students that the same concept, having a fair voice according to the number of people in the new states, came up in deciding how the people would be represented in

Let's Discuss, Cont.

the new government. If the states with the most people had the same number of votes as small states, that would not be fair. If the populous states always had more votes than the less populous ones, that would not be fair either because the larger states would always have their way.

4. Ask students to speculate how this problem might be solved.

### Activity Two

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Mr. Sherman's Bright Idea - The Connecticut Compromise*.
2. Read the Student Sheet aloud with the students following along. Stop at the appropriate points to discuss the following questions.
  - How many parts make up the Congress? What are they?
  - What is the least number of representatives a state must have?
  - How many people does each representative represent?
  - Who does "all other persons" describe?
  - How many senators does each state have?
  - How many people does each senator represent? (trick question—number varies)
  - How long is the term for a representative? For a senator?
3. Give the students an opportunity to discuss whether they think the Connecticut Compromise is fair. Can they think of a better idea?

### Teacher Directions

1. Ask the students the following question.
  - How could the government determine the number of representatives for each state?
2. Inform the students that Article 1, Section 2, of the Constitution assigns the number of representatives for each state for three years and calls for a census. Students may read the original text of the Constitution 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>.
3. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Stand Up and Be Counted: The United States Census 1790 – 1990*.
4. Help the students interpret the data on the Student Sheet to answer the following question.
  - How many members attended the First Congress?
  - Why did North Carolina and Rhode Island have no representatives?
  - Which states have gained representatives in 200 years?



History Sleuth



- Which states have the same number of representatives in the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress as they had in the First Congress?
- Which states have lost representatives?
- How could states lose representatives or have the same number if they gained in population?
- In July 2000, before the completion of the 2000 census the population was estimated at 275,562,673. How many representatives would go to Congress if one still represented thirty thousand people?

### Teacher Directions

1. Direct the students' attention to the Preamble of the Constitution in the sources mentioned above, or copy it on the chalkboard or chart paper.
2. Ask the students the following questions.
  - What is a preamble?
  - What question does this Preamble answer ? What does it explain?
  - What is the most famous phrase from the Preamble? Why?
3. Make sure the students understand the following information in discussing the questions.

A preamble is an introduction that, like this famous paragraph, explains the purpose of the document that follows. The most famous phrase is "We the People..." because, although democracies and republics had preceded the United States in history, none had ever given the sole right of government to a diverse group of people uniting and creating a new nation based on liberty and human rights.

4. Assist the students in separating the stated purposes for the Constitution into individual phrases:
  - form a more perfect union;
  - establish justice;
  - ensure domestic tranquility;
  - provide for the common defense;
  - promote the general welfare;
  - secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.
5. Assign a phrase to students in their small teams to discuss what they think it means and how it applies to their lives as American citizens. Students develop a brief skit to illustrate the meaning of the phrase.
6. Students perform and explain their skits.



### Teacher Directions

1. Discuss the following information with the students.

The members of the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention had much to say about liberty. Historians claim that these men of European descent meant liberty only for themselves, for white males. Yet some of these founders of our nation had deep reservations about the enslavement of fellow human beings.

2. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Our First Four Presidents Comment on Slavery*. Discuss each quotation with the students, asking them to rephrase each in their own words.
3. Ask students to speculate why the words of these men were so different from their actions. George Washington owned slaves, whom he freed in his will. John Adams never owned slaves. Thomas Jefferson owned slaves and freed very few. James Madison owned slaves; in his retirement he joined the American Colonization Society, which attempted to free enslaved people and transport them back to Africa.

### Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

**Math/Research** — Students research the census results for the years 1950 through 2000. Calculate how much the population of the country has grown every decade.

**Local History/Research** — Students research the census results for their home state from the first year it became a state and at fifty-year intervals. Calculate how much their state's population has grown or diminished. How many representatives does their state have? Has it gained or lost? How many people does each representative represent?

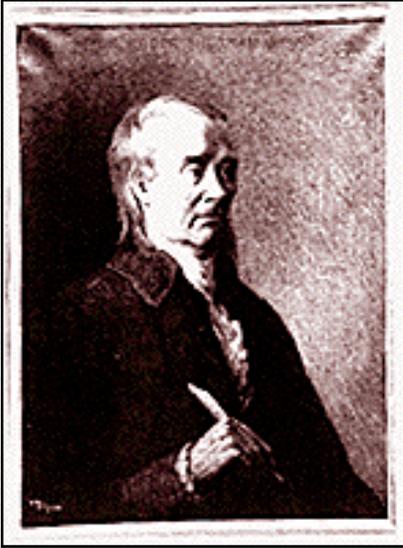
**Geography/Research** — Students find population maps for the United States for different census years. Where has the population shifted? What explanations can students propose for the shifts in population?

**Writing** — Students rewrite the Preamble to the Constitution in their own words.

**Local Government** — Students find the name of their representative and senators in Congress and how to contact them if they have a concern.



## *Mr. Sherman's Bright Idea: The Connecticut Compromise*



Deciding how the states could have fair representation in the legislative branch of the new government posed such a serious problem for the Constitutional Convention that the delegates talked about giving up and calling a new convention. Connecticut's delegate Roger Sherman, however, had a solution, which came to be called the Connecticut Compromise. This is how Sherman's solution appears in the United States Constitution.

### **Article I**

**Section 1.** All legislative powers, herein granted, shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives.

**Section 2.** The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by all the people of the several states...Representatives...shall be appointed among the several States which may be included in this Union, according to the respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other persons...The number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty-thousand, but each state shall have at least one Representative...

**Section 3.** The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six years; and each Senator shall have one vote.

## *Stand Up and Be Counted: The United States Census 1790 - 1990*

The Constitution assigned a number of representatives for each state in the House of Representatives until a census could take place in 1790.

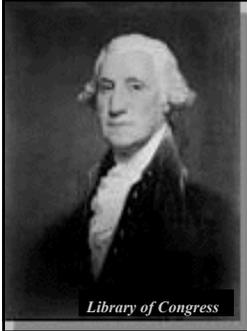
The Constitution also stated that the number of representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand, but the number of people for one representative has changed over the years.

A 1920 law set the number of members in the House of Representatives at 435. So as the population grows, each representative represents more people.

In 1996 each representative represented about 608,000 citizens.

State	Representatives 1st Congress (1787)	1790 Census	Representatives 107th Congress (2001)	1990 Census
Connecticut	5	237,655	5	3,287,116
Delaware	1	59,096	1	666,168
Georgia	3	82,548	11	6,478,216
Maryland	6	319,728	28	4,781,468
Massachusetts	8	378,556	10	6,016,425
New Hampshire	3	141,899	2	1,109,252
New Jersey	4	184,139	13	7,730,188
New York	6	340,241	30	17,990,455
North Carolina	0	395,005	12	6,628,637
Pennsylvania	8	433,611	18	11,881,643
Rhode Island	0	69,112	2	1,003,464
South Carolina	5	249,073	5	3,486,703
Virginia	10	747,550	8	6,187,358
<b>Totals</b>				

## *Our First Four Presidents Comment on Slavery*



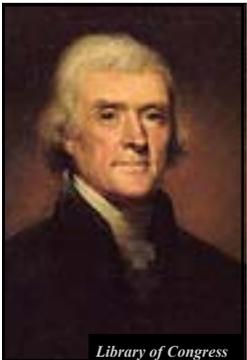
### **George Washington**

*I hope it will not be conceived, from these observations, that it is my wish to hold the unhappy people who are the subject of this letter in slavery. I can only say, that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it.*



### **John Adams**

*I have, through my whole life, held the practice of slavery in such abhorrence, that I have never owned a Negro or any other slave; though I have lived for many years in times when the practice was not disgraceful...*



### **Thomas Jefferson**

*There must, doubtless, be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people, produced by the existence of slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions—the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other.*



### **James Madison**

*We have seen the mere distinction of color made, in the most enlightened period of time, a ground of the most oppressive dominion ever exercised by man over man... where slavery exists, the republican theory becomes still more fallacious.*