7th Grade April 13th – April 17th

**United States Constitution**

**The Convention, The Preamble & Article 1**

**Directions:** Read the following sections and answer the questions in the spaces provided. Use the R.A.C.E. (Restate, Answer, Cite, and Explain) strategy to create answers in complete sentences.

**Introduction**

When we last had class we discussed how the new country of America was running their government. It was not working. They couldn’t pass laws, they couldn’t collect taxes, all the states had different money, and some states were not helping payback the debt the whole country gathered during the war with Britain for independence. It was a mess, a mess so bad that there was finally a rebellion led by a man Daniel Shay in Massachusetts. Shays rebellion was defeated but it exposed all the ugliness of the American Government under the old Articles of Confederation. After the rebellion dozens of delegates (representatives) gathered in Philadelphia to discuss a new government.

* This week your packet will included information on the convention and the main debates amongst the delegates. After that we will examine the actual US constitution and discuss how the government works under this new rule book.
* Next week, we will discuss the other articles of the constitution.

**GO TO THE NEXT PAGE**

**The Constitution Convention of 1787**

In May of 1787 the Constitutional Convention gathered to discuss changes to the Articles of the Confederation. After some debate it became apparent to the representatives that a new Constitution was needed. A lot of the debate was held in secret so that the delegates would feel free to speak their minds.

A primary aim of the Constitution was to create a government that would be powerful enough to run the country, but would not impose on people's or state's rights. To avoid too much power being held by one person or group, they created the Balance of Power between the three branches of government: Executive (President), Legislative (Congress), and Judicial (Judges).

1. What was the primary aim of the new constitution?

There were two primary competing plans for the Constitution:  
  
**Virginia Plan** - The Virginia plan was written by James Madison. It represented the desires of the larger states and said that the number of representatives to Congress (law makers) should be based on the state's population.

1. Under the Virginia Plan how would the number of representatives in Congress (the people who make laws) be decided?
2. How might the Virginia Plan be unfair to states with smaller populations?

**New Jersey Plan**- The New Jersey plan was written by William Paterson from New Jersey. It represented the smaller states and said that each state should have the same number of representatives.

1. How many representatives in Congress does each state get under the New Jersey Plan?
2. Opinion: is it fair that a small state like Rhode Island has the same say as a more populated state like New York? Explain.

In the end, an agreement was reached called **The Great Compromise**. This created a bicameral or two house congress. One house (House of Representatives) was based on the state's population while another house (Senate) allowed each state to have two representatives. The House of Representatives is called the lower house and the Senate is called the upper house.

1. In your own words explain what the Great Compromise did?

Now that an agreement was in place about the size of the law making body of government was in place, a new debate started: How do you determine population? You may think it is easy, just count the people but, the problem was slavery. People in the North did not like slavery and they certainly did not like the idea of Southern states counting them as people for more seats in Congress while they deny slaves their freedom. It just wasn’t fair in many people’s opinion. So next was a new compromise knowns as the **3/5 Compromise.**  This agreement was for every 5 slaves only 3 counted towards the population. This not one America’s best moments in history but it shows the unrest about slavery in the North and displays the racist ideas that were surrounding slavery.

1. How did the 3/5 Compromise work?

**GO TO THE NEXT PAGE**

**Preamble**

The preamble is an introduction to the constitution. Think of it as a way as the writers telling everyone what the constitution is going to do. It says:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

1. What do you think Justice means?
2. What do you think common defence means?
3. What do you think general welfare means?
4. Do you think everyone reads this paragraph and thinks about each word’s meaning the same way you do? How might this create disagreements?

**GO TO THE NEXT PAGE**

**Article 1 (Simplified)**

**\*Special Note: All questions are bolded to make it easier to separate them from each clauses of the sections listed below.**

Section 1

All legislative (law making) Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

1. **What does the legislative power do?**

Section 2

1: The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every two years by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

1. **How often do House of Representatives have an election?**

2: No Person shall be a Representative who is younger than the Age of twenty five Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and when elected must living in the State in which he shall be chosen.

1. **What requirements must be meet to severe in the House of Representatives?**

3: Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons. The Number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty Thousand, but each State shall have at Least one Representative.

1. **How many representatives are there for every 30,000 people?**

4: When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies.

5: The House of Representatives shall chose their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.

1. **The House of Representatives has the sole power to do what?**

Section 3

1: The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, 3 for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.

1. **How many Senators are there per state?**

2: Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three Classes. The Seats of the Senators of the first Class shall be vacated at the Expiration of the second Year, of the second Class at the Expiration of the fourth Year, and of the third Class at the Expiration of the sixth Year, so that one third may be chosen every second Year; and if Vacancies happen by Resignation, or otherwise, during the Recess of the Legislature of any State, the Executive thereof may make temporary Appointments until the next Meeting of the Legislature, which shall then fill such Vacancies.

3: No Person shall be a Senator who is younger than the Age of thirty Years, and been nine Years a Citizen of the United States, and when elected must be living in that State for which he shall be chosen.

1. **What requirements must be meet to become a Senator?**

4: The Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no Vote, unless they be equally divided.

1. **When does the President of the Senate have a vote?**

5: The Senate shall chose their other Officers, and also a President pro tempore, in the Absence of the Vice President, or when he shall exercise the Office of President of the United States.

6: The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that Purpose, they shall be on Oath or Affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no Person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present.

7: Judgment in Cases of impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from Office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of honor, Trust or Profit under the United States: but the Party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to Indictment, Trial, Judgment and Punishment, according to Law.

SKIPPING A FEW SECTIONS

Section 8

1: The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

2: To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;

3: To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

4: To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

5: To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

1. **Identify one way that Congress controls money in the United States government.**

6: To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

7: To establish Post Offices and post Roads;

8: To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

9: To constitute Tribunals inferior to the Supreme Court;

10: To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Law of Nations;

11: To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

12: To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;

13: To provide and maintain a Navy;

14: To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

15: To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

16: To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

1. **Explain one role Congress has in dealing with the military.**

**STOP! Make sure everything is answered in a complete sentence to get full credit. Be sure to submit this assignment by 5:00 PM Friday April 17th.**