



# EXPLORING PRIMARY SOURCES

## Lessons and Activities Constitution & New Government

### Table of Contents

Teacher's Guide Cover (1 page)

Teacher's Guide Table of Contents (1 page)

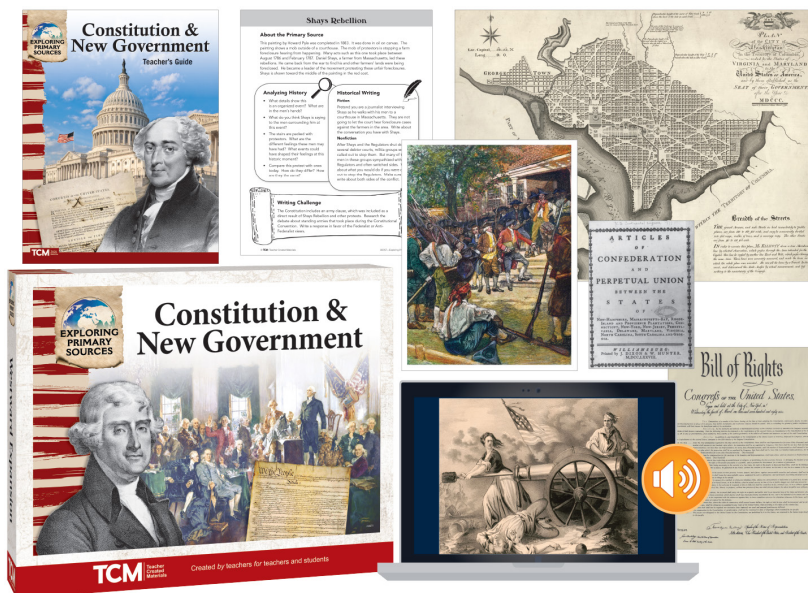
How to Use This Resource (5 pages)

Card Lesson Plan (4 pages)

Card (2 pages)

Document Lesson Plan (6 pages)

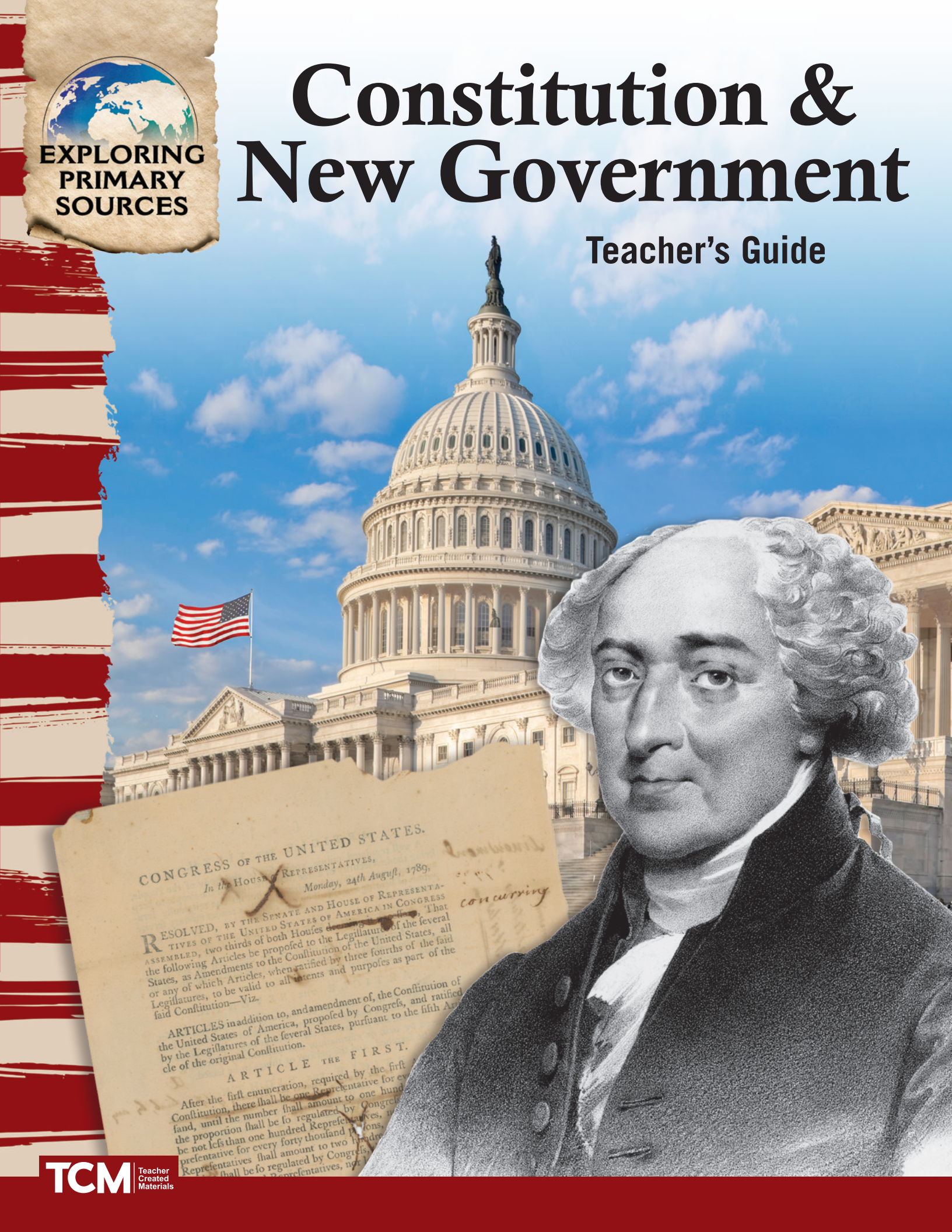
Document (1 page)





# Constitution & New Government

## Teacher's Guide



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.  
In the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Monday, 24th August, 1789.

RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, two thirds of both Houses *concurring* That the following Articles be proposed to the Legislature of the several States, as Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, all or any of which Articles, when ratified by three fourths of the said Legislatures, to be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the said Constitution—Viz.

ARTICLES in addition to, and amendment of, the Constitution of the United States of America, proposed by Congress, and ratified by the Legislatures of the several States, pursuant to the fifth Article of the original Constitution.

ARTICLE THE FIRST.

After the first enumeration, required by the first Constitution, there shall be one Representative for every *thousand* persons, until the number shall amount to one hundred; and thereafter the proportion shall be so regulated by Congress that the proportion shall be one hundred Representatives, not less than one hundred Representatives, nor more than one hundred Representatives, shall amount to two hundred Representatives, shall be so regulated by Congress, not more than two hundred Representatives, nor more than two hundred Representatives.

**Introduction**

Why Are Primary Sources Important? . . . . .	4
Research on Using Primary Sources . . . . .	6
Analyzing Primary Sources with Students . . . . .	11
Components of This Resource . . . . .	15
How to Use This Resource . . . . .	18
Standards Correlation. . . . .	23
Creating Strong Questions. . . . .	28

**Primary Source Card Activities**

John Adams . . . . .	31
Thomas Jefferson . . . . .	35
Shays’s Rebellion . . . . .	39
Constitutional Convention . . . . .	43
Federal Hall . . . . .	47
White House. . . . .	51
Capitol Building . . . . .	55
John Jay . . . . .	59

**Primary Source Reproduction Activities**

Magna Carta . . . . .	63
Articles of Confederation . . . . .	69
James Madison. . . . .	75
Constitutional Voting Record . . . . .	81
Bill of Rights . . . . .	87
Plan for Washington, DC. . . . .	93
Monroe Doctrine . . . . .	99
The Fourth of July. . . . .	105

**Culminating Activities**

Project-Based Learning Activity . . . . .	111
Document-Based Questions . . . . .	114

**Making Connections**

Technology Connections . . . . .	119
Young-Adult Literature Connections . . . . .	122

**Appendix**

References Cited. . . . .	123
Answer Key . . . . .	124
Digital Resources . . . . .	128

# How to Use This Resource

## Lesson Plans

The learning outcomes are the focus throughout each lesson.

For digital-only reproducibles, digital filenames are provided.

Page references and digital filenames make lesson preparation easy.

The guiding questions help support development of inquiry by focusing on the primary source being studied.

Essential questions provide inquiry anchors for students as they investigate enduring understandings.

**An American Founder**

**Learning Outcomes**

- Students will identify the accomplishments of John Adams.
- Students will be able to explain the significance of contributions made by John Adams to the founding of the United States.

**Materials**

- copies of the John Adams primary source card ([adams.pdf](#))
- copies of Adams's Life (page 33; [bgadams1.pdf](#))
- copies of the *Dinner with John Adams* document-based assessment (page 34; [dinner.pdf](#))

**Essential Question**

- Why is it important to understand the accomplishments of historical figures?

**Guiding Questions**

- What were Adams's most important accomplishments?
- What were the different roles John Adams had throughout his life?
- What were Adams's beliefs regarding the new nation?
- What was Adams's role in the Boston Massacre?

**Introducing the Primary Source**

- Ask students what they already know about the Founders of the United States. Find out how many they can name from memory. On chart paper, create a list of the names students are able to generate.
  - Use this list to discuss the accomplishments of each person.
  - Save this list for future lessons.
- Share the portrait of John Adams on the primary source card. Give students a few minutes to make lists of at least five observations that show he was an important figure.
- Introduce the essential question, and use the provided guiding questions to discuss Adams. Encourage students to ask their own questions to facilitate further inquiry.

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31

Students collaborate to interact with the primary source through inquiry, textual analysis, and engaging activities.

These assessments provide opportunities for students to independently practice primary source analysis.

Key content vocabulary from the historical background information is bolded in student texts and defined here for reference.

**An American Founder** (cont.)

**Analyzing the Primary Source**

- Have small groups of students read the background information, *Adams's Life*. (A copy of this text at a lower reading level is provided in the Digital Resources—[bgadams2.pdf](#)) Review key words with students as necessary. As students read, encourage them to annotate the text by noting the various accomplishments of Adams.
- Provide time for students to complete at least two of the activities from the back of the primary source card.
- Distribute sheets of paper. In the center of their papers, have students write different accomplishments of Adams. In the space around the center, have each student write about the accomplishments affected the transition of the colonies into the United States.
- Adams's wife, Abigail Adams, was also an important historical figure. Study her contributions during her 54-year marriage to John Adams. Then, have students create short biographies highlighting her accomplishments. They should discuss how these events affected the lives of the Adams family and how the members were affected by the presidency.

**Document-Based Assessment**

- Distribute copies of *Dinner with John Adams*. A digital copy of the primary source is provided in the Digital Resources ([independence.jpg](#)).
- Have students think about what they've learned throughout this lesson, carefully analyze the primary source, and respond thoughtfully to the questions.

**Key Words**

These key content words are included in both levels of the background information.

- denounced**—publicly announced to be evil
- negotiate**—to settle something through discussion
- rattified**—approved
- unanimously**—completely agreeing

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32

# How to Use This Resource *(cont.)*

## Background Information

The historical background information provides students with key information about both the time period and the primary source. It is provided at two different reading levels to support differentiation. When preparing for a lesson, decide which level best meets the needs of your students. Use one level for all students, or differentiate the reading levels by student need.

- Encourage students to write strong questions they have as they read these texts. The *Creating Strong Questions* lesson on pages 28–30 will prepare students for this important aspect of the inquiry arc.
- Suggestions for annotations students could make while reading are provided in each lesson plan.

Within the Teacher's Guide, the texts are leveled at a seventh- to eighth-grade reading level and are denoted by a triangle in the top right of each page.

Glossary terms are bolded to highlight their importance to the content. All glossary words are included in both levels of the information. A Student Glossary is provided on the digital resources. This document includes the vocabulary words and definitions from all 16 lessons.

Texts leveled at a fifth- to sixth-grade reading level are denoted by a square and are only provided in the Digital Resources.

# How to Use This Resource *(cont.)*

## Student Activity Pages

**John Adams**

**About the Engraving**  
This engraving was created by James Smither in 1797. It is from a painting of John Adams by John Singleton Copley. John Adams is considered one of the founders of the United States. He served as a representative to the Continental Congress. He helped write the Declaration of Independence. After becoming the nation's first vice president, he was elected as the second president. This engraving was published on February 15, 1797, just two weeks before Adams was sworn in as president on March 4.

**Analyzing History**

- What details in this image show the importance of this person? At what point in his career does this image appear to have been painted?
- Why do you think Adams was considered unsuccessful as a president during his time? How did his decision regarding the XYZ Affair affect his presidency?
- Create a campaign poster for Adams to be elected to a second term as president. Include his first-term accomplishments, and persuade others to re-elect him.
- Imagine you are Adams. Write a short speech persuading Congress to send a second group to France to seek peace and avoid war. The first group failed, and war is imminent. Explain why this effort should be tried again.

**Historical Writing Fiction**  
John Adams and Thomas Jefferson wrote a series of letters to each other in the last 25 years of their lives. As Adams, write a letter to Jefferson looking back on your life. Describe your most important accomplishments.

**Historical Writing Nonfiction**  
After writing the Declaration of Independence, Adams wrote to his wife, "The most memorable Epoch in the History of America has begun." Write about Adams's role in the era following the Declaration of Independence.

**Writing Challenge**  
Adams defended the British soldiers in the Boston Massacre. Research the event and the trial that followed. Write an essay explaining why Adams decided to take the case when no one else would. Be sure to write about how this trial affected his career.

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Background information provides a concise description of the primary source image students will study.

Activities for students increase in complexity, providing scaffolded opportunities for student engagement.

Fiction and nonfiction writing prompts promote deeper connections to the primary source.

An inquiry-driven writing task challenges students to take their learning to the next level.

Key information about the primary source reproduction prepares students for the activity.

Engaging activities encourage students to use higher-order thinking skills as they analyze the primary source.

Extension challenges are provided to engage students in more complex tasks.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**America's First Constitution**

**About the Document**  
The Articles of Confederation was America's first governing document. The Continental Congress drafted the document in 1778, and it was ratified in 1781. During the period under the Articles of Confederation, it became clear the nation would need a stronger document to survive. The Constitution was then written. It included several components from the Articles of Confederation.

**Directions:** Your job is to take on the role of a representative at the Continental Congress in 1778. You will work with a small group of students, all representing the same colony. Review the background information and the Articles of Confederation ratification of the Articles of Confederation. Then, work together to write a speech supporting or opposing the knowledge of the time period and the document.

- Which colony do you represent?
- What are four main rights provided by the Articles of Confederation?
- Should your colony support or oppose ratification? Explain your support.

**Challenge**  
Look at the signatures and dates on the document. Several signers did not sign the document until several weeks after July 9, 1778. Research the time period, and explain what may have delayed these members from signing.

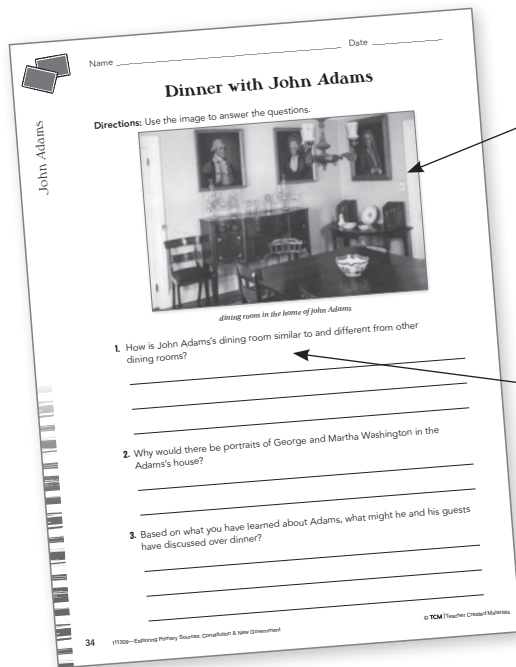
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- **Hint:** Find and use the photograph button on your copier when copying student reproducibles, including document-based assessments. This will produce clearer images that will be easier to analyze.

# How to Use This Resource *(cont.)*

## Document-Based Assessments

A document-based assessment (DBA) connected to the content of each lesson gives students an opportunity to practice primary source analysis. These DBAs practice key skills needed for many social studies assessments in middle school and high school.



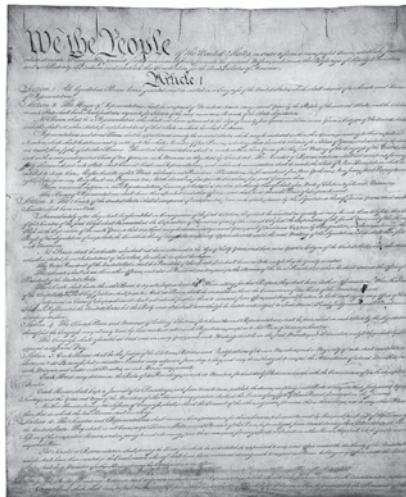
Each DBA includes a visual or textual primary source.

Students use general knowledge of the time period, what they learned in the lesson, and details in the primary source to respond to the constructed-response questions.

## Digital Resources

Projecting primary sources while students are analyzing them allows for whole-class discussions.

At times, projecting full-color versions of a primary source may be more beneficial than copying them on black-and-white copiers.



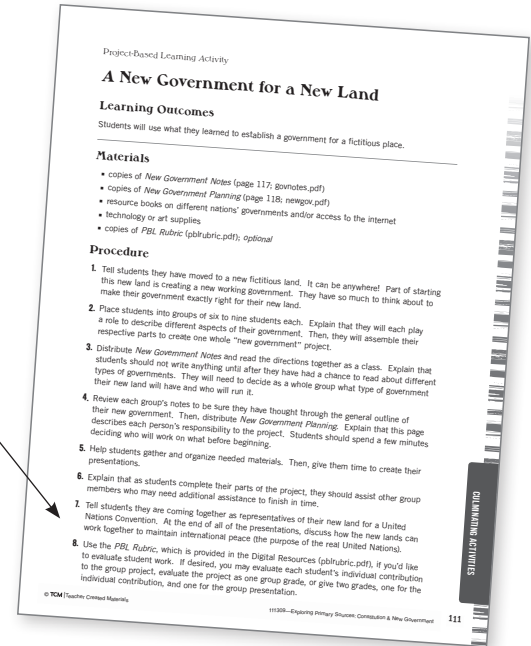
# How to Use This Resource *(cont.)*

## Culminating Activities

### Project-Based Learning Activity

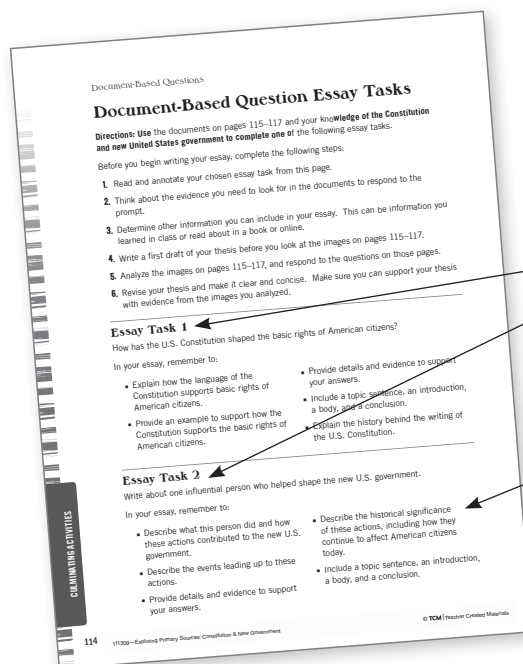
Engaging project-based learning (PBL) activities provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively and share what they've learned about the content.

Student presentations of PBL work are excellent for inviting guests to visit and see what students are doing.



### Document-Based Questions

Document-based questions (DBQs) require students to analyze multiple DBAs and then respond to essay tasks in cohesive, well-supported essays.



Two essay tasks allow students to choose which DBQ they'd like to answer.

Each has a specific question and indicators to guide student responses.



# Crafting the Constitution

## Learning Outcomes

- Students will describe the conflicts that led to compromises during the Constitutional Convention.
- Students will be able to explain the events that took place within Independence Hall by creating brochures to share their knowledge.



## Materials

- copies of the *Constitutional Convention* primary source card (constitutional.pdf)
- copies of *Constitution Creation* (page 45; bgconstitutional1.pdf)
- copies of the *Independence Hall* document-based assessment (page 46; independencehall.pdf)

### Essential Question

- How are governments created, structured, and changed?

### Guiding Questions

- Who are some people you recognize in this room?
- Using evidence from the painting, what are these people doing?
- How would you describe the mood of the people in this room?
- This room looks the same today. What do you think it is used for now?



## Introducing the Primary Source

1. Ask students to draw a picture of what they think of when they hear the word *convention*. Have students share their pictures, and let them know they will be learning about the Constitutional Convention of 1787.
2. Share the painting of the Constitutional Convention on the primary source card. Give students a few minutes to make lists of at least five observations or questions they have about the image.
3. Introduce the essential question, and use the provided guiding questions to discuss the painting. Encourage students to ask their own questions to facilitate further inquiry.

# Crafting the Constitution *(cont.)*

## Analyzing the Primary Source

1. Have small groups of students read the background information, *Constitution Creation*. (A copy of this text at a lower reading level is provided in the Digital Resources—[bgconstitutional2.pdf](#)). Review key words with students as necessary. As students read, they should annotate the text by circling conflicts and underlining compromises that were made as the Constitution was being written.
2. Provide time for students to complete at least two of the activities from the back of the primary source card.
3. Discuss the conflicts students found in the historical background information. Have a discussion about how some of these conflicts were resolved.
4. Have the class plan a field trip to the Independence Hall National Historic Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Use the internet and other travel resources to have your students figure out what they'd need to travel to the location.
5. After completing their research, have small groups of students create travel brochures that tell what they could learn at Independence Hall. The brochures should describe the sights and explain the historical events that took place there.

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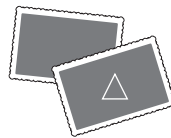
## Document-Based Assessment

- Distribute copies of *Independence Hall*. Digital copies of the primary sources are provided in the Digital Resources ([independencehall1.jpg](#) and [independencehall2.jpg](#)).
- Have students think about what they've learned throughout this lesson, carefully analyze the primary source, and respond thoughtfully to the prompt.

### Key Words

These key content words are included in both levels of the background information.

- **committee**—a group of people who were elected to study a problem, plan an event, or perform a specific duty
- **convention**—a meeting of people for a common purpose
- **overthrow**—cause a downfall



# Constitution Creation

Independence Hall was built in 1732. It is located in Philadelphia and once served as the Pennsylvania Statehouse. It was one of the largest buildings in the colonies at the time. The Continental Congress met there. The representatives wanted to keep their meetings and debates secret. So, they closed the doors and windows. That way, no one could overhear them.

The Articles of Confederation did not work. It became clear that a better government needed to be created. The Constitutional **Convention** was proposed. The representatives met in Independence Hall. George Washington attended. Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson were also there. However, Patrick Henry did not attend. He thought Madison would force a strong central government. Representatives from 12 of the 13 colonies attended the convention. The representatives from Rhode Island refused to attend. They felt the other men were trying to **overthrow** the existing government.

The representatives debated about the form they believed the new government should take. Several representatives proposed plans for the new government. Some of these plans were the Virginia Plan, the New Jersey Plan, and the Hamilton Plan. These plans were vigorously debated because each man felt his plan represented the ideal government.

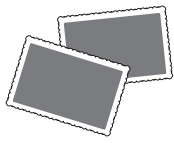
It took about two months of debate before the Great Compromise was reached. This compromise provided

a two-fold system of congressional representation. The House of Representatives would allow for each state to have representatives based on the size of its population. All states would have the same number of seats in the Senate.

Another very important issue was between the northern and southern states. They could not agree on how slaves should be counted for taxes and representation. Southerners did not want slaves counted as people. This is because they would then have to pay taxes. But they did want the slaves to count in their population. This would help the states have higher numbers of congressional representatives. The compromise was to count slaves as three-fifths of a person for taxes and representation. It was known as the Three-Fifths Compromise.

A **committee** was selected to draft a new Constitution. The final version of the Constitution was ratified in July 1788.





# Independence Hall

Constitutional Convention

**Directions:** These pictures of Independence Hall show the location where the Constitutional Convention was held. There were 55 men who filled this room for several months as they debated and wrote the Constitution. No reporters were allowed in the room. Write an article as if you were a reporter peeking in the window during the convention. Use the pictures to describe what you see in the room and what is happening.



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Howard Chandler Christy  
Scene at the Signing of the Declaration of Independence, 1776

# Constitutional Convention

## About the Painting

Congressional representatives first met in Independence Hall in Philadelphia to form a new government. The Declaration of Independence was written in this room. The Constitution was also written there. Important leaders such as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison all attended the Constitutional Convention. The title of this painting is *Scene at the Signing of the Constitution*. It was painted by Howard Chandler Christy in 1940.

### Analyzing History



- Knowing that 55 members attended the Constitutional Convention, what do you think the atmosphere in the room was like?
- What types of procedures were probably in place for the representatives to speak and give their speeches?
- Franklin supported a strong, but balanced, central government. Hamilton favored a very strong ruler at the center of the government. Write a conversation between the two men about this issue.
- Patrick Henry refused to attend this meeting, because he felt it was a conspiracy to overthrow the government. If Patrick Henry had attended the Constitutional Convention, what might his role in history have been?

### Historical Writing



#### Fiction

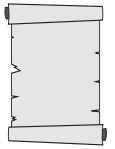
Pretend you are a representative attending the Constitutional Convention. Write a journal entry reflecting on the discussions and debates that happened. Include details on who said what, people's reactions, and how disagreements were solved.

#### Nonfiction

Why did Washington participate very little in the Constitutional Convention? Describe whether you agree or disagree with his decision.

### Writing Challenge

A room that looks very much like this one was created in the Capitol building in Washington. Representatives used to prefer to sit by the fireplace. Now, they prefer to sit farther back in the modern room. This is because of CSPAN. Study CSPAN and its role in Congress today. If you were a representative in Congress today, how would CSPAN affect your job?



# Mapping a Capital

## Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to explain how the location for Washington, DC, was chosen.
- Students will plan their own capital city and be able to identify all the key elements needed to house a country’s government.



## Materials

- *Plan for Washington, DC* reproduction (plan.pdf)
- copies of *Capital Plan* (page 95; bgplan1.pdf)
- copies of *Washington, DC, Map* (page 96; dcmmap.pdf); *optional*
- copies of *The New Capital City* (page 97; newcapital.pdf)
- copies of the *Philadelphia Map* document-based assessment (page 98; philadelphia.pdf)

### Essential Question

- How can the design of a location help to represent something greater?

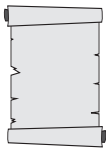
### Guiding Questions

- The design of the streets of the city is called a “wagon wheel” design. Look at the Plan for Washington, DC, and explain why this term fits the street design.
- Which building forms the center of the capital city?
- What other building occupies a large area of the city?
- What natural resources are near the city that may have helped the people living there?



## Introducing the Primary Source

1. Have students draw a map of their school from memory. Once students have finished, display a map of the school (or show them the school on Google Maps™) for comparison. Ask students if they left anything out. Discuss the sites of buildings and classrooms, pointing out the possible reasons for various locations. Explain that students will be learning about the layout of the capital city of the United States.
2. Share the *Plan for Washington, DC* reproduction, and ask students to study it carefully. (You may also choose to display the digital version of the map or distribute copies of *Washington, DC, Map*.) Give students a few minutes to make lists of at least five observations or questions they have about the map.



## Mapping a Capitol *(cont.)*

### Introducing the Primary Source *(cont.)*

3. Introduce the essential question, and use the provided guiding questions to discuss the city. Encourage students to ask their own questions to facilitate further inquiry.

### Analyzing the Primary Source

1. Have small groups of students read the background information, *Capital Plan*. (A copy of this text at a lower reading level is provided in the Digital Resources—bgplan2.pdf). Review key words with students as necessary. As students read, they should annotate the text by highlighting sections that explain how the city was designed.
2. Distribute copies of *The New Capital City*, and have students complete the activity in small groups or independently. Students will assume the role of architects designing a new capital city for the country today. They will plan a capital that not only includes all the elements the present capital contains, but also landmarks or design elements that would be relevant for modern times. They should reference the symbolism Pierre L'Enfant included in his plan for the capital and include some symbols in their own plans.
3. After students have finished their plans, have them write descriptions of the locations of their capitals and explain why they chose those locations. Further, have them explain the political, cultural, security, and geographic benefits to their nation's capitals that make them better than the current one.

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### Document-Based Assessment

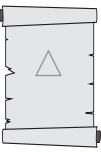
- Distribute copies of *Philadelphia Map*. A digital copy of the primary source is provided in the Digital Resources (philadelphia.jpg).
- Have students think about what they've learned throughout this lesson, carefully analyze the primary source, and respond thoughtfully to the questions.

#### Key Words

These key content words are included in both levels of the background information.

- **centralized**—located at a central place; bring together in one area
- **commissioners**—head officials of government departments
- **surveyed**—examined; looked over





# Capital Plan

In 1787, the new government was just being formed. The Constitution gave Congress the power to create a capital city for the new nation. Many members of Congress debated about where the new capital should be located. Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York were all suggested as locations. But the southern representatives wanted a more **centralized** location. It had been very difficult for them to travel to Philadelphia for meetings of the Continental Congress.

The congressmen finally agreed on a southern location for the new capital. Virginia and Maryland both gave some land where the capital could be built. This 100-square-mile piece of land was selected. President George Washington chose a Frenchman named Pierre L'Enfant to design the city.

Since this land was unsettled, the country had a unique opportunity. An entire city could be created from scratch. Benjamin Banneker was a self-educated, free black man living in the area. He and Andrew Ellicott **surveyed** the area. They laid the boundary stones in a diamond shape around the land. This would eventually become the nation's capital.

In L'Enfant's plan, he placed the Capitol building on a high point with a view of the Potomac. In Europe, it was customary to save the grandest spot for the leader's palace. But the goal was to have the city reflect the idea that every citizen was equally important. L'Enfant named a number of streets after states in the union. These streets were connected by squares and circles. Many elements

of his plan have evolved over time. Many of the circles and squares have been renamed for Civil War heroes. For example, DuPont Circle was named after Samuel Francis DuPont. He was a rear admiral in the United States Navy during the Civil War.

The city streets were designed in a grid system with diagonal avenues that would intersect them. This resulted in streets that are wagon wheel designs spread over a grid. L'Enfant also included large areas of grass in front of the Capitol building. Today, this area is called the Mall. It is now surrounded by the Smithsonian museums that attract millions of visitors each year.

After just one year of work, L'Enfant was fired as the planner for the city. He was defiant of some of the **commissioners**. He destroyed a resident's house to make room for an avenue. He also was delayed in getting a map for the sale of city lots. George Washington hired Andrew Ellicott to finish the job.

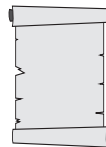
Ellicott used the same ideas that L'Enfant had created and made few changes. The Plan for Washington, DC, was intended to serve as a model for other cities. Today, the city looks very similar to its original plan.



# Washington, DC, Map



Plan for Washington, DC



# The New Capital City

## About the Map

It was very important for the framers of the Constitution to create a strong seat of government. Several locations were suggested for the new capital city. A compromise was made, and Virginia and Maryland gave up part of their land to create the nation’s capital. The decision to choose this location was very controversial. At the time, there were only the 13 original states. Other suggested locations were New York City, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

**Directions:** Assume the role of an architect who is designing a new capital for the country today. Plan a capital city that includes all the elements of Washington, DC, but that also includes landmarks or new elements that people need today.

1. What are some current elements in the capital that you want to highlight?

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2. What are some new elements or locations that you think should be included?

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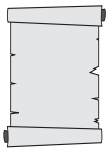
3. Think about the symbols L’Enfant included in his plan for the capital and include some in your plan. For each of the elements you include, draw a symbol next to it that you can use on the map. Sketch your symbols here.

4. Use a large sheet of paper to draw your newly planned capital.



### Challenge

Washington, DC, has streets named after letters of the alphabet. But if you zoom in on a map of Washington, DC, you find no J, X, or Y streets. Research possible reasons for the omission of these streets in Washington, DC.



# Philadelphia Map

**Directions:** Use the map to answer the questions.



*Philadelphia, 1777*

1. What other state is near this city?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Why might the building be included at the bottom of the map?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. How might water have played a part in this city's businesses?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

To front p. 636  
**PLAN**  
 of the **City of Washington**  
 in the Territory of Columbia  
 ceded by the States of  
**VIRGINIA** and **MARYLAND**  
 to the **United States of America**  
 and by them established as the  
**SEAT of their GOVERNMENT**  
 after the Year  
**MDCCC.**



Perpendicular height of the course of Tiber Creek } E. I. P<sup>th</sup>  
 above the level of the tide in said Creek..... } 256 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

Perpendicular height of the } E. I. P<sup>th</sup>  
 West branch, above the tide } 115.7 <sup>2</sup>/<sub>8</sub>  
 in Tiber Creek..... }

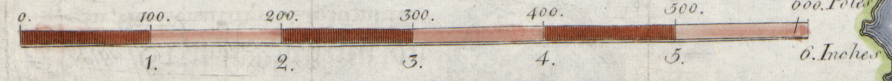


Lat. Capitol..... 38. 53. N.  
 Long..... 0. 0.

**Observations**  
 explanatory of the Plan.

- I. THE positions for the different Edifices, and for the several Squares or Areas of different shapes, as they are laid down, were first determined on the most advantageous ground commanding the most extensive Prospects, and the better susceptible of such improvements as either use or Ornament may hereafter call for.
- II. LINES or Avenues of direct communication have been devised to connect the separate and most distant Objects with the principal, and to preserve through the whole a reciprocity of sight at the same time. Attention has been paid to the passing of those leading Avenues over the most favorable ground for prospect and convenience.
- III. NORTH and South lines, intersected by others running due East and West, make the distribution of the City into Streets Squares, &c. and those lines have been so combined as to meet at certain given points with those divergent Avenues, so as to form on the spaces first determined the different Squares or Areas.

**SCALE OF POLES.**



**EASTERN BRANCH.**  
**Breadth of the Streets.**  
 THE grand Avenues and such Streets as lead immediately to public places are from 130 to 160 feet wide, and may be conveniently divided into foot ways walks of trees, and a carriage way The other Streets are from 90 to 110 feet wide

IN order to execute this plan, Mr. ELLICOTT drew a true meridional line by celestial Observation which passes through the Area intended for the Capitol, this line he crossed by another due East and West, which passes through the same Area These lines were accurately measured and made the bases on which the whole plan was executed He run all the lines by a Transit Instrument, and determined the acute angles by actual Measurement, and left nothing to the uncertainty of the Compass.