

Convention Rules

The delegates wanted to ensure that the Constitutional Convention was a civil and deliberative body rather than one divided by political ideologies. The convention delegates established a set of rules to conduct business and work toward compromise.

Examine the convention rules and add your evaluation of each using the Annotation Station strategies.

Annotation Station

Highlight in **YELLOW** phrases that confuse you. Use context clues to try and figure out their meaning.

Highlight in **RED** rules with which you do not agree.

Highlight in **GREEN** the rules with which you do agree.

☆ Star the rule that you find most important.

Convention Rules

- Delegates from at least 7 states (out of 13) had to be present for the convention to do business each day.
- If a delegate's absence would leave a state without representation, then he had to get permission to be absent.
- When rising to speak, a delegate had to address the president.
- While he was speaking, other members could not pass notes, hold conversations with other delegates, or read a book, pamphlet, or paper.
- A member was not allowed to speak more than twice on the same question. He could not speak the second time until every other member had had a first opportunity to speak on a subject.
- Committees could be appointed as necessary (to tackle particularly challenging topics).
- Any decision made by the convention was subject to reconsideration and change. No decision had to be final until the entire plan was completed.
- The convention's proceedings were to remain secret. No delegate could disclose the substance of the debates, although they were allowed to take notes.

How might these rules have helped civil discourse and decision-making at the convention?

How might these rules have been controversial at the convention?