

THE FEDERALIST PAPERS

The *Federalist Papers* were a series of 85 essays printed in newspapers to persuade critics of the Constitution and those on the fence to support ratification.

Alexander Hamilton wrote 51 of these essays, James Madison 29, and John Jay five.

All three authors wrote under the same famous pen name—“Publius.”

Broadly speaking, Madison focused on the big theoretical and structural questions of government and politics.

Hamilton focused on specific issues like the structure of (and framers’ vision for) the presidency and national courts.

The *Federalist Papers*—and their brilliant authors—were capable of both high-minded theory and persuasive political arguments.

Today, scholars and ordinary Americans alike recognize The *Federalist Papers* as some of the finest works of political theory. But it’s also important to understand them in context—as political documents written during the fight over the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.