

The Articles of Confederation

I. Formation of the Articles of Confederation. During the war (1776-1777), the Continental Congress met to form a new government.

A. States are fighting a war against a strong central government
– they do not want a government like England

B. Each state had one vote

II. Government was weak under the Articles of Confederation

A. Each state kept its own freedoms

1. Articles could not be changed without the consent of all

2. Congress could only request money from the states; states could choose to send money

3. No leader (executive) to enforce the laws of Congress

4. No national court system

B. The United States was powerless to do many things necessary to function as a nation

III. Great Land Ordinances of the Confederation

A. Articles of Confederation were approved only when the states gave up land claims in the west. They became part of public domain.

B. Ordinances of 1785 for Northwest Territory

1. area was divided up and sold by the government
2. money from land sales would go to national treasury and used for public schools in that area
3. government in the Territory
 - a. first ruled by Congress
 - b. when population reached 60,000 inhabitants it become a state
4. only positive part of the Articles of Confederation; this system will remain even when the Articles are discarded for the U.S. Constitution