

Shay's Rebellion

Comprehension Questions

1. Daniel Shays felt that he had the right to be protected from debt and decline. Why did he believe the government was obligated to provide this protection?
2. Do you think it was significant that Daniel Shays was a Revolutionary war veteran? Discuss.
3. What were the major complaints of Shays and his followers? What do you think they saw as the goals of the rebellion? Did these goals change over time?
4. Do you think most Americans would have agreed with Shays' and his followers at the time of the rebellion? Do you think they would have approved of the way they addressed them?
5. Why was Shays' Rebellion considered to be the United States' first civil war?
6. Americans soon learned after the war that the Articles of Confederation were too weak. How did Shays' Rebellion reveal these weaknesses?

7. What provisions were included in the Articles for a federal government? Did limiting the powers of the federal government negatively impact the nation's development? Explain.

8. What could have been included in the Articles to help the emerging nation recover from war?

9. What role did Shays' Rebellion play in the creation of the Constitution? If Shays' Rebellion had been a peaceful protest, do you feel it would have had the same impact? Explain.

10. Do you think Shays and his followers had any chance of leading a successful revolt? Why or why not?

11. What was the Riot Act? Why was it significant?

12. What punishment did Shays and the lead rebels receive for their actions? Do you think their treatment was just? Discuss.