

Mock Constitutional Convention

Reflection

Process and set up of activity

examine other versions - assign more than one person to a role - provide background information for each group - maybe have some other groups involved as one example does -

Inquiry - ask students questions

start with asking them questions-- what interests do each of the states want to protect? how would southern states feel about slavery? How would small states feel about representation based on population

In May of 1787 55 delegates came together to decide what should be done to fix an ailing national government. They represented the citizens of this new nation, and all but the state of Rhode Island sent delegates.

Each of you will represent a state in the new nation and will play the role of one of these delegates. You will base your answers to the following questions on your geographic location and your state's population as well as economic occupations. You will use the information provided in the handouts from We the People to help answer the questions. There will be several people who will take on specific roles in the convention, while the rest represent their roles.

Here are the main issues to be discussed at the convention - you should be able to answer these questions.

1. Should power rest in the states or the national government? Why? How much power should the leaders have and what type of leaders should there be? How should we select our governmental leaders?
2. How should the government be structured? How much power should each branch of government have and what specifics need to be considered about each branch (legislative, executive, judicial)?
3. How should representation be decided, by population or equally by state? Should slaves count in the population?
4. What should be done about the slave trade?

5. Do we need to guarantee individual rights?

POSITION PAPER -

Create a position paper which answers the questions based on the information below -

Each student is to compile a delegate portfolio that is to be turned in at the culmination of the convention. The portfolio will have three main parts:

- (1) Research Notes,
- (2) Position Statements,
- (3) Convention Records.

Part One: Research your delegate to discover information on your delegate in this order :

- a. Personal background of your delegate
- b. Delegate feelings and attitudes towards the issues of the Mock Convention
- c. How your delegate will vote in the issues
- d. Enemies and allies of your delegate at the convention
- e. How geography affects your delegate (where they live, how they make a living, etc.)

Part Two: Choose at least three of the issues addressed at the Convention and write a position statement for each as to how your delegate feels about that issue. You will use these at the convention during debate on the issues.

Part Three: During the convention, you will record:

- a. How you voted playing the part of your delegate
- b. How you would have voted on the issue
- c. What happened each day of the Mock Convention?
- d. The historical outcome of the convention issues

After instructing students of their task, have a lottery for roles. The teacher should take the role of George Washington to chair the convention. See the CongressLink web site, Historical Notes, for a list of delegates. Choose a number of delegates that will give representation of the various factions at the convention.

Resources for Research -

Give students time to research delegates and write their position statements. The librarians at my school pull resources from the shelves in advance so our students can access one main area for information. The National Archives site has great biographies of all of the delegates to the

Convention. http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_founding_fathers.html is also a copious site for convention information. -

Biographies and general summaries of the delegates (<http://www.archives.gov/index.html>)

Schedule of Convention and Assignments

Day 1 of Convention

Begin Debate/Discussion of what should be done to improve the system of government. Set time limits for discussion so that we are able to address Issue One concerning power today.

ISSUED COVERED - POWER - WHERE SHOULD IT LIE- STATE OR FEDERAL LEVEL

JAMES MADISON WILL RECORD THE EVENTS OF THE CONVENTION - AS HE DID IN THE ORIGINAL CONVENTION

End of Discussion - REALITY CHECK - after each issue is voted upon, we will refer to the actual Constitution as found on CongressLink so the delegates can compare their decision to the actual ones made.

http://www.congresslink.org/print_basics_histmats_constitution_contents.htm

Day 2 of Convention

ISSUED COVERED - STRUCTURE -FOCUS ON LEGISLATIVE BRANCH - AND REPRESENTATION - ENDED WITH DISCUSSION OF SLAVES AND POPULATION

JAMES MADISON WILL RECORD THE EVENTS OF THE CONVENTION - AS HE DID IN THE ORIGINAL CONVENTION

End of Discussion - REALITY CHECK - after each issue is voted upon, we will refer to the actual Constitution as found on CongressLink so the delegates can compare their decision to the actual ones made.

Day 3 of Convention

ISSUED COVERED - WRAP UP REPRESENTATION - THEN SLAVE TRADE -REST OF STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT-BRANCHES

JAMES MADISON WILL RECORD THE EVENTS OF THE CONVENTION - AS HE DID IN THE ORIGINAL CONVENTION

End of Discussion - REALITY CHECK - after each issue is voted upon, we will refer to the actual Constitution as found on CongressLink so the delegates can compare their decision to the actual ones made.

Day 4 of Convention

ISSUED COVERED - WRAP UP ANY FINAL ISSUES - DISCUSS FEDERALIST AND ANTI-FEDERALISTS AND DISCUSS RATIFICATION

JAMES MADISON WILL RECORD THE EVENTS OF THE CONVENTION - AS HE DID IN THE ORIGINAL CONVENTION

End of Discussion - REALITY CHECK - after each issue is voted upon, we will refer to the actual Constitution as found on CongressLink so the delegates can compare their decision to the actual ones made.

[Convention realities](#)

[Ratification Process](#)

[Federalists](#) - [Federalists Papers](#)

[Anti-Federalists](#) - [Anti-Federalists win battle](#) - [Bill of Rights](#)

[Ratification by State](#)

ASSIGNMENTS FOR CONVENTION -

You will chose 2 of the following 3 Homework tasks to complete

Homework: write a letter home informing your family about how the convention is going, citing personalities, factions, etc. that are shaping the convention thus far.

Homework: draw a political cartoon that might have appeared in the hometown paper of your delegate as to the decisions being made at the convention.

Homework: Have students draw an interest group: women, northerners, southerners, big states, small states. Have them write a letter to the editor in their role explaining their reaction thus far to the convention decisions.

EVERYONE WILL COMPLETE THIS AS FINAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE CONVENTION.

Evaluation: As a delegate you are wrapping up the convention and heading home. Your home state has received the new Constitution to be ratified. Your task is to write a recommendation as to whether or not you believe ratification is a good idea. You can go beyond your individual delegate perspective at this point, because I don't want you to just vote how they did, but to analyze the document and the ideas contained inside. Make your recommendation to you state legislature and citizens. If you know your person's view as a federalist or anti-federalist you may incorporate that into the recommendation.

You will use the MEL-Con format - you can either write or record your ideas

You could create a PSA - public service announcement or Political Ad to persuade voters of your point of view.

Your **Main Idea** is answering this question - Should your state ratify the constitution?

Evidence - this is the specific supporting details that you will use to persuade your audience on how they should vote. This includes ideas about how representation was decided, how slaves were dealt with, the 5 main ideas for your position should be included here. You need to discuss how these decisions will impact your state.

Link - this is where you take a fact like the constitution created a bicameral legislature with one house being proportional and the other equal representation and connect this fact to the main idea or thesis. How does this support your position? How does it impact your state?

Conclusion - This is where you summarize your main ideas or arguments that you used to persuade your audience. This is a critical section because it is the last thing your audience will remember. If they read or see lots of ads about the same topic, you need to make a lasting impression on them. Make sure you restate your thesis - what they should do - how they should vote!

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES TO COINCIDE WITH THE DEBATE

EXPLANATION OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE -

See <http://crs.uvm.edu/citizens/procedure.htm>

CONVENTION BEGINS - PROCEDURES -

JAMES MADISON WILL RECORD THE PROCEDURES AND GEORGE WASHINGTON WILL OVERSEE THE PROCESS

WE WILL SET TIME LIMITS FOR DISCUSSION ON EACH ISSUE- WE WILL HAVE A REALITY CHECK TO SEE WHAT THE ORIGINAL FOUNDERS DECIDED AT THE END OF EACH VOTE

Homework: Have students write a letter home informing their family about how the convention is going, citing personalities, factions, etc. that are shaping the convention thus far.

NEXT ISSUE DEBATED AND REALITY CHECK - DEPENDING ON TIME AND SEQUENCE- HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS MAY OR MAY NOT BE ASSIGNED.

Homework: Have students draw a political cartoon that might have appeared in the hometown paper of their delegate as to the decisions being made at the convention.

ISSUES 3 AND 4

Homework: Have students draw an interest group: women, northerners, southerners, big states, small states. Have them write a letter to the editor in their role explaining their reaction thus far to the convention decisions.

DISCUSS POLITICAL CARTOONS

Homework: Prepare portfolio to turn in.

NEXT DAY

Collect portfolios.

Evaluation: Instruct delegates that their home states have received the new Constitution to be ratified. Have them write a recommendation as to whether or not they believe ratification is a good idea.

- See more at: http://www.congresslink.org/print_lp_mockconvention.htm#sthash.qacmsoDu.dpuf