

Plans

Text: New Jersey Plan

The New Jersey Plan was a proposal for the structure of the United States federal government, presented by William Paterson at the Constitutional Convention of 1787. The plan was created in response to the Virginia Plan. Paterson's goal was to create a plan that ensured small states would have a voice in the national legislature. In the New Jersey Plan, the government would have one legislative house in which each state would have one vote. The New Jersey Plan was rejected, but it led to a compromise meant to balance the interests of small and large states.

Question:

Think about what you just read in the above paragraph and think about what you know about US History. What influence does this plan have on the government we have now?

Answer:

Class Notes

Text: Virginia Plan

The Virginia Plan was a proposal drafted by James Madison and discussed at the Constitutional Convention in 1787. The plan called for a bicameral (two-branch) legislature with the number of representatives for each state to be determined by the state's population. The Great Compromise of 1787 incorporated elements of the Virginia Plan into the new Constitution, replacing the Articles of Confederation.

Question:

Think about what you just read in the above paragraph and think about what you know about US History. What influence does this plan have on the government we have now?

Answer:

Class Notes

Compromises

Great Compromise

Text

The Great Compromise was an agreement made between large and small states which partly defined the representation each state would have under the United States Constitution, as well as in the legislature. It occurred in 1787. The Compromise resulted from a debate among delegates on how each state could have representation in the Congress. The Great Compromise led to the creation of a two-chambered Congress. Also created was the House of Representative which is determined by a state's population. The agreement retained the bicameral legislature, but the upper house had to change to accommodate two senators to represent each state. The deal reshaped the American government structure striking a balance between the highly populated states and their demands while at the same time taking into consideration the less-populous state and their interests.

Question:

Think about what you just read in the above paragraph and think about what you know about US History. Why do you think the founding fathers felt it necessary to compromise between the NJ and VA plans?

Answer:

Class Notes

3/5 Compromise

Text

The three-fifths compromise was an agreement, made at the 1787 Constitutional Convention, that allowed Southern states to count a portion of its enslaved population for purposes of taxation and representation. The compromise gave the South more power than it would have had if enslaved people had not been counted.

The agreement allowed slavery to spread and played a role in the forced removal of Indigenous peoples from their lands.

The 13th and 14th Amendments effectively repealed the three-fifths compromise.

Question:

Think about what you just read in the above paragraph and think about what you know about US History. Why do you think this compromise was necessary?

Answer:

Class Notes

Elastic Clause

Text

The specific powers and duties of the U.S. Congress are enumerated in several places in the Constitution. The most important listing of these powers is in Article I, Section 8, which identifies in 17 paragraphs the many important powers of Congress. The last paragraph grants to Congress the flexibility to create laws or otherwise to act where the Constitution does not give it the explicit authority to act. This clause is known as the Necessary and Proper Clause, although it is not a federal power, in itself.

Question:

Think about what you just read in the above paragraph and think about what you know about US History. Why do you think the founding fathers felt it necessary to put this clause in the Constitution?

Answer:

Class Notes