

Articles of Confederation

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As the war raged on, the state governments had seen the need for a central authority to direct the army and deal with foreign nations. Yet the states feared giving Congress too much power. A strong national government might trample the very rights they were fighting for.

In 1777 Congress proposed a plan to create a **confederation**—an alliance of independent states. This plan, called the Articles of Confederation, was finally approved by all of the states in 1781. Under the Articles each state would have one vote in Congress. Major decisions had to be approved by 9 of the 13 states.

The Articles gave Congress the right to raise an army and navy, control foreign affairs, coin money, and set up a postal system. However, Congress was not allowed to regulate trade or to tax. The states were fearful of handing those powers over to a central government.

Both during and after the war, Congress had to beg for money to carry out its policies. All too often, states ignored these humble requests. The result, said Madison, was that Congress was about as effective at uniting the states as "a rope of sand."

Vocabulary Blitz!

Congress – the law makers

Congress is a group of elected representatives who make the laws.

Articles of Confederation - Plan A for how the US government would work...It failed!

This was the first plan of government for the new United States. It gave Congress the power to do many things, such as, raise an army and a navy, set up a postal service, coin money, control foreign affairs, and pass laws. However, it did not let Congress control trade or collect taxes.

Trade - buying and selling; taxing imports and exports; exchanging goods and services

United - together; as one

Nation - country

National - of the whole country; central; federal; (as in Washington, DC – for the USA)

Barter - to trade one item for another, instead of giving money for an item

Currency - the kind of money used - Dollar/USA
Pound/England
Yen/Japan

Arsenal - the place where weapons are kept until they need to be used

Legislature - the group of people who make the laws (Congress)

Rebellion - a fight to change something that you don't agree with

Seize - to take or take over

Militia - a group of armed citizens – may or may not be trained/officially recognized