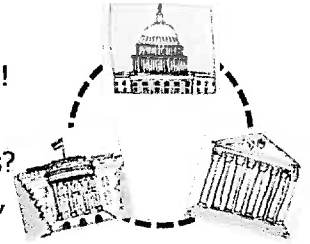


Wanted: A Just Right Government Name: _____

Let's Fix This Thing

In 1787, representatives from every state except Rhode Island met in Philadelphia to fix the Articles. We call this meeting the **Constitutional Convention** because they ended up doing more than just fixing the articles—they wrote the Constitution! But agreeing on a new way to structure the government wasn't easy.



Some states floated a new idea: Why not create a government with *three* branches? The new government could have a *legislative branch* with a congress to make laws, an *executive branch* led by a president to carry out laws, and a *judicial branch* with courts to interpret laws. It sounded good, but there was one major problem: How many votes would each state get in the Congress?

Voting in Congress: Yes, It's a Big Deal



Why? Because some states have a large population and some have a small population. Under the Articles of Confederation, each state got one vote no matter how many people it had. That meant people in large states had less influence in Congress. Naturally, large states thought this wasn't fair. They thought they should get more votes because they had more people. Small states, however, thought it was a pretty good deal. Even though they were small, they had the same amount of power and influence as large states. They wanted to keep a one-vote-per-state system.

Battle of the Plans	
Two different plans emerged—one favoring small states and one favoring large states. Can you tell which is which?	
<i>Virginia Plan</i>	<i>New Jersey Plan</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislative branch has 2 chambers• Number of votes for each state depends on the state's population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislative branch has one chamber• Each state gets one vote



The Americans were a lot like Goldilocks in the story about the three bears: They had to try different governments until they found one that was "just right!"

The Constitution Solution

The two sides—large states and small states—finally reached a compromise. The **Constitution** was the second and final attempt to write a document that would govern the United States, and we still follow it today. Under the Constitution, Congress is divided into two chambers: the Senate and the House of Representatives. In the Senate, each state gets two votes no matter what size it is. This favors small states. In the House of Representatives, the more people a state has, the more votes it gets. This favors large states. The Constitution also solved some other problems found in the Articles of Confederation.

- The Articles didn't require states to treat citizens from other states the same as their own citizens, but the Constitution does.
- The Articles couldn't be changed unless all states agreed, but the Constitution can be changed if 3/4 of the states agree.
- The Articles didn't require states to follow the laws Congress passed, but the Constitution says federal laws are superior to state laws.

The Constitution Solution: Establish a new plan for government! (Plan B)

There would be _____ branches to deal with the laws for the nation.

1. _____ Branch: _____ the laws
2. _____ Branch: _____ the laws
3. _____ Branch: _____ the laws

How to elect the members of the most powerful branch, the legislature, became the source of a big disagreement! Two plans were suggested:

	Virginia Plan	New Jersey Plan
The number of chambers or houses in Congress:		
The number of representatives (votes):		

- **The Virginia Plan** upset the _____ states because they felt the _____ states would always outvote them when making new laws.
- However, **The New Jersey Plan**, was too much like the _____, so would not solve the nation's problems.
- Neither group was willing to agree with the other side's plan; so someone suggested a _____.

The Great Compromise used the ideas from both plans in order to give both the large and the small states what they wanted in the legislative branch.

There would be a legislative branch with _____ chambers (houses):

	The Senate	The House of Representatives
The number of representatives (votes):		