

The articles of confederation essay

[Economics](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Articles of Confederation were drafted by John Dickerson in 1776 and were submitted to the states for ratification in November 1777. The Articles were not ratified until March of 1781, since it was required that all states ratify the document. Many states had problems with the Articles and through several compromises, the document was made to suit all the states.

Although the Articles provided the United States with an adequate form of government, there were many weaknesses in the document that needed to be fixed. The Articles of Confederation served as a stepping stone to the United States Constitution, which was later to be written. There were no federal courts, no authority to act directly upon individuals, no power to coerce states, and there had to be unanimous approval of the states for an amendment to be put into action. Unfortunately, the people could not get any help from the government because of the fact that Congress had no power to regulate commerce and that the Articles of Confederation, due to different views, created foreign disputes. Rawlin Lowndes of South Carolina posed the question in a speech to the House of Representatives (Document H) whether they should keep the Articles or simply revise them.

Because the surrounding states didn't have the time, the power, the money, nor the patience to erect an army to fight over rights to trade routes, the Mississippi River, for the time being, simply had to be closed. Later, when these territories have a population of more than sixty thousand, they could be admitted by Congress as states. The only reason that the Articles of Confederation needed to be patched up in the first place was that there were some major components missing from this law-biding document.

The Articles of Confederation did not provide an effective government, but ensured sovereignty of the states. The Articles of Confederation were simply a loose confederation of the states with no congressional power over commerce and no congressional power to levy taxes. In one certain instance, George Washington had to bring two individuals to his home and sit them down to settle out their dispute over a cup of tea. If there had been an effective government, the said factors and problems would not have been in existence. In fact, statistics (Document B) show that from 1784 to 1789, the estimated market value of United States exports to Great Britain fluctuated from about \$4, 429, 000 in 1784 to about \$4, 901, 000 in 1789. Instead, many wanted a sovereignty of the states, which they received under the Articles of Confederation. The most significant downfall to the Articles was the inability of the congress to enforce taxes upon the public.

Without taxation, which the Americans hated with a passion, the central governing body of the United States had almost no way to collect taxes, and next to zero power over the rest of the nation. In fact, the most that congress could do to collect any revenues whatsoever, was ask people kindly for “ donations”. The states also felt that if they allowed taxes imposed upon them, that the taxes would be distributed unequally.

Perhaps the most fundamental inefficiencies of the Articles were related to the nation’s economy. Having just won just won their own control over commerce and taxation from Britain, the individual states were reluctant to hand these privileges to another possible tyranny.