

# Dbq: us constitution

[Economics](#), [Tax](#)



From 1781 to 1789 the Articles of Confederation failed to provide the United States with an effective government. It acted as though a loose confederation, or “firm league of friendship.” The Articles of Confederation created a weak central government that linked the thirteen states in common problems such as foreign affairs, and a judicial arm. Although, there was no executive branch, which meant no leader to enforce laws.

Also, the Congress was weak (it was designed that way), and therefore the government could merely advocate and appeal. The United States faced two main problems: the lack of the central government’s power, and its inability to collect and/or create revenue. Each state was in fact not very coherent with the central government. Nor were the states coherent with each other. The states possessed more control than the central government, as the Articles of Confederation forbade the government to command, coerce, or control. It could not act directly upon the individual citizens of sovereign states. Also, the government could only recommend laws, taxes, and other pieces of legislation to a state.

Most often, when the government advocated for a law to be passed in a certain state, the state would reject the recommendation, like Rhode Island had done in 1782 (Doc. A). Moreover, the central government had no power to regulate commerce. This is due to how reluctant the states were to hand over control of taxation and commerce, after they had just won it from Great Britain. Without a central power to control these two aspects of the economy, the states were free to establish different, and often conflicting laws regarding tariffs and navigation. This led states to become only farther apart from each other, rather than more unified. Additionally, despite the

weak, unsuccessful government, to make any change to the Articles of Confederation required unanimous ratification.

Unanimity was near impossible, meaning that the Articles could never be amended. With a government this weak, people would lose confidence in it, and won't realize the benefit of the liberty they won from the British (Doc. G). Next, the Articles of Confederation failed to allow the central government to collect revenue. In addition to the central government already being weak, it could not effectively collect taxes. Congress, dealing with a large war debt, could not even pay its own soldiers their promised money (Doc. C).

Congress needed some form of revenue to get out of debt, so it established a tax quota for each of the states. It then asked each of them to contribute to their share on a voluntary basis. The government, lacking a president (executive branch), had no way to enforce this tax. Congress was lucky if they received one-fourth of their desired tax amount. Furthermore, Congress could not tax trade or any commerce; as for they did not set the regulations for it. Despite not fully “paying federal taxes”, states still scrambled to get money, and some ended up having to foreclose farms of debtors. Events like this in Massachusetts (along with the high taxes issued by the state), caused Shays's Rebellion.

This was occurred when a group of debtors demanded that the state issue paper money, lighten taxes, and suspend property takeovers. Even though the rebellion was crushed, it was a sign that in order for the United States to survive, a new constitution with a stronger federal government must be created. With a government so weak and ineffective, it is clear that the

United States could not survive without a new constitution. This is evident through the lack of the central government's power, and its inability to generate revenue. As time went by, more and more people began to realize this, which soon began the pursuit of the U. S. Constitution.

Therefore, it is obvious that from 1781 to 1789 the Articles of Confederation did not provide the United States with an effective government. (American Pageant was textbook used)