

Reasons the articles of confederation led to the ratification of the constitution...

[Law](#), [Constitution](#)



After America had declared independence from Great Britain in 1776, the next step was to construct a new set of government laws to govern the new nation. This was a task left up to the Confederation Congress, who adopted the Articles of Confederation in 1781. The Articles of Confederation were a good idea in theory, but when put into use by the colonies proved to be weak, and failed.

The Articles failed for many reasons. One of the main reasons was that Congress had no control over taxes, and the individual states wouldn't give the federal government the money it needed. This meant the federal government could not pay off the millions of dollars of debt from the revolution. There was also no money to get any type of military force together. This left the American borders vulnerable to attacks or invasions from Spain and Britain. Congress also had no power over foreign or interstate trade. This led to economic problems because each state was making their own laws, own money, and taxing each other. This led to chaos because one state's currency may not be usable in any other state.

Another problem was that there were no federal courts. Disagreements between states were hard to settle because, just like with the currency, each state only recognized its own laws. This led to criminals not being penalized because they would just go to another state.

Also, under the Articles, each state had one vote in Congress, no matter the size of the state. This caused problems because the larger states thought they should have more representation because they had a larger population. The larger states often ignored Congress and did what they wanted, like

negotiate with foreign nations. They got away with this because there was no way to punish individuals. The root of this problem was that there was no judicial system in place.

The Americans also had no type of executive power. They had no one to run the country and even the individual states did not like to give any one person too much power. The Americans were still traumatized by the British King and tyranny. The former colonists were afraid to give one person all the power because they had fought so hard to get away from that type of rule.

A government set up like this was bound to fail, and, for America's sake, something had to be done. At first it was purposed to amend the Articles, but it was decided that wasn't going to be enough. In the summer of 1787 delegates from all states, excluding Rhode Island, convened in Philadelphia, and elected George Washington to preside. Among them they decided the Articles had to go and that a whole new law was required. For sixteen weeks the fifty-five delegates underwent rocky debates. One of the major debates was over whether larger states should have more representation than smaller states. This was finally solved by Connecticut proposing the Great Compromise, which gave all states equal representation.

Another large debate was over economic interests. The southern states not being as highly populated as the northern states feared Congress having the power to regulate trade. They gave in to a compromise that prohibited the federal government from levying export taxes and from interfering with slave trade, which the south depended on for their tobacco plantations.

On September 12, 1787, the convention was finished and on September 17, 1787, thirty-nine delegates signed the document of new laws they had written, called the Constitution. The convention was sent home and the Constitution was sent to the individual states for ratifying. This started a whole new set of debates but ultimately, with some agreements of amendments, the Constitution was accepted as the new law.

Some of the major differences of the Constitution that strengthened the old Articles were: the Congress was divided into the House of Representatives and the Senate; each state had two Senators, and the amount of Representatives was chosen according to the state's population; the terms for legislative office terms were lengthened; congressional pay was paid by the federal government, not states. America now had one executive president, amendment was agreed upon by three fourths of all states, the United States coined money as a nation instead of by individual states, taxes were laid and collected by Congress not by individual states, and ratification only needed the consent of nine states.

For Americans to come up with and agree to the writing of and ratification of the Constitution was not easy. Not everyone agreed with all the changes, but, that will never happen. The Articles of Confederation were weak and bound to fail; a stronger government had to be built. We still stand by the Constitution today, with only a few amendments from the original. Even now no one has found a solution to every problem we have in this country or any

country, but the problems the Constitution did solve in 1787 made it possible for America to move forward and exist as we know it today.

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