

FINAL PROJECT

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, COMPROMISE AS A POLITICAL NECESSITY. NECESSARY IN THE CREATION AND FOUNDING OF THESE UNITED STATES, AND NECESSARY AND CRUCIAL IN THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THESE UNITED STATES.

The Constitutional Convention, from May to September 1787 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was a gathering of probably the best legal minds of the new United States. With the best minds came outsized self-perceptions of grandiose accomplishment, and enhanced self-image. The reason these very capable and professionally successful men who were very self aggrandizing individuals were able to craft a remarkable blueprint for self-government, which after two hundred and twenty two years has not been bettered, is due to the realization, and application of perhaps a very unique American trait of political compromise.

The Constitutional Convention and the process of compromise will be explored in this unit and taught at North Quincy High School in two courses covering United States government. The courses are an Advanced Placement United States Government class and a United States Government class at the honors level. Both classes are for seniors, but are open to interested and qualified junior level students.

The exploration and analysis of compromise as unique to any democratic system, and the focus of unique issues leading up to and during the founding of the United States, and exploring contemporary issues through the use of compromise in achieving peaceful and productive solutions to issues in which violence, destruction of property, and even to the loss of life may result in other nations, will provide a oversight of the use of compromise in a very distinctive American way. This method and subject will promote higher level thinking skills by encouraging the students to understand points of view about the topic from a multitude of perspectives. By presenting the different viewpoints from different individuals at the Convention, students will begin to identify themes made up of single or perhaps multiple societal segments. The students should be encouraged to make generalized observations as the result of exploring basic factual historical records. As part of the classes students will be lead toward and encouraged to experience the political issues in the same way as those who

went through them in the time period studied. Through the constant reminder of the ever present reality of human nature, the students will understand how the past decisions were made and why.

Through the use of the subject of compromise, not only of the founding of the unique form of the American Federal government, but also through the exploration of the continuing successful functioning of the United States Federal government in respect to also state and local governments.

PROCEDURES AND ASSESSMENT

Students will be provided with two readings taken from Carol Berkin's, *A Brilliant Solution: Inventing the American Constitution*; Hardcourt Inc. 2002. The two readings will be chapter three to familiarize the students with the major and some minor participants to the Convention; and chapter five through which the students will explore and analyze the process of compromise in presenting, structuring, formalizing, listening and acknowledging diverging points of view, and eventually agreeing through compromise to advance an agenda for the common long term good, and not short term partisan gain and or advantage, and the result being a framework toward creating a working and enduring system of government based on a written constitution.

Students will also use textbooks provided in their classes for an overview and exploration of the historical setting, political and economic situation and conditions, social norms and customs, and a generalized description of religious influences of the time period. The textbook, and readings will provide the students with a set of vocabulary terms which the students will define into their notebooks and be familiar with to enlarge and add depth to the classroom analysis and discussions. The terms required of the students to be familiar with will be as follows: delegate; Constitution; Preamble; Founding Fathers; compromise; proportional representation; Virginia Plan; New Jersey Plan; Great Compromise; 3/5th Clause; legislative branch, executive branch, judicial branch; bicameral legislature; senate, house of representatives ; cabinet ; veto; override; checks and balances ; separation of powers ; supreme Court ;judicial review ;enumerated powers ; implied powers ;tariffs; taxes; general welfare;

Electoral College; necessary and proper clause; popular sovereignty clause; federalism; ratify . Also the text books will provide a brief factual overview of the Virginia and New Jersey Plans as presented to the delegates, the compromise that resulted, and the long ratification process throughout the thirteen states that eventually validated the work, sacrifice, and dedication to others and a cause greater than the delegates themselves.

Students during and after reading both chapters will compile a list and brief description of the leading participants listing names; state of residence; personal, professional, and political backgrounds; political goals; synopsis of arguments to Convention; strengths and weakness of said arguments.

For chapter five, students will list, explain and define the process of agreement and disagreement among the participants; locate, identify the participants and list the verbal wrangling ; find strengths and weaknesses in the arguments; but primarily look for, target, and identify when compromise begins to emerge as the viable solution to the impasse of creating a working national level form of government.

Students will have two class days to read each chapter, in class time and for homework. As students read, their notebooks will be checked to ensure assignment goals are being fulfilled by the students, and proper notes and documentation are being kept. The third class day after each chapter assignment will be devoted to in class discussion and student input to answer and clarify topic questions concerning background, situation, goals, obstacles, disagreement, agreement and eventually compromise. After both chapters have been read and analyzed, student notebooks graded for completeness and content, two days will be used for group analysis and exploration of the subject of the importance of compromise in the American governmental and political process.

After the completion of the in- class analysis and discussion of compromise, a five paragraph written assessment will be required of the students. The essay question will be given in class and students will have one class session to answer the following question: Identify and explain, with the use of specific examples and names, of the individuals most instrumental to achieving the compromises which were necessary to resolve the major conflicts at the Constitutional Convention. Provide details of issues in dispute, agreements presented, for and against, strengths and weaknesses of individuals involved, and the evolving process of compromise. Upon the return of the graded essay, two days will be used to further clarify

and focus on compromise, through the use of the students own writing. During the two days, contemporary political, social, economic, religious, and or governmental issues which should be perhaps topically familiar to the students will be weaved into the discussion so to bridge the gap between time periods to make connections between the historical past and the students' current present time frame.

CONTENT STANDARD ALIGNMENT

USI.2 Explain the historical and intellectual influences on the American revolution and the formation and framework of the American Government. (H,C)

A. The legacy of Greece and Rome

B. The political theories of such European philosophers as Locke and Montesquieu

USI.7 Explain the roles of various founders at the Constitutional Convention. Describe the major debates that occurred at the Convention and the “Great Compromise” that was reached.

USI.8 Describe the debate over the ratification of the Constitution between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists; and explain the key ideas contained in the Federalist Papers on federalism, factions, checks and balances, and the importance of an independent judiciary.

USI.14 Explain the characteristics of American democracy, including the concepts of popular sovereignty and constitutional government, which includes representative institutions, federalism, separation of powers, checks and balances, and individual rights.

USI.15 Explain the varying roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments in the United States.

USI.21 Describe how decisions are made in a democracy, including the role of legislatures, courts, executive branch, and the public.

USG.2.1 Trace the colonial, revolutionary, and founding era experiences and events that led to the writing, ratification, and implementation of the United States Constitution (1787) and the Bill of Rights (1791).

USG.2.2 Analyze and interpret central ideas on government, individual rights, and the common good in the founding documents of the United States.

Examples: The Virginia declaration of Rights (1776); The declaration of Independence (1776); The Massachusetts Constitution (1780); The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom (1786); The Northwest Ordinance (1787); The United States Constitution (1787); selected Federalist Papers, such as numbers 1; 9;10; 39;51; and 78 (1787 – 1788); The Bill of Rights (1791); President Washington’s Farewell Address (1796); and president Jefferson’s First Inaugural address (1801).

USG.2.6 Define and provide examples of fundamental principles and values of American political and civic life, including liberty, the common good, justice, equality, tolerance, law and order, rights of individuals, diversity, civic unity, patriotism, constitutionalism, popular sovereignty, and representative democracy.

USG.2.8 Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues concerning foundational ideas or values in tension or conflict.

Examples: analyze issues involving liberty in conflict with equality, liberty in conflict with authority, individual rights in conflict with the common good, or majority rule in conflict with minority rights.

USG.3.9 Explain the formal process of how a bill becomes a law and define the terms initiative and referendum.

With the unit completed as outline above, students will be encouraged in class to address questions about the nature of the distribution of political power and not only the rights of the individual but the responsibilities of the individual to keep the democratic republic which was given us two hundred and twenty two years ago.

[Go to SSEC TAH Site](#)