

SUGGESTED QUILL LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

Constitutional literacy and civics education are inseparably interconnected: good constitutionalism requires good citizens who possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for perpetuating institutions; similarly, good civic education must be centered on a thorough understanding of the Constitution's foundations, principles, and text. The Civic Thought & Leadership Initiative recommends keeping civics at the forefront when lesson planning.

This template keeps this connection in mind. It draws upon and expands the expert pedagogy behind Jeff Nokes' lesson plans. The template can be altered as needed while focusing on civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions and the integration of primary sources whenever possible. The digital copy of this template can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/2s3ub5wb>.



BACKGROUND

<p>Learning Objectives</p> <p>Begin with the end in mind. Answer: By the end of the lesson, students should be able to ...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will be able to summarize the main ideas behind the major compromises at the Constitutional Convention by reading a simplified scholarly analysis of the event and answering questions.• (Student Friendly) I can support an opinion by examining ideas and quotes from the Quill Project like a historian would.
<p>Essential Question(s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Articles of Confederation gave the federal government very few powers. After the revolution, the federal government had responsibilities that they could not solve under the articles. What might be a couple examples of what the delegates needed to improve in the new Constitution?

	<p>Our congress has two levels of representation: the House of Representatives and the Senate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every state has two senators that are sent to congress, why is it important that every state has an equal amount of representation in the Senate? • The number of members of the House of Representatives are chosen based on the population of each state. Why is it important that each state have representation based on the population of the state? (Ex. Large states and small states)
<p>Brief Introduction</p> <p>In a paragraph or two, briefly introduce the topic and core issues.</p> <p>Warm-Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jq29NpmsK1A • What were the goals of each party in this video? (Meemaw and Georgie and Missy) • The delegates of the Constitutional Convention were divided between small and large states. Each group had their own vision for what representation in congress should look like. Representation by population would benefit the large states, but hurt the small states. On the other hand, equal representation would not be very fair because citizens in large states would not be represented equally. The Great Compromise brought both visions together to create the congress we have now. We have two levels of representation to maintain equal power among the states. (Possible Quill Event Evidence Number: E74251)

INSTRUCTION & PRACTICE

Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excerpt from Handout B• Quill Project Page: https://www.quillproject.net/m2/
Terms & Concepts to Understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Virginia Plan• New Jersey Plan• The Great Compromise• Senate or Second Branch of Legislature• House of Representatives or First Branch of Legislature• Civility• Representation• Articles of Confederation
Scaffolding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Together: Background information essay excerpt on Convention goals• Small groups: Back information essay excerpt on New Jersey and Virginia Plans• By themselves: Great Compromise using Quill (E74251, E77526)

Content Knowledge

Exploration

Background Information:

“Between 1776 and 1789 the state governments were unified under a structure set out in the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union. While this Union provided for powers to be delegated from the states to this 'league of friendship', the Articles stopped short of providing the institutions that are now recognized as the defining features of American government. Reform of this system of government proved difficult, however, and the convention held in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787, ostensibly for the purpose of recommending revisions to the Articles of Confederation', was only the latest in a series of efforts to change the federal system of government. Holding such a convention had been recommended by the Annapolis Convention, which had been held the previous year, and which had been asked to look at the much narrower issue of trade, an issue which the delegates realized touched on so many issues of government that it was impossible to solve without a broader revision of the system of government.

Nevertheless, the fifty-five delegates who attended the 1787 Convention disagreed on fundamental questions, and (as representatives of their various states) had been given differing authorities to negotiate, Perhaps the least controversial question of all was the decision, taken at the start of the 1787 Convention, to write an entirely new constitutional document rather than propose revisions to the existing Articles of Confederation.”

- The author says that the Convention knew they needed to completely reorganize their government vision. What might be some examples of what the delegates needed to improve in the new Constitution?

Note: This is an initial thought question. The students are not supposed to know the answer but begin brainstorming the important changes made to the federal government.

Skills & Dispositions

Quill Project

Background information:

“...Of the two, the Virginia Plan recommended a more powerful central state, with a bicameral legislature, an executive, and a judicial branch. The lower house of the legislature was to be elected by the people of each state, with seats allocated on the basis either of the financial contribution of each state to the Union, or of the number of free inhabitants, or on 'some other principle'. The upper house and the national executive were to be chosen by the lower house. Although many of the details of this framework were left blank or explicitly left as issues to be decided, it was a plan that clearly envisaged a form of union that would have a powerful central government and within which the larger, richer states would have an advantage. By contrast, the New Jersey Plan would have gone further to preserve the looser structure of the union under the Articles of Confederation. It did not anticipate an election of members of Congress by the people directly, nor did it propose to remove the equal vote that all states currently exercised in Congress. A government designed within this framework would have been weak, with much more power (and, just as importantly, democratic legitimacy) reserved to the state governments.”

Excerpt from quill - E67264

“Mr. Wilson entered into a contrast of the principal points of the two plans so far < he said> as there had been time to examine the one last proposed. These points were 1. in the Virga. plan there <are> 2 & in some degree 3 branches in the Legislature / in the plan from N. J. there is to be a single legislature only — 2. Representation of the people at large is the basis of the one / the State Legislatures the pillars of the other — 3. proportional representation prevails in one / equality of suffrage in the other — 4. a single Executive Magistrate is at the head of the one: — a

plurality is held out in the other. — 5. in the one the majority of 〈the people of〉 7
the U. S. must prevail: — in the other a minority may prevail.”

1. What are three principle points of the Virginia plan?
2. What are three principle points of the New Jersey plan?

Primary Sources & Case Studies

Application

Excerpt from quill – e74251

“7. Resolved that the right of suffrage in the first branch of the national Legislature ought not to be according to the rule established in the articles of confederation, but according to some equitable ratio of representation. Resolved — That in the original formation of the Legislature of the United States the first Branch thereof shall consist of sixty five members — of which number

New Hampshire shall send Three
Massachusetts Eight
Rhode Island One
Connecticut Five
New York Six
New Jersey Four
Pennsylvania Eight
Delaware One
Maryland Six
Virginia Ten
North Carolina Five
South Carolina Five
Georgia Three.

But as the present situation of the States may probably alter in the number of their inhabitants the Legislature of the United States shall be authorized from time to time to apportion the number of representatives: and in case any of the States shall hereafter be divided, or enlarged by addition of territory, or any two or more States united, or any New States created within the limits of the United States the Legislature of the United States shall possess authority to regulate the number of

representatives: in any of the foregoing cases upon the principle of their number of inhabitants, according to the provisions hereafter mentioned, namely,

[...]

8. Resolved That in the second Branch of the Legislature of the United States each State shall have an equal vote.”

1. How would states be represented in the House of Representatives?
2. How would states be represented in the Senate?

Graphic Organizer

Graphic organizers are one way to encourage student analysis of primary source texts. The organizer may include questions for analyzing the texts as well as more global interpretive questions which students defend through their study of the primary source. See examples in Nokes (2019).

CLOSURE**Debriefing**

In addition to the text of the Constitution, what lessons can we learn from studying the Convention?

Reinforcing Core Facts? Clarify any absolute facts	The Great Compromise provided the United States with the Legislature we have today.
Reinforce Skills & Dispositions	Also review any civic skills and dispositions learned and practiced during the lesson.

This template is a work in progress. Please share any feedback you may have with the Civics Fellows by emailing lisa.halverson@uvu.edu.