

# articles of confederation worksheet answers

**Articles of Confederation worksheet answers** are essential for students and educators alike, as they provide a comprehensive understanding of the first governing document of the United States. The Articles of Confederation were ratified in 1781 and served as the nation's first constitution until it was replaced by the current Constitution in 1789. This article aims to delve into the key aspects of the Articles of Confederation, the challenges they presented, and the reasons for their eventual replacement. By exploring this topic in depth, students can better answer worksheets and questions related to this formative period in American history.

## Overview of the Articles of Confederation

The Articles of Confederation were drafted in 1777 and ratified by the thirteen original states in 1781. The document aimed to create a loose alliance of independent states while providing a framework for national governance. The Articles established a unicameral legislature, known as the Congress of the Confederation, where each state had one vote regardless of its size or population.

## Key Features of the Articles of Confederation

1. **Sovereignty of States:** The Articles emphasized the sovereignty and independence of each state, allowing them to retain most of their powers.
2. **Unicameral Legislature:** There was no separate executive or judicial branch; legislative authority rested solely with Congress.
3. **Limited Powers of Congress:** Congress could conduct foreign affairs, negotiate treaties, and manage relations with Native American tribes, but it lacked the authority to levy taxes or regulate commerce.
4. **No Executive Branch:** There was no president or executive branch to enforce laws or oversee the functioning of the government.
5. **Amendment Process:** Amendments to the Articles required unanimous consent from all thirteen states, making it extremely difficult to adapt the document to changing needs.

## Challenges Faced Under the Articles of Confederation

While the Articles of Confederation represented a significant step towards governance, they also presented numerous challenges that highlighted their weaknesses. Below are some of the key issues:

### Economic Weaknesses

- **Inability to Tax:** Congress had no power to impose taxes, relying instead on voluntary contributions from the states. This led to financial instability and an inability to pay debts from the Revolutionary War.

- Trade Restrictions: Without the power to regulate commerce, states often engaged in trade disputes with one another, leading to economic fragmentation.

## **Political Challenges**

- Lack of Central Authority: The absence of a strong central government meant that Congress struggled to enforce its laws or decisions, leading to a lack of cohesion among the states.
- Interstate Conflicts: Disputes between states occasionally escalated into conflicts, as there was no national judicial system to resolve these issues.

## **Military Weaknesses**

- No Standing Army: The inability to raise a standing army left the nation vulnerable to threats, both domestic and foreign.
- Shays' Rebellion: This armed uprising in 1786-1787 highlighted the weaknesses of the federal government under the Articles, as it was unable to quell the rebellion effectively.

## **Reasons for Replacement of the Articles of Confederation**

The myriad challenges faced under the Articles of Confederation culminated in the decision to replace it with a new governing document. Several key factors contributed to this shift.

## **Constitutional Convention of 1787**

In response to the growing sense of discontent with the Articles, the Constitutional Convention was held in Philadelphia in 1787. Delegates from twelve states convened to address the weaknesses of the Articles and create a new framework for government.

## **Key Motivations for Change**

1. Need for a Stronger Central Government: The inability to enforce laws and raise revenue underscored the need for a more robust federal system.
2. Economic Stability: To promote national commerce and trade, a stronger government with the power to regulate commerce was essential.
3. National Defense: The need for a standing army and a coordinated defense strategy became increasingly apparent, especially in light of international threats.

# Transition to the U.S. Constitution

The culmination of the Constitutional Convention was the drafting of the United States Constitution, which addressed many of the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation. The new document established a federal system of government with checks and balances among three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial.

## Key Differences Between the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution

- Stronger Federal Authority: The Constitution granted the federal government the power to tax, regulate interstate and foreign commerce, and enforce laws.
- Bicameral Legislature: The new Congress consisted of two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives, which provided a more balanced representation of the states.
- Executive Branch: A president was established to serve as the head of the executive branch, responsible for enforcing laws and managing national affairs.
- Judicial System: The Constitution created a federal judiciary to interpret laws and resolve disputes, addressing the lack of a judicial system under the Articles.

## Conclusion

In summary, the Articles of Confederation were a pioneering attempt at self-governance for the newly independent United States. While they laid the groundwork for future governance, the inherent weaknesses prompted the need for a stronger federal system, ultimately leading to the creation of the U.S. Constitution. Understanding the Articles of Confederation and their impact on American history is crucial for students, as it provides insights into the challenges of governance and the evolution of the American political system. The answers to Articles of Confederation worksheets can thus serve as a valuable resource for reinforcing this knowledge and enhancing comprehension of the complexities of early American governance.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What were the main weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation?

The main weaknesses included the lack of a strong central government, no power to tax, no executive branch, and the requirement of unanimous consent for amendments.

### How did the Articles of Confederation impact interstate relations?

The Articles of Confederation led to disputes between states over trade and borders, as there was no

national authority to resolve conflicts.

## **What event highlighted the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation?**

Shays' Rebellion in 1786-1787 highlighted the inability of the government to maintain order and protect property, demonstrating the need for a stronger federal system.

## **What was the process for amending the Articles of Confederation?**

Amendments to the Articles required unanimous approval from all 13 states, making it nearly impossible to adapt to changing needs.

## **What did the Articles of Confederation establish regarding the military?**

The Articles allowed Congress to raise and support an army, but it lacked the power to draft soldiers, relying instead on state militias.

## **How did the Articles of Confederation influence the U.S. Constitution?**

The weaknesses of the Articles prompted the Constitutional Convention of 1787, where delegates created a stronger federal system, leading to the drafting of the U.S. Constitution.

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