Introduction

In 1765, the colonists objected to the British government collecting taxes in the thirteen colonies.
George Washington (left) and Thomas Jefferson (right) participated in the First Continental Congress, in 1774, which sent King George III a list of the colonists’ complaints.
Introduction

In 1775, the Second Continental Congress chose George Washington to command the Continental Army during the American Revolution.
In 1776, the Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson, declared the colonies’ separation from Britain and their establishment as “free and independent states.”

**Big Question:** What does self-government mean, and why was it such a revolutionary idea?
Big Question: What is a republic or a republican form of government?
CHAPTER 3: The Articles of Confederation

In 1777, the Second Continental Congress approved the Articles of Confederation to form a central government beyond the individual state governments.

Some Powers of the Central Government Under the Articles of Confederation:

- Declare war and make peace
- Create an army and a navy
- Send representatives to foreign countries
- Borrow money
- Establish a system of weights and measures
- Establish post offices
- Print money

Big Question: Why did the lack of a central government prove to be a problem?
CHAPTER 4: Planning a New Constitution

James Madison (left), Alexander Hamilton (middle), George Washington (right), and others decided that the nation needed a stronger central government.

**Big Question:** Why did James Madison and Alexander Hamilton think a stronger central government was needed?
In 1787, a convention was held in Philadelphia to reconsider the need for a stronger central government.

**Big Question:** Why did James Madison and Alexander Hamilton think a stronger central government was needed?
The convention delegates decided that they should write a new constitution to form a stronger central government.

**Powers the Central Government Should Have**
- Protect the people against enemies
- Protect the liberties of its citizens
- Control trade between the states
- Provide for the good of all the people
- Raise money through some form of taxation

**Big Question:** What was the Virginia Plan, and why might some delegates have objected to it?
The new government was organized into three branches of government.

The Constitution

Separation of Powers

The Congress
- Passes laws

The President
- Carries out the laws of Congress
- Suggests new laws

The Supreme Court
- Settles arguments about the law

Big Question: What were the main challenges that had to be overcome in order to create a new constitution?
Roger Sherman introduced a plan that shared power between large and small states.

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The slave trade continued, even though many people were against slavery.

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Big Question: Why was it considered essential to have a Bill of Rights added to the U.S. Constitution?
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James Madison led the movement to amend the Constitution to include the Bill of Rights, which was ratified in 1791.