



9-1 The Articles of Confederation



Introduction After declaring their independence, the new states were wary of a strong national government. The first constitution they approved, the Articles of Confederation, guaranteed certain powers to the states and restricted those granted to the new national government. Selections from the articles appear here.

Vocabulary Before reading the selection, find the meaning of these words in a dictionary: sovereignty, confederation.

Article I. The style of this confederacy shall be "The United States of America."

Article II. Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence. Every power and right which is

not expressly delegated to the United States in Congress assembled.

Article III. The said states hereby enter into a firm league of friendship with each other, for their common defense, the security of their liberties, and their mutual and general welfare. They agree to bind themselves to assist each other against all attacks made upon them, or any of them, on account of religion, trade, or any other pretense whatever.

sovereignty – the ability to govern itself

1. According to the Articles of Confederation, what powers were given to the states?

2. According to Article III, for what reasons were the states joined in this confederation?

Life under the Articles of Confederation



Which of the following LEAST describes the artist's point of view as expressed through the image?

- The Articles of Confederation did not do a good job unifying the states.
- The Articles of Confederation caused a number of economic problems.
- The Articles of Confederation created a struggle for power among the states.
- The Articles of Confederation did not set up a proper form of leadership which resulted in much fighting among the states.

The cartoon might also be used to describe

- the difficulties faced by the President during the early years of the new republic.
- the Articles of Confederation's failure to establish a court system.
- the disagreement among the states over taxes.
- the issue that needed to be settled with paying back foreign debts.

Overall, what was a major weakness with the Articles of Confederation?

An Ordinance for the government of the Territory of the United States northwest of the River Ohio.

Article 2. ...No man shall be deprived of his liberty or property...their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed

Article 5. There shall be formed in the said territory, not less than three nor more than five States; And, whenever any of the said States shall have sixty thousand free inhabitants therein, such State shall be admitted, by its delegates, into the Congress of the United States, on an equal footing with the original States

Article 6. There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.

Taken from the Northwest Ordinance, July 13, 1787

1. Where does this information come from?

2. What area of the United States does this document refer to?

3. According to Article 2, what are **two** rights every resident is guaranteed?

a. _____

b. _____

4. According to Article 5, how are new states created?

5. What rule is established in Article 6?

Creating the Constitution

Primary Source**James Bowdoin's Account of Shays' Rebellion**

James Bowdoin was governor of Massachusetts during Shays' Rebellion. In this document, he recounted the event and its significance.

Directions: Read the excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

The rebels, under Daniel Shays, Luke Day, and Eli Parsons, soon gathered a force in that vicinity [of Springfield], of 2000 men, and on the 25th of January advanced in a menacing manner towards the arsenal [warehouse]. Gen. Shepard sent an aid-de-camp [officer] to inquire the design of the movement, and to warn Shays of his danger. The answer was, that they *would have* possession of the barracks [warehouse]; and they immediately marched to within 250 yards of the arsenal. They were again warned that if they approached nearer, they would be fired on; still they advanced. He then ordered the artillery to be pointed at the centre of their column [group]. The cry of murder then arose from the rear of the insurgents, and the whole were struck with panic and confusion. Shays lost all control over them, and they fled . . . 10 miles, leaving 3 dead and 1 wounded. . . .

Good frequently springs from evil. Shays's Rebellion served to impress on the public mind a belief of the necessity of a new form of National Government. It may be doubted, whether the present United States Constitution would have been adopted, if that rebellion had not predisposed the minds of the people in favor of an energetic [powerful] government.

1. How many men did Shays gather together?

2. What were the rebels going to do? How were they stopped?

3. **Draw Conclusions** Why did Governor Bowdoin state that "good frequently springs from evil"?
