

Articles of
Confederation

First plan of government for the United States, in effect from 1781 to 1789. It gave more power to the states than to the central government

ratify

to officially approve

legislative branch

part of the government
that passes laws

executive branch

part of the government, headed
by the President, that carries out
the laws

judicial branch

part of the government that
decides the meaning of laws

inflation

economic condition in which
prices rise very quickly

Shays' Rebellion

revolt of Massachusetts's
farmers against high state taxes,
led by Daniel Shays

**Northwest Ordinance of
1787**

Federal order that divided the Northwest Territory
into smaller territories and created a plan for how
the territories could become states

delegate

person chosen to
represent others

**Constitutional
Convention**

meeting of delegates who met in Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania, in 1787 and replaced the Articles
of Confederation with the Constitution

Virginia Plan

proposal during the Constitutional Convention that Congress be given greater power over the states and that large states have more representatives in Congress than smaller states

New Jersey Plan

proposal during the Constitutional Convention that each state should have the same number of representatives in Congress

compromise

settlement of a disagreement in which each side agrees to give up part of its demands

Great Compromise

agreement at the Constitutional Convention to create a Congress with two houses, first proposed by Roger Sherman of Connecticut

Three-Fifths Compromise

agreement made at the Constitutional Convention that only three-fifths of the slaves in a state would be counted for representation and tax purposes

Preamble

introduction to the Constitution,
beginning, "We the People of the
United States..."

reserved powers

powers in the Constitution that
are left to the individual states

separation of powers

division of power among the
three branches of the federal
government under the
Constitution

checks and balances

system set up by the Constitution that gives each
branch of government the power to check, or
limit, the power of the other branches

veto

power of the President to reject a
bill passed by Congress

Federalists

supporter of a strong national government and in favor adopting the Constitution

federal

refers to the national government

Antifederalists

people opposed to the new U.S. Constitution and its emphasis on a strong national government

The Federalist

series of essays in 1787 and 1788 by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay that urged support of the new Constitution

amendment

a change, or addition, to the Constitution

Bill of Rights

first ten amendments to the
Constitution, ratified in 1791