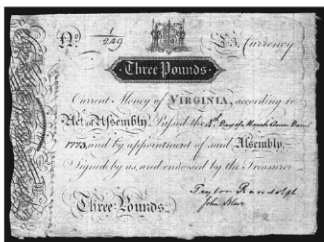
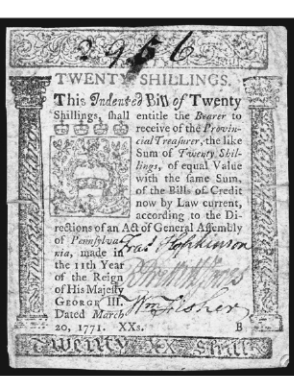


Our First Laws

The **Articles of Confederation** were our new country's first laws. A **confederation** is a group united together for a purpose. The Articles of Confederation joined together our original 13 states.

The Articles held our country together during the fight for independence from Britain. When the American Revolution was over and the enemy threat was gone, the states became interested only in themselves.

There were many problems because there was no strong central government.



Pennsylvania's currency (left) was different from Virginia's and other states' after the American Revolution.

Money: The government had no control over paper money. Each state could print its own.

Taxes: The government did not have the power to collect taxes. Gen. George Washington was well aware of this problem. During the Revolutionary War, many of his troops were ragged and hungry. Some troops paid for their own gunpowder.

Trade: The government had no powers over trade or commerce. Dealing with other countries was hard because Congress could not speak for all states. States even set **tariffs**, or taxes, on items coming in from other states.

Other countries had no respect for us: Our government was so weak that England kept some of the forts it agreed to give up after the Revolutionary War.

Mount Vernon meeting, 1785

After the Revolution, the government of the 13 states was not strong enough to straighten out differences among the states. Leaders met at George Washington's home to settle differences between Maryland and Virginia. The five delegates settled the differences, and then decided to hold a meeting once a year and invite all 13 states.

Meeting at Annapolis, 1786

Five states sent a total of 12 delegates. They took a strong step. They sent word to the Congress and other states that another meeting should be held the next year to rewrite the Articles of Confederation. The meeting in 1787 did more than that. It wrote the Constitution.



The meeting in Annapolis, Maryland, was held at Mann's Tavern.

Mini Fact:

Gouverneur Morris, who lived from 1752-1816, is credited with writing the Preamble to the Constitution.

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

The Preamble

Most people agree that the first three words — “We the People” — are the most important in the Constitution. They clearly say that the American people are in charge of their government. This is known as “popular sovereignty.” The people hold the power.

Who are ‘We the People’?

In 1787, when the Constitution was written, there were about 3,894,000 people in the United States. Today there are about 330,177,000. We the people have grown!

In 2005, Betty Debnam, creator of The Mini Page, worked closely with the National Archives in Washington, D.C., to create a nine-part series of issues about our U.S. Constitution. This is the second issue in the series, which will continue once a month until Election Day 2020.

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MParticles

At the library:

- “The Articles of Confederation” by Blair Belton

Try ‘n’ Find

Words that remind us of our first laws are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

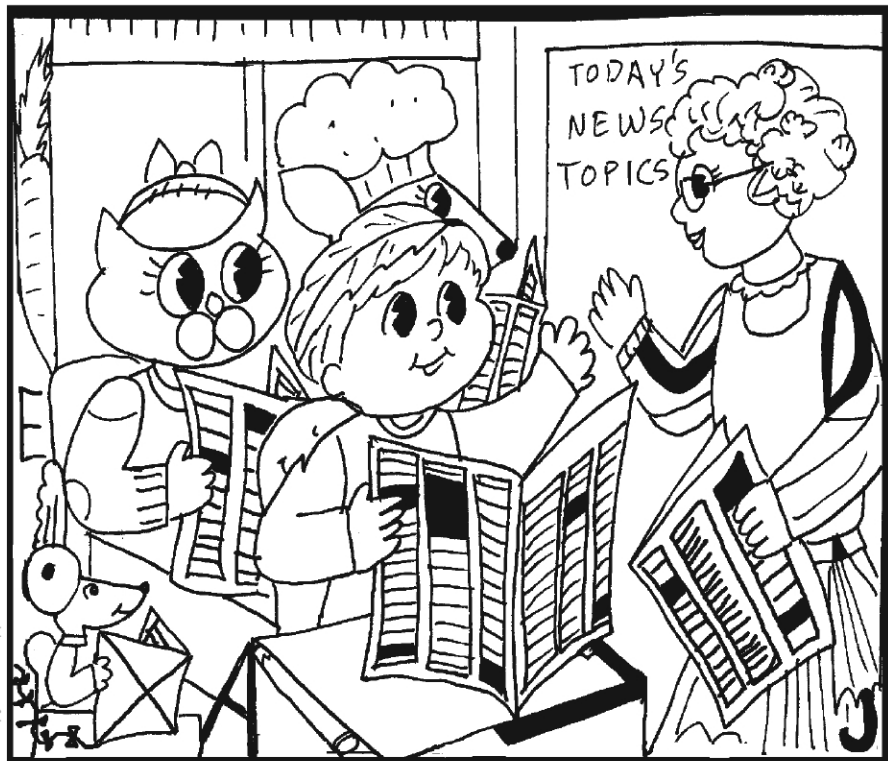
BRITAIN, CENTRAL,
CONFEDERATION,
CONGRESS,
CONSTITUTION,
FIRST, GOVERNMENT,
INDEPENDENCE, LAWS,
MONEY, PREAMBLE,
RESPECT, REVOLUTION,
STATES, TARIFF, TAXES,
TRADE, UNITED.

H C O N S T I T U T I O N B F
S W A L C O N G R E S S W R F
U N I T E D B J Y E N O M I I
R R E S P E C T A X E S S T R
C O N F E D E R A T I O N A A
E I N D E P E N D E N C E I T
T S R I F G O V E R N M E N T
E L B M A E R P S T A T E S S
B C F N O I T U L O V E R G O
C E N T R A L F E E D A R T O



Mini Spy Classics

Mini Spy and her friends are using newspapers in school. See if you can find the hidden pictures. Then color the picture.



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- man in the moon
- pencil
- kite
- cat
- carrot
- letter D
- letter E
- football
- ruler
- sock
- number 8
- letter A
- umbrella
- number 7
- muffin
- feather

Mini Jokes



Penny: Where does a penguin keep its money?
Paul: In a snow bank!

Eco Note



Why is it important to protect our planet? The average person goes through two trees' worth of paper products a year. Across the globe, around 1 million new plastic bags are used **every minute**. Even if you live in the center of a city, you cannot survive without nature. People once saw nature as something to be tamed and dominated. Now we know it's vital to look after the environment. The future of the planet is in our hands and depends on choices we make today.

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For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles about local or state government.

Teachers: Follow and interact with The Mini Page on Facebook!



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