Constitutional Debates



Name _____ Date _____

1 Recall, then make a connection.

Start from memory. Write a meaning or quick example for each term.

ratification	Federalist	Anti-Federalist

Explain what ratification would accomplish in the founding debate. Contrast a Federalist argument with an Anti-Federalist concern without treating either side as a single, identical viewpoint.

Context for the task

The Constitution emerged from disagreement about how a republic could be both effective and accountable. Under the Articles of Confederation, the national government struggled with revenue and interstate coordination. Supporters of the proposed Constitution argued that a stronger federal structure was needed. Critics feared distant power, inadequate representation, and threats to rights. The labels Federalist and Anti-Federalist describe broad positions in the ratification debate, not two perfectly uniform groups.

2 Build the sequence.

Print the four-date strip

Use the founding documents' dates to organize the display.

Arrange the events.

A. 1787: Delegates sign the proposed Constitution.

B. 1789: Congress proposes amendments including rights protections.

C. 1791: Ten proposed amendments are ratified as the Bill of Rights.

D. 1781: The Articles of Confederation take effect.

Sequence: _____ -> _____ -> _____ -> _____

Explain one connection between two neighboring steps.

Evidence, application & transfer.



3 Read the evidence closely.

Find evidence of a political response

The printshop editor claims that demands for explicit safeguards influenced the early constitutional system.

Select every record supporting that claim.

A. Ratifying conventions expressed a desire for additional protective and restrictive clauses.

B. Congress proposed amendments in 1789, and ten were ratified in 1791.

C. The original Constitution lists the ages required to serve in Congress.

D. A shipping ledger records trade between two states in 1786.

Selections: _____ Explain your reasoning:

4 Apply the idea.

Add the necessary qualification

An exhibit caption says, "Ratification and the Bill of Rights immediately made freedom and political participation equal for everyone."

Which editorial note is needed?

A. The new protections mattered, but slavery and exclusions from political participation remained; later struggles and changes must also be studied.

B. The existence of remaining exclusions proves that none of the constitutional protections mattered.

C. A written statement of rights automatically proves equal access in practice.

My choice: _____ Explain why it fits:

5 Carry the idea forward.

Write a printshop introduction that presents a supporter's concern, a critic's concern, the Bill of Rights response, and one limitation of claiming that the compromise solved everything.