

**Name:**

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Document A: "...We would sooner submit to another country"

Records of the Federal Convention of 1787 - Resolution Proposed by Mr. Patterson (New Jersey), June 15, 1787

Source: [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/hlaw:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(fr00191\)\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/hlaw:@field(DOCID+@lit(fr00191)))

At the beginning of the (agreeing with the U.S. Constitution) Convention, Governor Randolph of Virginia put forward Madison's Virginia Plan for a new form of government which preferred the large states over the small states. William Patterson of New Jersey then answered to/fought by proposing the New Jersey Plan that put the small states on an equal footing with the large states. This plan reflected the fear and stress felt by people (who do things for other people) from the small states, especially New Jersey and Delaware.

In the official records of the Federal Convention of 1787, the following was recorded,

"Mr. Dickenson (from Pennsylvania) said to Mr. Madison "You see the result of pushing things too far. Some of the members from the small States wish for two branches in the General Government, and are friends to a good National Government; but we would sooner submit to another country, than submit to be kept away from an equality of right to vote, in both branches of the government, and in that way be thrown under the rule of the large States." January 1639/40-ACT X.

Document B: Objections to the Constitution, George Mason

Elliot's Debates --OBJECTIONS OF THE HON. GEORGE MASON, ONE OF THE DELEGATES FROM VIRGINIA IN THE LATE CONTINENTAL CONVENTION, TO THE PROPOSED FEDERAL CONSTITUTION; ASSIGNED AS HIS REASONS FOR NOT SIGNING THE SAME.

Small sections/small parts:

There is no declaration of rights; and, the laws of the general government being most important to the laws and constitutions of the several states, the declarations of rights in the separate states are no security. Nor are the people secured even in the enjoyment of the benefit of the common law, which stands here upon no other foundation than its having been adopted by the (pertaining to each person or thing) acts forming the constitutions of the several states.

...The (related to judges and the court system) of the United States is so built and extended as to soak up (like a towel) and destroy the judiciaries of the several states; by that/in that way creating and displaying laws as tiring and boring, detailed, and expensive, and justice as impossible-to-get, by a great part of the community, as in England; and enabling the rich to badly mistreat and ruin the poor.

The President of the United States has no (agreeing with the U.S. Constitution) (group of people who advise or govern), (a thing unknown in any safe and regular government.) He will therefore be unsupported by proper information and (opinions about what could or should be done about a situation), and will generally be directed by servants and favorites; or he will become a tool to the Senate; or a (group of people who advise or govern) of state will grow out of the principal officers of the great departments--the worst and most dangerous of all ingredients for such a (group of people who advise or govern), in a free country; for they may be caused to join in any dangerous or terrible (because of mistreatment) measures, to shelter themselves, and prevent a question (or investigation) into their own bad behavior in office. Whereas, had an (agreeing with the U.S. Constitution) (group of people who advise or govern) been formed (as was proposed) of six members, that is,, two from the Eastern, two from the Middle, and two from the Southern States, to be selected/hired by vote of the states in the House of

...By needing/ordering only a majority to make all commercial and navigation laws, the five Southern States (whose produce and facts or conditions (that surround someone) are totally different from those of the eight Northern and Eastern States) will be ruined; for such stiff/not flexible and (too)

... The people gave them no power to use their name. That they went beyond their power is perfectly clear.

**Name:**

Document C: Letters between George Washington, Patrick Henry, and Benjamin Harrison - September/October, 1787

George Washington to Patrick Henry, Benjamin Harrison, and Thomas Nelson Jr., September 24, 1787

Mount Vernon, September 24, 1787.

Dear Sir: In the first moment after my return I take the freedom of sending you a copy of the Constitution which the foederal Convention has submitted to the People of these States. I go with it with no observations; your own Judgment will at once discover the good, and the (able to be objected to) parts of it. and your experience of the difficulties, which have ever arisen when attempts have been made to create agreement between such variety of Interests and local (unfair, pre-decided bad opinions) as spread (or exist) throughout the several States will make/give explanation unnecessary. I wish the Constitution which is offered had been made more perfect, but I honestly believe it is the best that could be received/be gotten at this time; and, as an (agreeing with the U.S. Constitution) door is opened for change after now, the adoption of it under the present facts or conditions that surround the Union is in my opinion desirable.

From a variety of agreeing accounts it appears to me that the political concerns of this Country are, in a manner, suspended by a thread. That the Convention has been looked up to by the reflecting part of the community with a worry/concern (for someone) which is hardly to be understood/created, and that if nothing had been agreed on by that body, lack of law and order would soon have resulted, the seeds being richly [(sic) spread around in every soil. I am &c.8

## Responses:

Henry answered (October 19): "I have to sad complaint that I cannot bring my Mind to give/to peace with the proposed Constitution The Concern I feel on this Account, is really greater than I am able to express. Maybe mature Reflection may furnish me Reasons to change my present Feelings into a Being like other people with the Opinions of those people For whom i have the highest (almost holy) respect."

On October 4 Harrison replied: "I feel myself deeply interested in every thing that you have had a hand in, or that comes from you, and am so well promised to/certain of the solidity of your judgment, and the rightness of your plans/desires, that i will never stick at little things to obey (social) rules myself to your opinion; in the present instance, I am So totally uninform'd as to the general situation of America, that I can form no judgment of the need the convention was under to give us such a constitution as it has done; If our condition is not very desperate, I have my fears that the fix (for a disease) will prove worse than the disease. Age makes men often over cautious; I am walling to attribute my fears to that cause, but from whatever source they spring, I cannot remove myself of an opinion, that the seeds of civil disagreement are plentifully spread around in very many of the powers given both to the president and congress, and that if the constitution is carried into effect, the States south of the potowmac, will be little more than (things that stick out) to those to the northward of it....I will only say, that my objections mostly lay agst. the unlimited powers of taxation and the rules of trade, and you legal controls that are to be established in every State completely independent of their laws, The sword, and such powers will; no in the nature of things they must sooner or later, establish a very bad treatment, not inferior to the (government by three rulers) or centum viri of Rome."

<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field%28DOCID+@lit%28gw290211%29%29>

There are 44 hard words. How many do you want to learn?

3

7

10

Hand-pick words

Reading time: 16 seconds. | Total points: 0 | ? | X

[Rewordified text](#)
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Document D: Patrick Henry's speech at Virginia Approval Convention - June 4, 1788

Mr. HENRY. Mr. Chairman, the public mind, as well as my own, is very uneasy at the proposed change of government. Give me leave to form one of the number of those who wish to be completely (made) familiar with the reasons of this dangerous and uneasy situation, and why we are brought here to decide on this great national question. I consider myself as the servant of the people of this country/state, as a guard over their rights, freedom, and happiness. I represent their feelings when I say that they are very uneasy at being brought from that state of full security, which they enjoyed, to the present mentally ill (because of false beliefs) appearance of things. A year ago, the minds of our people (who lawfully live in a country, state, etc.) were at perfect rest. Before the meeting of the late federal Convention at Philadelphia, a general peace and a universal peace and calmness won in this country; but, since that period, they are very uneasy and upset. When I wished for an appointment to this Convention, my mind was very upset/shook/shaken for the situation of public affairs. I understood/created the republic to be in extreme danger. If our situation be this way uneasy, from where has arisen this afraid/scary danger? It rises/comes up from this deadly system; it rises/comes up from a proposal to change our government -- a proposal that goes to the total destruction of the most serious engagements of the states -- a proposal of beginning and building on nine states into a confederacy, to the eventual exclusion of four states. It goes to the destruction of those serious agreements between countries we have formed with foreign nations.

... This proposal of changing our federal government is of a most upsetting nature! Make the best of this new government -- say it is written by any thing but inspiration -- you should be very cautious, watchful, jealous of your freedom; for, instead of securing your rights, you may lose them forever. If a wrong step be now made, the republic may be lost forever. If this new government will not come up to the expectation of the people, and they will be disappointed, their freedom will be lost, and very bad treatment must and will arise. I repeat it again, and I beg gentlemen think about, ]', to consider, ', event)" class="hy" title="to consider,">\_to think about, ] that a wrong step, made now, will suddenly drop us into extreme unhappiness/extreme pain, and our republic will be lost.

...I have the highest extreme respect for those gentlemen; but, sir, give me leave to demand, What right had they to say, We, the people? My political curiosity, exclusive of my nervous/eager worry/concern (for someone) for the public welfare, leads me to ask, Who approved them to speak the language of, We, the people, instead of, We, the states? States are the characteristics and the soul of a confederation. If the states be not the agents of this compact, it must be one great, grouped together, national government, of the people of all the states.

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not only to demand a ridiculously high price, but to totally control the purchase of the (things of value), at their own price, for many years, to the great injury of the landed interest, and the extreme poorness of the people; and the danger is the greater, as the gain on one side will be in proportion to the loss on the other. Whereas, needing/ordering two thirds of the members present in both houses, would have produced back and forth/equal between people moderation, (helped increase/showed in a good way) the general interest, and removed a (something that can't be overcome or won) objection to the adoption of the government.

...This government will begin in a not extreme/medium-level (rich and powerful group of people): it is now impossible to predict whether it will, in its operation, produce a (rule by a king or queen) or a dishonest (in a way that ruins your trust) terrible (because of mistreatment) (rich and powerful group of people); it will most probably vibrate some years between the two, and then end in the one or the other.

GEO. MASON.

#### Tips:

- ▶ Click the highlighted words to learn them and hear them.
- ▶ To print vocab lists, cloze exercises, quizzes, and more: click *Print / Learning activities* at the top.
- ▶ To look up almost any non-highlighted word in the dictionary, click or tap it.
- ▶ See a bad or missing definition? We'll fix it quickly.
- ▶ Change the highlighting format, text difficulty, and more on the settings page.

Enter English text or a web page to simplify:

Document B: Objections to the Constitution, George Mason

Elliot's Debates --OBJECTIONS OF THE HON. GEORGE MASON, ONE OF THE DELEGATES FROM VIRGINIA IN THE LATE CONTINENTAL CONVENTION, TO THE PROPOSED FEDERAL CONSTITUTION; ASSIGNED AS HIS REASONS FOR NOT SIGNING THE SAME.

Excerpts:

There is no declaration of rights; and, the laws of the general government being paramount to the laws and constitutions of the several states, the declarations of rights in the separate states are no security. Nor are the

Rewordify text

There are 33 hard words. How many do you want to learn?

3

7

10

Hand-pick words

Reading time: 8 seconds. | Total points: 0 | ? | X

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Document E: Patrick Henry's Speech at Virginia Approval Convention, June 24, 1788

Mr. HENRY, after watching/following that the proposal of approval was (too) early or soon, and that the importance of the subject needed/demanded the most mature careful thinking, went ahead/moved forward this way: -- The honorable member must forgive me for declaring my disagreement from it; because, if I understand it rightly, it admits that the new system is defective, and most capitially; for, immediately after the proposed approval, there comes a declaration that the paper before you is not meant to violate any of these three great rights -- the freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and the trial by jury. What is the guessing (based on what you've been told) 588X when you list, one by one, the rights which you are to enjoy? That those not listed, one by one, are gave up. There are only three things to be kept/held -- religion, freedom of the press, and jury trial. Will not the approval carry every thing, without excepting these three things? Will not all the world say that we meant to give up all the rest? Every thing it speaks of, by way of rights, is contained/made up in these things. Your later changes only go to these three changes.

I feel myself upset (in bad shape), because the need of securing our personal rights seems not to have spreaded (or existed) throughout the minds of men; for many other valuable things are left out: -- for instance, general warrants, by which an officer may search suspected places, without evidence of the commission of a fact, or grab and take control of any person without evidence of his crime, should be prohibited. As these are admitted, any man may be grabbed and taken control of, any property may be taken, in the most random manner, without any evidence or reason. Every thing the most holy and untouchable may be searched and wildly searched by the strong hand of power. We have infinitely more reason to fear (a terrible future) general warrants here than they have in England, because there, if a person be confined, freedom may be quickly received/got by the (official written order) of (check to ensure an imprisonment is valid). But here a man living many hundred miles from the judges may get in prison before he can get that (official written order).

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- ▶ Change the highlighting format, text difficulty, and more on the settings page.

Document F: Letter from Madison to Jefferson, Oct. 17, 1788

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON. ... MAD. MSS.

New York, Oct 17, 1788.

[http://www.ushistory.org/constitution/constitution\\_documents.html#loc1](http://www.ushistory.org/constitution/constitution_documents.html#loc1)

Dear Sir, --

The little pamphlet herewith inclosed will give you a collective view of the alterations which have been proposed for the new Constitution. Various and numerous as they appear they certainly omit many of the true grounds of opposition. The articles relating to Treaties, to paper money, and to contracts, created more enemies than all the errors in the System positive & negative put together. It is true nevertheless that not a few, particularly in Virginia have contended for the proposed alterations from the most honorable & patriotic motives; and that among the advocates for the Constitution there are some who wish for further guards to public liberty & individual rights. As far as these may consist of a constitutional declaration of the most essential rights, it is probable they will be added; though there are many who think such addition unnecessary, and not a few who think it misplaced in such a Constitution. ... My own opinion has always been in favor of a bill of rights; provided it be so framed as not to imply powers not meant to be included in the enumeration. At the same time I have never thought the omission a material defect, nor been anxious to supply it even by subsequent amendment, for any other reason than that it is anxiously desired by others. I have favored it because I supposed it might be of use, and if properly executed could not be of disservice.

I am, Dr sir with the sincerest esteem & affectn,  
Yours

<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mjmtxt:@field%28DOCID+@lit%28jm050091%29%29>

There are 37 hard words. How many do you want to learn?

3

7

10

Hand-pick words

Reading time: 20 seconds. | Total points: 0 | ? | X

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Document G: Madison's speech before 1st Congress about the need for changes, June 8, 1789

Records of Congress, House of Representatives, 1st Congress, 1st Session, Pages 441 through 466, Changes to the Constitution, June 8, 1789

Mr. Madison: It cannot be a secret to the gentlemen in this House, that, not prevented by/not part of the issue the approval of this system of Government by eleven of the thirteen United States, sometimes (every single person agrees), in others by large majorities; yet still there is a great number of our voters/parts who are dissatisfied with it; among whom are many respectable for their talents and country-loving, and respectable for their jealousy they have for their freedom, which, though mistaken in its object, is wonderful in its reason (for doing something). There is a great body of the people falling under this description, who now feel much likely to join their support to the cause of Federalism, if they were satisfied on this one point. We shouldn't ignoring (people's feelings) this desire, but, on ways of thinking/basic truths/rules of friendship and moderation, go along with their wishes, and (clearly/for a single purpose) declare the great rights of people secured under this constitution.

...There have been objections of different kinds made against the constitution. Some were leveled against its structure because the President was without a (group of people who advise or govern); because the Senate, which is a law-based body, had (law-related) powers in trials on (accusing of a crime while in office)s; and because the powers of that body were compounded in other respects, in a manner that did not correspond with a particular explanation (of why something works or happens the way it does); because it grants more power than is supposed to be necessary for every good purpose, and controls the ordinary power of the State Governments. I know some respectable characters who argued/against this Government on these grounds; but I believe that the great mass of the people who argued/against it, disliked it because it did not contain effective (legal rules/food and supplies) against invasions on particular rights, and those safeguards which they have been long comfortable with have inserted between them and the judge who exercises the independent power; nor ought we to think about them safe, while a great number of our fellow-citizens think these securities necessary.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llac&fileName=001/llac001.db&recNum=226>

**Tips:**

Detective's Log

PERIOD \_\_\_\_\_

Document	Author? Audience?	When was it written?	Objections to the Constitution?
<b>Document 1:</b> "... We would sooner submit to a foreign power"			
<b>Document 2:</b> Objections to the Constitution, George Mason			
<b>Document 3:</b> Letters between George Washington, Patrick Henry, and Benjamin Harrison			

Historical Scene Investigation - The U.S. Constitution: "I Smelt a Rat"

Document	Author? Audience?	When was it written?	Objections to the Constitution?
<b>Document 4:</b> Patrick Henry's speech at Virginia Ratification Convention (part 1)			
<b>Document 5:</b> Patrick Henry's speech at Virginia Ratification Convention (part 2)			
<b>Document 6:</b> Letter from Madison to Jefferson			

Historical Scene Investigation - The U.S. Constitution: "I Smelt a Rat"

Document	Author? Audience?	When was it written?	Objections to the Constitution?
<p><b>Document 7:</b> Madison's speech before 1<sup>st</sup> Congress</p>			

**Analytical Questions**

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN COMPLETE SENTENCES, PARAGRAPH FORM, SUPPORTED WITH FACTUAL EVIDENCE

1. In summary, what are the key objections to the Constitution?
2. How would you assess the merits of these objections?  

MERIT = THE QUALITY OF BEING GOOD, IMPORTANT, OR USEFUL  
 VALUE OR WORTH

Historical Scene Investigation - The U.S. Constitution: "I Smelt a Rat"

3. Look at your textbook entry on the ratification of the Constitution. To what degree are these objections covered? Why do you think that the objections to the Constitution by such notable patriots are not emphasized more in your history textbook? P 244 - 247 CALL TO FREEDOM