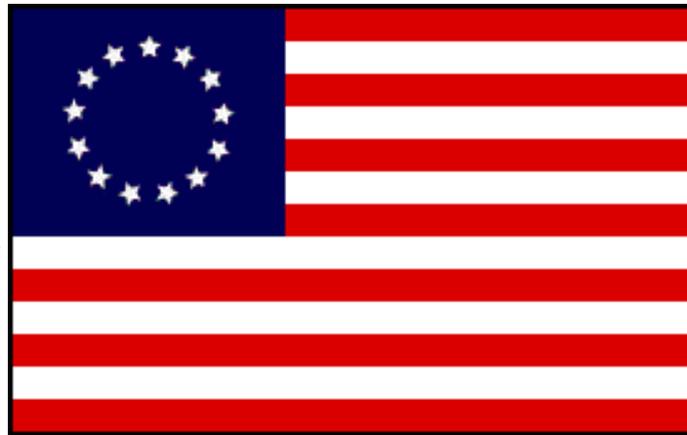


The Articles of Confederation



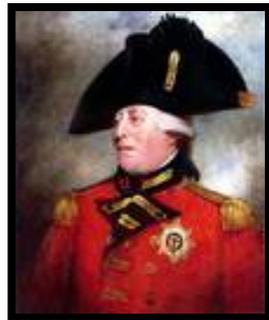
America's first Constitution

1781-1789 📢

Basic Facts

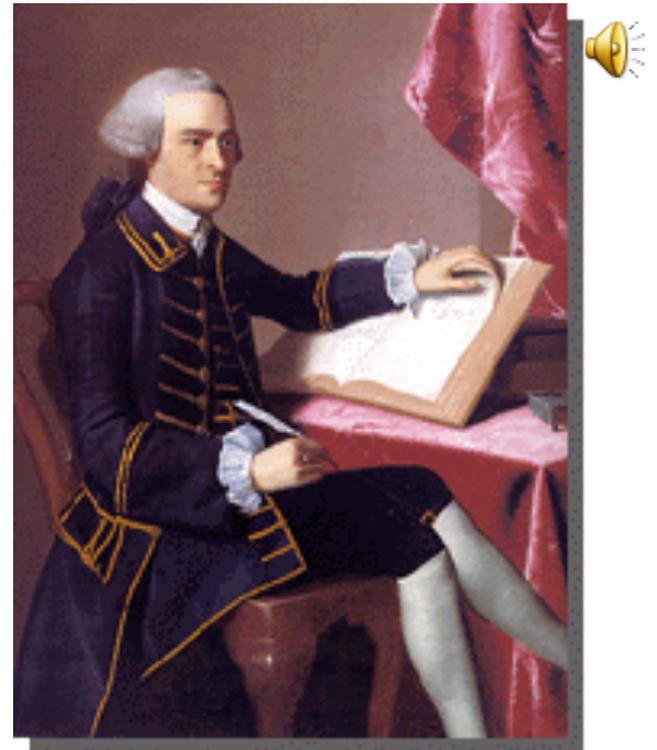


- America's **first Constitution**
- Ratified in 1781: would last until 1789
- Created a weak national government in which the individual states retain most of the power (confederation of states)
- Considered to be the "**critical period**" in US History
- Back-lash from the Monarchy rule of King George III



Government Structure

- Created a Unicameral Congress (Legislative Branch)
- No Executive: Congress would choose a president but he had no authority or power (John Hancock 1785)
- No Judicial Branch



Powers of the Congress

- Unicameral (one house) one vote per state
- Could make war and peace
- Could send and receive ambassadors
- Could borrow money on the credit of the US
- Could establish a national monetary system
- Could establish a post office for mail
- Could raise a Army and Navy
- Could pass (make) laws: 9 votes out of 13 required 🔊

Weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation

- Congress did not have the power to tax (only to borrow money or request money from the states)
- Congress could not regulate foreign trade or interstate commerce
- One vote per state in Congress regardless of size
- 9/13 majority required to pass laws in Congress
- Required unanimous consent by all 13 states to amend the Articles of Confederation 🔊

Weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation (cont)

- No strong executive (President) to make the states obey the laws that were made by Congress
- No national judiciary (courts) to settle disputes among the states
- Congress could only raise an Army or Navy by asking states to donate troops
- Every state had the authority to print and coin its own money as well as the US Congress

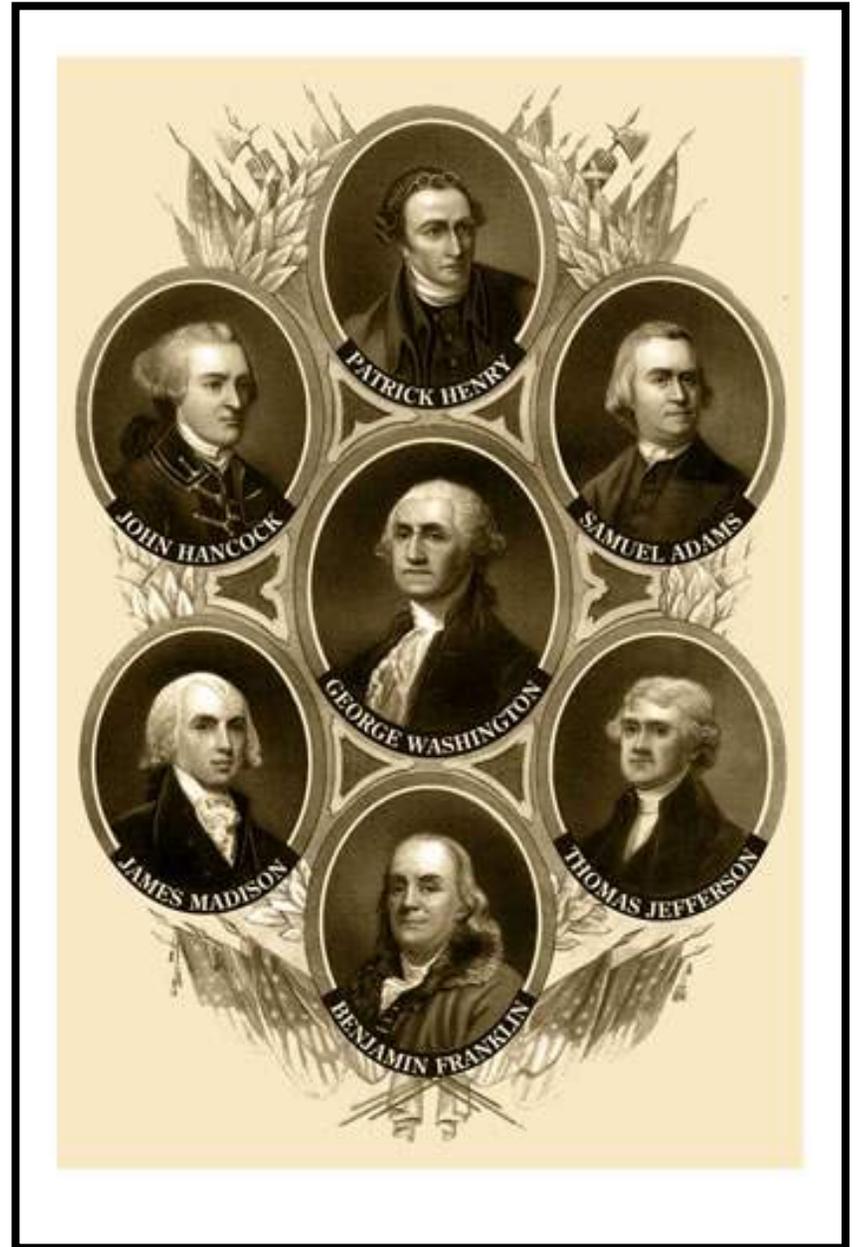


The Articles of Confederation

- Congress given the power to:
- Declare **War**
- Make **Peace**
- Sign Treaties
- Borrow **Money**
- **Establish** an Army & Navy
- Organize a **Post Office**
- No Chief **Executive**
- No National Court System
- No Power to **Draft** Soldiers
- No Power to Control Interstate **Commerce**
- No Power to **Enforce** Treaties
- No Power to Collect **Taxes** from the States
- Difficult to Pass Laws (**2/3** vote)
- No National **Currency**
- Difficult to **Amend**
- (**Unanimous** Vote Needed to Change Articles)

Summary

- People fearful of a strong national government (King George III)
- National government was too weak to solve the problems of the states or to enforce laws



The Articles of Confederation was weak, on purpose

- Americans were afraid of a strong **national** government. After all, they had fought a war over it. So, the government they decided on was weak.
- The national government under the Articles did not have the power to **tax** or enforce **laws**.
- The national government did have the power to wage **war**, but since they couldn't **tax**, there was no way to **pay** for it.
- The government could also issue **money**, but the states didn't have to use it. The **states** had their own money.

Weaknesses of the Articles

- Since the **national** government could not tax, and the national money was **worthless**, debt became a huge problem.
- Debt = **owing money**
- The biggest problem was that the **soldiers** who had fought the war, had not been **paid**, and they were mad.
- Most of the soldiers were **farmers**, and they were unable to pay their debts.