



## Do We Need a New Government?

by  
Fran O'Malley  
Democracy Project

### Lesson Description

In this Problem-Based Learning (PBL) lesson students will play one of three roles to debate the question, “Should the Articles of Confederation be changed in order to solve the problems facing the nation? If so, how?” The lesson is actually designed to help students analyze merits of the federal system [Civics 1] but also draws attention to change over time [History 1]. It works most effectively after students have analyzed the kind of government created under the Articles of Confederation.

### Rationale

This lesson is designed to provide students with the information that allows them to compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of different “structures” of government. This information empowers them to make more informed judgments about the relative merits of their own form of government while scaffolding students toward a fuller understanding of Delaware Civics Standard 1. The lesson also provides a context in which the students’ problem solving skills are nurtured.

**Grade:** 6-8

### Lesson Content

The decade of the 1780s was full of great challenges for our Founding generation. There was a great deal of hope that peace, security, and prosperity would envelop the land once the War for Independence from England ended. While the new government under the Articles of Confederations accomplished much, many believed that conditions actually grew worse than they were before the war. Moreover, many believed that the problems facing the new nation could not be solved by the government under the Articles.

Domestically, the nation’s economy was in trouble. The national debt grew from \$11 million to \$28 million since the war began while exports fell 30%. The government’s failure to repay the national debt caused many to lose faith in government. At one point the value of New York’s currency dropped so low that it took \$128 to pay for what once cost \$1. Some states engaged in “trade wars” that involved them in imposing high taxes on goods coming in from other states.

The new nation’s international problems were just as bad. The United States found itself unable to repay its international war debts. Consequently, the country had virtually no credit. The British thought so lowly of the United States that they continued to keep soldiers and forts on American soil. At the same time, the Spanish refused to let Americans ship their goods down the Mississippi River. Most humiliating of all, perhaps, the Barbary pirates attacked American ships just off the coast of North Africa.

During the colonial period, the Britain's American colonists lived under a government that was unitary and parliamentary. In the minds of many Americans it was also corrupt. In 1781 the Americans replaced British unitary and parliamentary government with a confederation. By 1786, the government under the Articles of Confederation seemed incapable of fulfilling the purposes for which it was intended. Americans had to decide whether they would stick with a confederation, revert back to a unitary/parliamentary form, or come up with an entirely new plan of government.

In this lesson, students will assume roles featuring various perspectives on the question as they attempt to solve the problem that confronted our Founding Fathers.

**Prior Knowledge:** Although there are many content supports built into the lesson, its effectiveness depends on the students having a general understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation and the challenges that that government faced during the 1780s.

**Concepts Addressed:**

- Federalism
- Structures of Government

**Benchmarks and Essential Questions Addressed**

- Civics 1, Grades 6-8: Why has the United States adopted a federal system of government?
- History 1, Grades 6-8: Why might the “structure” of the American government have changed over time?

**Objectives:** At the conclusion of this lesson students will be able to

- Distinguish between unitary, federal, and confederate “structures” of government.
- Explain why the United States might have adopted a federal system of government.

**Assessments**

See pages 17-20.

**Student vocabulary**

- Unitary – a system of government in which power rests in a central government and that power flows from that single source.
- Federal – a system of government in which power is diffused between a national and local government. The power flows in multiple directions i.e. from a national government to local ones and back again.
- Confederate – a system of government in which power resides in local governments and flows from the local governments to a national one.

**Time Required**      Approximately 3 class periods

## Materials

- Transparency 1: *Classroom Scenarios* (p. 8)
- Copies (1 per student) of Handout 1: *Structures of Government* (p. 9)
- Transparency of Handout 1: *Structures of Government* (p. 9)
- Copies (1 per student) of Handout 2: *Statement of the Problem – Letter from Col. George James Jefferson* (p. 11)
- Copies (1 role description per student) of Handout 3: *Role Cards* (pp. 12-14)
- Copies (1 per student) of Handout 4: *Special Edition – The Annapolis Gazette* (p. 15)
- Transparency markers.
- Optional - Copies (1 per student) & a Transparency of Handout 5: *PBL Support Material – Notable Features of the Articles* (p. 16)
- Copies (1 per student) of Handouts 6-9: *Assessment*. (pp. 17-20)

## Procedures

1. Brainstorm - Activate Prior Knowledge: ask students to think about ...
  1. Britain’s government that ruled over the colonies before the Americans won their independence.
  2. The first government of the United States under the Articles of Confederation.

Ask them to describe ways in which the British and Confederation governments were similar or different. Then, ask them if they think that the government under the Articles was better than the government under British rule. Students may offer a variety of responses. The purpose of this portion of the lesson is simply to activate prior knowledge. The statement of the problem, role descriptions, and other support materials that are included in this lesson will provide students with the information they need to play their roles effectively.

PBL lessons often contain “support” materials that may or may not be introduced by the teacher. Introduction depends on the judgment of the teacher. One piece of “support” material that you might consider is found in Handout 5 (Notable Features of the Articles of Confederation). Distribute and review this handout if the brainstorming reveals that the students are in need of a review.

2. Building Schema and Preparing for Transfer (Context 1): Tell students that you are going to diagram three classroom scenarios and that you want them to think about. Project a copy of Transparency 1: *Classroom Scenarios* (show scenarios 1-3 one at a time) and explain the following:
  - Scenario 1: Teacher holds all the power. Students are permitted to do only what the teacher allows them to do. Power flows from teacher to students.
  - Scenario 2: Students hold all of the power. The teacher is permitted to do only what the students allow her (or him) to do. Power flows from students to teacher.
  - Scenario 3: The teacher holds most of the power but students hold some as well. The teacher can do what is in her power and the students can do what is in their power. Ask students to suggest some powers that the teacher might have and some that the students might have.

After presenting each scenario, ask students what might be some costs and benefits of each arrangement.

Tell students that the three common structures of government around the world mirror these three classroom scenarios and that today's lesson is designed to help them understand these common structures and why the people of the United States chose the one that they did.

3. **Transfer Activity - Analyze Structures of Government (Context 2):** Distribute copies of Handout 1. Project a transparency version of the Handout onto a screen. Tell the students that their understanding of Civics Standard 1 and the success of this lesson depends upon their ability to distinguish between the various structures of government around the world. Explain that there are, generally speaking, 3 different "structures" of government that can be found around the world (unitary, federal, and confederate). Fill in the chart on the overhead (a completed version is provided on Teacher Resource 1) and ask the students to do the same on their copies of the handout. Be sure that they understand the fundamental differences between the various structures as well as some costs and benefits of each structure.

After completing the chart, draw attention back to Procedure 1. Remind the students that the British government was unitary while the Government under the Articles was confederate.

4. **Meeting the Problem:** Tell students that, today, they are going to be asked to play the roles of leaders from the 1780s and that their task is to try and solve what was perhaps the most important problem of the decade. Different students will play different roles so that the problem and possible solutions can be viewed from different perspectives. Ask them to pretend that they are leaders from the states in the year 1786 and that a letter requiring their immediate attention has just arrived from Virginia. Distribute copies of Handout 1: *Statement of the Problem – Letter from Col. George James Jefferson* and ask the students to read the letter.
5. **Defining the Problem Statement:** Ask students to restate the problem described in Handout 1 in question format. A good response might be "Should the structure of the United States government be changed in order to solve the problems facing the nation? If so, how?" Do not move on until all of the students have a common and accurate understanding of the problem. Write the problem question on the board or project it onto a screen so that it remains a focus of attention for the duration of the lesson.
6. **Role Assignments:** Tell the students that they are now going to be assigned roles (Perspective 1, 2, or 3) that they will be asked to play during the course of this lesson. Their assignment is to read the role descriptions and to argue from that role's perspective during the lesson. Distribute copies of the roles (Handout 3) making sure that there are an equal number of students assigned to each of the 3 perspectives. Assign each student a letter also (e.g. A, B, C...). Each perspective group (e.g. Perspective 1, 2, 3) should have a person assigned to A, B, C...etc. so

that there is a 1A, 2A, 3A...1B, 2B, 3B etc. These letters will be used to determine which “mixed group” they will work in during Procedure 8.

7. Expert Group Work – Clarifying Roles: Distribute copies of Handout 3 so that there are even numbers of students having each “Perspective” (i.e. 1, 2, and 3). Tell the students that they are going to move into “expert groups” for the next 10-15 minutes to prepare for problem-solving discussions. Expert groups consist of all students assigned to similar roles or perspectives (i.e. all #1s sit together in one area of the room, all 2s sit together in another area of the room etc.).

Tell the students that their assignments in the expert groups are

  - to read about their perspective,
  - to formulate a clear understanding of the group’s perspective,
  - to reach an agreement on a proposed solution to the problem identified in Procedure 4,
  - and to prepare arguments supporting the group’s proposed solution.

Tell them that in a few minutes, students from the each expert group will be mixed with students from other expert groups to share perspectives and to try to find a mutually agreeable solution to the problem. Give the students 15-20 minutes to formulate their proposed solution and supporting arguments.
8. Mixed Groups – Generating Possible Solutions: Ask students to recall the letter (e.g. A, B, C...) to which they were assigned in Procedure 5. Tell them that they are now going to move into mixed groups of three. Their task is to work with students playing different roles (i.e. different “stakeholders”) to come up with a solution to the problem that all three perspectives agree upon. Ask all of the students assigned to the same letters in Procedure 5 to form triads (e.g. all of the A’s in one group; all of the B’s in another group etc). You should have a series of triads with the A’s from Perspectives 1-3; the Bs from Perspectives 1-3; the Cs from Perspectives 1-3 etc. Tell the students that each person must be offered the opportunity to identify, explain, and support his or her “expert groups” solution before open debate begins. Once each solution has been proposed, discussions open up until a solution is reached. Ask each group to select one person to serve as a “reporter.” The reporter will be asked to share the group’s solution toward the end of the lesson.

Give the groups approximately 20-25 minutes to come up with a solution.  
The teacher should circulate among the groups and serve as a resource (but not the problem solver).
9. Newsbreak! After the students get well into the open debate portion of their discussion, break in with the following announcement: “Hear ye, hear ye! Breaking news out of Western Massachusetts.” Distribute copies of Handout 4: *Special Edition – The Annapolis Gazette* (or project it on the screen). This “News Break” offers sketchy details of Shays Rebellion. Tell students to read the news story. Ask a volunteer to summarize the story. Tell them that there is now an added dimension to the problem that they are trying to solve and that they need to consider this development as they formulate their solutions. Have them continue with their mixed-group, problem-solving discussions.

10. Presenting Solutions: Once the students arrive at solutions, ask each group's reporter to share his or her group's solution with the rest of the class. *Did they agree to change the "structure" of government? If so, how? Why did they choose a particular structure?* Keep a record of the solutions on the board to allow for ongoing comparisons. After all of the groups present their solutions, invite students to step out of their roles and explain what they think would have been the best solution to the problem.

#### 11. Debrief

A. PBL Debrief - Raise the following questions to the entire group:

1. *What strategies did you use to solve the problem?*
2. *What problem solving strategies might you consider using in the future?*
3. *What might you consider doing differently in another problem situation?*

B. Content Debrief: Tell students that, in the end, a convention was held in Philadelphia in 1787 and that a majority of those attending the convention agreed to replace the confederate "structure" of the U.S. government under the Articles with a federal and presidential structure under newly adopted Constitution.

Raise the following questions:

1. *How do unitary, federal, and confederate governments differ?*
2. *Why might our "structure" of the American government have changed over time?*

The primary explanation drawn from this lesson is that the Americans' experiences with Britain's unitary model and the government under the Articles of Confederation suggested that the unitary system was too susceptible to corruption, offered too few protections of individual rights, & did not allow sufficiently for local control. The confederate structure denied the national government the power to solve national problems. A federal system appeared to offer the benefits of adequate (but not excessive) national power and sufficient local control and supervision.

#### 4. *Why might the United States have adopted a federal system of government?*

The primary explanations that students should draw from this lesson are:

- Historically, Americans rejected Britain's unitary system because it appeared susceptible to corruption. A federal structure offers better protections for individual rights than a highly centralized government would.
- Historically, Americans rejected the confederate government that emerged under the Articles of Confederation because the national government lacked the powers needed to deal with large-scale national problems.
- A federal structure recognizes that large countries require a "farming-out" of different functions so that both local and national needs can be met efficiently and effectively. Large national and international problems require the resources of an adequately empowered national government. Smaller problems are more efficiently and effectively dealt with by local governments.

Other arguments supporting a federal structure and that might be brought to the students' attentions include:

- The people living in the 13 colonies (then states) grew accustomed to living under a structure that granted national control over national matters but local control over local matters
- A federal structure permits diversity – allowing a variety of “local” governments to deal with local problems while allowing local voters to hold local officials accountable.
- A federal structure creates more points of access and greater opportunities for participation.
- A federal structure fosters experimentation and innovation. Local governments can pave the way to improvements in government.

5. *Why might other countries adopt a federal system?* (same reasons as above)

### **Administer the Assessments**

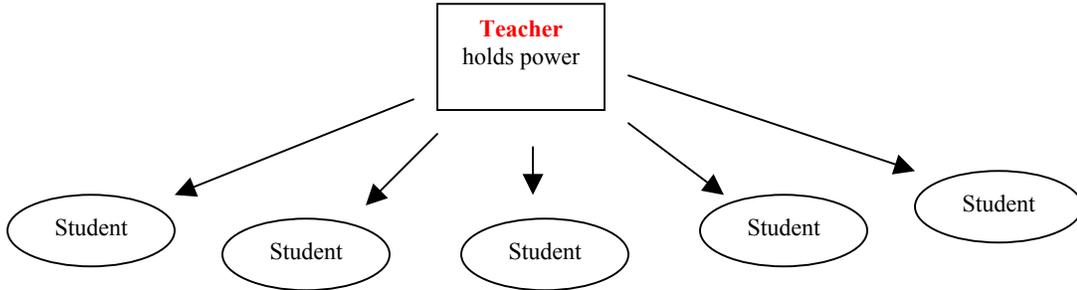
#### **Bibliography**

Torp, Linda and Sage, Sara. (1998) *Problems as Possibilities: Problem Based Learning for K-12 Education*. Alexandria, VA. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Delisle, Robert. (1997) *How to Use Problem Based Learning in the Classroom*. Alexandria, VA. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

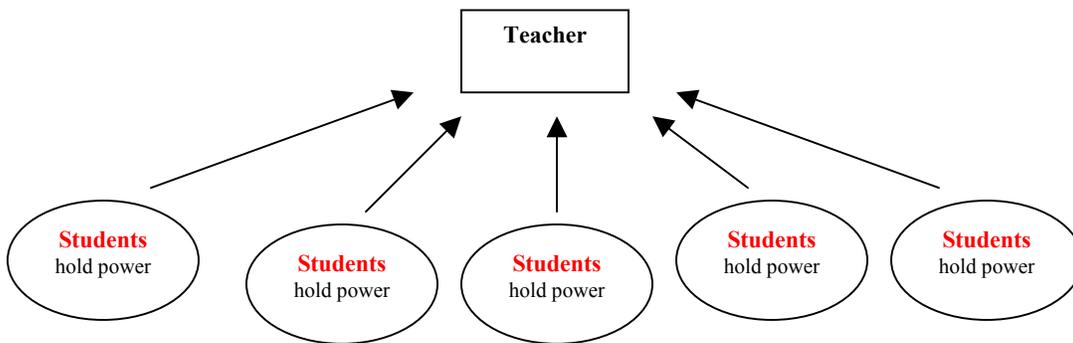
# Transparency 1 Classroom Scenarios

## Scenario 1



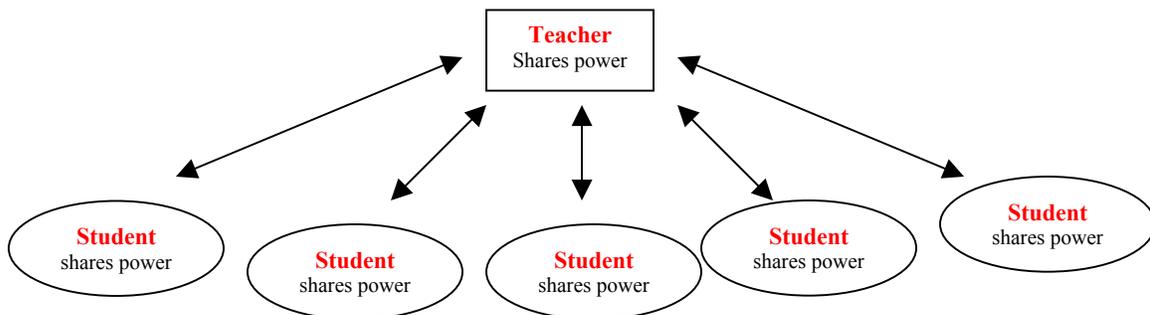
Students can only do what the teacher permits them to do. All power flows from the teacher.

## Scenario 2



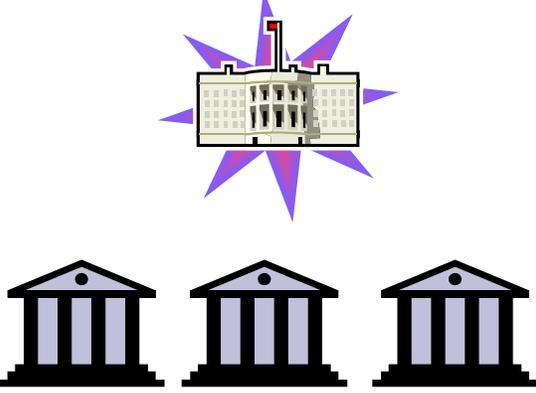
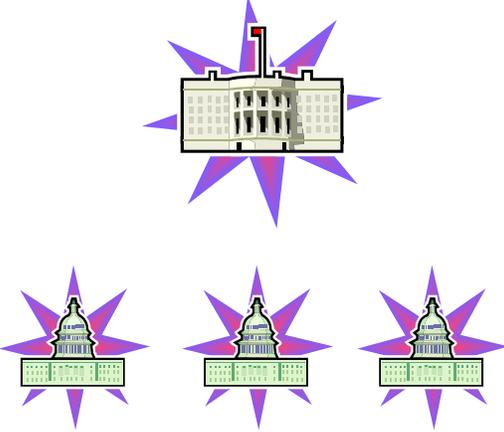
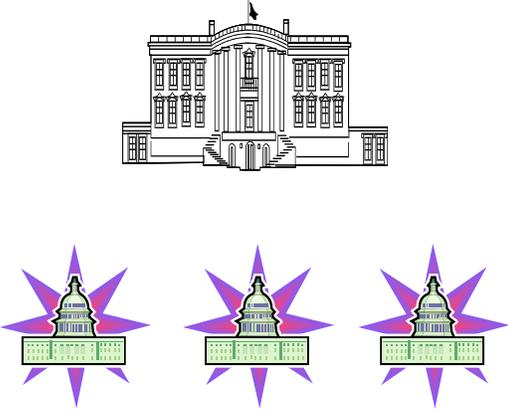
The teacher can only do what the students permit her to do. All power flows from the students.

## Scenario 3

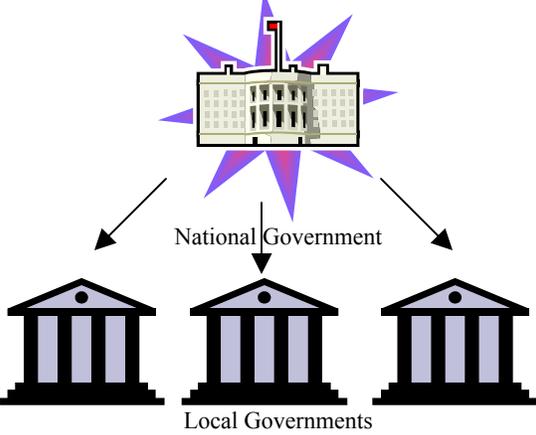
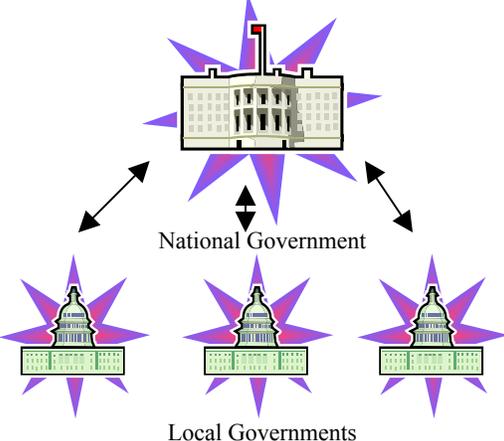
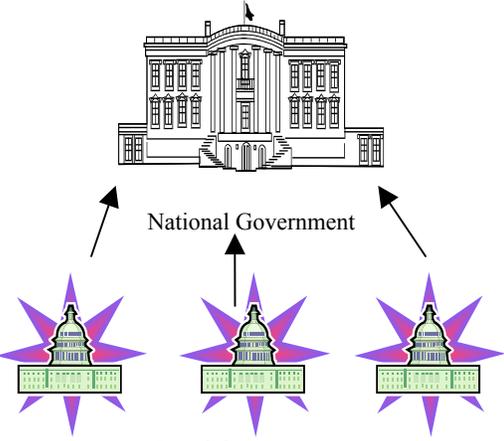


The teacher holds some power and the students hold some power. Power flows back and forth between teachers and students.

## Handout 1 Structures of Government

Where is Power Located?	
Flow of Power	Where is Power Located?
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Unitary “Structure”</b></p> <p>All power is _____. Power flows from _____ to _____.</p> <p><i>What might be some of the benefits and drawbacks of this structure?</i></p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Federal “Structure”</b></p> <p>Powers of government are _____ between a _____ _____ and _____ _____.</p> <p><i>What might be some of the benefits and drawbacks of this structure?</i></p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Confederate “Structure”</b></p> <p>An alliance of _____ _____.</p> <p>Power flows from _____ to _____.</p> <p><i>What might be some of the benefits and drawbacks of this structure?</i></p>

## Handout 1 (Completed for Teacher Resource) Structures of Government

Where is Power Located?	
Flow of Power	Where is Power Located?
 <p style="text-align: center;">National Government</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Local Governments</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Unitary “Structure”</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">All power is <u>centralized</u>. Power flows from <u>a national government</u> to <u>local units</u>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(draw “flow of power” arrows pointing from national government to local ones)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What might be some of the benefits and drawbacks of this structure?</i></p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">National Government</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Local Governments</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Federal “Structure”</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Powers of government are <u>diffused</u> between a <u>national government</u> and <u>local governments</u>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(draw “flow of power” arrows pointing back and forth i.e. both ways from national government and local ones)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What might be some of the benefits and drawbacks of this structure?</i></p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">National Government</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Local Governments</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Confederate “Structure”</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">An alliance of <u>independent states</u>. Power flows from <u>local governments</u> to <u>the national government</u>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(draw “flow of power” arrows pointing from local governments to the national government)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What might be some of the benefits and drawbacks of this structure?</i></p>

## Handout 2

Statement of the Problem – Letter from Col. George James Jefferson



*State of Virginia*

*The Old Dominion*

*September 11, 1786*

*Concerned citizen,*

*Noting the serious problems now facing the nation, concerned citizens from the state of Virginia hereby invite you to attend a meeting in Annapolis, Maryland to discuss changes that may need to be made in our government so that it might be made more capable of dealing with our ever deepening crisis.*

*The last two decades have been very difficult for many Americans. There was a great deal of hope that peace, security, and prosperity would envelop the land once the War for Independence from England ended. While the new government under the Articles of Confederations has accomplished much, many believe that conditions are now worse than they were before the war. Moreover, they believe that the problems cannot be solved by the government that is now in place under the Articles.*

*Our economy is in serious trouble. The national debt has grown from \$11 million to \$28 million since before the war while exports have fallen 30%. The government's failure to repay the national debt has caused many to lose faith in government. At one point the value of New York's currency dropped so low that it took \$128 to pay for what once cost \$1. Some states are now involved in "trade wars" that involve them in imposing high taxes on goods coming in from other states.*

*Our international problems are just as bad. We have not been able to repay our war debts to the Dutch or French, or our pre-war debts to the British. Consequently, the country has virtually no credit. The British think so little of the United States that they continue to keep soldiers and forts on American soil. At the same time, the Spanish refuse to let Americans ship their goods down the Mississippi River. Perhaps worst of all, the Barbary pirates are attacking American ships just off the coast of North Africa.*

*This country has endured these problems for over 5 years and they appear to be growing ever more serious with the passage of time. The solution for our nation's problems must be found. We know that you share in our concerns for this great nation and the principles on which it was built. We have to decide if the government of the United States needs to be changed in order to solve the problems facing the nation. We eagerly await your arrival in Annapolis.*

*Sincerely*

*Col. George James Jefferson  
Albemarle Co., Virginia*

## Handout 3

### Role Descriptions

#### Perspective 1: Keep the Government (Articles) as It Is

The Articles of Confederation gives us the kind of government we need in a country committed to the principles of freedom and individual liberty. Sure we have our problems but these problems are far less serious than the ones we had to live with while under Britain's *unitary* government. England had a strong and corrupt central government that abused power. At least our rights are not being denied under the Articles. This is because we keep power at the local level where we can keep an eye on it.

Those who suggest that the Articles need to be replaced or even amended totally exaggerate the situation in this country and completely overlook the achievements of the government under the Articles. Every country faces problems after a revolution. The Congress under the Articles deals with these problems as well as any government in similar circumstances could.

Keep the Articles and the confederation government that they created. The nation is on the road to peace and prosperity. Moreover, our government will have money when we start selling the western lands. The problems we face are not due to our plan of government. Rather, they are due to the temporary effects of revolution and the people of limited ability who govern. If someone thinks that things can be better he should take advantage of the Congressional elections that are held every year to elect more capable political leaders. Our experiences with England proved that the worst thing we could do is give more power to a distant central government. Power usually corrupts people but it almost always does when it is held by a few people who are too far away to keep an eye on. Keep power under local control.

There is an old saying, "once you give up power, you never get it back."

### Background Notes

#### Achievements of the Government Under the Articles of Confederation

- Congress negotiated a very important alliance with France.
- Congress led the nation to victory over Britain in the War for Independence.
- Congress negotiated the Treaty of Paris under which the U.S. acquired huge amount of land from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River.
- Congress is holding together this new country despite serious postwar problems.
- Congress has negotiated treaties that have settled land disputes with Native tribes.
  - Congress convinced the states to cede western lands.
  - Congress pieced together and passed several western Land Ordinances that created a plan for western expansion, provided a source of money for Congress, made slavery illegal, and protected individual rights.
- The Articles created a plan of government (a bureaucracy) that makes it possible for the work of government to be completed even when Congress is not around.

**Perspective 2: Amend the Articles**

The Articles should be amended. There are serious problems facing this country but not ones that are so serious that a few changes in our plan of government can't correct. The worst thing we might do at this time is overreact by replacing a government under which our rights and liberties are safe with a powerful central government like Britain's. If we do this our liberties will be constantly in jeopardy.

We can solve our current problems with a few amendments to the Articles. First, we can change the Articles so that amendments do not require the unanimous approval of the states. We live in a political system guided by the principal of "majority rule," not "unanimous rule." Second, we can give the government sufficient power to deal with the large scale national and international problems that we face. Such powers might include the power to tax and regulate trade. We don't need an entirely new Constitution to fix the few flaws that lie at the heart of our nation's problems.

**Background Notes**

**The Articles of Confederation  
Achievements and Failures**

<u><b>Achievements</b></u>	<u><b>Failures</b></u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance with France.</li> <li>• Victory over Britain.</li> <li>• Treaty of Paris – US got all the land from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River.</li> <li>• Held a new country with enormous postwar problems together.</li> <li>• Settled land disputes with Native tribes.</li> <li>• Convinced states to turn western lands over to the national government.</li> <li>• Developed land ordinances – Congress created a plan for western expansion. This land provides a source of revenue for Congress, makes slavery illegal, and contains a wonderful bill of rights.</li> <li>• Created a federal bureaucracy that carried on the work of government (even when Congress was not around).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National debt has grown from \$11 million to \$28 million</li> <li>• Congress has received only 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the money it requested from the states.</li> <li>• The nation's currency is practically worthless.</li> <li>• Trade wars have erupted between states.</li> <li>• Britain retains forts in northwest.</li> <li>• Congress has not been able to enforce the provisions of the Treaty of Paris (e.g. states would not repay their pre-war debts to England or compensate Loyalists for property seized during the war).</li> <li>• Congress has not been able to repay government bondholders.</li> <li>• Bonds have decreased in value to a mere \$.15 on the dollar.</li> <li>• Spain denies Americans use of the Mississippi River.</li> <li>• U.S. exports have fallen 30% because Britain denies American access to its ports.</li> </ul>

### **Perspective 3: Replace the Articles with a New Government**

The United States needs an entirely new plan of government. The government under the Articles is so flawed that it cannot be repaired. Efforts to “fix” the Articles through amendments have failed. On three occasions when amendments were proposed they were defeated by 1 or 2 states because of the clause that states that amendments have to be approved unanimously (i.e. by every state). It has gotten so bad that members of Congress are too embarrassed to be associated with the government. Congress cannot even conduct business because it has not been able to get the required quorum of 8 states to show up.

Confederations do not work! The national governments found in confederate systems are intentionally designed to be weak. The United States government is facing large scale national problems but has not been given the power it needs to solve them. The problems that this nation faces are serious and of such a nature that *dramatic* changes must occur. A few amendments here and there cannot change the fact that we have adopted a structure of government (i.e. a confederation) that simply does not work. Living under a confederate system is similar to living in a family in which the children are given all of the power while the parents have none but are expected to solve the problems. Changing the fundamental structure of a government requires a new plan of government, not an amendment here or there.

Those who think that the solution to our problems is to give the national government under the Articles more power do not understand the nature of the problem. The main reason why the government under the Articles must not be given more power is because the structure of government under the Articles does not feature a system of checks and balances that could prevent the abuse of power. A legislature is all we have. There are no other branches of government (e.g. president or courts) to check the actions of the Congress.

We lived under a government that was unitary and parliamentary when we were colonies of England and we did not like that government. We are now living under a confederate form of government that is ineffective because the national government lacks the kind of power that is needed to solve large scale national & international problems. It is clear that we need a new plan of government that creates a national government that is not given so much power that it is dangerous but that is also not given so little power that it cannot solve national problems. We need something in between - a federal system in which power is divided between a national government and the state governments.

### **Background Notes**

#### **Failures of the Government Under the Articles of Confederation**

- The national debt has grown from \$11 million to \$28 million
- Congress has received only 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the money it requested from the states.
- Continental currency has become practically worthless.
- War veterans have not been paid.
- Trade wars have erupted between states.
- The British continue to retain forts on American soil.
- Congress has not been able to enforce the provisions of the Treaty of Paris (e.g. states would not repay their pre-war debts to England or compensate Loyalists for property seized during the war).
- Congress has not been able to repay government bondholders.
- Bonds have decreased in value to a mere \$.15 on the dollar.
- Spain now denies Americans free use of the Mississippi River.
- U.S. exports have fallen 30% as the British deny American ships access to its ports.

## **Handout 4**

*Special Edition – The Annapolis Gazette*

# The Annapolis Gazette

January 6, 1787

- Special Edition! -

Breaking news out of western Massachusetts

Bands of men have taken up arms against their government intent on closing the courts and preventing foreclosures on their property. A ragtag “army” under the command of Daniel Shays has marched on an arsenal at Springfield. Many of the rioters, including Daniel Shays, are veterans of the War for Independence – many of whom are still owed back pay or payment on bonds that they received in lieu of wartime pay. They claim that they cannot pay taxes because their government has not paid them what they are owed. That same government is now seizing their property as a punishment for not paying taxes. The country appears to be on the brink of civil war.

## **Handout 5**

PBL Lesson Support

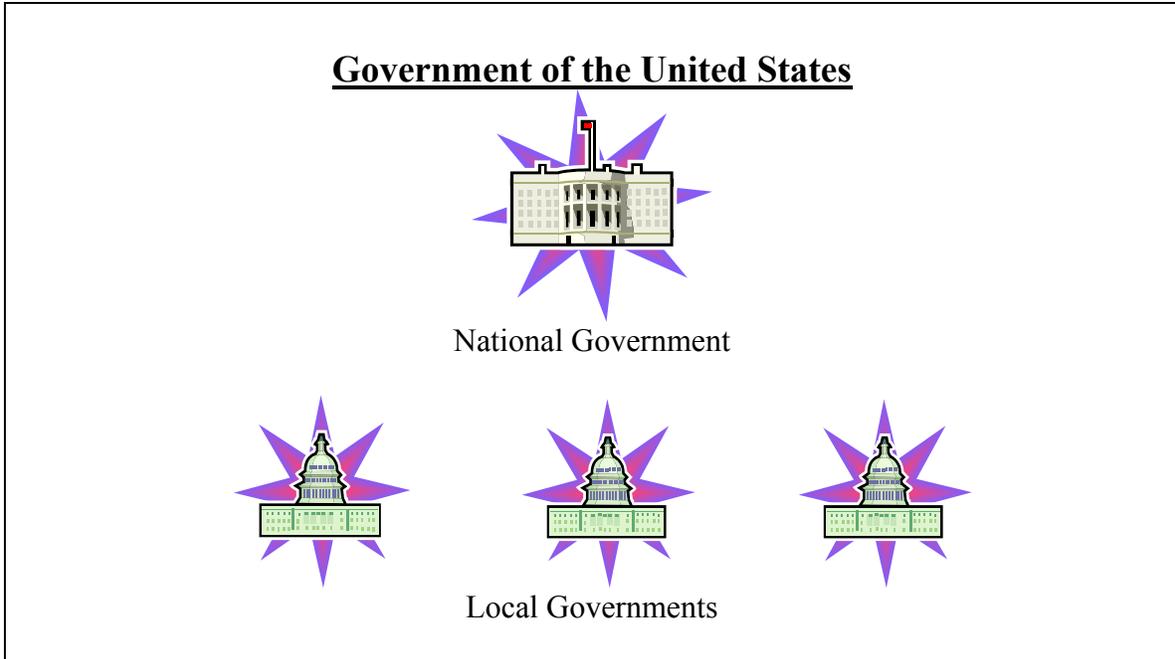
**Notable Features of the Articles of Confederation**

<b><u>Structure &amp; Procedures of Government</u></b>	<b><u>Powers Denied</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Power is centered in (flowed from) the states.</li><li>• No national executive (America is “headless”).</li><li>• No national judiciary.</li><li>• All power situated in a unicameral legislature.</li><li>• Amendments require unanimous approval.</li><li>• 9 states required to pass legislation.</li><li>• Each state gets only 1 vote and 2 representatives must be present for their state’s vote to count.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To tax.</li><li>• To compel states abide by treaties.</li><li>• To regulate interstate trade.</li><li>• To raise an army (could only “request” troops from the states).</li></ul>

# Handout 6

## Assessment: Brief Constructed Response

(In Context Prompt – Assessing “local” knowledge)



Explain the federal system and why the people who wrote the Constitution might have adopted a federal system for the United States?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Rubric**

- 2 = this response gives a valid response with an accurate and relevant explanation.
- 1 = this response gives a valid response with an inaccurate, irrelevant, or no relevant explanation.
- 0 = inaccurate or no response.

## Handout 7

### Assessment: Brief Constructed Response (Near Transfer Task)



Why might the people who designed the government of Sunkurdia might have adopted a federal system for their country.

<hr/>
---

**Rubric**

- 2 = this response gives a valid response with an accurate and relevant explanation.*
- 1 = this response gives a valid response with an inaccurate, irrelevant, or no relevant explanation.*
- 0 = inaccurate or no response.*

## Handout 8

### Assessment: Brief Constructed Response (Far Transfer Task)



Use your understanding of our federal system of government to describe how the role of the national government may differ from the role of state governments in the crisis described on the computer screen. In other words, what would a state government be likely to do? What might the national government be likely to do? Explain why the governments might respond differently.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

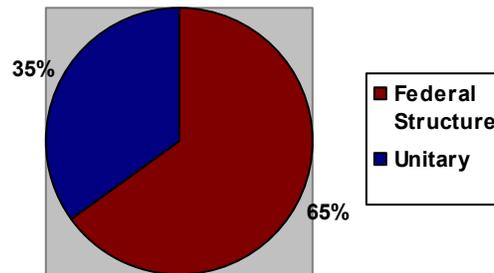
---

**Rubric**

- 2 = this response gives a valid prediction with an accurate and relevant explanation.
- 1 = this response gives a valid prediction with an inaccurate, irrelevant, or no relevant explanation.
- 0 = inaccurate or no response.

## Handout 9

### Assessment: Selected Response



*Figure 1*  
*Percentage of people supporting a federal system of government*

Why would many people argue that a federal system of government offers more protections of individual rights than a unitary system?

- the rule of law is a feature of all federal systems.
- the national government is given very little power.
- the judicial branch of government can check the other two branches.
- the people can keep a closer eye on the use of power at the local level.

Correct Response: d