

Lesson 5: The Constitutional Convention: Building a Stronger America

Teacher Version

Essential Question

What were the objectives of the Constitutional Convention, and how did they help the U.S. Constitution last over time?

Lesson Bridge

Review Lesson 4:

- The Articles of Confederation created a weak national government
- Congress could not tax, enforce laws, regulate trade, or easily amend the government

Bridge Question:

- If leaders wanted to replace the Articles, what goals would they need to accomplish when designing a new government?

Key Vocabulary

Paragraph	Word	How it Will be Taught	Student-Friendly Definition
2	Delegate	Context: Described as leaders sent by states to the Convention.	A representative chosen to act for others.
3	Convention	Context: Meeting of leaders to discuss government.	A formal meeting to solve a problem.
4	National Government	Context: Explained through comparison to state governments.	The government that serves the whole country.
6	Balance	Context: Used when describing sharing power.	Keeping power from becoming too strong in one person or group.

Vocabulary Activity

Word Sort (10 minutes)

Setup: Students sort words into categories:

—Government Goals

- Strengthen national government
- Balance power

—Government Protections

- Prevent abuse of power

—Government Stability

- Ratify the Constitution
- Create a lasting system

- **Teacher Prompt:** “Why might leaders designing a new government care about each of these ideas?”

Text Coding Guide

P = Problem from the Articles of Confederation

O = Objective of the Constitutional Convention

S = Solution included in the Constitution

- Students read and code the text
- Teacher models paragraph 1
- Students complete remaining paragraphs

Directed Note-Taking Graphic Organizer:

Students track how the objectives of the Convention shaped the Constitution

Objective	Evidence (Paragraph #)	Why This Objective Mattered	How the Constitution Addressed It
Create a stronger national government			
Balance power between states and the national government			
Prevent abuse of power			
Create a system that could be ratified and last			

Reminder: Historians recognize that all of these objectives were important. Students are evaluating which objective they believe had the strongest impact.

Partner Preparation

- **Prompt:** “Which objective of the Constitutional Convention do you think played the largest role in helping the Constitution last over time – and why?”

Partners select ONE objective and identify TWO pieces of evidence from the text. They must also prepare to explain their reasoning.

Group Discussion

Prompt: “Which objective do you think played the largest role in helping the Constitution endure?”

Students defend their position using text evidence in a whole class discussion.

Teacher pushes reasoning and synthesis:

- Why do you think this objective mattered most?
- How does this objective connect to the others?
- Would the Constitution have lasted if this objective were missing?
- How did compromise influence this objective?

Final Writing Prompt

Prompt: *Which objective of the Constitutional Convention do you think played the largest role in helping the Constitution last over time?*

Students must:

- Identify one objective
- Use at least TWO pieces of textual evidence
- Explain how the Constitution addressed the objective
- Explain why it helped the Constitution endure

Closure

- **Connection to Today**—Turn-and-talk:
“Why do successful governments need both power and limits on power?”
- **Exit Ticket**—“Write one sentence explaining why the objectives of the Constitutional Convention mattered when creating the Constitution.”