

Lesson 6: Compromises at the Constitutional Convention

Teacher Version

Essential Question

Why were compromises necessary at the Constitutional Convention and which compromise do you think was most important in allowing the Constitution to succeed?

Lesson Bridge

Review Lesson 5:

- Leaders met to fix problems with the Articles of Confederation.
- Delegates had different ideas about representation and power.

Bridge Question:

- Last lesson, we examined what the delegates wanted to accomplish. Today, we ask: How did they actually make it happen?

Key Vocabulary

Step 1: Review Previously Taught Terms

The following terms were introduced in earlier lessons:

Compromise (Lesson 1)

Popular Sovereignty (Lesson 2)

Representation (Lesson 4)

Proportional (Lesson 4)

Executive (Lesson 4/5)

Checks and Balances (Lesson 5)

Ratify (Lesson 5)

Teacher Note: Do not fully reteach these. Ask students to recall definitions and provide examples from earlier lessons. Suggested prompt: “Where have we seen this word before? What problem was it connected to?”

Key Vocabulary (continued)

Step 2: New/Reinforced Term

Paragraph	Word	How it Will be Taught	Student-Friendly Definition
4	Bicameral	Context: Taught through the structure of Congress created by the Great Compromise	A lawmaking body with two parts (House and Senate)

Vocabulary Activity

Word Sort (5-7 minutes)

Setup: Students sort words into conceptual categories:

A: Democratic Principles	B: Government Structure	C: Decision-Making Process
Popular Sovereignty Representation Proportional	Bicameral Executive Checks and Balances	Compromise Ratify

Discussion Questions:

- Which words describe ideas?
- Which words describe parts of government?
- Which words describe actions?

Text Coding Guide

P = Problem or Conflict

O = Objective

C = Compromise

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

Directed Note-Taking Graphic Organizer:

Students track how compromises shaped the Constitution

Conflict/Issue	Evidence (Paragraph #)	Why This Was a Problem	The Compromise Solution	How the Constitution Reflected It
Representation in Congress				
Counting Enslaved People				
Choosing the President				

Reminder: These compromises are specifically identified in the benchmark clarification for this lesson.

Partner Preparation

- **Prompt:** “Which compromise at the Constitutional Convention do you think was most important in allowing the Constitution to be created—and why?”

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

Group Discussion

Prompt: “Which compromise at the Constitutional Convention do you think was most important in allowing the Constitution to be created—and why?”

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

Teacher pushes reasoning and synthesis:

- Why do you believe this compromise mattered most?
- How did this compromise help resolve conflict between the states?
- Would the Constitution have succeeded if this compromise had not been reached?
- How did this compromise influence the structure of the government?

Final Writing Prompt

Prompt: *Which compromise at the Constitutional Convention do you think was most important in allowing the Constitution to be created and endure?*

Students must:

- Identify one compromise.
- Use at least TWO pieces of textual evidence.
- Explain the conflict that led to this compromise.
- Explain how the Constitution reflects this compromise and why it mattered for the new government.

Closure

- **Connection to Today**—Turn-and-talk:
“Why is compromise necessary in a democracy, even when people strongly disagree?”
- **Exit Ticket**—“Write one sentence explaining how compromise helped the Constitution succeed.”