Early Attempts at Government

Articles of Confederation to the Constitutional Convention
The Articles of Confederation

- Submitted to Congress in 1777
  - Took a while to get approval
    - States wanted to be sure it would be fair

Major Points
- Established Confederation Congress
- Equal Representation for States
- Placed majority of power with states
- Wanted to limit control of Central Government
Establishing the West

• Congress feared another war with natives
  – Settlers already pouring into western territory
• Land Ordinance of 1785
  – Set up rules on distributing land and establishing new states
• Northwest Ordinance of 1787
  – Established a government to oversee western lands
Conflicts with Europe

- Spanish
  - Afraid of American power, forbid trade with New Orleans

- British
  - Extended Navigation Acts
    - Wanted to weaken America
    - Wanted to make money back
Weakness of the Articles

- Congress could not establish a currency
- Could not levy taxes
- Could not collect money from states
  - Could not repay war debt
- Almost impossible to amend articles
“A little rebellion now and then is a good thing”

- Shay’s Rebellion
  - Farmers angry they could not pay their debts shut down the courts
  - Showed problems with State’s power
    - Led to push for stronger central government
Constitutional Convention

- 1787 – Delegates met in Philadelphia to come up with a new government
  - Virginia Plan – Three Branches with a powerful president
  - New Jersey Plan – Favored a stronger congress
Compromises

• Great Compromise - Combined the New Jersey Plan and the Virginia Plan
• Federalism – Divided power between the Federal Government and the States
• Three-Fifths – Solved question of how to count slaves in the south
Homework

Using the book (pages 147, 150-152) list the arguments for, and against ratifying the Constitution.