The Constitutional Convention

The Articles of Confederation to the Constitutional Convention
The Articles of Confederation

• Major Points
  – Established Confederation Congress
  – Placed Majority of power with the states
    • Each state with one vote

• Submitted to Congress in 1777
  – Took a while to get approval
    • States wanted to be sure it would be fair
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
Shay’s Rebellion

• Farmers Angry they could not pay their debts shut down the courts
• Showed problems with state’s power
  – “A little rebellion now and then is a good thing”
  – Led to a 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
The Anti-Federalists

- Did not want the new constitution to be ratified
  - It gave too much power to the national government
  - Allowed for a standing army in peacetime
  - No Bill of rights
  - Executive Branch had too much power
  - ‘Necessary and proper’ clause
The Federalists

• Defended the new constitution
  – Needed a strong central government
  – The separation of powers into three independent branches protected the rights of the people.
  – No one branch could be too powerful
  – We can’t list all rights so don’t limit them by restricting them to a list
Ratification

• By 1788 nine states had ratified the new constitution
  – Ten were needed to ratify

• A Bill of Rights was promised once the constitution was ratified
  – Bringing in three more states
  – Constitution Ratified June 21, 1788