

# A More Perfect Union

*America Becomes a Nation*

This Coloring and Activity Book is specifically designed to be used with the feature film, *A More Perfect Union: America Becomes a Nation*.

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Grades  
K-12



**COLORING and ACTIVITY BOOK**

# *A More Perfect Union*

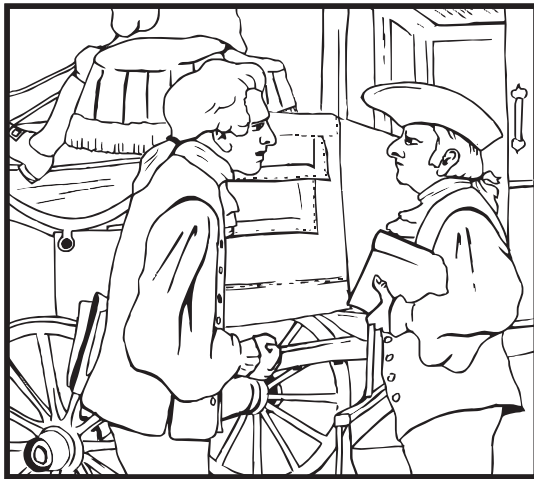
## *America Becomes a Nation*

AMERICA, 1786. Ten years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. England wages a new war of unfair trade. Arguing and jealousy divided the once united states.



But a handful of honorable men, James Madison, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and others, lead a battle to create a new government, one that will protect freedom.

The coloring/comic pages, readers' theater, and lesson plans inside are taken directly "A MORE PERFECT UNION," the first comprehensive re-creation of those heated debates during the hot summer of 1787. Filmed on location at Independence Hall, Williamsburg, and other historical sites, it dramatically chronicles the Constitutional Convention and the underlying principles that guard our freedoms today.



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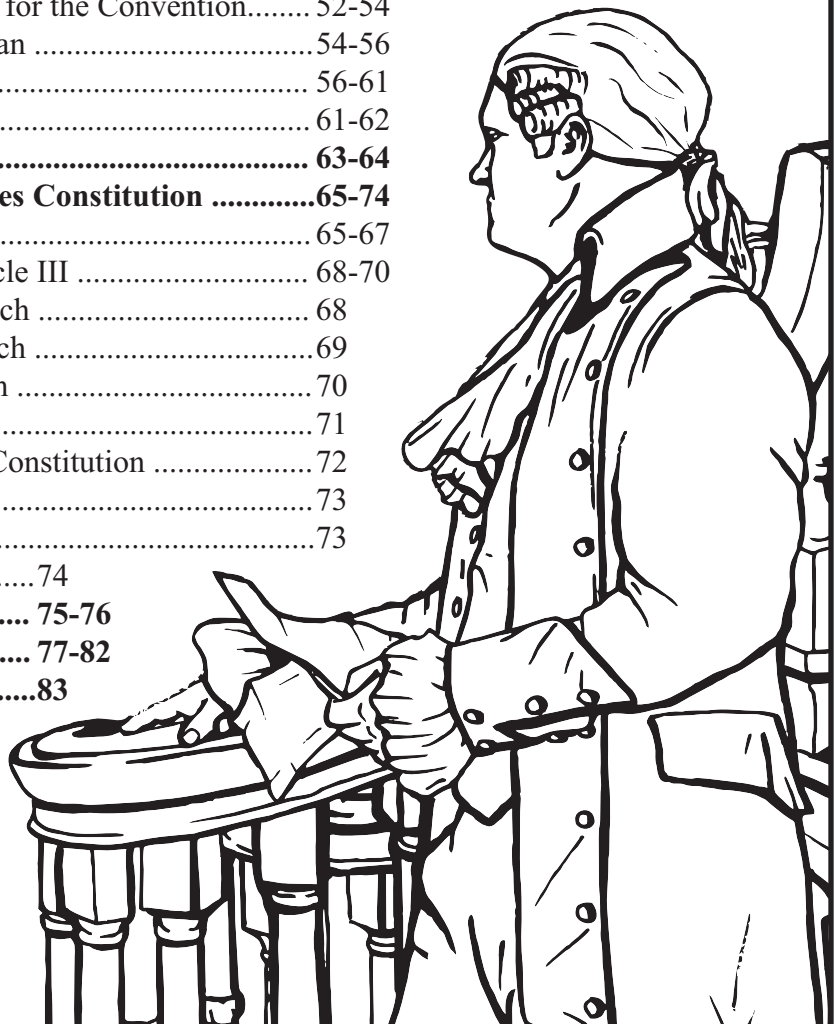
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The Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution has officially recognized A More Perfect Union: America Becomes a Nation as being "of exceptional merit" and has given its seal of approval.

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# A More Perfect Union

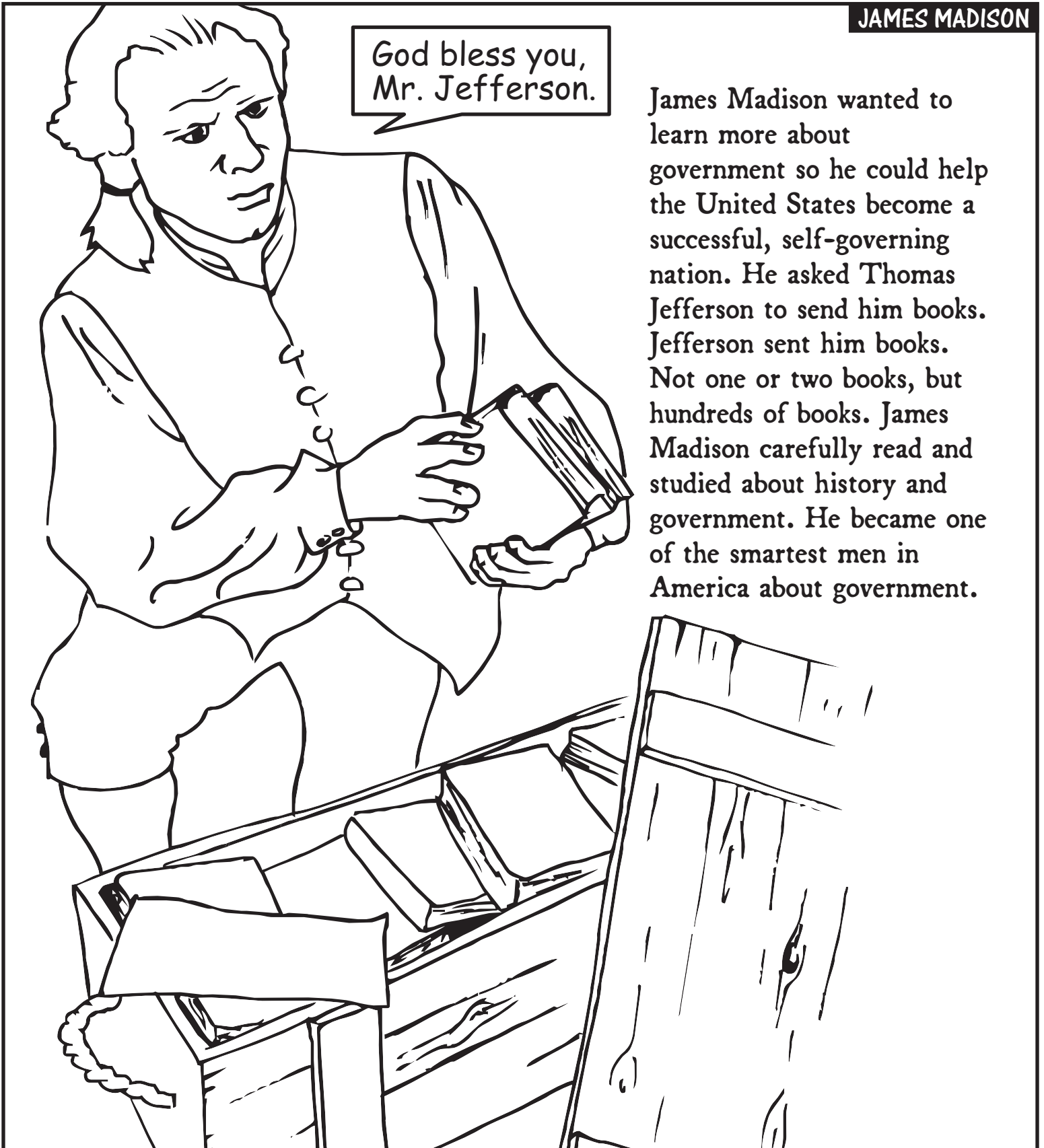
*America Becomes a Nation*

— OPENING SCENE —

**JAMES MADISON**

God bless you,  
Mr. Jefferson.

James Madison wanted to learn more about government so he could help the United States become a successful, self-governing nation. He asked Thomas Jefferson to send him books. Jefferson sent him books. Not one or two books, but hundreds of books. James Madison carefully read and studied about history and government. He became one of the smartest men in America about government.





**JAMES MADISON**

America is in crisis. Once united by the war against great Britain, the states are now deeply divided. Unless a means can be found to unite the states, I fear the worst for my country. Its life may be as the flame of a candle – bright but brief.

**AMERICAN MERCHANT**

That wasn't our understanding.

**BRITISH MERCHANT**

That's what I said, and that's the price.

**AMERICAN MERCHANT**

That's flat robbery. It's more than you said. I won't do it, and I won't pay your price for this lot either! Take it back! Take it all back!





# IMPORTANT PEOPLE AT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION



**JAMES MADISON** was one of the youngest delegates to the Constitutional Convention. Long study had made him the most prepared person there. Known as “The Father of the Constitution,” he is mostly responsible for the structure of our government. He was from Virginia.



**GEORGE WASHINGTON** was probably the most respected man in the country. The Constitutional Convention would not have happened without him. He retired after winning the Revolutionary War, but not for long. His country needed him to serve in the Convention. He was from Virginia.



**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN** was well known to be the best philosopher of his day. He invented many things and served his community for years. He had been trying to unite the Colonies for decades, now he was able to help in the Convention. He was 81 years old and very ill, but served anyway. He was from Pennsylvania.



**ROGER SHERMAN** was from Connecticut. He was very kindhearted and had a clear mind. When the Convention almost failed he came up with a compromise that solved the longest, most heated argument at the Convention. The argument was between the large and small states about how the states would be represented.

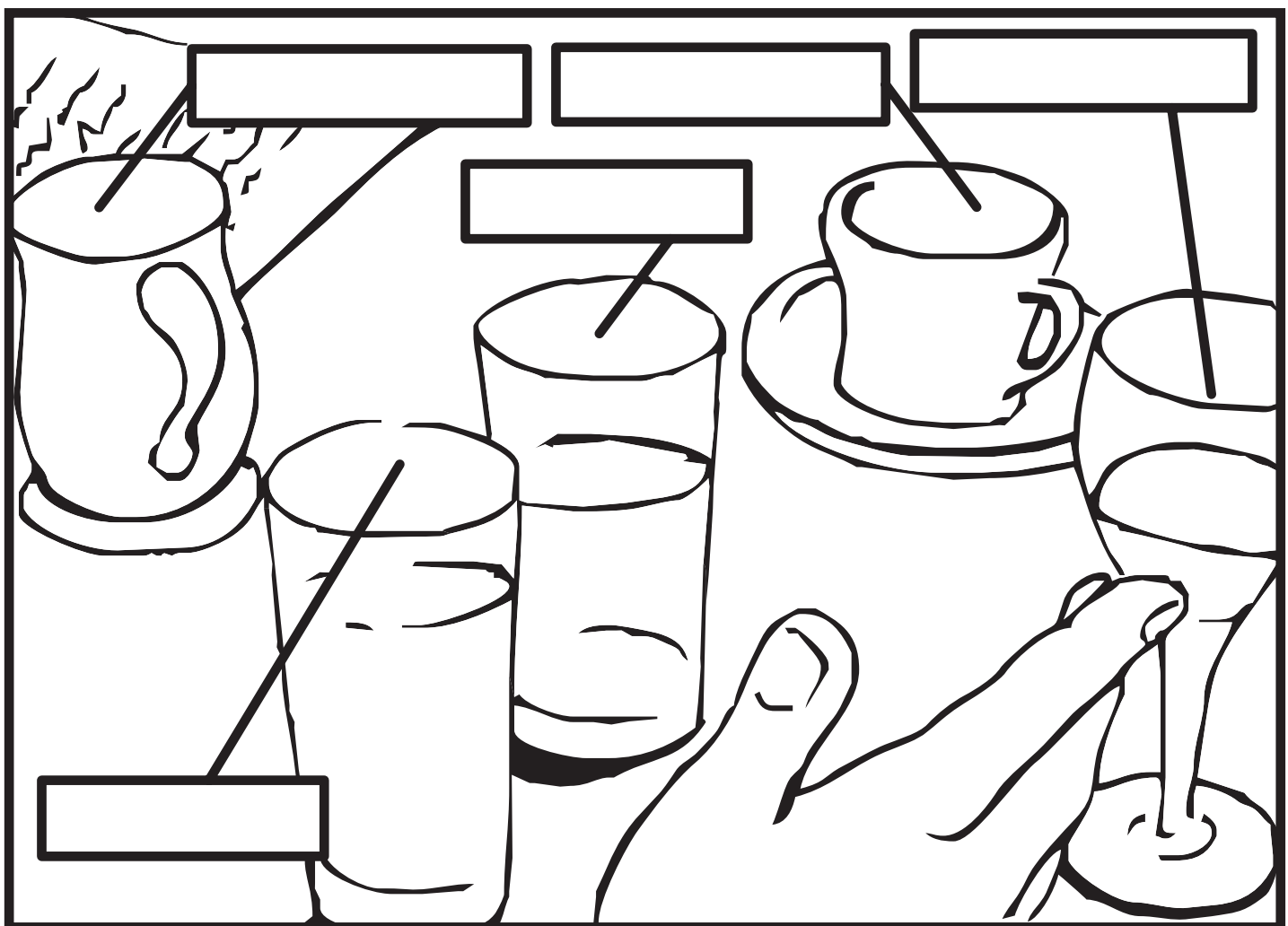
# THE VIRGINIA PLAN ACTIVITY

In the movie *A More Perfect Union*, James Madison explains his plan for a new government to the other delegates from Virginia. He uses glasses and mugs to explain his ideas. His plan was known as the Virginia Plan. The Virginia Plan was debated in the Convention and became the basis for the United States Constitution.

Madison wanted to separate government into three branches. This way, no one branch could get too much control. They could not abuse the rights of the people as easily.

Using the words below, label the dishware according to Madison's explanation from that scene in the movie.

Executive    House    Judiciary    Legislature    Senate





James Madison sat at the front of the room so he could hear and take notes. His notes are a great historical record of the convention.

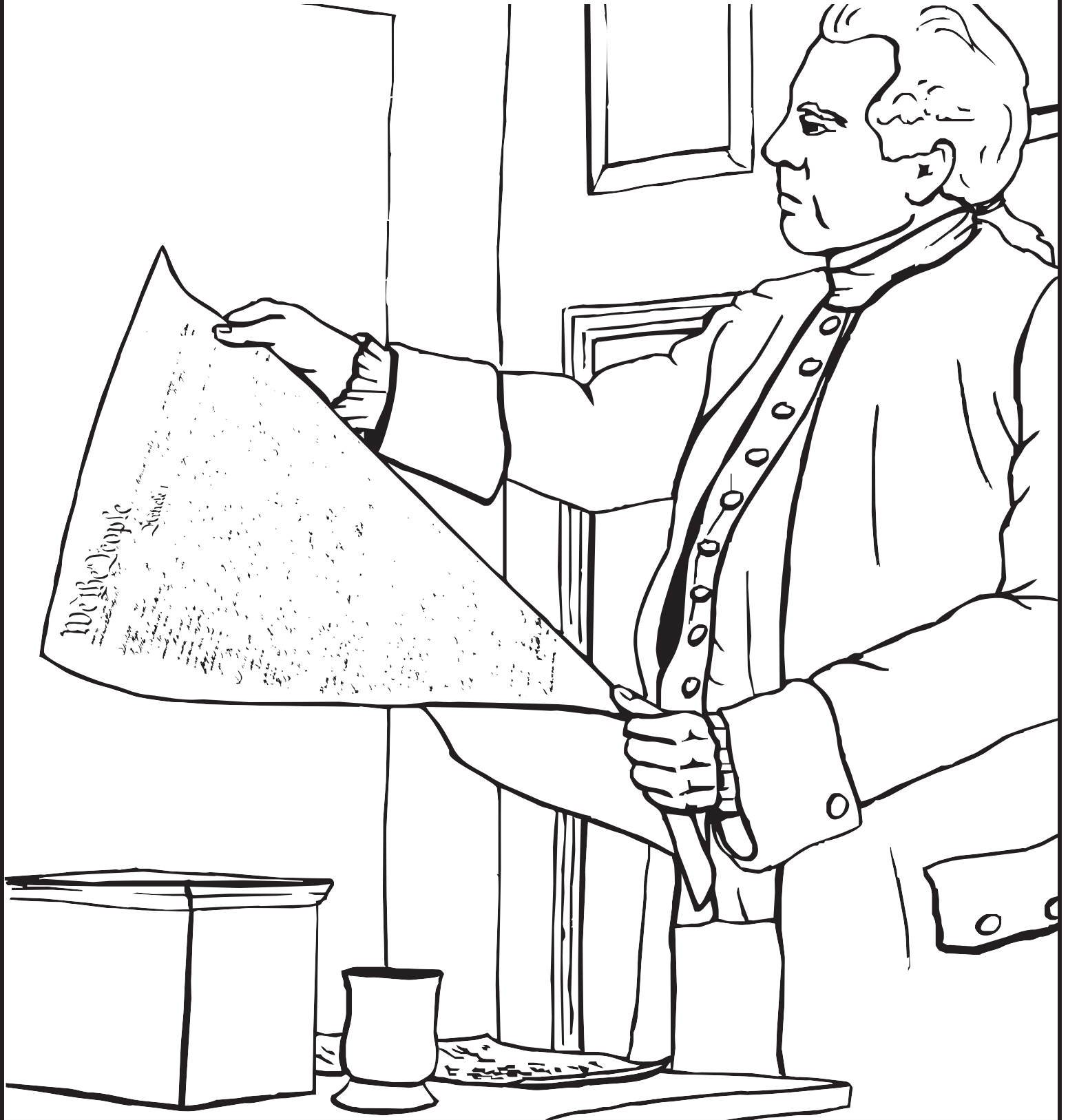
**MADISON**

With the indulgence of the members, I am moving to the front, where I may more perfectly hear the proceedings and make notes of them. I wish to record the mechanisms by which our new government is created.



# THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

After four long months the Constitution was finally completed, signed, and ready to be sent out to the states. Pages 65-74 outlines the main sections in the Constitution.



# A MORE PERFECT UNION SCRIPT

## Readers' Theater

The following sections are excerpts from the script for the movie *A More Perfect Union: America Becomes a Nation*. This script covers some of the major discussions and arguments highlighted in the movie. Assign parts to each person to read and enjoy a dramatic reading of these heated debates.

### THE NEED FOR A CONVENTION

After the War of Independence was won, our new country fell into turmoil. The governing document at the time was the Articles of Confederation. That document did not provide for a federal government strong enough to meet the needs of the country. The Articles needed to be revised or changed. A convention to work out the nations problems became very necessary.

**PARTS:** James Madison  
George Mason  
Thomas Jefferson  
John Adams

<-VIRGINIA DELEGATE MEETING-->

**MADISON** I HAVE HERE A RESOLUTION WHICH GRANTS TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS OF CONFEDERATION THE POWER, FINALLY, TO REGULATE THE TRADE OF THIS COUNTRY.

**LEE** NOT AGAIN, MR. MADISON.

**MADISON** YES, AGAIN, MR. LEE.

**LEE** ALL THOSE IN THIS HOUSE KNOW YOU WISH TO STRIP VIRGINIA OF HER GOD-ENDOWED RIGHT TO REGULATE HER OWN TRADE.

**MADISON** VIRGINIA DOES NOT REGULATE HER TRADE, SIR, NOR DOES ANY OTHER STATE IN THE UNION, GREAT BRITAIN CONTROLS IT. GO DOWN TO YOUR DOCKS AND SEE FOR YOURSELF.

**MASON** INDEED. WE CHARGE THE BRITISH NOTHING FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF TRADING WITH US. MEANWHILE, THEY CHARGE US HUGE TARIFFS.

**LEE** IF THE BRITISH REGULATE OUR TRADE ABROAD, MR. MASON, LET US, BY ALL MEANS, RESTRICT THEIRS HERE, BUT AS VIRGINIANS.

[DELEGATES SHOUTING]

**LEE** LET US NOT EMPOWER CONGRESS TO JOIN WITH US AVARICIOUS NEW ENGLANDERS.

[DELEGATES SHOUTING]

**MADISON** WHAT ABOUT AVARICIOUS SOUTHERNERS? OUR SOUTHERN

STATE GOVERNMENTS, INDEED THE STATE HOUSES IN EVERY CORNER OF THE UNION, REEK WITH CORRUPTION. THE RESULT, GENTLEMEN -- THIS NATION BECOMES EVERY DAY WEAKER, HER BORDER THREATENED BY SPAIN TO THE WEST, GREAT BRITAIN TO THE NORTH. CAN'T YOU SEE, MR. LEE THE GLORY OF THE REVOLUTION IS BEING BLASTED? THE STATES MUST RENOUNCE THEIR JEALOUSIES AND GIVE SOME POWER TO A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, OTHERWISE, AMERICA WILL DISSOLVE.

**LEE** MR. MADISON, YOU MAY SPECHIFY AS LONG AS YOU LIKE ABOUT A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND AMERICA, WE HERE IN THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES ARE VIRGINIANS -- FIRST, LAST, AND ALWAYS!

[DELEGATES SHOUTING]

<-JAMES MADISON AND COLONEL MASON TALKING WHILE WALKING TO THE CARRIAGE-->

**MADISON** IF WE COULD JUST GET THE STATES TOGETHER TO TALK OUTSIDE THEIR CURSED LEGISLATURES.

**MASON** TALK? ABOUT WHAT?

**MADISON** TALK ABOUT TRADE, ABOUT LAWS, ABOUT A MORE EFFECTIVE UNION, ABOUT ANYTHING. IF -- IF HONEST, INFLUENTIAL MEN MET TOGETHER REPRESENTING THEIR STATES -- MEN LIKE WASHINGTON AND DR. FRANKLIN, AND YOURSELF, SIR -- I HAVE THE GREATEST ADMIRATION FOR YOUR WRITING VIRGINIA'S CONSTITUTION AND HER DECLARATION OF RIGHTS. SIR, MAY I COUNT ON YOUR HELP?

# *A More Perfect Union*

## *America Becomes a Nation*

THE PHILADELPHIA CONVENTION  
AND THE CONSTITUTION OF  
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



### **A TEACHER'S GUIDE**

**The following lessons correspond with the motion picture,  
A More Perfect Union: America Becomes a Nation.**

#### **A BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY PRODUCTION**

In 1990 Brigham Young University released its feature film dramatization of the events of the Constitutional Convention of 1787. *A More Perfect Union* was shown initially on PBS nationwide and was viewed by almost two-and-a-half million people. It has received several gold and silver awards in national and international film festivals, including a prestigious Emmy Award presented by the Rocky Mountain Region.

In cooperation with Modern Talking Picture Services, the motion picture has now been divided into video segments for supplementary classroom use.

*A More Perfect Union* was produced to celebrate two centuries of unprecedented human liberty under the Constitution of the United States of America and to help people everywhere better understand and appreciate the origins and meaning of this historic achievement.

The American founding was a product of ideas and of human commitment to important values. This package, including the teacher's guide, focuses on the concepts and principles that have proven important for the success of the American Constitution. The emphasis is on understanding the founders in the context of their own times.

Every effort has been made to make this production as historically accurate as possible. While a motion picture by its very nature requires simplification of complex events, *A More Perfect Union* preserves the essential concepts, arguments and political motivations that scholars have recognized in the formation of the American republic. This guide was prepared by Professor Noel B. Reynolds with the assistance of his wife, Sydney S. Reynolds, and in conjunction with the James Madison Center for Constitutional Studies at Brigham Young University.

The American experiment in self-government provides a model that attracts the admiration and close scrutiny of peoples around the world who are struggling to establish new forms of government that will provide peace and freedom in a wide variety of social and cultural contexts. It is an appropriate time for Americans as well to reconsider their political founding that they might better understand what they have to offer a world in turmoil.

#### **A More Perfect Union Education Version DVD**

The DVD containing *A More Perfect Union Education Version* includes the full motion picture and is also divided into five teaching segments (or lessons) for classroom use.

#### **Teacher's Guide**

Lesson 1 is a summary of the motion picture and includes essential scenes from the film. Teachers and administrators may choose to use this lesson to recap parts of the production. This lesson may be helpful to teachers and administrators in considering how to adapt this package to their class.

Lessons 2-6 divide the full production into independent parts for separate showing. Each lesson opens with a brief host narration regarding that segment. These segments vary from 18 to 28 minutes in length.

This teacher's guide provides background information and perspectives designed to help teachers with classroom discussions and other learning activities related to the production. The five lessons provide support for each of the five segments on the DVD.

A bibliography listing books for further reference is located on page 52.

## LESSON ONE

### INTRODUCTION

By the summer of 1786, just ten years after the announcement of the Declaration of Independence and three years after the end of the victorious Revolution, the 13 American states found themselves in a critical situation. Each state retained the sovereign right to govern itself, except for a limited number of activities, such as defense, where the states coordinated their actions through a national congress. But Congress was weak. It could not pay off the war debts or regulate commerce between the states or with foreign nations.

James Madison was seeking to mobilize other concerned and far-sighted statesmen in support of a stronger national government. They agreed to meet in Philadelphia in 1787 to consider revisions of their six-year-old constitution, the Articles of Confederation. The participation of George Washington was essential if the best leaders from each state were to see this convention as worth their while.

### THE CRISIS

The 13 former British colonies had been strongly united by their common desire for independence from Britain during the Revolutionary War. After the war, they soon found themselves competing for the same trade opportunities and for opportunities for their citizens to move farther west to settle. Because there was no strong central government to unite their interests, they were reduced to squabbling among themselves, particularly in the form of trade wars. It was simple for the British, still the world's strongest trading nation, to exploit these differences to their own advantage. The British even ignored some terms of the war settlement, including the requirement that they remove their troops from American territory.

The 13 states were also threatened individually by internal crises of their own. Several state legislatures were torn apart by the demands of rival factions. State governments tended to be dominated by their legislatures and thus provided little effective check on violent and dominant factions. The possibility of rebellion by oppressed and desperate citizens became a grave concern.

### THE MODEL CONSTITUTION

Shortly before the colonies declared their independence from Britain, the Continental Congress issued instructions to the individual states to establish constitutions as a basis for their separate governments. Some undertook to write new constitutions; others made changes to their royal charters, substituting "the people" for the king," to minimize overall changes to existing law.

The most notable trend was to reduce the authority and power of the executive branch in favor of stronger legislatures. This was a natural reaction for a people whose liberty had suffered severely at the hands of a king and his royal governors but had been defended by elected legislatures. The disturbing lesson the Americans learned during the 1780s was that unchecked legislatures could be as tyrannical as unchecked executives. The constitutions themselves could be changed by these legislatures and thus provided no fundamental checks on legislative power.

As early as 1777, observers noticed the weaknesses of these state constitutions. Massachusetts led out in the process of constitutional reform and established the concept of a special constitutional convention and ratification process to make the constitution a fundamental law that could effectively limit the legislature and the executive. John Adams wrote a constitution for Massachusetts that featured balance between the executive, legislative and judicial branches and that divided the legislature into two separate houses, thus providing a further check on its power. This constitution soon earned wide admiration, was circulated by Congress to the other states for their consideration as a model, and ultimately provided a source for many of the constitutional ideas used by the writers of the federal constitution of 1787.

### THE ROAD TO PHILADELPHIA

The Declaration of Independence was the end product of a long process that began with letter writing between patriots of the various colonies, developed into informal meetings of delegates from the various colonies, and culminated in a document written by a Continental Congress, with formal representation and authorization from each colony. The U.S. Constitution was produced through a similar process. Concerns were already being expressed in the correspondence of leading citizens as early as 1785. Virginia and New York called others to a convention at Annapolis in 1786, but only six states sent delegations. The Annapolis Convention met briefly, called upon all 13 states to send delegates to a convention the next year in Philadelphia, and adjourned. James Madison was the principal agitator during the next year, writing far and wide to persuade the states to send their strongest leaders to Philadelphia.

### KEY PERSONALITIES

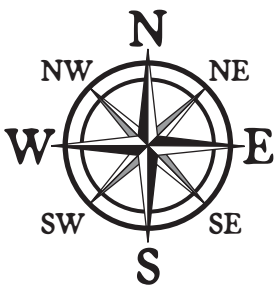
James Madison. Justly called the "Father of the Constitution," Madison was actually one of the youngest delegates. He was well educated, having studied at Princeton under the Scottish scholar John Witherspoon. Madison, Jefferson and Hamilton were all deeply influenced by the Scottish thinking that emphasized rule of law under sound constitutional government and also free markets.

# ARTICLE IV - FOR THE STATES

Article four is for the states. It lists the powers, rights, and responsibilities of the states. It requires that each state must recognize the official acts of the other states and that citizens of all the states must be treated equally. It also explains how new states can be made and guarantees that all Americans will live in a Republic. That means we will always have representatives in our government and laws to protect our rights.

**ACTIVITY:** Complete the map's key.

1. Color each of the boxes on the map key a different color.
2. Color the state(s) to match the colors on the map key.



## MAP KEY

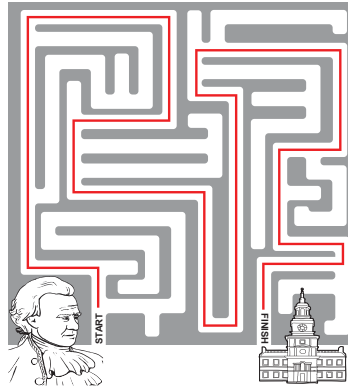
- |                                     |                                                  |                                          |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I Live     | <input type="checkbox"/> My Grandparents Live(d) | <input type="checkbox"/> My Dad Was Born |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I Was Born | <input type="checkbox"/> States I've Visited     | <input type="checkbox"/> My Mom Was Born |

QUIZ ANSWER KEY

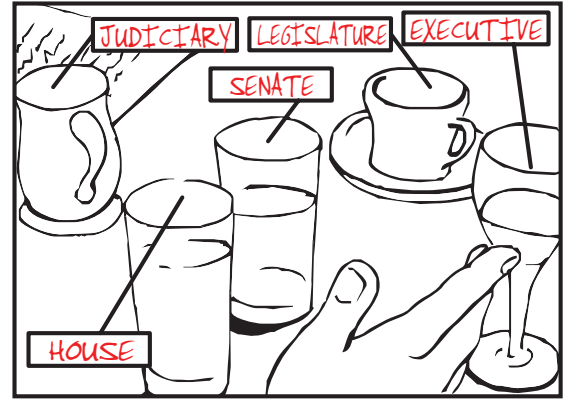
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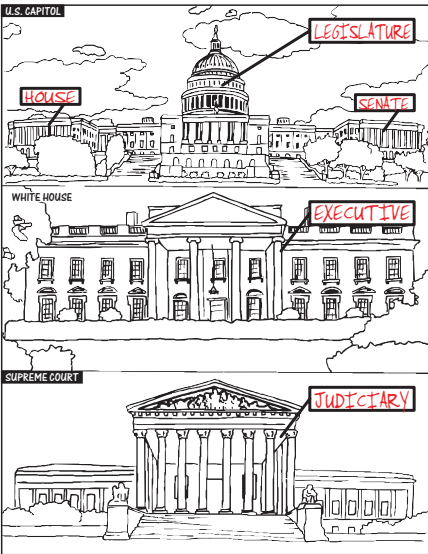
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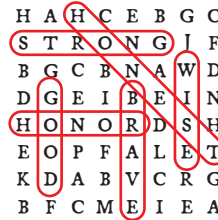
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1. C 2. D 3. B 4. B 5. B 6. A 7. D 8. A 9. A
10. D 11. D 12. C 13. B 14. B 15. C 16. B
17. C 18. D 19. A 20. C

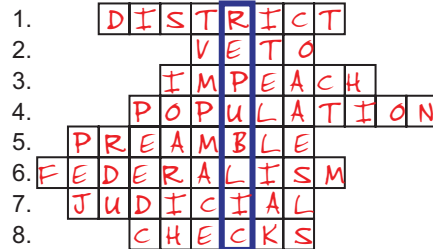
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1. GEORGE WASHINGTON
2. JAMES MADISON
3. GOVERNEUR MORRIS
4. ROGER SHERMAN
5. ALEXANDER HAMILTON
6. WILLIAM PATERSON
7. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

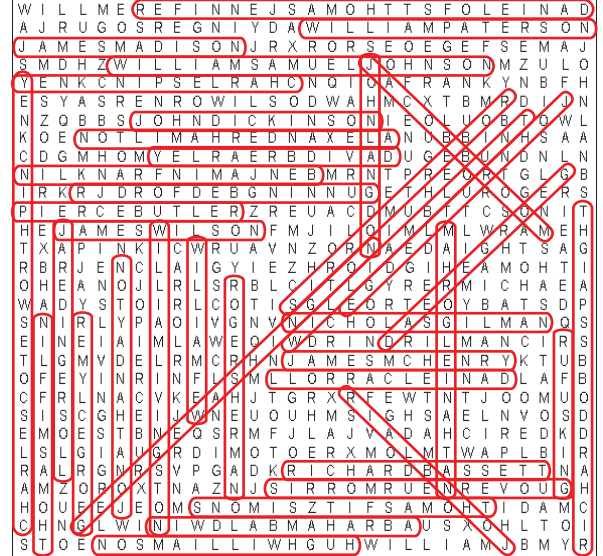
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What type of government do we have?

**REPUBLIC**

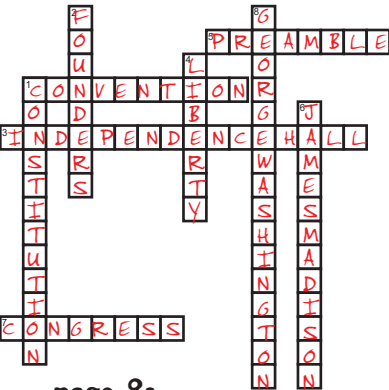


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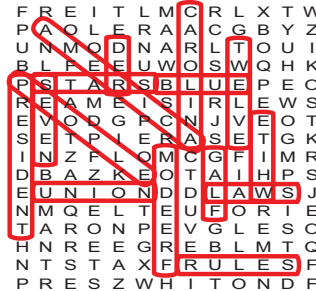


- Roger Sherman      George Washington  
Alexander Hamilton      James Madison

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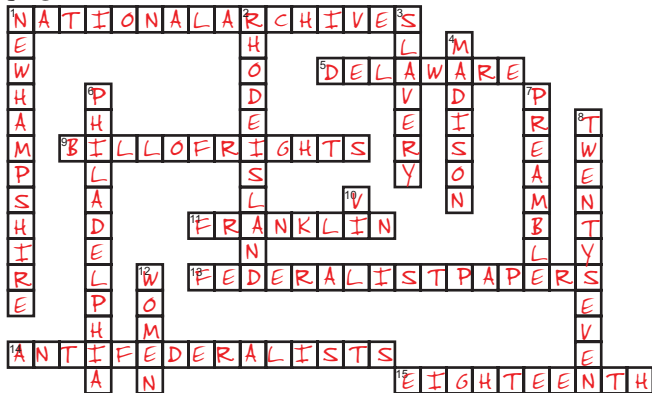


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- PEOPLE  
CAROLINA  
UNION  
SEVEN  
TWELVE

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1. ROEGEG      OAGNNHWTSI  
GEORGE WASHINGTON
2. MEJANINB      NKRIIFAN  
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
3. EAMSJ      DMOSSNIA  
JAMES MADISON
4. GBAILA      SAMDA  
ABIGAIL ADAMS
5. XAALERND E      NOIAHMT  
ALEXANDER HAMILTON