

TEXT SUMMARY

The 1780s were problem-filled years for the United States. Although the States wanted a permanent government, they did not want to give it much power.

The 13 States **ratified**—or formally approved—the **Articles of Confederation** in 1781. The Articles set up a government that tied the States together in a loose union. They also created a central government that had power to do little more than set up an army and a navy, make war and peace, and settle State disputes. This government consisted of only one branch, the Congress, which was unicameral. Each State had one vote. Each year, Congress was to choose one of its members as its **presiding officer**, or chairperson.









THE BIG IDEA

The weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation led to demands for a stronger central government.

The National Government had no power to make the States obey the Articles or the laws passed by the legislature. The States had the power to tax and printed their own money. When a rebellion broke out in Massachusetts, many leaders were convinced that Americans had to strengthen the government.

Delegates from Maryland and Virginia met at Mount Vernon, Virginia, to solve their trade problems. Their success led them to call a meeting at Annapolis, Maryland, to try to solve some of the nation's problems. Only five States sent delegates. They set up another meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania which became the Constitutional Convention.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: *Weaknesses of the Government under the Articles of Confederation*

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|  One vote for each State, regardless of size. |  No national court system. |
|  Congress powerless to collect taxes or duties. |  Amendment only with consent of all of the States. |
|  Congress powerless to regulate foreign and interstate commerce. |  A 9/13 majority required to pass laws. |
|  No executive to enforce acts of Congress. |  Articles only a "firm league of friendship." |

Under the Articles of Confederation, the new central government had few powers.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What were the Articles of Confederation?
2. **Chart Skills** List three weaknesses of the government under the Articles of Confederation.