

CREATING THE CONSTITUTION

TEXT SUMMARY

In 1787, 55 delegates from 12 States met in Philadelphia to revise the Articles of Confederation. Later known as the **Framers**, these delegates soon decided to write a new constitution instead.

The delegates from Virginia were the first to offer a plan. The **Virginia Plan** called for three branches of government: an executive, a bicameral legislature, and courts. The number of representatives a State sent to the legislature was linked to its wealth and population. Small States opposed this plan.

The **New Jersey Plan** called for a government without strong and separate branches. It also proposed a unicameral legislature with an equal number of representatives from each State.

The **Connecticut Compromise** combined the basic features of the Virginia

and New Jersey plans. It called for two houses in Congress. In the smaller Senate, the States would have equal representation. In the larger House, each State would be represented based on its population.

The Constitution became a document of compromises. The **Three-Fifths Compromise** determined that States could count three-fifths of their slaves as part of their populations, which increased their representation in the House. The **Commerce and Slave Trade Compromise** forbade Congress from taxing exports from any State as well as from acting against the slave trade for 20 years. The Framers made many other compromises before they completed their work on September 17, 1787.

THE BIG IDEA

The delegates to the Constitutional Convention created a new form of government for a new nation.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: *Compromises Made in Framing the Constitution*

Compromise	Issue	Solution
Connecticut	Representation in Congress	Bicameral legislature: States have equal representation in Senate; representation in the House depends on State's population.
Three-Fifths	Counting slaves within population to determine representation	Slaves were counted as if 3/5 of one person, both for representation and taxation.
Commerce and Slave Trade	Granting Congress the power to regulate foreign and interstate trade	Congress was forbidden to tax a State's exports or take action against the slave trade for 20 years.

The Framers made many compromises when writing the Constitution.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did small States oppose the Virginia Plan?
2. **Chart Skills** Which compromise guaranteed that the slave trade could exist for 20 years?