

RATIFYING THE CONSTITUTION

TEXT SUMMARY

The Framers had provided that before the Constitution could take effect, at least nine of the 13 States had to ratify it. Americans were greatly divided in their opinions about the Constitution.

Two groups formed during the ratification process: the **Federalists**, who favored ratifying the Constitution, and the **Anti-Federalists**, who strongly opposed it.

The Federalists stressed the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation. Anti-Federalists attacked almost every part of the Constitution, but two of its features drew the strongest criticism: (1) the greatly

increased powers of the central government and (2) the lack of a bill of rights that would provide for basic liberties such as freedom of speech and religion.

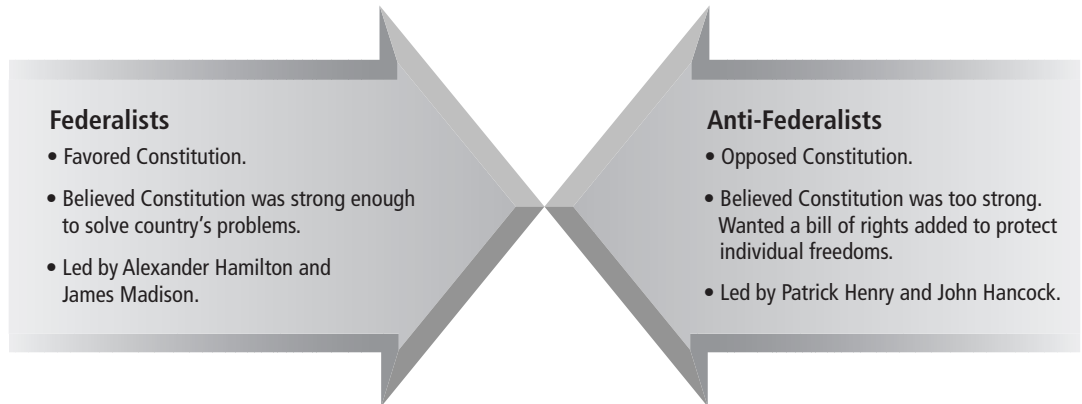
The struggle for ratification was intense in several States, especially Virginia and New York. The Federalists finally won in both States.

After eleven States had ratified the Constitution in 1788, the States held elections for a new President. The first Congress of the new National Government met in March, 1789. Because there was not a **quorum**, or majority of its members, the electoral votes could not be counted until April 6. At that point, it declared George Washington President.

THE BIG IDEA

After great debate, the Constitution was ratified by nine States and became the supreme law of the nation.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: *The Debate over Ratification*



The debate over ratification of the Constitution was intense.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who were the Federalists?

2. **Diagram Skills** Give two reasons why the Anti-Federalists opposed the Constitution.