

2. How the Founders Got it Done | Worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Crisis! Can Your Government Handle It?

Government Type: _____

Civilization Name (have fun!): _____

What is the crisis? (briefly sum up)

What decision does your government make first?

What makes this crisis hard to solve in your system? (choose one or more)

- ☐ People can't disagree safely
- ☐ The wrong people make the decision
- ☐ Decisions take too long or never settle
- ☐ The rules are unclear or depend on one person
- ☐ The system protects leaders more than citizens



Explain your choice(s):

What would have to change in your system to prevent this problem from happening again?

1787 Constitutional Convention

Why did the Founders meet in Philadelphia in 1787?

What solution helped them move forward instead of breaking apart?



Deal or No Deal: The Constitutional Convention

Read each proposal. For each one, decide whether the delegates should accept it, reject it, or change it to keep the country together.

Proposal 1: Representation by Population

States with more people should have more representatives and more power in Congress. States with fewer people should have less power.

- ☐ Accept
- ☐ Reject
- ☐ Change

Proposal 2: Equal Power for All States

Every state should have the same number of representatives, no matter how large or small its population.

- ☐ Accept
- ☐ Reject
- ☐ Change

Proposal 3: One National Lawmaker

To keep things simple and fast, the country should have one main lawmaker who decides laws for all the states.

- ☐ Accept
- ☐ Reject
- ☐ Change

Proposal 4: Walk Away

If states cannot agree, they should stop trying to form one nation and go their separate ways.

- ☐ Accept
- ☐ Reject
- ☐ Change

Comprehension Questions

1. The Revolutionary War ended in _____ (year). The Constitutional Convention met in _____ (year). How many years passed between the end of the war and the Convention? _____ years.
2. Why were the Articles of Confederation considered too weak? (list at least three reasons)

3. How many delegates attended the Constitutional Convention? _____
4. How many days did the delegates meet to write the Constitution? _____
5. What were the stakes if this Convention failed?

6. What was the unified goal of the Convention?

7. What subjects were the delegates knowledgeable about that helped them write the Constitution?

8. Benjamin Franklin asked the delegates to do something before giving the matter one last try. What was it, and what happened afterwards?

Answer Key | How the Founders Got it Done

Box 1: Crisis! Can Your Government Handle It?

Answers will vary by group. Grade for understanding. (Use this to check student responses against the intended model.)

Dictatorship

Crisis summed up: A food supply crisis leads the dictator to impose a fast, centralized solution that creates shortages and mistakes.

Ruler Decision: The ruler makes a fast rule for everyone (often without input).

Hard to solve because: People can't disagree safely; rules depend on one person; leaders protected more than citizens.

Strong Reasoning: fear of punishment, no honest feedback, mistakes continue.

What would have to change: limits on the ruler; safe disagreement; checks on power; a way to correct bad decisions.

Absolute Monarchy

Crisis summed up: The king dies without naming an heir, causing confusion and conflict over who should rule.

Ruler Decision: There is no clear decision because succession rules are unclear or nonexistent.

Hard to Solve Because: The rules are unclear or depend on one person, The system protects leaders more than citizens

Strong Reasoning: Without written laws or a clear process, power struggles erupt, and stability depends entirely on the ruler's choices.

What would have to change: Clear, written laws for succession and limits on royal authority.

Oligarchy

Crisis summed up: A food shortage forces elites to choose between helping the public or protecting their own wealth.

Ruler Decision: The ruling families debate privately and prioritize their own interests.

Hard to Solve Because: The wrong people make the decision, The system protects leaders more than citizens

Strong Reasoning: Decisions are made by a small group that benefits from the crisis, leaving ordinary people without a voice or protection.

What would have to change: Broader representation, accountability to the public, and limits on elite power.

Theocracy

Crisis summed up: A water shortage leads religious leaders to impose stricter religious laws instead of practical solutions.

Ruler Decision: Religious authorities declare the crisis a punishment and enforce religious rules rather than addressing the problem.

Hard to Solve Because: People can't disagree safely, The wrong people make the decision

Strong Reasoning: Questioning religious authority is dangerous, so practical solutions are ignored even when people suffer.

What would have to change: Freedom to question leaders, separation of religious belief from government decisions, and protection for dissent.

Communist Government

Crisis summed up: Food and fuel shortages worsen while the government claims everything is fine and silences dissent.

Ruler Decision: Central leaders control all resources and suppress information about the crisis.

Hard to Solve Because: People can't disagree safely, The system protects leaders more than citizens

Strong Reasoning: When the government controls information and punishes disagreement, problems cannot be acknowledged or fixed.

What would have to change: Freedom of speech, transparency, and limits on centralized government control.

Direct Democracy

Crisis summed up: A food shortage leads to endless voting and debate while no solution is implemented in time.

Ruler Decision: Citizens repeatedly vote on different solutions, but no decision lasts long enough to work.

Hard to Solve Because: Decisions take too long or never settle

Strong Reasoning: Without structure or leadership, majority rule leads to delay, instability, and ineffective action during emergencies.

What would have to change: Elected representatives, clear procedures, and limits on constant voting.

Box 2: 1787 Constitutional Convention

Why did the Founders meet in Philadelphia in 1787? The Founders met because the Articles of Confederation were too weak to hold the country together. The national government could not solve major problems, maintain order, or unite the states into one strong nation.

What solution helped them move forward instead of breaking apart? **Compromise.** The delegates were willing to give up some of what they wanted, listen to one another, and work together to create a stronger, unified government that balanced power and protected freedom.

Section 3: Deal or No Deal: Constitutional Convention

Answers will vary.

Comprehension Questions | Answers

1. The Revolutionary War ended in **1783** (year). The Constitutional Convention met in **1787** (year) . How many years passed between the end of the war and the Convention? **4** years.
2. From today's lesson, why were the Articles of Confederation considered too weak? (list at least three reasons)
 - The national government had very little power.
 - States acted like separate countries instead of one nation.
 - Congress could not collect taxes.
 - The government could not solve major problems or maintain order.
 - America was vulnerable to foreign threats and internal conflict.
 - There was no strong, unified leadership.

3. How many delegates attended the Constitutional Convention?
55
4. How many days did the delegates meet to write the Constitution?
113
5. What were the stakes if this Convention failed?
Accept reasonable answers from what was mentioned in the video: Examples: There would be no unified country, and America could break apart into weak states that could be taken advantage of by foreign powers. Americans would have sacrificed too much in the War for Independence for nothing.
6. What was the unified goal of the Convention?

To create a strong, unified nation that would protect freedom for future generations.

7. What subjects were the delegates knowledgeable about that helped them write the Constitution?
History, science, philosophy, the Bible (scripture).
8. Benjamin Franklin asked the delegates to do something before giving the matter one last try. What was it, and what happened afterwards?
He suggested they ask God for help. Afterward, the delegates returned with a renewed spirit of compromise and successfully completed the Constitution.