



*Federal Government: SS.7.CG.1.10*  
**Federalists versus Anti-Federalists**  
**VIDEO SCRIPT #1**



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## **Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists Video #1**

1. Oh hey there! You're just in time for our first review session on Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists.
2. Under the United States Constitution, our system of government is a federal one where the central government shares power with the states.
3. But did you know that we almost didn't get our Constitution? That's right, it almost didn't happen because our Founding Fathers didn't originally agree about whether there should be a federal system as the United States national government.
4. So let's learn just why they might have disagreed! In this video, you will learn about the viewpoints of the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists regarding the ratification of the Constitution and inclusion of a bill of rights.
5. After watching this video, you will be able to:
  - ✓ identify the viewpoints of the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists about the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.
6. So let's get started! Following the American Revolution when the colonists rejected the British crown, declared independence from Great Britain, and established the United States, the Continental Congress ratified the Articles of Confederation as the governing document of the newly created nation.
7. At the time, because of experience with Great Britain, the Continental Congress was fearful of the national government with power concentrated in the hands of a strong executive. The perfect alternative, they believed, was establishing a confederacy, or a government where power is held by the individual states and not with a central power. However, they soon learned that the government established under the Articles of Confederation was not able to handle the problems of the new nation.
8. It became clear that in order for the United States to survive, something had to be done with the Articles of Confederation. So at the urging of George Washington and others a meeting was called to take place in Philadelphia. This meeting is known as the Constitutional Convention. As the meeting convened and debate began, multiple views on how to fix the existing government of the United States began to emerge.
9. Based on their views, the men who crafted the Constitution of the United States can be divided into two sides: the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists. The Federalists, who shared their ideas in the Federalists Papers, believed that the way the government was set up under the proposed

Constitution would fix the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation, unify the 13 states, and protect the people, and their rights, from a strong, national, government. So let's take a couple of minutes and look at what they argued:

10. First of all, the Federalists argued that the Enlightenment ideas of separation of powers and checks and balances were put into the proposed Constitution to protect the people from a strong national government, guaranteeing no branch of government could get too strong.

11. At the same time, the Federalists argued that the inclusion of a bill of rights in the Constitution wasn't necessary because the people were better protected than they would be if such a list was included. The Federalists believed it would be impossible to think of all of the rights to which citizens were entitled. By including a list of specific, or enumerated, rights might mean the government could limit any unenumerated, or rights not listed in the proposed Constitution!

12. And finally the Federalists thought that the proposed Constitution would better unite the 13 states and would lead to the growth of more business and trade, benefiting the entire country. They believed that the Articles of Confederation had failed to do these things, which is why they felt the proposed constitution was necessary.

13. So then, to recap, the Federalists thought that the proposed Constitution would fix the weaknesses that existed under the Articles of Confederation, unify the 13 states, and protect the people, and their rights, from a strong national government.

14. That's great, right? Well, hold on a minute! Not everyone believed the Constitution was even necessary or would do a good job protecting the rights of citizens. These folks were known as the Anti-Federalists. The Anti-Federalists believed the Constitution should not be ratified, or formally adopted, for a number of reasons. They shared these reasons in the Anti-Federalist Papers, and there were more than a couple!

15. First, the Anti-Federalists thought that too much power would be taken from the states. Because they thought power could be abused, they argued the proposed Constitution needed a bill of rights to protect the people from the power of the national government.

16. In addition, they were worried about Congress. The necessary and proper, or "elastic" clause of the Constitution would give too much power to Congress. Let's read it: 'To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.' In the eyes of the Anti-Federalists, this gave Congress way more power than they were comfortable with.

17. But wouldn't the Congress be checked by the executive branch? For the Anti-Federalists, that wasn't enough.

18. The executive branch (the president and those who worked with him) would be too strong under the proposed Constitution. Furthermore, the system of government (federalism) described in the Constitution was new and untested. No government anywhere else in the world had tried federalism before.

19. The United States was too large for one central government to manage.

20. So to recap, the Anti-Federalists thought that the proposed constitution went too far in strengthening the powers of the national government and did not do enough to secure the rights of the people by not including a bill of rights.

21. Phew! Those are quite a few different viewpoints between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists and their evaluation of the proposed constitution. Let's think about this for a minute and make sure we understand!

22. Let's Check In

23. How did the Federalists and Anti-Federalists argue their positions?

24. ANSWER TO QUESTION

25. What did the Federalists believe would keep the government from getting too powerful?

26. ANSWER TO QUESTION

27. Why did the Federalists oppose a bill of rights?

28. ANSWER TO QUESTION

29. Why did the Anti-Federalists want a Bill of Rights?

30. ANSWER TO QUESTION

31. Great job thinking about those questions! In the next video, we'll dive deeper and compare the Federalists and anti-Federalists viewpoints regarding ratification of the U.S. Constitution!