



MANY COMPROMISES

The debate between large states and small states went on and on. Some delegates wanted to go home. So the delegates set up a committee to work out a compromise. In a compromise, as you have read in Chapter 4, each side gives up something it wants in order to reach an agreement. It took all the delegates two months to agree.

The Great Compromise

Roger Sherman from Connecticut proposed what became known as the **Great Compromise**. Sherman was known for his clear thinking. Jefferson claimed Sherman had “never said a foolish thing in his life.” In the Great Compromise the new Congress would have two separate houses. In the **House of Representatives**, the number of a state’s representatives would be

This picture of the signing of the Constitution was painted by Howard Chandler Christy in 1940. It hangs in the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.

based on population, which favored the large states. In the **Senate**, each state would have two representatives, which favored the small states.

Slavery and the Constitution

Once the delegates started discussing population, the issue of slavery came up. Should enslaved people be counted in a state’s population? Many northern states wanted to end slavery. Most southern states, which had many enslaved people, wanted slavery to continue.

Finally, a compromise was made. Every five enslaved people, or people “bound to service,” would be counted as three. In addition, the delegates agreed to end the trading of enslaved people with other countries in 1808.

Many delegates were unhappy with this compromise. Without it, however, the southern states might have left the convention. There would have been no Constitution.

On September 17, 1787, the delegates finally signed the Constitution of the United States. Now they could open the doors and the windows. They would carry the Constitution back to their states for approval.

WHY IT MATTERS

When Ben Franklin came out of the convention hall for the last time, Eliza Powel stopped him. She asked him what kind of government the country would have. "A republic if you can keep it," he told her.

The hard job of keeping the republic alive still lay ahead, and it continues today. Writing the Constitution was a struggle with many compromises.

The delegates used this silver inkstand and quill set to sign the Constitution.



Franklin, Madison, and the other delegates created a plan of government that still works today. You can read the Constitution on pages R22–R45 in the back of this book.

✓ Reviewing Facts and Ideas

SUM IT UP

- Delegates gathered in Philadelphia in May 1787 for a meeting of the states that turned into a Constitutional Convention. The writing of the United States Constitution involved many compromises.
- The Constitution set up a central government with three main branches—legislative, executive, and judicial.
- On September 17, 1787 the delegates signed the Constitution of the United States of America.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. How did James Madison prepare for the Constitutional Convention?
2. What did the delegates to the Constitutional Convention have in common?
3. **FOCUS** On what issues did the delegates need to compromise?
4. **THINKING SKILL** Compare the Virginia Plan to the New Jersey Plan. Who favored each plan? Why?
5. **WRITE** Write a conversation between two delegates about one issue of the convention.

THINKING SKILLS



Recognizing Point of View

VOCABULARY

point of view

WHY THE SKILL MATTERS

You have read about the Constitutional Convention. The delegates disagreed about how representatives should be chosen for the United States Congress. They had different **points of view**. A point of view is the position from which a person looks at something.

Delegates from small states wanted to protect their states from large states. From their point of view, small states should have representation equal to states with large populations. Delegates from large states thought they should



Delegates William Paterson (left) and James Wilson (above) debated how many representatives the states should have.

have more power. From their point of view, it was important for representation in Congress to be based on population.

USING THE SKILL

Read this statement made by William Paterson. He presented the New Jersey Plan to the Convention.

There is no more reason that a large state should have more votes than a small one, than that a rich individual citizen should have more votes than a [poor] one. . . . Give the large states an influence in proportion to their [size], and what will be the consequence? Their ambition will be . . . increased, and the small states will have everything to fear.

Paterson's statement has the point of view of the small states. There are several ways you can tell what a person's point of view is. First, identify what things that person is for or against. Paterson was against basing a state's representation on population.

Next, think about the information a person gives. Which statements are facts and which are opinions? Paterson used the word *should*, which is a clue that he was expressing an opinion. He was giving his view of what was the "right" thing to do. He also used the words *rich* and *poor* to compare large states to small states.

TRYING THE SKILL

Now identify the point of view of another delegate. James Wilson of Pennsylvania said:

As all authority is derived from the people, equal numbers of people ought to have an equal number of representatives, and different numbers of people different numbers of representatives.

What position did Wilson support in his statement? Is Wilson expressing a fact or an opinion? How do you know? What words or phrases tell you about Wilson's point of view? Why did

HELPING Yourself

- A point of view is the position from which a person looks at something.
- To recognize a point of view, identify statements of fact and opinion.
- Next, identify words or phrases that tell how the person feels about the subject.

Wilson have the point of view he had on this topic?

REVIEWING THE SKILL

1. What is a person's point of view?
2. What clues tell you about a person's point of view?
3. Why is it important to recognize a person's point of view?
4. Georgia, then a small southern state, depended on the large southern states for trade. It voted with the large states. What shaped Georgia's point of view? Why?
5. Historians may present different views of the same event. How can knowing their points of view help you to understand their different accounts of what happened in the past?



This political cartoon shows that North Carolina and Rhode Island had not yet adopted the Constitution.