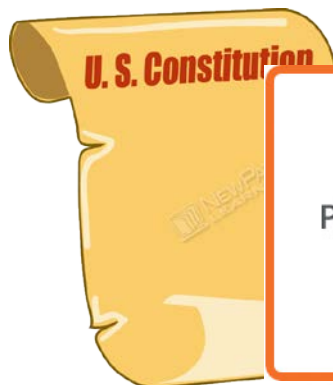


FORMING A GOVERNMENT

How was the United States Government formed?

After the Revolutionary War, the new nation of the United States of America needed a government. The first attempt at a written plan of government had been the **Articles of Confederation**. The Articles of Confederation, passed in 1781 during the War, gave much power to the individual states. Eventually, the citizens of the United States decided that a new government needed to give power to a central government while still keeping some powers for the states.

A meeting to change the Articles of Confederation was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1787. This meeting was called the **Constitutional Convention**. James Madison took notes at the Constitutional Convention and wrote the Bill of Rights. At the meeting, it was decided that a new form of government for the nation would be created.



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The men who came up with the ideas for the Constitution, or written plan of government, decided that the new government would be a **republic**, where representatives elected by the people would control the country. The power would be divided among three branches with equal powers:

- **The Executive Branch**



- The Legislative Branch



- The Judicial Branch



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Each branch of government is called the system.

branches. This idea



The **Executive Branch** is the branch made up of the President and his advisers. The President's closest advisers are called the Cabinet. This branch **enforces the laws**.

The branch that **makes the laws** is called the **Legislative Branch**. The Legislative Branch, also known as the **Congress**, is divided into two parts: the **House of Representatives** and the **Senate**.

The branch made up of judges who **interpret the laws** is called the **Judicial Branch**. The Supreme Court, part of the Judicial Branch, is the highest court in the United States.

The Constitution was not approved, or **ratified**, by all 13 states until 1790. By 1790, personal freedoms for all Americans had been guaranteed by the first ten amendments, or additions, to the Constitution. The first ten amendments to the Constitution are known as the **Bill of Rights**.



PREVIEW

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