

The Constitutional Convention and Great Compromises

Name: _____ Date: _____

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

The student will role-play the Constitutional Convention debates to understand the Great Compromise and the Three-Fifths Compromise.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- index cards
- pen
- a family member or friend to role-play with (or play both roles yourself)
- paper

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

1. On separate index cards, write 'Virginia Plan' (representation based on population, favored by large states) and 'New Jersey Plan' (equal representation for all states, favored by small states).
2. Role-play a short debate (with a partner, or by arguing both sides yourself out loud): argue for 1 minute as a delegate from a large state supporting the Virginia Plan, then 1 minute as a delegate from a small state supporting the New Jersey Plan.
3. Write a summary of the Great Compromise (Connecticut Compromise) that resulted: a two-house Congress with a House of Representatives based on population and a Senate with equal representation.
4. Draw a simple diagram of Congress showing the two houses, labeling how representatives are determined in each.
5. Write 2-3 sentences summarizing the Three-Fifths Compromise and why it was a deeply flawed and unjust part of the agreement.

QUESTIONS

1. What did the Virginia Plan propose, and which states supported it?
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2. What did the New Jersey Plan propose, and which states supported it?
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3. Describe the Great Compromise and how it combined both plans.

4. What was the Three-Fifths Compromise, and why is it considered unjust today?
