

## Forming a Government

### Section 3



#### MAIN IDEAS

1. The Constitutional Convention met to improve the government of the United States.
2. The issue of representation led to the Great Compromise.
3. Regional debate over slavery led to the Three-Fifths Compromise.
4. The U.S. Constitution created federalism and a balance of power.

### Key Terms and People

**Constitutional Convention** meeting held in Philadelphia to create a new constitution

**James Madison** a leading convention delegate from Virginia

**Virginia Plan** a plan giving supreme power to the central government and creating a bicameral legislature made of two groups, or houses, of representatives

**New Jersey Plan** a plan creating a unicameral, or one-house, legislature

**Great Compromise** an agreement that gave each state one vote in the upper house of the legislature and a number of representatives based on its population in the lower house

**Three-Fifths Compromise** only three-fifths of a state's slaves were counted when deciding representation in Congress

**popular sovereignty** the idea that political power belongs to the people

**federalism** the sharing of power between a central government and the states

**legislative branch** a Congress of two houses that proposes and passes laws

**executive branch** the president and the departments that help run the government

**judicial branch** a system of all the national courts

**checks and balances** a system that keeps any branch of government from becoming too powerful

### Section Summary

#### CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

The **Constitutional Convention** met in May 1787 in Philadelphia, where America had declared independence. Twelve states sent delegates. Most delegates were educated and had served in state legislatures or Congress. **James Madison** attended.

Name one reason Philadelphia was chosen as the site of the Convention.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Section 3, continued**

---

**GREAT COMPROMISE**

States disagreed about representation, tariffs, slavery, and strength of the central government. In the **Virginia Plan**, the legislature would be selected on the basis of population. The **New Jersey Plan** proposed that each state receive an equal number of votes. The **Great Compromise** gave every state, regardless of size, an equal vote in the upper house of the legislature. Each state would be represented in the lower house based on population.

**THREE-FIFTHS COMPROMISE**

The **Three-Fifths Compromise** satisfied northerners, who wanted the number of slaves in southern states to determine taxes but not representation. It also satisfied southern delegates, who wanted slaves counted as part of their state populations to increase their power. The delegates agreed to end the slave trade in 20 years.

**Underline the sentence that explains what action the delegates took about the slave trade.**

**THE LIVING CONSTITUTION**

The delegates wanted to protect **popular sovereignty**. They thought **federalism** could accomplish that. States would control government functions not assigned to the federal government.

**CHECKS AND BALANCES**

The Constitution balances power among the **legislative branch**, the **executive branch**, and the **judicial branch**. The Constitution's framers established **checks and balances** to prevent any one branch from becoming too strong. The Constitution was completed in September 1787. Congress and then the states ratified the Constitution.

**What do you think about checks and balances?**

---

---

---

**CHALLENGE ACTIVITY**

**Critical Thinking: Making Judgments** Decide whether you support the Three-Fifths Compromise. Give a two-minute speech about your view.

**Section 3, *continued***

---

**DIRECTIONS** Match the terms in the first column with their correct definitions from the second column by placing the letter of the correct definition in the space provided before each term.

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. checks and balances       | a. meeting where delegates discussed ways to improve the Articles of Confederation  |
| _____ 2. Constitutional Convention | b. the sharing of power between a central government and the states it is comprised of  |
| _____ 3. Great Compromise          | c. called the Father of the Constitution  |
| _____ 4. James Madison             | d. called for a bicameral legislature with representation in both houses based on population  |
| _____ 5. New Jersey Plan           | e. responsible for proposing and passing laws   |
| _____ 6. popular sovereignty       | f. called for a one-house legislature in which each state had an equal number of votes  |
| _____ 7. Three-Fifths Compromise   | g. gave each state an equal vote in the upper house of the legislature while granting to the lower house representation based on population |
| _____ 8. Virginia Plan             | h. agreement that only part of the slave population of a state would be used when determining representation                                |
| _____ 9. federalism                | i. the idea that political authority belongs to the people  |
| _____ 10. legislative branch       | j. system by which any one branch of government is prevented from becoming too powerful   |