

RACE TO RATIFY

a game guide for teachers

The ink is still drying on the new Constitution. Will it become the law of the land or will it fall into the dustbin of history? The fate of our young nation is in your hands! Dive deep into the heated national debate over the future of a radical new plan for American government. Travel across the 13 states to hear from a diverse and opinionated cast of characters and use what you have learned to influence others through the *social media* of the time... pamphlets. Can you be a ratification #influencer?



Learning Objectives

- Identify the main stances of the Federalists and Anti-Federalists between 1787 and 1789
- Understand the key debates surrounding the ratification of the constitution, including an extended republic, the House of Representatives, the Senate, executive power, the judiciary, and a bill of rights
- Interact with the ideas, perspectives, and arguments that defined the ratification debate
- Explore the many different viewpoints which spanned geographic regions, populations, and socio-economic class
- Identify the building blocks of the proposed Constitution
- Engage with competing ideas in order to form an effective and cohesive set of arguments

Prerequisites

None needed! *Race to Ratify* is designed for students to discover the big ideas at the core of the ratification debate while learning about the role of pamphleteering in the 1780s. The last page of this guide has pre- and post-game questions to help you lead discussions with your class. Find additional resources, including lesson plans and more games at www.iCivics.org/teachers.

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

1. Select a Game Mode

Historical Mode sets up the game to match the starting conditions as they were in the Fall of 1787. This includes the order in which Ratification Conventions were held and the starting support and opposition for the Constitution.

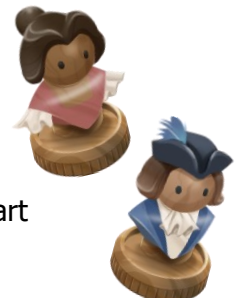
Free Play Mode randomizes the order of the state conventions and the starting support and opposition for each state. It's a different game each time!

2. Pick Your Pawn

Select a pawn to represent you as a pamphleteer.

3. Start a conversation with your friend in Philadelphia

Once on the map, move your pawn to meet with the other pawn on the board. This will start a conversation with Sullivan McGuffey, your friend from Philadelphia, that will guide you through the rest of the game. Pay close attention to what he has to say.



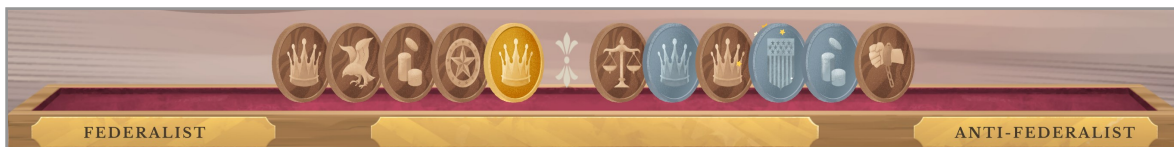
HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

4. Collect Your First Tokens

As you chat with Sullivan, you will earn two tokens. These Argument Tokens contain ideas that will be used when composing persuasive pamphlets and can even unlock additional conversation threads during interviews.

Each token belongs to either the Federalist or Anti-Federalist's perspective and corresponds to a big idea in the debate.

You keep your collected tokens in your tray at the bottom of the screen. You can organize them by perspective, Federalist to the left and Anti-Federalist to the right. But pay close attention; the game won't tell you if they are correctly placed.



5. Hear Two Opposing Perspectives

As convention season heats up, you will see two pawns on the map. Click on each to learn more about the debate and earn more tokens.

You will also reveal each state's leaning—Federalist or Anti-Federalist—once you visit it. A state's leaning informs the convention vote to ratify or reject the Constitution when the time comes.



6. Pamphlet Composition

Now that you've gotten a better feel for the debate, it's time to pick a side, a pen name, and start printing those pamphlets.

Compose your pamphlet by dragging tokens up from your tray. Be sure to choose the ones that support YOUR side of the debate. Arguments are not created equal—some are stronger than others. Likewise, tokens range in increasing strength from bronze, to silver, to gold. The more times you hear an argument, the stronger its token will get. And the stronger the argument, the greater effect it will have on public opinion.

Persuasion stars are given for each article you publish that aligns to your chosen side.



HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

7. Publishing the Pamphlet



After composing your pamphlet, your pawn will reappear on the map and transform into a printing press. As a traveling pamphleteer, you are able to travel across the states and publish your opinions. However, since news traveled more slowly back then than it does today, your impact will have a geographical limit. Horses can only go so fast!



When deciding where to place the printing press, you can see which states are within its range of influence. These states are highlighted in yellow. Try to reach as many opposing states as you can. You might want to focus on the states with upcoming conventions, or on states that you need to convince to support your side of the debate. The strategy is up to you!

After you publish, you will see reactions from your readers as well as the impact you had on the targeted states.

Hint – keep those arguments fresh. The more you use the same old arguments the less impact they have!

8. Keep Track of Your Progress

Each round will end in a screen that you can use to track your progress. It will take 9 states supporting the Constitution to ratify it, but only 5 states opposing to reject it. For each state that ratifies over those thresholds, you will earn additional impact points.

You are now an expert interviewer and pamphleteer! New conventions and interviewees will pop up each round.



Drat. It looks like you have some competition. This guy will be working hard to undo all of your hard work. He's good,

but not as good as you. Probably. Hopefully?

9. Continue Canvassing

When deciding who to interview, you can choose people you suspect are on your side, or simply pick whoever strikes your fancy. But keep in mind that interviewing someone in a state also reveals the balance of Federalist and Anti-Federalist support in that state. So it's usually a good idea to choose people in states whose pie charts have not yet been revealed.

During the interviews, think before you speak. Ask questions that move the conversation forward instead of sideways—you'll collect more tokens that way. Speaking of tokens, you're bound to hear some arguments for the other side. Even though you'll want to avoid using them in your pamphlets, they're worth just as many points!



The Big Ideas



Extended Republic If the success of a republic depends on its size, how big is too big? The Constitution proposed a stronger central government that concentrated power into a national system. Opponents of this plan believed that the states were better suited to this kind of republic and worried they would lose power to the new central government. Should the states lead the way, or should a single unified government act as the bond?



House of Representatives The Constitution created a Congress that consisted of two chambers, the House and the Senate. The lower chamber, the House of Representatives, would be based on population and elected directly by the people. Representatives would serve two-year terms, rather than the single-year terms under the Articles of Confederation. But how was representation determined, and was it enough? How did this reward some states but not others?



The Senate The Constitution created a Congress that consisted of two chambers, the House and the Senate. The upper chamber, the Senate, would have two senators from each state that were elected by their state legislatures. This put all states, regardless of population, on the same level. Senators would serve six-year terms. The Senate had powers that closely tied it to the executive branch. Was the Senate set up to create an aristocracy? Were the branches separate enough? Was this approach to representation fair?



The Executive The Constitution established an executive branch led by a president with a variety of powers including those to make treaties and appointments and veto legislation. The president would be elected by the people through a process called the Electoral College and serve four-year terms. Was the role of president too powerful? Could the system of checks and balances prevent another king? Was the power to veto legislation appropriate?



The Judiciary The convention proposed a judicial branch with the Constitution as the supreme law of the land. It established a federal court system that was divided into districts and provided appellate courts with the Supreme Court as the final stop. Would this new federal system threaten the jurisdiction of the states? How would juries be handled? Was the branch too powerful? What happened when state and federal laws collided?



A Bill of Rights Everyone agreed that individual rights were important and should be protected. But how best to do that? The Constitution was presented without any specific listing of protected rights, which greatly concerned some. Others believed that the list wasn't necessary, as the Constitution provided enough protection within the document. Was a list the answer? What risks came with listing out rights? What role did the state bills of rights have in the debate?



Slavery Slavery was core to the economy of the southern states and was present across the nation. But many took issue with the institution and expressed concern with how it was treated in the new Constitution. Were slaves taxable property or people to be considered when counting for representation in Congress? How would the future of slave importation be treated? How would the answer to these questions impact the likelihood of compromise between the slave and non-slave states?



Taxation Taxes are necessary to pay for services provided by government. The Constitution gave Congress the power to tax and spend. But how much is too much? What is the best way to collect and spend tax money? What is the proper role of the federal government in taxation?

Screen Guide & Tips

There is a lot of information packed into Race to Ratify. Here are some hints at where to find it all!

Keep track of which state conventions have passed, are in play, and are coming up soon. Just zoom the map out to see this view.

In this example PA, MA, and NJ are currently in play!



See how each state has voted or which side it supports by checking out the pie charts.

The scoreboard will keep track of state votes. Remember: 9 to ratify, 5 to reject!

When hovering over states with your printing press (as seen above) undecided states appear in yellow, ratified states in blue, and rejected states in red.



Try to get the most out of every conversation!



The handy little “?” icon at the upper left-hand side of the screen will take you to a reference guide filled with information on history, game features, and more!



There's so much said about the Constitution, but how to keep track of it all? Click on the chat log at the top right of the screen and access all of the conversations you've had, organized by character.

CLASSROOM CONVERSATION STARTERS

Pre-Game Questions

You can use these questions to lead into playing *Race to Ratify* in the classroom.

- What document organized the new government after America won the Revolutionary War? How long did it last?
 - *The Articles of Confederation was created and lasted until it was scrapped in 1787.*
- How do you think people reacted to the new Constitution in 1787? Why would or wouldn't they like it?
- How did people communicate back in the 1780s? Where did they get their information?
 - *Letters, newspapers, pamphlets, broadsides, conversation, travel, books*
- Which kind of groups had more power in the 1700s? Less power? What has changed since then? What hasn't?

Post-Game Questions

Use these questions as a way to debrief the individual experiences of playing *Race to Ratify*.

- What surprised you in the individual interviews? What did you learn that you didn't already know?
- How did the responses differ across gender, class, and geography?
- Which side did you choose? Did you feel the same after the game ended? Would you have chosen that side if you lived back in that time?
- What was your strategy to win? What impact did the competing pamphleteer have on your strategy?
- What topics (tokens) came up in conversation again and again? Why do you think these topics were so popular?

Activity Ideas

Looking to extend the learning experience? Here are a few ideas to get you and your students started.

- Ask students to select one of the issues and write a longer pamphlet article taking a side.
- Have students read various selections of The Federalist Papers and other Anti-Federalist writings and assign tokens to the Big Ideas.
- Ask students to research the real state-by-state strategy used to convince Americans and the convention delegates to ratify the Constitution. (Hint: James Madison was the mastermind.) How did this differ from current political campaigns? How is it similar?

The **Race to Ratify [Extension Pack](#)** is now available! Make your students' game play more meaningful with activities designed specifically for *Race to Ratify*. This easy-to-use resource set means deeper learning for students and best practices around game-centered learning for you! Extension Packs require PowerPoint and are designed for use with projectors or interactive whiteboards. Find this great resource linked in the game page or in the Teach Hub.



Check out the [History Files](#) for Race to Ratify! It offers a thorough biography of the characters and so much more!