

RACE TO RATIFY ... the history files

Race to Ratify brings the ratification debate to life, and iCivics is here to help you contextualize this period with your students. The History Files are designed to support teaching the game with helpful vocabulary, a timeline of ratification, research, and additional ideas for activities in your classroom. Each offering can be used independently or as a teaching set, it is all up to you!



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ACTIVITY IDEAS

1. Biography Sketches

Using the Character Research document and Biography Sketch Sheet, assign each student a "person behind the character" to research. They may find their own sources or be assisted by those provided in the research document. You can play "Guess Who" or other clue games with these as a class for additional practice.

2. DIY Broadside or Pamphlets

Assign a position (Federalist or Anti-Federalist) to each student or use students' Biographical Sketches completed above. Ask students to write three short persuasive articles from their position or personal perspective. This can be a simple writing activity or a larger art and presentation opportunity.

3. What If... Creative Writing Activity

In *Race to Ratify* the fate of the Constitution was anything but certain. If you look at the timeline, some state votes were close. What if the new Constitution was actually a real flop? Have the students imagine an America where the Articles of Confederation was maintained, or where there was no government beyond the states. They can present their altered history as a diary entry, newspaper report, or anything else you can think up!

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RATIFICATION TIMELINE



The years between the drafting of the Constitution, the eventual ratification, and finally the addition of the Bill of Rights were very busy. As you review the timeline, ponder on these questions:

How close was the ratification in the states? What do you think the state ratification conventions discussed? Would things proceed at a faster or slower pace today? How closely did your game follow the real story?

Sep. 17: The Constitutional Convention concludes. Every state but Rhode Island sent delegates to the meeting that wrote and approved the document. It then headed to the state ratification conventions for a vote.	Fall 1787	The debate begins. Supporters and opponents of the new Constitution fought fiercely in the press, through pamphlets and broadsides, and in conversations across the states. Their goal was simple, to influence the public and the convention delegates.
Dec. 7: Delaware ratifies with 30-0 vote. Dec. 12: Pennsylvania ratifies with 46-23	Winter 1787 – 1788	Dec. 18: New Jersey ratifies with 38-0 vote. Dec. 31: Georgia ratifies with 26-0 vote.
Jan. 9: Connecticut ratifies with 128-40 vote.		Feb. 6: Massachusetts ratifies with 187-168 vote after securing a Bill of Rights for the Constitution.
Apr. 26: Maryland ratifies with 63-11 vote.	Spring 1788	May 23: South Carolina ratifies with 149-73 vote.
Jun. 21: New Hampshire ratifies with 57-47 vote (meeting the 9 state requirement to officially ratify the Constitution). Jun. 25: Virginia ratifies with 89-79 vote.	Summer 1788	Jul. 2: Congress announces the Constitution was adopted . Jul. 26: New York ratifies with 30-27 vote.
Dec. 15, 1788 to Jan. 10, 1789: Federal elections are held. George Washington is elected as president, John Adams as vice president and the new Congress is restructured.	Winter 1788 – 1789	Mar. 4, 1789: The new government begins.
Nov. 21: North Carolina ratifies with 194-77 vote.	Fall 1789	Sep. 25: Congress adopts 12 of the 19 amendments introduced for the Bill of Rights, which are then sent to the states for ratification.
May 29: Rhode Island ratifies with 34-32 vote.	Summer 1790	Jul. 16: Washington, DC is named as the new seat of government and national capital .
Dec. 15: Ten amendments are added to the Constitution, creating the Bill of Rights .	Winter 1791	

Anti-Federalists - (n.) people who opposed ratification of the Constitution, feared a strong federal government

aristocrats - (n.) a group of people with wealth and power

Articles of Confederation - (n.) the original plan of government for the United States

broadside - (n.) a strongly worded critical attack, often printed on a single sheet and distributed

class - (n.) social grouping based on wealth

commerce - (n.) the exchange of goods between different countries or areas; trade

compromise - (n.) an agreement to a dispute that is reached by each side giving a little

concessions - (n.) a thing that is given or granted in a compromise

constituents - (n.) people represented by someone in government

convene - (v.) to gather for a meeting

democratic - (adj.) where power is shared by the people

despotism - (n.) the use of absolute power, especially in a cruel and oppressive way

direct democracy - (n.) form of government where the people vote directly on things

Electoral College - (n.) method of electing the U.S. president through electors

elite - (n.) a group of people with wealth and power (adj.) relating to or being part of a group of people with wealth and power

executive - (n.) the branch of government that executes and enforces the laws

federal - (adj.) relating to a government that is made up of unified states

Federalists - (n.) people who supported ratification of the Constitution, wanted a strong federal government

Great Law of Peace - Oral constitution of the Iroquois Confederacy

interstate - (adj.) between two or more states

Iroquois Confederacy - Collection of five tribes in the New York area, democratic government

judicial - (n.) the branch of government that interprets the laws in the courts

jurisdiction - (n.) official power to make legal decisions

legislative - (n.) the branch of government that makes the laws

mob rule - (n.) control of things by a violent or illegal group

monarchy - (n.) form of government where the power is held by a king or queen

oppression - (n.) the use of power in an unfair manner

pamphlet - (n.) small booklet or flyer used to spread information and persuade on a topic

policy - (n.) a course of action by a government

popular vote - total number of votes

principle - (n.) basic rule or belief

proportionate - (adj.) corresponding in size to something else; ratio

ratification - (n.) the approval process

representation - (n.) a person or group that acts or speaks on behalf of others
(v.) to act or speak on behalf of others

republic - (n.) a state in which supreme power is held by the people and their elected representatives, and which has an elected or nominated president

revise - (v.) to make changes to improve or correct something

sovereign - (adj.) having independent power
(n.) supreme power and authority

standing army - permanent military, with professional full-time soldiers

status quo - (n.) the existing state of affairs, current status

supremacy - (n.) the state of being superior to all others in power and authority

sword or the purse - power over the military or government spending

tariff - (n.) a tax or duty to be paid on a particular class of imports or exports

tax - (n.) an amount of money collected by a government
(v.) to impose a tax on someone or something

tyranny - (n.) cruel and oppressive government or rule

union - (n.) something formed when two or more things are joined

veto - (v.) to reject a law



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Real Name	Game Name
Born	Birth Place
Died	Resting Place
Occupation	Opinion of Constitution
Three Notable Facts	

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CHARACTER RESEARCH

The characters in Race to Ratify were based on real people and the evidence they left behind. Below is the collection of these characters, their true identities and the list of resources we used to research them. It's just scratching the surface!

Elizabeth Baron (aka Elizabeth "Betsy" King)



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John Cask (aka Joseph Barrell, Nathaniel's brother!)

The Debate on the Constitution: Federalist and Antifederalist Speeches, Articles, and Letters During the Struggle over Ratification. Vol. 1. Series 62. New York, NY: Literary Classics of the United States, 1993. Accessed February 1, 2019. <https://books.google.com/books?id=Ve26sbPKBxC>.

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Nathaniel Cask (aka Nathaniel Barrell, Joseph's brother!)



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Ambrose Doubleton (aka Amos Singletary)



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Johnathan Downer (aka Zachariah Johnston)

Elliot, Jonathan. *The Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution as Recommended by the General Convention at Philadelphia in 1787: Together with the Journal of the Federal Convention, Luther Martins Letter, Yates's Minutes, Congressional Opinions, Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 98-99, and Other Illustrations of the Constitution*. Vol. 3. New York: Lenox Hill, 1974 reprint. Accessed January 12, 2019. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/elliott-the-debates-in-the-several-state-conventions-vol-3>.



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Benjamin Doyle (aka Benjamin Workman)



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Jane Greene (composite)

We created Ms. Greene out of the research we did from other characters. You should be able to pick up on ideas and opinions she shares with others in the game.

James Harris (aka Johnny Harris)



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Jonathan King (aka John Kean)



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Andrew McGillian (aka Alexander McGillivray)



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Hank Patrick (aka Patrick Henry)

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Randall Prince (aka Rufus King)



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GENERAL RESEARCH RESOURCES

Websites for Primary Sources

- [Center for the Study of the American Constitution](#) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Congress.gov: [The Federalist Papers](#)
- National Archives: [Founders Online](#)
- The Library of Congress: [Digital Collections](#) related to the ratification debate



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