

PATRIOTS OR TRAITORS?

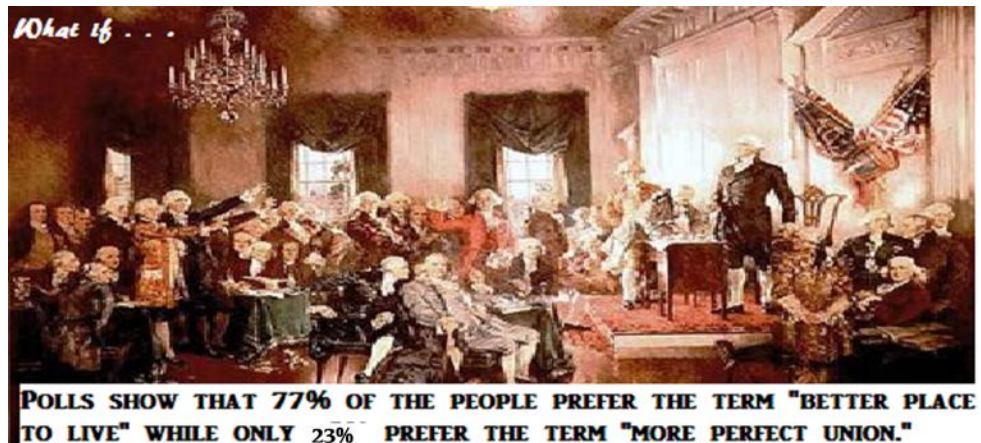
PRAISE AND CRITICISM OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION UPDATED



Background: Many Americans are unaware that the famous meeting in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787 in which the Founders created the Constitution, was considered by some at the time an act of treason. During the 1780s, conventions were viewed by the citizenry as suspect and seldom motivated by virtue. The Articles of Confederation actually prohibited them. Modern scholars have debated both its purpose and legitimacy, with such varied characterizations as “a gathering of self-serving, wealthy men who stood to gain financially from the new Constitution” to “nothing short of miraculous.” (American Center for the Study of the Constitution).

Objective: In this activity, you will work with a partner to read and analyze a variety of primary documents relating to the purpose of the Philadelphia Convention from September 27, 1787 – April 23, 1788. The documents include editorials from newspapers as well as the writings of the men who were there. Some authors have used a pen name to disguise their true identity.



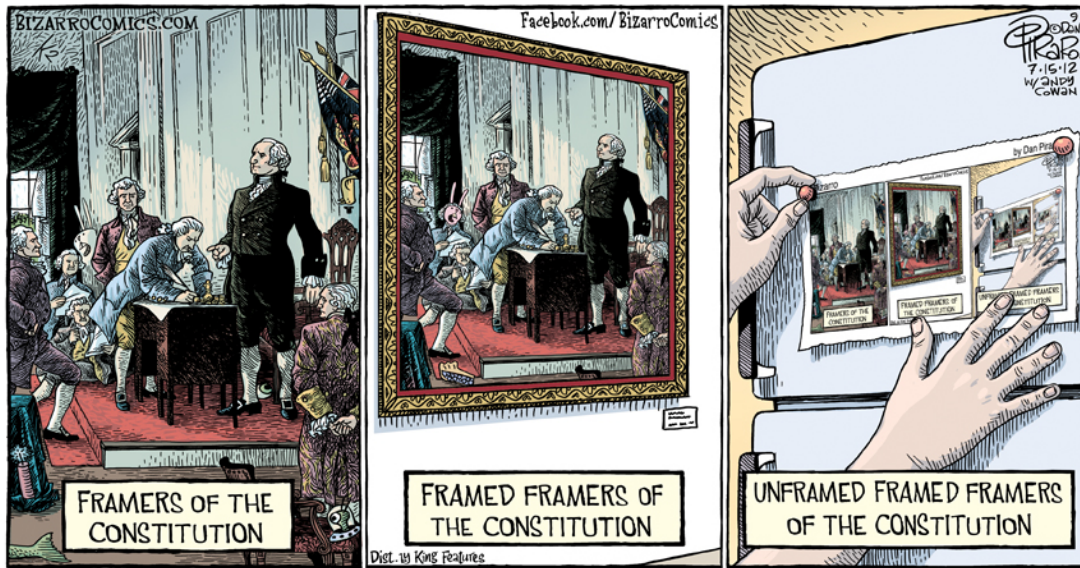
Question: *Were the men who attended the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787 patriots and men of courage, or were they—as Rusticus asserts—“more remarkable for their ambition and cunning than their patriotism?”*

Tasks:

- Create a T-Chart in which you summarize the arguments presented in the primary documents
- Provide an informal citation (e.g. Daggett, Luther Martin) following each document summary
- Write a paragraph or two in which you state your view on the question, as well as provide several broad, persuasive points to support your point of view. The language used should be appealing to your target audience, and should take no more than 20-30 seconds to read aloud.

Vocabulary:

Civic virtue
Federalists
Anti-federalists



Patriots?

[David Daggett: Oration Delivered in New Haven, 4 July 1787 \(excerpt\) \(pdf\)](#)

[An Admirer of Anti-Federal Men, New York Daily Advertiser, 26 July 1787 \(excerpt\) \(pdf\)](#)

[Captain M'Daniel, Massachusetts Gazette, 1 January 1788 \(excerpt\) \(pdf\)](#)

[A Connecticut Farmer, Connecticut Courant, 28 January 1788 \(excerpt\) \(pdf\)](#)

[Boston American Herald, 6 August 1787 \(pdf\)](#)

[Providence United States Chronicle, 27 September 1787 \(excerpt\) \(pdf\)](#)

Traitors?

[Centinel IV, Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer, 30 November 1787 \(pdf\)](#)

[Centinel XII, Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer, 23 January 1788 \(pdf\)](#)

[State Gazette of South Carolina, 28 January 1788 \(excerpt\) \(pdf\)](#)

[Poughkeepsie Country Journal, 11 March 1788 \(excerpt\) \(pdf\)](#)

[Luther Martin: To the Citizens of the United States, Baltimore, 30 March 1788 \(pdf\)](#)

[Rusticus, New York Journal, 23 May 1788 \(pdf\)](#)