Lesson: Federalist and Anti-Federalist showdown
Created by: Matt Scherbarth, Mukwonago High School
Duration: 1-2 class periods
Grade level: 11-12

WI State Standards:
B.12.1 Explain different points of view on the same historical event, using data gathered from various sources, such as letters, journals, diaries, newspapers, government documents, and speeches
B.12.2 Analyze primary and secondary sources related to a historical question to evaluate their relevance, make comparisons, integrate new information with prior knowledge, and come to a reasoned conclusion
B.12.5 Gather various types of historical evidence, including visual and quantitative data, to analyze issues of freedom and equality, liberty and order, region and nation, individual and community, law and conscience, diversity and civic duty; form a reasoned conclusion in the light of other possible conclusions; and develop a coherent argument in the light of other possible arguments
C.12.3 Trace how legal interpretations of liberty, equality, justice, and power, as identified in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and other Constitutional Amendments, have changed and evolved over time

Essential Questions:
1) What are the philosophical and demographic differences between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists?
2) How did fundamental concepts such as liberty and republicanism drive the Ratification debate?
3) In what ways did the Anti-Federalists manage to secure partial victory in achieving their goals?

Lesson:

Step 1: Hook
--Hand out a short newspaper editorial of recent vintage and display the same on an overhead projector/doc cam
--give students a few minutes to read editorial with the instructions to both identify the argument being made and the evidence used to support this argument
--After students have read editorial, model (with student input) how to deconstruct the editorial by highlighting the argument and underlining the evidence therein on the copy projected for the class
--tell students that the focus of today’s activity will be to similarly deconstruct arguments advanced for and against the ratification of the Constitution

Step 2: Mini-Lesson/Review
--Divide students into three groups and instruct all students to take out a piece of paper
--on this piece of paper, have students create a T-chart labeled Federalists/Anti-Federalists
--instruct two of the groups (the Feds) to fill out the Federalist side with characteristics & beliefs of the Federalists; instruct the third group to do the same for the A-Feds
--After students have had 2-5 minutes to fill out their sides of the charts, invite each group to send up a representative to write one characteristic/belief on ‘their’ side of the T-Chart (reproduced in the front of the class)
--repeat until T-Chart is filled out, supplementing as necessary
--Close mini-lesson by instructing each group to come up with a 50 word sentence defining either Fed or Anti-Fed and stating their position on the Constitution
  --have each group share their sentence

**Step 3: Student Practice—primary source analysis**
--Give each of the groups a different primary source to read (the ‘Federalists’ get either Federalist 39 or 46, the ‘Antis’ get Federal Farmer II)
  --have students read excerpts in groups and have them write down the individual ‘arguments’ each document makes on individual post-its
--after students have finished reading, have each group place their arguments (one post-it at a time) on a prepared spot on the white-board, explaining each argument as they post them
  --prompt students as necessary to draw out all arguments

**Step 4: Planned ‘Catch’—highlighting fundamental differences in belief**
--use the arguments the students have drawn out to illustrate the ‘fundamental’ differences between the Federalists & Anti’s
  --push students to realize that the two groups take fundamentally different views on the central topics of liberty & republican government
  --work with student to develop a working definition of these concepts

**Step 5: Student Practice—rereading primary sources with a reading focus**
--give each student the double sided conception tracking sheet and have them return to their texts to reread them and to look for how the conceptions of liberty and republicanism are treated (the top half of the sheet)
  --after students have completed their ‘re-read’, have each group share their findings with the class
--after all groups have shared their findings, have each student fill out the bottom of each side of the conception tracking sheet (the summary portion)

**Closure: Reflection and exit slip**
--ask students to reflect on how this fundamental difference between Federalists and Anti-Federalists was ultimately resolved
  --invite student suggestions, drawing attention to such compromises as the Bill of Rights and/or examples of states’ rights in the Constitution
--have students complete an exit slip responding to the following prompt:
“The Federalists and Anti-Federalists fundamentally disagreed about the nature of liberty and the government’s role in protecting the liberty of its citizens. Make a case that, in the long run, the Anti-Federalists managed to ‘win’”

**Future Lesson:**
--As an extension, students could bring in a news article illustrating the continuance of this debate in American politics
Resources
Excerpts from the Federalist papers: Numbers 39 and 46
All available from: http://www.foundingfathers.info/federalistpapers/fedindex.htm

Excerpts from “Letters from the Federal Farmer to the Republican II” Oct 9th, 1787
Available from: http://www.constitution.org/afp/fedfar02.htm

Conception Tracking Sheet
Developed by Matt Scherbarth (attached)
To the People of the State of New York:

* * *

"But it was not sufficient," say the adversaries of the proposed Constitution, "for the convention to adhere to the republican form. They ought, with equal care, to have preserved the FEDERAL form, which regards the Union as a CONFEDERACY of sovereign states; instead of which, they have framed a NATIONAL government, which regards the Union as a CONSOLIDATION of the States." And it is asked by what authority this bold and radical innovation was undertaken? The handle which has been made of this objection requires that it should be examined with some precision.

Without inquiring into the accuracy of the distinction on which the objection is founded, it will be necessary to a just estimate of its force, first, to ascertain the real character of the government in question; secondly, to inquire how far the convention were authorized to propose such a government; and thirdly, how far the duty they owed to their country could supply any defect of regular authority.

First. In order to ascertain the real character of the government, it may be considered in relation to the foundation on which it is to be established; to the sources from which its ordinary powers are to be drawn; to the operation of those powers; to the extent of them; and to the authority by which future changes in the government are to be introduced.

On examining the first relation, it appears, on one hand, that the Constitution is to be founded on the assent and ratification of the people of America, given by deputies elected for the special purpose; but, on the other, that this assent and ratification is to be given by the people, not as individuals composing one entire nation, but as composing the distinct and independent States to which they respectively belong. It is to be the assent and ratification of the several States, derived
from the supreme authority in each State, the authority of the people themselves. The act, therefore, establishing the Constitution, will not be a NATIONAL, but a FEDERAL act.

That it will be a federal and not a national act, as these terms are understood by the objectors; the act of the people, as forming so many independent States, not as forming one aggregate nation, is obvious from this single consideration, that it is to result neither from the decision of a MAJORITY of the people of the Union, nor from that of a MAJORITY of the States. It must result from the UNANIMOUS assent of the several States that are parties to it, differing no otherwise from their ordinary assent than in its being expressed, not by the legislative authority, but by that of the people themselves. Were the people regarded in this transaction as forming one nation, the will of the majority of the whole people of the United States would bind the minority, in the same manner as the majority in each State must bind the minority; and the will of the majority must be determined either by a comparison of the individual votes, or by considering the will of the majority of the States as evidence of the will of a majority of the people of the United States. Neither of these rules have been adopted. Each State, in ratifying the Constitution, is considered as a sovereign body, independent of all others, and only to be bound by its own voluntary act. In this relation, then, the new Constitution will, if established, be a FEDERAL, and not a NATIONAL constitution.

The next relation is, to the sources from which the ordinary powers of government are to be derived. The House of Representatives will derive its powers from the people of America; and the people will be represented in the same proportion, and on the same principle, as they are in the legislature of a particular State. So far the government is NATIONAL, not FEDERAL. The Senate, on the other hand, will derive its powers from the States, as political and coequal societies; and these will be represented on the principle of equality in the Senate, as they now are in the existing Congress. So far the government is FEDERAL, not NATIONAL. The executive power will be derived from a very compound source. The immediate election of the President is to be made by the States in their political characters. The votes allotted to them are in a compound ratio, which considers them partly as distinct and coequal societies, partly as unequal members of the same society. The eventual election, again, is to be made by that branch of the legislature which consists of the national representatives; but in this particular act they are to be thrown into the form of individual delegations, from so many distinct and coequal bodies politic.
From this aspect of the government it appears to be of a mixed character, presenting at least as many FEDERAL as NATIONAL features.

The difference between a federal and national government, as it relates to the OPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT, is supposed to consist in this, that in the former the powers operate on the political bodies composing the Confederacy, in their political capacities; in the latter, on the individual citizens composing the nation, in their individual capacities. On trying the Constitution by this criterion, it falls under the NATIONAL, not the FEDERAL character; though perhaps not so completely as has been understood. In several cases, and particularly in the trial of controversies to which States may be parties, they must be viewed and proceeded against in their collective and political capacities only. So far the national countenance of the government on this side seems to be disfigured by a few federal features. But this blemish is perhaps unavoidable in any plan; and the operation of the government on the people, in their individual capacities, in its ordinary and most essential proceedings, may, on the whole, designate it, in this relation, a NATIONAL government.

But if the government be national with regard to the OPERATION of its powers, it changes its aspect again when we contemplate it in relation to the EXTENT of its powers. The idea of a national government involves in it, not only an authority over the individual citizens, but an indefinite supremacy over all persons and things, so far as they are objects of lawful government. Among a people consolidated into one nation, this supremacy is completely vested in the national legislature. Among communities united for particular purposes, it is vested partly in the general and partly in the municipal legislatures. In the former case, all local authorities are subordinate to the supreme; and may be controlled, directed, or abolished by it at pleasure. In the latter, the local or municipal authorities form distinct and independent portions of the supremacy, no more subject, within their respective spheres, to the general authority, than the general authority is subject to them, within its own sphere. In this relation, then, the proposed government cannot be deemed a NATIONAL one; since its jurisdiction extends to certain enumerated objects only, and leaves to the several States a residuary and inviolable sovereignty over all other objects. It is true that in controversies relating to the boundary between the two jurisdictions, the tribunal which is ultimately to decide, is to be established under the general government. But this does not change the principle of the case. The decision is to be impartially
made, according to the rules of the Constitution; and all the usual and most effectual precautions are taken to secure this impartiality. Some such tribunal is clearly essential to prevent an appeal to the sword and a dissolution of the compact; and that it ought to be established under the general rather than under the local governments, or, to speak more properly, that it could be safely established under the first alone, is a position not likely to be combated.

If we try the Constitution by its last relation to the authority by which amendments are to be made, we find it neither wholly NATIONAL nor wholly FEDERAL. Were it wholly national, the supreme and ultimate authority would reside in the MAJORITY of the people of the Union; and this authority would be competent at all times, like that of a majority of every national society, to alter or abolish its established government. Were it wholly federal, on the other hand, the concurrence of each State in the Union would be essential to every alteration that would be binding on all. The mode provided by the plan of the convention is not founded on either of these principles. In requiring more than a majority, and principles. In requiring more than a majority, and particularly in computing the proportion by STATES, not by CITIZENS, it departs from the NATIONAL and advances towards the FEDERAL character; in rendering the concurrence of less than the whole number of States sufficient, it loses again the FEDERAL and partakes of the NATIONAL character.

The proposed Constitution, therefore, is, in strictness, neither a national nor a federal Constitution, but a composition of both. In its foundation it is federal, not national; in the sources from which the ordinary powers of the government are drawn, it is partly federal and partly national; in the operation of these powers, it is national, not federal; in the extent of them, again, it is federal, not national; and, finally, in the authoritative mode of introducing amendments, it is neither wholly federal nor wholly national.

PUBLIUS.
RESUMING the subject of the last paper, I proceed to inquire whether the federal government or the State governments will have the advantage with regard to the predilection and support of the people. Notwithstanding the different modes in which they are appointed, we must consider both of them as substantially dependent on the great body of the citizens of the United States. I assume this position here as it respects the first, reserving the proofs for another place. The federal and State governments are in fact but different agents and trustees of the people, constituted with different powers, and designed for different purposes. The adversaries of the Constitution seem to have lost sight of the people altogether in their reasonings on this subject; and to have viewed these different establishments, not only as mutual rivals and enemies, but as uncontrolled by any common superior in their efforts to usurp the authorities of each other. These gentlemen must here be reminded of their error. They must be told that the ultimate authority, wherever the derivative may be found, resides in the people alone, and that it will not depend merely on the comparative ambition or address of the different governments, whether either, or which of them, will be able to enlarge its sphere of jurisdiction at the expense of the other. Truth, no less than decency, requires that the event in every case should be supposed to depend on the sentiments and sanction of their common constituents.

Many considerations, besides those suggested on a former occasion, seem to place it beyond doubt that the first and most natural attachment of the people will be to the governments of their respective States. Into the administration of these a greater number of individuals will expect to rise. From the gift of these a greater number of offices and emoluments will flow. By the superintending care of these, all the more domestic and personal interests of the people will be regulated and provided for. With the affairs of these, the people will be more familiarly and minutely conversant. And with the members of these, will a greater proportion of the people have the ties of personal acquaintance and friendship, and of family and party attachments; on the side of these, therefore, the popular bias may well be expected most strongly to incline.
Experience speaks the same language in this case. The federal administration, though hitherto very defective in comparison with what may be hoped under a better system, had, during the war, and particularly whilst the independent fund of paper emissions was in credit, an activity and importance as great as it can well have in any future circumstances whatever. It was engaged, too, in a course of measures which had for their object the protection of everything that was dear, and the acquisition of everything that could be desirable to the people at large. It was, nevertheless, invariably found, after the transient enthusiasm for the early Congresses was over, that the attention and attachment of the people were turned anew to their own particular governments; that the federal council was at no time the idol of popular favor; and that opposition to proposed enlargements of its powers and importance was the side usually taken by the men who wished to build their political consequence on the prepossessions of their fellow-citizens.

If, therefore, as has been elsewhere remarked, the people should in future become more partial to the federal than to the State governments, the change can only result from such manifest and irresistible proofs of a better administration, as will overcome all their antecedent propensities. And in that case, the people ought not surely to be precluded from giving most of their confidence where they may discover it to be most due; but even in that case the State governments could have little to apprehend, because it is only within a certain sphere that the federal power can, in the nature of things, be advantageously administered.

The remaining points on which I propose to compare the federal and State governments, are the disposition and the faculty they may respectively possess, to resist and frustrate the measures of each other.

It has been already proved that the members of the federal will be more dependent on the members of the State governments, than the latter will be on the former. It has appeared also, that the prepossessions of the people, on whom both will depend, will be more on the side of the State governments, than of the federal government. So far as the disposition of each towards the other may be influenced by these causes, the State governments must clearly have the advantage. But in a distinct and very important point of view, the advantage will lie on the same side. The prepossessions, which the members themselves will carry into the federal government, will
generally be favorable to the States; whilst it will rarely happen, that the members of the State
governments will carry into the public councils a bias in favor of the general government. A
local spirit will infallibly prevail much more in the members of Congress, than a national spirit
will prevail in the legislatures of the particular States. * * *

The argument under the present head may be put into a very concise form, which appears
altogether conclusive. Either the mode in which the federal government is to be constructed will
render it sufficiently dependent on the people, or it will not. On the first supposition, it will be
restrained by that dependence from forming schemes obnoxious to their constituents. On the
other supposition, it will not possess the confidence of the people, and its schemes of usurpation
will be easily defeated by the State governments, who will be supported by the people.

On summing up the considerations stated in this and the last paper, they seem to amount to the
most convincing evidence, that the powers proposed to be lodged in the federal government are
as little formidable to those reserved to the individual States, as they are indispensably necessary
to accomplish the purposes of the Union; and that all those alarms which have been sounded, of a
meditated and consequential annihilation of the State governments, must, on the most favorable
interpretation, be ascribed to the chimerical fears of the authors of them.

PUBLIUS.
October 9, 1787.

Dear Sir,

The essential parts of a free and good government are a full and equal representation of the people in the legislature, and the jury trial of the vicinage in the administration of justice—a full and equal representation, is that which possesses the same interests, feelings, opinions, and views the people themselves would were they all assembled—a fair representation, therefore, should be so regulated that every order of men in the community, according to the common course of elections, can have a share in it—in order to allow professional men, merchants, traders, farmers, mechanics, etc. to bring a just proportion of their best informed men respectively into the legislature, the representation must be considerably numerous—We have about 200 state senators in the United States, and a less number than that of federal representatives cannot, clearly, be a full representation of this people, in the affairs of internal taxation and police, were there but one legislature for the whole union. The representation cannot be equal, or the situation of the people proper for one government only—if the extreme parts of the society cannot be represented as fully as the central—It is apparently impracticable that this should be the case in this extensive country—it would be impossible to collect a representation of the parts of the country five, six, and seven hundred miles from the seat of government.

Under one general government alone, there could be but one judiciary, one supreme and a proper number of inferior courts. I think it would be totally impracticable in this case to preserve a due administration of justice, and the real benefits of the jury trial of the vicinage—there are now supreme courts in each state in the union and a great number of county and other courts subordinate to each supreme court—most of these supreme and inferior courts are itinerant, and hold their sessions in different parts every year of their respective states, counties and districts—with all these moving courts, our citizens, from the vast extent of the country must travel very considerable distances from home to find the place where justice is administered. I am not for bringing justice so near to individuals as to afford them any temptation to engage in law suits; though I think it one of the greatest benefits in a good government, that each citizen should find a court of justice within a reasonable distance, perhaps within a day’s travel of his home; so that, without great inconveniences and enormous expenses, he may have the advantages of his
witnesses and jury—it would be impracticable to derive these advantages from one judiciary—
the one supreme court at most could only set in the center of the union, and move once a year
into the center of the eastern and southern extremes of it—and, in this case, each citizen, on an
average, would travel 150 or 200 miles to find this court—that, however, inferior courts might be
properly placed in the different counties, and districts of the union, the appellate jurisdiction
would be intolerable and expensive.

If it were possible to consolidate the states, and preserve the features of a free government, still it
is evident that the middle states, the parts of the union, about the seat of government, would
enjoy great advantages, while the remote states would experience the many inconveniences of
remote provinces. Wealth, offices, and the benefits of government would collect in the center:
and the extreme states, and their principal towns, become much less important.

There are other considerations which tend to prove that the idea of one consolidated whole, on
free principles, is ill-founded—the laws of a free government rest on the confidence of the
people and operate gently—and never can extend their influence very far—if they are executed
on free principles, about the center, where the benefits of the government induce the people to
support it voluntarily; yet they must be executed on the principles of fear and force in the
extremes—This has been the case with every extensive republic of which we have any accurate
account.

There are certain inalienable and fundamental rights, which in forming the social compact, ought
to be explicitly ascertained and fixed—a free and enlightened people, in forming this compact,
will not resign all their rights to those who govern, and they will fix limits to their legislators and
rulers, which will soon be plainly seen by those who are governed, as well as by those who
govern: and the latter will know they cannot be passed unperceived by the former, and without
giving a general alarm—These rights should be made the basis of every constitution; and if a
people be so situated, or have such different opinions that they cannot agree in ascertaining and
fixing them, it is a very strong argument against their attempting to form one entire society, to
live under one system of laws only. I confess, I never thought the people of these states differed
essentially in these respects; they having derived all these rights from one common source, the
British systems; and having in the formation of their state constitutions, discovered that their
ideas relative to these rights are very similar. However, it is now said that the states differ so essentially in these respects, and even in the important article of the trial by jury, that when assembled in convention, they can agree to no words by which to establish that trial, or by which to ascertain and establish many other of these rights, as fundamental articles in the social compact. If so, we proceed to consolidate the states on no solid basis whatever.

But I do not pay much regard to the reasons given for not bottoming the new constitution on a better bill of rights. I still believe a complete federal bill of rights to be very practicable. Nevertheless I acknowledge the proceedings of the convention furnish my mind with many new and strong reasons, against a complete consolidation of the states. They tend to convince me, that it cannot be carried with propriety very far—that the convention have gone much farther in one respect than they found it practicable to go in another; that is, they propose to lodge in the general government very extensive powers—powers nearly, if not altogether, complete and unlimited, over the purse and the sword. But, in its organization, they furnish the strongest proof that the proper limbs, or parts of a government, to support and execute those powers on proper principles (or in which they can be safely lodged) cannot be formed. These powers must be lodged somewhere in every society; but then they should be lodged where the strength and guardians of the people are collected. They can be wielded, or safely used, in a free country only by an able executive and judiciary, a respectable senate, and a secure, full, and equal representation of the people. I think the principles I have premised or brought into view, are well founded—I think they will not be denied by any fair reasoner. It is in connection with these, and other solid principles, we are to examine the constitution. It is not a few democratic phrases, or a few well formed features, that will prove its merits; or a few small omissions that will produce its rejection among men of sense; they will inquire what are the essential powers in a community, and what are nominal ones; where and how the essential powers shall be lodged to secure government, and to secure true liberty.

In examining the proposed constitution carefully, we must clearly perceive an unnatural separation of these powers from the substantial representation of the people. The state governments will exist, with all their governors, senators, representatives, officers and expenses; in these will be nineteen-twentieths of the representatives of the people; they will have a near connection, and their members an immediate intercourse with the people; and the probability is,
that the state governments will possess the confidence of the people, and be considered generally as their immediate guardians.

The general government will consist of a new species of executive, a small senate, and a very small house of representatives. As many citizens will be more than three hundred miles from the seat of this government as will be nearer to it, its judges and officers cannot be very numerous, without making our governments very expensive. Thus will stand the state and the general governments, should the constitution be adopted without any alterations in their organization; but as to powers, the general government will possess all essential ones, at least on paper, and those of the states a mere shadow of power. And therefore, unless the people shall make some great exertions to restore to the state governments their powers in matters of internal police; as the powers to lay and collect, exclusively, internal taxes, to govern the militia, and to hold the decisions of their own judicial courts upon their own laws final, the balance cannot possibly continue long; but the state governments must be annihilated, or continue to exist for no purpose.

It is however to be observed, that many of the essential powers given the national government are not exclusively given; and the general government may have prudence enough to forbear the exercise of those which may still be exercised by the respective states. But this cannot justify the impropiety of giving powers, the exercise of which prudent men will not attempt, and imprudent men will, or probably can, exercise only in a manner destructive of free government. The general government, organized as it is, may be adequate to many valuable objects, and be able to carry its laws into execution on proper principles in several cases; but I think its warmest friends will not contend, that it can carry all the powers proposed to be lodged in it into effect, without calling to its aid a military force, which must very soon destroy all elective governments in the country, produce anarchy or establish despotism. Though we cannot have now a complete idea of what will be the operations of the proposed system, we may, allowing things to have their common course, have a very tolerable one. The powers lodged in the general government, if exercised by it, must intimately affect the internal police of the states, as well as external concerns; and there is no reason to expect the numerous state governments, and their connections, will be very friendly to the execution of federal laws in those internal affairs which hitherto have been under their own immediate management. There is more reason to believe, that the general government, far removed from the people, and none of its members elected oftener
than once in two years, will be forgot or neglected, and its laws in many cases disregarded, unless a multitude of officers and military force be continually kept in view, and employed to enforce the execution of the laws, and to make the government feared and respected. No position can be truer than this. That in this country either neglected laws, or a military execution of them, must lead to a revolution, and to the destruction of freedom. Neglected laws must first lead to anarchy and confusion; and a military execution of laws is only a shorter way to the same point—despotic government.

Yours Etc.

The Federal Farmer
## Tracking Conceptions: Liberty

**Directions:** As you read your text record quotes/phrases that illustrate the author’s conception of liberty. Next to each quote/phrase write in parentheses what you think this quote says about liberty.

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### Summary

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Tracking Conceptions: Republican Government

**Directions:** As you read your text record quotes/phrases that illustrate the author’s conception of the ‘proper’ Republican government. Next to each quote/phrase write in parentheses what you think this quote says about this concept.

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