



Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists

Ratification of the Constitution Debate

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Grade Level	8th Grade	Time Frame	1-2 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	Duration	90 minutes
Course	U.S. Government, U.S. History		

Essential Question

How do citizens, individually or collectively, influence government structure and policy? How did the debate of ideas between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists influence the ratification of the U.S. Constitution?

Summary

In collaborative groups, students will work to understand and create point-of-view statements, such as tweets for a mock Twitter debate, for both Federalists' and Anti-Federalists' viewpoints on ratifying the U.S. Constitution. Then, students will identify important issues currently being debated on social media or in other public forums and compare these debates to the Constitution ratification debate of the late 1700s. Students will discuss how these debates influence government structure and policy.

Snapshot

Engage

Students listen to the song "Non-Stop" from the musical "Hamilton" and consider why Alexander Hamilton would describe the U.S. Constitution as his "client" in need of defending.

Explore

Working in collaborative groups, students read the "Debate Over Ratification" article. Each group creates two point-of-view statements of three to five sentences each, one on the Federalist viewpoint and one on the Anti-Federalist viewpoint, regarding ratification of the Constitution.

Explain

Using a Card Sort strategy, student groups sort a series of statements into "Federalist" and "Anti-Federalist" categories, examining the evidence each statement gives for supporting or opposing ratification of the Constitution.

Extend

Students create tweets to represent Federalist and Anti-Federalist views on ratifying the Constitution. Then, the class discusses how the Federalist and Anti-Federalist debate over ratification shaped the structure of the Constitution.

Evaluate

The class discusses important issues currently debated on Twitter or in other public forums in the same way ratification of the Constitution was debated in the late 1700s. The discussion also covers how these debates influence government structure and policy. The two point-of-view summaries and tweets serve as lesson evaluations.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: United States Government (9th through 12th grade))

8.3.7: Examine the Federalist and Anti-Federalist arguments for and against the ratification of the Constitution as expressed in the Federalist Papers authored by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay and the writings of Anti-Federalists, such as George Mason, including concerns over a strong central government and the omission of a bill of rights.

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: United States Government (9th through 12th grade))

USG.2.4: Compare the points of view toward the structure and powers of government as expressed in the Federalist Papers, authored by Madison, Hamilton and Jay, as well as the writings of the Anti-Federalists.

Attachments

- [Card Sort Activity \(Answer Key\)—Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists.docx](#)
- [Card Sort Activity \(Answer Key\)—Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists.pdf](#)
- [Card Sort Activity—Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists.docx](#)
- [Card Sort Activity—Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists.pdf](#)
- [Lesson Slides—Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists.pptx](#)
- [Non-Stop Lyrics—Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists.docx](#)
- [Non-Stop Lyrics—Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists.pdf](#)
- [The Debate Over Ratification—Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists.docx](#)
- [The Debate Over Ratification—Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists.pdf](#)
- [Tweet Up—Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists.docx](#)
- [Tweet Up—Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists.pdf](#)
- [Twitter Debate—Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists.docx](#)
- [Twitter Debate—Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists.pdf](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- "Non-Stop" Lyrics (attached; one per student)
- "Non-Stop" song audio (linked below)
- Internet-connected device with sound and video
- The Debate Over Ratification (attached; one per student)
- Card Sort Activity (attached; one per group of three to four students)
- Card Sort Activity Answer Key (attached)
- Twitter Debate (attached; one per group of three to four students)
- Tweet Up (attached; one per group of three to four students)

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Preparation

Prior to the lesson, prepare the attached Card Sort Activity. Print on heavy paper or card stock and cut out a 10-card set for each group of three to four students. Place each set in individual ziplock bags or envelopes, if possible.

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson. Begin by introducing students to the essential questions on **slide 3**: How do citizens, individually and collectively, influence government structure and policy? Furthermore, how did the debate of ideas between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists influence the ratification of the United States Constitution?

Next, pass out a copy of the attached "**Non-Stop**" **Lyrics** from the musical "Hamilton" to each student. Explain to students that the lyric sheet contains only a short portion of the song. Direct students to their lyric sheet when that part of the song is playing.

As the song plays, ask students to consider the question on **slide 4**, also printed at the top of the lyric sheet: In the song, why does Alexander Hamilton describe the U.S. Constitution as his "client" that needs defending? Ask students to underline statements or phrases that might answer the question as they listen. Play the song by clicking on the link on **slide 5**, by clicking the video embedded below, or by clicking the link [here](#). The full URL of the linked source is also listed in the Resources below.

Embedded video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHVPNOHySk>

After the song is over, move to **slide 6** and give students 1–2 minutes to discuss the question using an [Elbow Partner](#) strategy. Ask students to share their responses. Based on those responses, facilitate a short class discussion and connect students' prior knowledge of the Constitutional Convention to the debate over ratification of the Constitution.

Sample Class Discussion Responses

The structure of the Constitution was heavily debated during the Constitution Convention (for example, the debate over representation, powers to the national government, slavery, etc.) so it is not surprising that, once the Constitution was published, there were people who supported ratifying the Constitution and people who opposed it. Hamilton was a lawyer, so his language was largely persuasive and included terms like "defense" and "client." Hamilton recognized the need to explain and defend the Constitution to the public in order to garner enough support to ratify it. He would go on to write essays with John Jay and James Madison defending the Constitution and persuading people to support ratifying it. Those essays became known as The Federalist Papers.

Explore

Moving to **slide 7**, transition by explaining to the class that, once the Constitution was made public, two major groups developed: the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists. These groups influenced the public debate over whether or not the Constitution should be ratified, and as a result, helped to determine the ultimate structure of our current government.

Now, sort the class into groups of three to four students. Hand out the attached **Debate Over Ratification** article to all students. Moving to **slide 8**, ask students to work collaboratively with their group to explore different viewpoints of Federalists and Anti-Federalists as they read. Have students use a modified form of the [Categorical Highlighting](#) strategy in which they underline Federalist viewpoints and circle Anti-Federalist viewpoints.

After the class has finished reading, move to **slide 9**. Ask each group to reference the information they highlighted to create one point-of-view statement, or summary statement, for the Federalist viewpoint and one for the Anti-Federalist viewpoint. Each of these statements should be three to five sentences in length, written on a sheet of notebook paper with all group names listed.

Teacher's Note: Scaffolding Statement Structure

As students begin writing their point-of-view statements, remind them to state in their opening sentence whether or not each group supported or opposed ratification. Then, in their remaining sentences, they can explain why each group held that viewpoint.

Call on each group to share their point-of-view statements. As others read, have students correct any misinformation they might have in their own statements.

Sample Student Response for Federalists

Federalists supported ratification of the Constitution as it was written. They felt the Constitution did enough to limit the power of the government with federalism, separation of powers, and checks and balances. Therefore, the Constitution was ready to be ratified.

Sample Student Response for Anti-Federalists

Anti-Federalists opposed ratification of the Constitution. They felt the Constitution gave too much power to the national government. To further limit the power of the national government, they felt a Bill of Rights was needed to better protect the rights of individual citizens.

Explain

Move to **slide 10**. Have students use the [Card Sort](#) strategy and pass out the attached **Card Sort Activity** to each group. Ask students to work together and apply their knowledge of Federalist and Anti-Federalist perspectives on ratification to complete the activity. Each card contains a statement made by Federalists or Anti-Federalists, for or against ratification. Ask students to sort the cards into "Federalist" or "Anti-Federalist" viewpoint categories based on what they know. After all groups have finished the activity, call on each to explain why a given statement supports the Federalist or Anti-Federalist point of view.

Technology: Digital Card Sort with Desmos

If a digital card sort better suits your classroom needs, you can use [this premade Desmos digital card sort](#). If you plan to do so, be sure to create a class code prior to the activity. Have students use this code to join the activity. The Desmos card sort includes an answer key, which can be used to check students' answers.

Possible Student Responses

Please see the attached Card Sort Activity Answer Key for the correct responses to the Card Sort.

Teacher's Note: Managing Group Discussion

When calling on groups to explain their answers, consider assigning each group one or two statements to explain to the class why the group categorized them as "Federalist" or "Anti-Federalist." If pressed for time, limit class discussion to only the statements deemed most important or relevant.

Extend

Move to **slide 11** and give each group a copy of the attached **Twitter Debate** handout. Ask students to read the mock Twitter exchange between Alexander Hamilton (representing the Federalist side) and George Mason (representing the Anti-Federalist side) as they debate over ratifying the Constitution.

Either in groups or individually, have students use the [Tweet Up](#) strategy and the attached **Tweet Up** handout to create one new tweet for Alexander Hamilton and one for George Mason that accurately represent each view on ratifying the Constitution.

Optional Activity

If desired, print a copy of the Tweet Up handout for each student to create their own Tweet Up, instead of one Tweet Up handout per group.

Once students have created their tweets, ask two students from each group to represent the two opposing viewpoints. Have students who represent the Federalist viewpoint line up on one side of the room, and students who represent the Anti-Federalist viewpoint to line up on the opposite side. Ask students to share aloud their tweets one at a time, alternating viewpoints to mimic a debate—first a Federalist tweet, then an Anti-Federalist tweet.

After sharing their tweets, move to **slide 12**. Give each group 2–3 minutes to discuss how the arguments of both Federalists and Anti-Federalists influenced the structure and functioning of our government. As you call on different groups to share answers with the class, type their responses into **slide 13** or write their responses on the board. Move to **slide 14** for more examples that may be discussed as a class if they have not already been mentioned.

Possible Student Responses

Students might point out that our government is structured with federalism, separation of powers, and checks and balances—all structures explained and supported by the Federalists. Students might point out the importance of these structures in limiting the power of the national government and ensuring that our state governments and individuals have power as well. Additionally, students might note that we have a Bill of Rights today because of the arguments put forth by the Anti-Federalists. Students might also point to specific freedoms listed in the Bill of Rights that they feel are important to them as citizens, such as freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

Evaluate

Move to **slide 15** and ask the class to brainstorm issues debated on Twitter or in other public forums today, similar to the way ratification of the Constitution was debated in the late 1700s. With the class, make a list of these current issues by typing student responses into **slide 16** or by writing the responses on the board. Discuss how each issue influences or is influenced by government structure and policy and, by extension, our daily lives.

Possible Student Responses

Responses may include issues involving national government and state government policies, for example, ICE vs. sanctuary cities. Another example might be when the State of Oklahoma wanted to put a monument of the Ten Commandments on the grounds of the Capitol building. Many who protested this cited the separation of church and state in the Constitution's Bill of Rights. Other issues may include immigration, gun regulations, environmental regulations, health care, education, etc.

Evaluations for this lesson may include the point-of-view summaries completed by each group in the Explore portion of the lesson, Tweet Ups completed by each group or individual student in the Extend portion, and class responses collected in the Extend and Evaluate sections.

Resources

- We the People Resource Center. (n.d.). What Was the Anti-Federalist Position in the Debate for Ratification of the Constitution? *Center for Civic Education*.
<http://www.civiced.org/resourcecenter/lesson.php?lesson=13§ion=sources>
- Hamilton: Non-Stop. (2017, May 9). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHVPNOHySk&feature=youtu.be>.
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Card Sort. Strategies.
<https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f506976b>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Categorical Highlighting. Strategies.
<https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/fc74060730ea745c8c4f356aa204c85d>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow Partners. Strategies.
<https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/cc07ea2d6099763c2dbc9d05b00c4b4>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Tweet Up. Strategies.
<https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f505fb94>