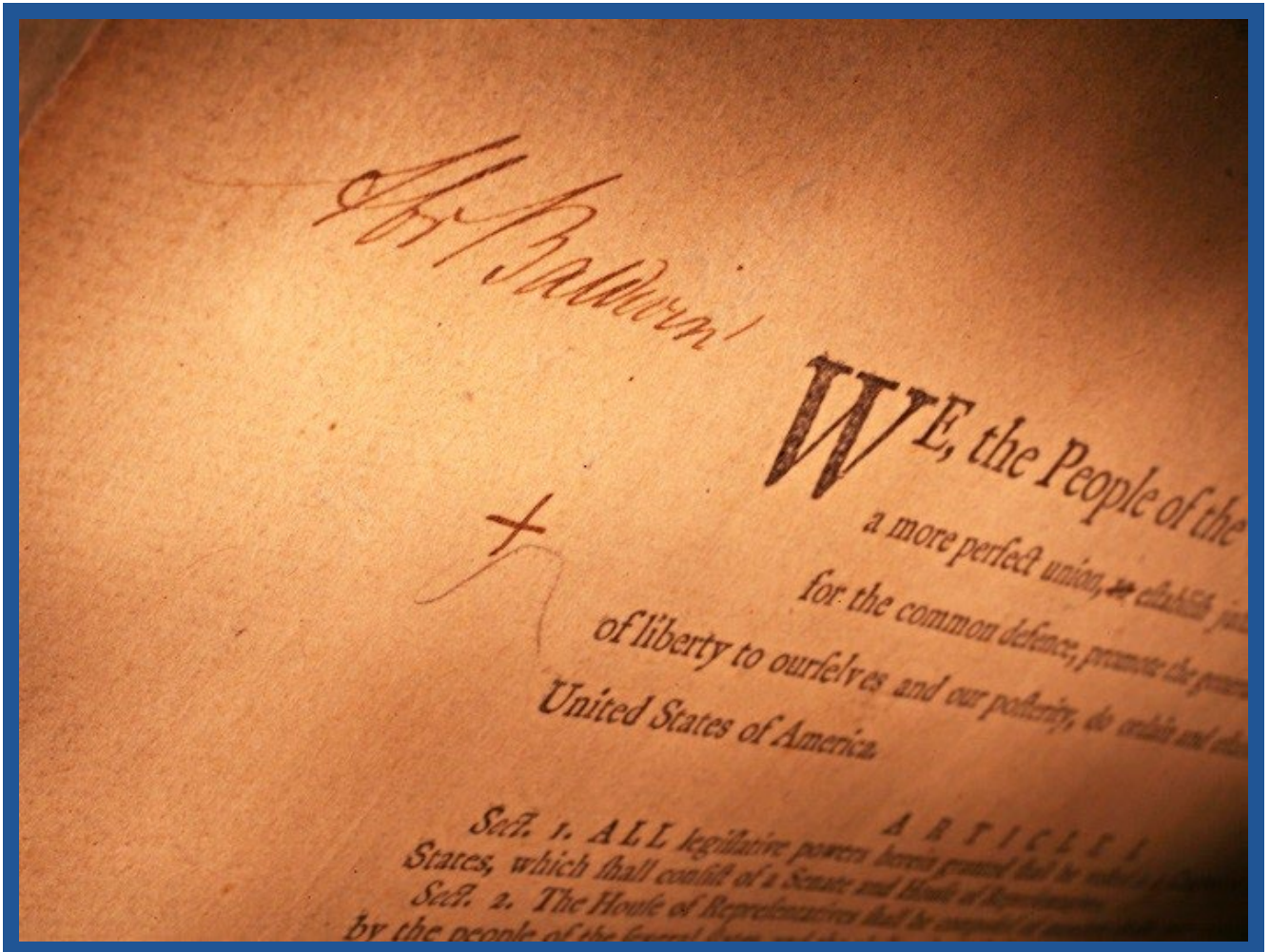


## Was the Great Compromise of 1787 fair?



Bryant, R. (n.d.). Baldwin Draft of the U.S. Constitution [Photograph]. Abraham Baldwin Papers, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah.

### Supporting Questions

---

1. Which Founders played a key role in the Great Compromise and how did they compare to each other?
2. Despite their differences, how did the Founders work together to create the US Constitution?
3. Could the Constitution be written without compromise?

Was the Great Compromise of 1787 fair?				
Inquiry Standard		SS8H3 Analyze the role of Georgia in the American Revolutionary Era. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Analyze the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation and explain how those weaknesses led to the writing of a new federal Constitution.</li></ul> L6-8HSS1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.		
Staging the Compelling Question		View the video clip from <a href="#">The Zax, by Dr. Seuss</a> . Discuss the topics of pride, autonomy, and compromise.		
Supporting Question 1		Supporting Question 2		Supporting Question 3
Which Founders played a key role in the Great Compromise and how did they compare to each other?		Despite their differences, how did the Founders work together to create the US Constitution?		Could the Constitution be written without compromise?
Formative Performance Task		Formative Performance Task		Formative Performance Task
Using a Venn Diagram tool for comparison, write a reflection statement explaining the similarities and differences between the states of the Founders.		Compare the sections of the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan and write a summary of the compromise reached between the two plans in the US Constitution.		Write an alternative ending to the Great Compromise. Assume Abraham Baldwin sided with the larger states instead of the smaller states? What might be different about the Nation's system of government?
Featured Sources		Featured Sources		Featured Sources
Source A: Founders Bios and Documents		Source A: Comparing the Virginia Plan with the New Jersey Plan		Source A: Compromise in the Constitutional Convention
Summative Performance Task		<b>ARGUMENT</b> Construct an argument detailing the differing ways in which the Founders had to work together to create the Nation's governing document. Address the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical sources while acknowledging competing views.		
		<b>EXTENSION</b> Is compromise always a good thing? What consequences may arise in the face of compromise? What did the Founders have to give up, leave out, or concede to achieve their goals? Potential topics of discussion could include the Three-Fifths Compromise or the Electoral College.		
Taking Informed Action		<b>UNDERSTAND</b> Investigate a current issue that will require compromise between Republicans and Democrats. <b>ASSESS</b> Examine the opinion of your Congressman or Senator about the current issue you chose to research. Assess their desire to compromise with the opposing side. <b>ACTION</b> Write a letter to your Congressman or Senator stating your support or opposition to the issue. Encourage the representatives to compromise if necessary.		

# Overview

## Inquiry Description

---

This 8th grade annotated inquiry asks students to examine the actions of the Founders during the Constitutional Convention. Students will practice their comparison skills to assess the similarities and differences between members of the Constitutional Convention, specifically those who played a part in The Great Compromise. This inquiry also requires students to consider the benefit and outcome of the practice of compromise during the Convention.

## Structure

---

The inquiry begins with an introduction to the concept of compromise. From there, the students will use their comparison skills to analyze the contributions of Founders and how their points of view may be similar or different. Next, students will compare the Virginia Plan to the New Jersey Plan which resulted in the Great Compromise. Finally, students will consider the outcome of the Constitutional Convention if the Great Compromise was never reached.

Staging the Compelling Question	
Compelling Question	Was the Great Compromise of 1787 fair?
Featured Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Source A:</b> "The Zax" by Dr. Seuss</li></ul>

## Staging the compelling question

---

Compromise was essential to the formation of the United States Constitution. Students should view the video looking for the positive or negative effects resulting from pride. Should the Zax have put aside their pride in order to make progress? Would the Zax be forced to give up their autonomy to make a compromise with each other? This sets up the larger picture for the focus of the inquiry.

## Compelling Question

Featured Source A

"The Zax" by Dr. Seuss

### Excerpt

---

Introducing the concept of compromise to students. [The Zax by Dr. Seuss.](#)

Source:

Dr. Seuss, The Zax. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfzmQaP4\\_5M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfzmQaP4_5M)

## Supporting Question 1

Supporting Question	Which Founders played a key role in the Great Compromise and how did they compare to each other?
Formative Performance Task	Using a Venn Diagram tool for comparison, write a reflection statement explaining the similarities and differences between the states of the Founders.
Featured Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Source A:</b> Founders Bios and Documents</li></ul>

There are far too many Founders to be studied at once. Consider choosing two from the list of Founders that played a significant role in the Great Compromise such as: Abraham Baldwin, GA.; James Madison, George Washington, and Edmund Randolph, VA; William Paterson, NJ; or Roger Sherman, and Oliver Ellsworth, CT. This a great activity to practice assessing point of view based on the needs of the differing states.

### Formative Performance Task

---

Use the biographies to gather more information about the individual Founders and the states they represented. Or use the two draft copies of the U.S. Constitution for direct comparison of two primary sources. One draft belonged to George Washington, and one belonged to Abraham Baldwin (GA). Each draft includes marginal notes made by their owners.

## Supporting Question 1

Featured Source A

Founders Bios and Documents

### Excerpts

---

[Biography of Abraham Baldwin](#)

[Biographical Sketches of the Signers of the Constitution](#)

[George Washington Papers, Draft Constitution with Marginal Notes, 1787](#)

[Abraham Baldwin Draft Constitution with Marginal Notes and Transcription](#),

Source:

Signers of the Constitution Biographical Sketches. National Park Service.

[https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online\\_books/constitution/bioa.htm](https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/constitution/bioa.htm)

George Washington Papers, Series 4, General Correspondence: Constitution, Printed, with Marginal Notes by George Washington. 1787. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mgw435950/>

United States Constitution draft annotated by Abraham Baldwin, MS 1703, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia. <https://7063.sydneyplus.com/archive/final/Portal.aspx?lang=en-US>

Abraham Baldwin Biographical Resource. Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

<https://www.georgiahistory.com/resource/abraham-baldwin/>

## Supporting Question 2

Supporting Question	Despite their differences, how did the Founders work together to create the US Constitution?
Formative Performance Task	Compare the sections of the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan and write a summary of the compromise reached between the two plans in the US Constitution.
Featured Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Source A:</b> Comparing the Virginia Plan with the New Jersey Plan</li></ul>

This question requires students to utilize their understanding of the concept of compromise and how it was used to form the national government.

### Formative Performance Task

---

Have students compare the two state plans for representation in the United States Legislature. Students can read the primary sources explaining the Virginia Plan and New Jersey Plan respectively or students can use the secondary source chart included in the sources.

Also located in the sources is Article I Sections 2 and 3 of the U.S. Constitution that explain the current form of state representation in the U.S. Legislature.



## Supporting Question 2

Featured Source A

Comparing the Virginia Plan with the New Jersey Plan

### Excerpt

[The Virginia Plan, Transcription](#)

[The New Jersey Plan Transcription](#)

[Comparison Chart of VA Plan and NJ Plan](#)

[US Constitution Article I Sections 2 and 3](#)

[Commemorative Medal, "...whether they be strong or weak." \(back of medal\)](#)

### Source:

Virginia (Randolph) Plan as Amended (National Archives Microfilm Publication M866, 1 roll); The Official Records of the Constitutional Convention; Records of the Continental and Confederation Congresses and the Constitutional Convention, 1774-1789, Record Group 360; National Archives. Retrieved from <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&d..>

Plans of Government Proposed at Convention. William Paterson. 1787. ConSource. Retrieved from <https://www.consource.org/document/the-new-jersey-plan-or-paterson-resolutions-1787/>

American Government. College Sidekick. Retrieved from <https://www.collegesidekick.com/study-guides/amgovernment/the-development-of-the-constitution>

The 1st Article of the U.S. Constitution. Retrieved from <https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution>

Commemorative Medal. Pleasant Alexander Stovall papers, MS 1021, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.  
<https://7063.sydneyplus.com/archive/final/Portal/Default.aspx?component=AABC&record=4b4ba7e4-b307-4f7d-8271-c3c33830f64d>

## Supporting Question 3

Supporting Question	Could the Constitution be written without compromise?
Formative Performance Task	Write an alternative ending to the Great Compromise. Assume Abraham Baldwin sided with the larger states instead of the smaller states? What might be different about the Nation's system of government?
Featured Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Source A:</b> Compromise in the Constitutional Convention</li></ul>

Abraham Baldwin of Georgia was integral in forcing the Constitutional Convention to find a compromise on the issue of state representation in the U.S. Legislature. Have students consider the necessity of compromise in order to create a governing document that would be ratified by enough states to ensure it would become law.

### Formative Performance Task

---

Read about Abraham Baldwin's essential role in the Great Compromise. Watch the video from Georgia Historical Society to help students understand the importance of Baldwin's role to ensuring the large states and small states would find a compromise on the issue at hand.

A Georgia signer of the U.S. Constitution, Abraham Baldwin, was responsible for making the Compromise possible as he voted to side with the smaller states, favoring equal representation, and forcing a deal to be worked out. The third formative task asks students to consider Baldwin's role in the Convention and what might have happened if he did not cast the tying vote which resulted in a push for compromise.

## Supporting Question 3

Featured Source A

Compromise in the Constitutional Convention

### Excerpts

---

[Abraham Baldwin's role in the Great Compromise](#)

[Creating the United States, various documents regarding the convention and ratification](#)

["Get to Know Abraham Baldwin." Georgia Historical Society YouTube](#)

Source:

Drafter and Signer of the Constitution [webpage]. (n.d.). Georgia Historical Society. Retrieved from <https://www.georgiahistory.com/resource/abraham-baldwin/drafter-and-signer-of-the-constitution/>

Get To Know Abraham Baldwin, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah Georgia,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=feXuH5sv0xg&t=1s>

Creating the United States Convention and Ratification, Library of Congress,  
<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/creating-the-united-s..>

## Summative Performance Task

Compelling Question	<b>Was the Great Compromise of 1787 fair?</b>
Argument	Construct an argument detailing the differing ways in which the Founders had to work together to create the Nation's governing document. Address the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical sources while acknowledging competing views.
Extension	Is compromise always a good thing? What consequences may arise in the face of compromise? What did the Founders have to give up, leave out, or concede to achieve their goals? Potential topics of discussion could include the Three-Fifths Compromise or the Electoral College.

### Argument

---

The Founders had to work together to ensure liberty and justice for all. Make sure to note the differing ways in which the Founders worked towards this goal.

### Extension

---

The concept of compromise implies that something must be given up in exchange for something gained. Explore the negative side of compromise with your students. What issues were left on the table in the light of the Great Compromise or other compromises established in the creation and ratification of the U.S. Constitution? This could be a great time to discuss topics such as slavery, the Three-Fifths Compromise, or even the involvement or lack of influence by women in the creation of the U.S. Constitution.

## Taking Informed Action

Understand	Investigate a current issue that will require compromise between Republicans and Democrats.
Assess	Examine the opinion of your Congressman or Senator about the current issue you chose to research. Assess their desire to compromise with the opposing side.
Action	Write a letter to your Congressman or Senator stating your support or opposition to the issue. Encourage the representatives to compromise if necessary.

Students should consider the role of compromise and/or bipartisanship in the current national government.