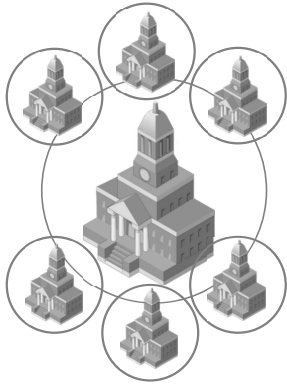


Federalists & Anti-Federalists

Name: _____

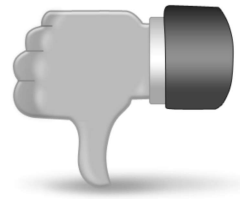


Who Needs a Central Government?

In America's earliest days, the Founders experimented with several types of government. The first one was organized under an agreement called the **Articles of Confederation**. It created a central government that had very little power. Individual state governments kept most of the power. This gave the states a lot of independence, but it also created problems. So the Founders tried again, and this time they wrote the **Constitution**. Signed by representatives from every state, the Constitution created a stronger central government that shared power with the states. The Constitution couldn't be passed until it was approved by the states, and when it was sent out for approval, a raging debate started! Many people feared a strong central government, so they feared the Constitution.

Anti-Federalists: Down with Central Government!

In a system where a central government shares power with smaller units of government, such as states, the term **federal** refers to the central government. On one side of the Constitution debate, **anti-federalists** wanted a small central government. They believed local governments best understood what citizens needed and would best protect citizens' freedom. Anti-federalists opposed parts of the Constitution they thought limited the power of the states. They feared that a strong central government would overpower state governments, and eventually state governments would lose their independence and influence. They also didn't like that the original Constitution did not guarantee citizens any specific rights. They feared that a central government would become so powerful it would be just like having a king.



Federalists: Yay for Central Government!

Federalists wanted a strong central government. They believed that a strong central government was necessary if the states were going to band together to form a nation. A strong central government could represent the nation to other countries. It could also control individual states that would not cooperate with the rest. Federalists also believed that a strong central government could best protect individual citizens' rights and freedoms. Federalists were not afraid of the central government created by the Constitution because it had three branches—the executive, legislative, and judicial—that could limit each other's power. That way, the central government could not become too powerful.



A Battle on Paper

With no TV or internet in the 1780s, the two sides duked it out in newspapers and pamphlets. James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay used the fake name 'Publius' to write 85 letters supporting the Constitution. These were published in newspapers and are called the **Federalist Papers**. Anti-federalists responded with their own series of letters and essays arguing that the Constitution was a threat to liberty.



A Compromise

In the end, federalists agreed to add ten **amendments**, or changes, to the Constitution. Known as the **Bill of Rights**, these amendments guaranteed a list of rights to citizens. The anti-federalists were pleased with this addition because the Bill of Rights limited the central government's power.

