

Guided Reading

The Constitution

Lesson 1 *The Country's First Governments*

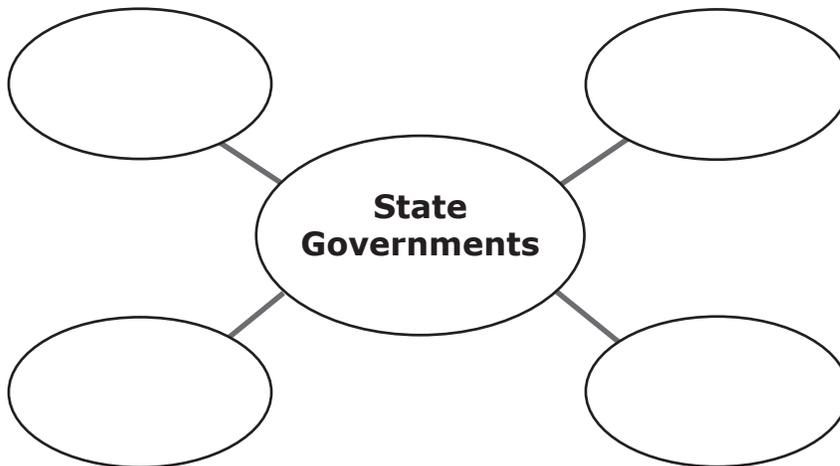
ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- *Why do people create, structure, and change governments?*

State Constitutions

As the colonies moved toward independence, they began to plan for the future. Old charters designed to govern the colonies under British rule did not fit the needs of an independent people. The states developed new plans, or constitutions, for their governments.

1. **Identifying** The new state constitutions set up similar forms of government. Complete the web diagram below by naming some features of the new state governments.



2. **Explaining** Why did most state constitutions include a bill of rights?

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The Articles of Confederation

American leaders met in the Second Continental Congress. They wrote the Articles of Confederation, which created a limited central government. They also passed two important laws, or ordinances.

- 3. Listing** Fill in the blanks below with details about the Northwest Ordinances.
- The area called the Old Northwest included the present day states of _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, and part of _____.
 - The Ordinance of 1785 created a system to _____ and _____ western lands.
 - The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 became a model for admitting _____ to the union.
 - The Northwest Ordinance outlawed _____ in the territory.
- 4. Explaining** The limited powers outlined in the Articles of Confederation made it difficult for the Congress to pass and enforce laws. The Congress could raise an army. However, it could not pay for an army because it did not have the power to tax. Why did the Articles of Confederation create such a weak central government?
- _____
- _____
- 5. Describing** How did weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation lead to Shays's Rebellion?
- _____
- _____
- _____