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THE GREAT COMPROMISE

Multiple Choice Quiz

ABOUT THIS QUIZ



The Great Compromise

This quiz is about The Great Compromise.

All questions have 4 possible answers of which only 1 is correct.

You may read the article over the next few pages to freshen up before taking the quiz!

At the back of the book, will be an answer sheet.

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THE GREAT COMPROMISE

At the constitutional convention, a huge amount of work had gone into preparing the Constitution. However, different states couldn't agree on how their size would be represented in Congress proportionally.

What was the Great Compromise?

The Great Compromise was a solution where both big and small states would be fairly represented by creating two houses of Congress. The House of Representatives would be according to a state's size. The Senate would give each state 2 delegates regardless of their size.

Read on to find out how the Great Compromise came into being and exactly what it meant.

The Great Compromise and the US Constitution

The United States Constitution was created in 1787 to replace America's first unofficial Constitution, known as the Articles of Confederation.

Unfortunately, the Articles of Confederation had proven ineffective in guaranteeing a strong central government. This was very apparent by the lack of response to Shays' Rebellion, an armed protest against the government's handling of taxes.

The Constitution that continues to govern the country today first came into effect in March of 1789 after its ratification by the required number of states.

Complications of the US Constitution

In 1787, 55 delegates from all 13 states met to draft the document that would eventually become the Constitution. As you might imagine, these 55 men all had varying opinions about what the new Constitution should contain and wanted to promote the interests of their states.

There was plenty of debate and what emerged from all this deliberation and discussion was the foundation for the strong Federal Republic. But, of course, there were also a few compromises thrown in to meet the demands of the various delegates.

Constitution Compromises of 1787

There were three significant compromises:

- The Great Compromise, which is also known as Connecticut Compromise
- The Three-Fifths Compromise
- The establishment of the Electoral College

In this article, we'll focus on the Great Compromise of 1787.

The Great Compromise Definition and Explanation

Who proposed the Great Compromise?

The Great Compromise is also referred to as the Connecticut Compromise because it was proposed by Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth, two delegates from Connecticut. Some also call it the Sherman Compromise after Roger Sherman.

The Great Compromise is why our Congress today has two houses:

- The lower chamber is called the House of Representatives.
- The upper chamber is called the Senate.

The Great Compromise and the Representative Republic

All the delegates present at the Constitutional Convention wanted to create a representative republic.

The question was, how many representatives should be elected from each of the 13 states?

The basic proposal was that states with more people should get more representatives, while states with lower populations would get fewer representations.

States with higher populations were happy with this arrangement. However, smaller states felt it was unfair and wanted just as much representation as the larger states would have.

The constitutional convention was on the verge of collapse as this issue of representation was not being resolved.

What is the Great Compromise?

The Great Compromise solved the issue of the representation of states by creating two houses. This is called a bicameral legislature. The proposal was only narrowly accepted.

What did the proposal entail?

The number of representatives each state would get in the House of Representatives would be proportional to that state's population. The number of members that each state could elect to the Senate would be 2 regardless of the state's size.

In other words, larger states have more power in the House of Representatives, but the largest and the smallest states have the same power in the Senate.

How does the Great Compromise work today?

As the most populous state in the Union, California has 53 representatives in the House of Representatives. Seven smaller states – Alaska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Delaware, and Vermont – only have one representative.

With its nearly 40 million people, California and Wyoming, with around 580,000 people, have two seats in the Senate. This number is the same with all states, regardless of size.

How is the number of members in the House of Representatives determined?

The number of members of the House of Representatives that each state gets is determined every 10 years through the census, most recently conducted in 2020.

According to Article 1, every state must have at least 1 representative, but there can not be more than 1 representative for every 30,000 people. The House of Representatives threatened to become too large as the country's population grew, and every 10 years, Congress would make a law that stipulated the total number of representatives.

Since 1963, the number of representatives has been fixed at 435.

Problems with the Great Compromise in modern times

As the population has grown, the power of smaller states has become more and more disproportionate in the Senate. This means that small states can demand more money from the federal government in exchange for voting on specific bills. The number of votes that a bill needs to pass is 51, which is one more than the number of senators.

The Great Compromise was somewhat similar to the Three-Fifths Compromise. This counted $\frac{3}{5}$ of enslaved people as part of a states' population for purposes of the number of congresspeople allowed in the House of Representatives. The similarity is that it sought to satisfy two separate categories of states.

In the case of the Three-Fifths Compromise, it was slaveholding and non-slaveholding states.

The Great Compromise is written into Article I of the Constitution, which describes how the legislative branch functions.

The Great Compromise and the Electoral College

The Great Compromise also affects how the Electoral College works. Each state is assigned Electors based on the number of their House of Representatives and Senators combined.

California, for example, has 55 electoral votes because they have 53 representatives and 2 senators.

Montana (and the other six states mentioned earlier with only 1 representative) has 3 electoral votes because they have 1 representative and 2 senators.

Presidential Campaigns

The number of representatives that a state has directly affects where presidential candidates choose to campaign in the country. Candidates will focus on states that could vote Republican or Democrat (swing states) and that have a significant electoral count. Florida, with its 29 electoral votes, is a good example.

It is through the legislative branch (Congress) and the executive branch (the President, who is elected by the Electoral College) that the Great Compromise affects the United States today.

Effects of the Great Compromise

The Great Compromise is why the United States has two chambers in its legislature: the House of Representatives and the Senate. Collectively, these are referred to as the U.S. Congress.

Members of the House of Representatives are typically referred to as “Congresspeople” – “Congressman” or “Congresswoman,” depending on gender – while members of the Senate are Senators.

The Great Compromise balances out concerns about representation based on population – although larger states have more power in the House of Representatives, all states have the same amount of power in the Senate.

All this ensures that every state is relevant when making laws that apply to the entire country. An example is that California can’t overpower Wyoming because, although they have more Representatives in the House, they each have the same number of senators in the Senate.

Multiple Choice Quiz

1. What year was the US Constitution written?

- A. 1776
- B. 1781
- C. 1787
- D. 1792

2. What unofficial constitution did the US Constitution replace?

- A. Articles of Confederation
- B. Monroe Doctrine
- C. Declaration of Independence
- D. Declaration of the Rights of Man

3. What was the greatest weakness of the Articles of Confederation?

- A. The central government was too strong
- B. The legislature was too big
- C. The central government was too weak
- D. There was no provision for waging war

4. What major rebellion occurred as a result of taxation in the early years of the United States?

- A. Washington's Rebellion
- B. Shay's Rebellion
- C. Tariff Rebellion
- D. Farmer's Rebellion

5. What year was the US Constitution officially implemented?

- A. 1787
- B. 1789
- C. 1792
- D. 1796

6. How many delegates attended the Constitutional Convention?

- A. 25
- B. 36
- C. 55
- D. 114

7. Which of the following was not a compromise from the Constitutional Convention?

- A. Great Compromise
- B. Three-Fifths Compromise
- C. Electoral College
- D. Progressive Taxation

8. What two delegates proposed the Great Compromise?

- A. Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth
- B. Benjamin Franklin and James Madison
- C. Marvin Webster and John Frasier
- D. Peter Wright and Alexander Hamilton

9. What type of republic did the delegates at the Constitutional Convention want to create?

- A. Constitutional Republic
- B. Democratic Republic
- C. Monarchal Republic
- D. Representative Republic

10. What type of legislature did the Great Compromise create?

- A. Unicameral
- B. Multi-cameral
- C. Bicameral
- D. Tricameral

11. What two legislative bodies were created by the Great Compromise?

- A. House of Representatives and National Committee
- B. House of Representatives and Senate
- C. Senate and National Assembly
- D. Senate and Upper House

12. How was representation in the House of Representatives determined?

- A. Number of counties
- B. Progressive population increase
- C. Number of municipalities
- D. State population

13. How many Senators represented each state?

- A. 2
- B. 3
- C. 4
- D. 6

14. How often is the number of representatives in a state updated through the census?

- A. Every year
- B. Every 5 years
- C. Every 10 years
- D. Every 20 years

15. How many members are currently in the House of Representatives?

- A. 435
- B. 535
- C. 538
- D. 625

16. What determines the number of an individual state's electoral votes?

- A. Number of a state's counties
- B. Number of a state's House members
- C. State population
- D. Number of a state's Senators and House members combined

17. In presidential elections, what are states called that routinely switch between political parties?

- A. Toss-up states
- B. To-close-to-call states
- C. Swing states
- D. Close states

Multiple Choice Quiz Answers

1. C
2. A
3. C
4. B
5. B
6. C
7. D
8. A
9. D
10. C
11. B
12. D
13. A
14. C
15. A
16. D
17. C