

## **STANDARD USI.7b**

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**The student will apply social science skills to understand the challenges faced by the new nation by**  
**b) describing the historical development of the Constitution of the United States;**

### **Essential Understandings**

The development of the Constitution of the United States was significant to the foundation of the American republic.

The Constitution of the United States established a federal system of government based on power being shared between the national and state governments.

### **Essential Knowledge**

#### **Confederation to Constitution**

- Weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation led to the effort to draft a new constitution.

#### **The Constitutional Convention**

- State delegates met in Philadelphia and decided not to revise the Articles of Confederation but to write a new constitution.
- George Washington was elected president of the Constitutional Convention.
- James Madison became known as the “Father of the Constitution.”
- Delegates debated over how much power should be given to the new national government and how large and small states should be represented in the new government.
- The structure of the new national government included three separate branches of government:
  - Legislative (makes the laws)
  - Executive (carries out the laws)
  - Judicial (interprets the laws)
- The Great Compromise decided how many votes each state would have in the Senate and the House of Representatives.
- The Three-fifths Compromise perpetuated slavery in the United States.
- The Constitution was signed at the end of the convention.

#### **Ratification of the Constitution**

- A minimum of nine of the thirteen states had to vote in favor of the Constitution before it could become law.

#### **The Bill of Rights**

- The Bill of Rights was based on the Virginia Declaration of Rights (George Mason) and the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom (Thomas Jefferson).
- These first ten amendments to the Constitution provide a written guarantee of individual rights (e.g., freedom of speech, freedom of religion).