

Constitutional Convention Compromises - Congress

Steps:

1. Read the text.
2. List the key facts about each plan on the Graphic Organizer.
3. Highlight similarities between the plans.

Virginia Plan	Great Compromise	New Jersey Plan
James Madison	Roger Sherman	William Patterson

The Virginia Plan

39. The Virginia Plan was written by James Madison. 40. It was written to replace the Articles of Confederation instead of revising them. 41. It proposed three branches of government (executive, judicial, and legislative) with a ‘checks and balances’ system to prevent abuses of power. 42. Madison believed that, although a stronger central government was necessary to defend against foreign invaders and to control the power of the states, it was also important to make sure that no one entity¹ of government ever had too much power. 43. Edmund Randolph presented the plan to the Convention on May 29, 1787. 44. In the Virginia Plan, the judicial branch would have the power to strike down laws that were deemed² unconstitutional, use armed forces to enforce the laws, and regulate interstate trade³. 45. The

¹ something that exists as one complete unit

² to think of something in a particular way or of having a particular quality

³ (interstate trade) the activity of exchanging goods and

legislative branch would have two different chambers. 46. One chamber would have elected officials serve for three years, while the other chamber would have elected officials serve for seven years. 47. Both chambers would use the population of the state to determine the amount of seats in each chamber. 48. Larger states, like Virginia, strongly supported this plan. 49. Smaller states, like New Jersey, did not support this plan and instead came up with their own plan.

The New Jersey Plan

50. The New Jersey Plan was presented by William Patterson to the convention on June 15, 1787. 51. It also proposed three branches of government (executive, judicial, and legislative). 52. The difference, however, was in the legislative branch. 53. In this plan, the legislative branch would consist of only one chamber where every state was represented equally. 54. Also included in this plan, the legislative branch would choose officials to serve in the executive branch. 55. The officials in the executive branch would select the justices of the Supreme Court, who are in the judicial branch. 56. This plan also stated that the national government could levy⁴ taxes and regulate trade. 57. Federal law would override state law.

The Great Compromise

58. The Great Compromise was presented to the convention by Roger Sherman, a delegate from Connecticut, on June 29, 1787. 59. This plan combined pieces of the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan. 60. It called for two chambers of the legislative branch, just as the Virginia Plan did. 61. However, the size of both chambers being decided by population, as the Virginia Plan called for, was not instituted. 62. The Great Compromise instead called for one chamber where its size was based on population, and one chamber that had a fixed number of representatives per state, regardless of population. 63. A census⁵ would be taken every ten years to determine the number of seats in the population-based chamber. 64. Two seats were given in the fixed chamber to every state. 65. This plan would also include the three branches of government (executive, judicial, and legislative) that were called for in both the Virginia Plan and New Jersey Plan. 66. The Great Compromise was passed by one vote on July 16, 1787.

Closure

services between states

⁴ charge

⁵ official process of counting a nation's population