



*"Rough Sailing Ahead?"*

The Articles of Confederation served as the first constitution of the United States. The Articles went into effect on March 1, 1781. Soon afterward, however, the people realized that there were problems with the document. On March 4, 1789, the United States Constitution replaced the articles.

The Articles were written by the representatives of the American colonies who made up the Second Continental Congress. When the colonies declared independence from Great Britain in 1776, they realized they needed a new government plan. The colonies deeply resented the British Parliament's laws imposed on them, so they set up a central government, but weaknesses became apparent. The only branch of government was Congress, with one house. Congress had power over military and foreign affairs but not over the affairs of each state. It could not enforce its powers or collect taxes.

The full text of the Articles of Confederation is organized as 13 Articles detailing the rules for establishing and maintaining the national government of the colonies. Become familiar with the document and look for excerpts that correlate with the weaknesses identified in the cartoon. Complete the table below by listing the five weaknesses reflected in the cartoon and research the improvements made by the new Constitution.

Articles of Confederation Shortcomings/Weaknesses	Constitution Resolutions/Fixes
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

**ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION EXERCISE**

1. Why do you think the artist meant by "Rough Sailing Ahead?" \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. Were there any strengths or accomplishments from the Articles? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. How long did the Articles serve as our first constitution? \_\_\_\_\_