

## Federalists & Anti-federalists Lesson Plan

**Central Historical Question:**  
*What types of government did Federalists and Anti-Federalists prefer?*

### Materials:

- Copies of Federalist Document: Alexander Hamilton
- Copies of Anti-Federalist Document: Melancton Smith
- Copies of Federalist/Anti-Federalist Graphic Organizer
- Copies of Federalists/Anti-Federalists Chart

### Plan of Instruction:

#### 1. Introduction: Mini-lecture on Constitution:

- *The Constitutional Convention met in 1787 to draft a new Constitution.*
- *One of the biggest debates at the Constitutional Convention was over representation—populous states wanted proportional representation, and emptier states wanted equal representation. The Great Compromise solved the problem. Congress would have two legislative houses—a Congress (with 2 Senators from each state) and a House of Representatives (with 1 Representative for every 30,000 people).*
- *Anti-Federalists thought that the solution was not good enough. They wanted more representation. They worried that 1 person could not adequately represent 30,000 people. Federalists disagreed.*
- *After the Constitution was written, it had to be ratified by 9 states. There were very extensive debates between Federalists (who supported the Constitution) and Anti-Federalists (who opposed a strong central government).*
- *Today, we are going to read some documents from the New York Constitution Ratification Convention in June 1787, which was from the most heatedly debated of all the states.*

#### 2. Hand out Alexander Hamilton and Melancton Smith Documents. Have students read and fill in Graphic Organizer.

#### 3. Discussion:

- What was Hamilton's position on representation?
- What was Smith's position?

- What arguments did they make in support of their claims?
  - Based on these arguments, what type of people would you guess tended to be Federalists? Anti-Federalists?
  - If you could have chosen, what side would you have supported?
  - Do you see versions of these issues being debated today?
4. Hand out Federalist/Anti-Federalist chart to summarize differences between two groups.
5. What actually happened?
- New York ratified the Constitution by a vote of 30-27 (the narrowest margin of victory of any state that met in 1787-88).
  - The Anti-Federalists lost the battle but won the war. The first 10 amendments to the Constitution—the Bill of Rights—were ratified in 1791. These addressed many of the issues that the Anti-Federalists raised in the conventions.
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Citations:

Melancton Smith, Speech, June 21, 1788.

[http://teachers.sduhsd.k12.ca.us/tpsocialsciences/american\\_govt/antipapers/msmith.htm](http://teachers.sduhsd.k12.ca.us/tpsocialsciences/american_govt/antipapers/msmith.htm)

Alexander Hamilton, Speech, June 21, 1788. <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch13s38.html>