

Ratification

It was decided that as soon as nine states approved the Constitution, it would go into effect. The convention adjourned on September 17, 1787, and the fight for ratification began. The battle was a bitter one. The Federalists supported the Constitution. Leading Federalists Hamilton, Jay, and Madison published the *Federalist Papers*. These papers were essential in convincing people that the Constitution was of value. The Anti-Federalists fought against the Constitution but were not successful.

On June 21, 1788, the Constitution took effect when New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify it. The remaining four states joined by 1790. The Federalists and Anti-Federalists continued their battle over the Constitution and became two separate political forces under the new government.

On January 7, 1789, the United States, having recently adopted its Constitution, held its first presidential election. Only white men who owned property voted. They choose electors who, in turn, vote for the candidates. As it did in 1789, the United States still uses the Electoral College system established by the U.S. Constitution.

Our First President

As expected, George Washington won the election and was sworn into office on April 30, 1789, as the first president of the United States and the "Father of Our Country." Washington was a Virginia landowner who had led the patriotic forces in the war against the British. His accomplishments matched his popularity. Washington



George Washington

was a delegate to both Continental Congresses. He was unanimously named both as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War and as president of the Constitutional Convention that drafted the Constitution.

Washington finished first with 69 votes, followed by his fellow Federalist John Adams of Massachusetts, whose 34 votes propelled him into the vice presidency. (Before ratifying the 12th Amendment in 1804, the candidate who received the most electoral votes became president while the runner-up became vice president.)

Citizenship and Becoming President

The members of the Constitutional Convention envisioned a president born in the good, old United States of America. In Article 2, Section 1, they wrote that "No person except a natural-born citizen... shall be eligible to the office of president." The convention delegates did not want to take the chance of a foreign country sending someone to run for our highest political office. Immigrants can become citizens, thus becoming naturalized citizens. But naturalized citizens cannot become president; only natural-born citizens are eligible.

QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a **T** or **F** in the space provided.

1. Six states had to approve the Constitution before it was effective. _____
2. The Federalists were against the Constitution. _____
3. The authors of the Constitution wrote a document that was easily adapted to change. _____
4. The small states wanted each state to have the same number of representatives. _____
5. The Constitutional Convention adopted the Virginia Plan. _____
6. Fortunately, the Constitution outlawed slavery. _____
7. The Electoral College showed that the Constitutional Convention trusted the people. _____
8. The New Jersey Plan suggested only one house of Congress. _____
9. The New Jersey Plan favored small states, and the Virginia Plan favored large ones. _____
10. Each state gets the same number of votes in the Electoral College. _____
11. Article 2 of the U.S. Constitution provides that only "natural-born" citizens are eligible to become president. _____
12. Immigrants can become citizens. _____

MATCH THE PERSON TO THE STATEMENT. Write the letter of the statement that matches the person.



Benjamin Franklin

Patrick Henry



James Madison



John Adams



Robert Morris

Alexander Hamilton



- a. First Vice President
- b. Submitted Virginia Plan
- c. NY Delegate & Federalist
- d. Financier of the Revolution
- e. "Smelt a Rat"
- f. Oldest Delegate at Convention

SHORT ANSWER / FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. Write a definition of democracy. _____
2. Number of the amendment that changed the way we elect U.S. senators. _____
3. Name three of the original 13 colonies. _____
4. The Constitutional Convention adjourned on what date? _____
5. How many states had to ratify the Constitution before it went into effect? _____