

**AP<sup>®</sup> UNITED STATES HISTORY**  
**2011 SCORING GUIDELINES (Form B)**

**Question 3**

Analyze the ways in which the political, economic, and diplomatic crises of the 1780s shaped the provisions of the United States Constitution.

**The 8–9 Essay**

- Contains a clear, well-developed thesis that addresses the ways in which the political, economic, and diplomatic crises of the 1780s shaped the provisions of the United States Constitution.
- Develops the thesis with substantial and relevant historical information.
- Provides effective analysis of the topic; treatment of multiple parts may be somewhat uneven, but this does not detract from the overall quality of the essay.
- May contain minor errors that do not detract from the quality of the essay.
- Is well organized and well written.

**The 5–7 Essay**

- Contains a partially developed thesis that addresses the ways in which the political, economic, and diplomatic crises of the 1780s shaped the provisions of the United States Constitution.
- Supports the thesis with some relevant historical information.
- Provides some analysis of the topic, but treatment of multiple parts may be uneven.
- May contain errors that do not seriously detract from the quality of the essay.
- Has acceptable organization and writing.

**The 2–4 Essay**

- Contains an unfocused or limited thesis that addresses the ways in which the political, economic, and diplomatic crises of the 1780s shaped the provisions of the United States Constitution or that simply paraphrases the question.
- Provides minimal relevant information or lists facts with little or no application to the question.
- May address the question only partially, with limited or no analysis.
- May have major errors.
- May be poorly organized and/or written.

**The 0–1 Essay**

- Lacks a thesis or simply restates the question.
- Demonstrates an incompetent or inappropriate response.
- Has numerous errors.
- Is organized and/or written so poorly that it inhibits understanding.

**The — Essay**

- Is completely off topic or blank.

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**Question 3 (continued)**

**Information Sheet**

The 1780s witnessed a string of political, economic, and foreign policy problems, earning it the name of the “critical period” in many U.S. history textbooks.

The American Revolution was followed by a severe economic depression in 1784 and 1785, forcing many states to impose charges on goods from other states to raise revenue. In addition, the national government was on the verge of bankruptcy, and a shortage of hard currency made it difficult to do business. Many of the nation’s fledgling industries were flooded by British imports. Economic problems were especially pronounced in the South, where planters lost about 60,000 slaves during the Revolution and suffered under the new British trade regulations that prohibited the southern states from selling many of their agricultural products in the British West Indies, previously one of the South’s leading markets.

In addition, Britain violated the Peace Treaty of Paris by refusing to evacuate its military posts because the states would not restore loyalist property that had been confiscated during the Revolution. At the same time, Spain failed to recognize U.S. claims to territory between the Ohio River and Florida and in 1784 closed the Mississippi River to U.S. trade.

Having not yet implemented the Constitution, the United States was operating under an inadequate framework of government that many leaders felt threatened its independence. By 1787 many of the nation’s leaders were especially concerned that the tyrannical majorities in state legislatures threatened fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion and the rights of property holders.

The Constitutional Convention of 1787 produced the most enduring written Constitution ever created. Though the United States existed prior to the ratification of the Constitution, it was a nation held together by the tenuous threads of the Articles of Confederation, a sometimes contentious, and often ineffectual national government. The men who were at Philadelphia that hot summer hammered out a document that was the result of dozens of compromises and shaped by the failures of the United States under the Articles as well as the failures of all well-known European governments of the time.

*Political Problems: 1780s*

- The federal government had not been able to either fund the Revolutionary War or pay the war debt under the Articles of Confederation.
- The states — which had borrowed money from individual creditors to fund the war — were by the mid-1780s heavily taxing landowners (farmers in particular) to pay their debts.
- The states were demanding hard money, not paper. Impoverished farmers were unable to pay and feared loss of their land.
- This situation resulted in Shays’ Rebellion in Massachusetts, which some historians view as a major impetus to the replacement of the Articles of Confederation by the Constitution.
- Once the Constitution was ratified, control of funding and repayment of the debt passed to the federal government.

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**Question 3 (continued)**

Economic Problems: 1780s

- Depression of 1784: Severe economic downturn resulting from low production, an insufficient hard money supply, and few opportunities to export goods.
- The Depression of 1784 helped to convince the nation that the central government created by the Articles of Confederation was too weak and that a new, stronger federal government with the power to issue currency, create tariffs, and regulate commerce was essential to national prosperity.
- During the Revolutionary War, the government had used loan-office certificates and continental certificates to pay for supplies as well as to pay soldiers and officers. These non-interest-bearing notes quickly lost their value after the war. The holders of the certificates were for the most part farmers, small businessmen, and merchants, who all needed cash to operate their farms and businesses. Therefore, they had little recourse but to sell their certificates at rates of 10 or 20 cents on the dollar. By the mid-1780s the majority of these certificates were in the possession of a few wealthy speculators.

Diplomatic Problems: 1780s

- 1780: Russia proclaims “armed neutrality,” which helps the Patriot side in the Revolutionary War.
- 1780–1781: Russia and Austria propose peace terms; rejected by John Adams.
- 1781: Benjamin Franklin, Henry Laurens, and Thomas Jefferson are named to assist Adams in peace negotiations; Congress insists on independence; all else is negotiable.
- 1782: The Netherlands recognizes United States independence and signs a treaty of commerce and friendship; Dutch bankers loan \$2 million for war supplies.
- 1783: Treaty of Paris ends the Revolutionary War; U.S. boundaries are confirmed as British North America on the north, the Mississippi River on the west, Florida on the south.
- 1783: U.S. signs a commercial treaty with Sweden.
- 1784: British allow trade with the United States but forbid some U.S. food exports to the West Indies; British exports to United States reach £3.7 million, while imports of U.S. goods to Britain are only £750,000; imbalance causes a shortage of gold in the United States.
- 1784: New York-based merchants open the China trade, followed by merchants in Salem, Boston, and Philadelphia.
- 1785: Adams is appointed first minister to Great Britain; Jefferson replaces Franklin as minister to France.
- 1789: Jay–Gardoqui Treaty with Spain gives Spain the exclusive right to navigate the Mississippi River for 30 years; not ratified because of western opposition.

**Names and Terms**

Annapolis Meeting, 1785–1786	Constitutional Convention, 1787	Northwest Ordinance of 1787 (no slavery)
Anti-Federalists	<i>Federalist</i> Papers	Old Northwest
Articles of Confederation, 1781–1788 (weaknesses: no power to tax, regulate commerce, or raise an army)	Federalists	Paterson, William
Bill of Rights (ratified 1791)	Great Compromise (Roger Sherman, Connecticut)	Pinckney, Charles
Constitution (strengths: can tax, regulate commerce, and raise an army)	Hamilton, Alexander	Shays’ Rebellion, 1785–1786
	Land Ordinance of 1785	Sherman, Roger
	Madison, James	slavery
	Newburgh Conspiracy, 1783	Treaty of Paris, 1783
	New Jersey Plan (William Paterson)	Virginia Plan (James Madison)

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The time of confederation after the Revolutionary War was a difficult one. The Articles of Confederation, which were in line with the intentionally weak governmental policies at the time, were intended to facilitate democracy, but eventually ended up being too weak to control the states. Thus, an unstable era of interstate rivalry, diplomatic unreliability, and political conflict ~~etc~~ emerged. The Annapolis Convention and the Constitutional Convention changed this; backed by the Federalists, it drew on the problems of the confederation era to change the way the US was governed, making the government stronger yet not too strong, the economy stable, and foreign policy more easily developed.

Political problems throughout the 1780s confederation era were mostly down to a difference in principle between the Federalists and the Democratic Republicans. Dem.-Reps. favored a ~~str~~ weak central government, an agrarian economy and stronger states' rights. Federalists, who were more upper class, wanted a strong central government, an industrial economy with protective tariffs, and did not favor states' rights. ~~Initially~~ The initial government was also too weak militarily to enforce interstate discipline. A revolution of poor farmers, disgruntled by their poverty, attacked ~~the~~ settlements in Shays' Rebellion, yet the lack of a unified army, as prohibited by the Articles of Confederation, prevented the revolt from being put down; it was only through state militias that it was stopped. In response to this, the Constitution had many provisions that appealed to both factions of the gov't, while keeping the civil peace. The government was created with great executive power; the president could veto, and needed to be overruled. However, the system of checks & balances

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as well as the establishment of the Supreme Court, allowed each branch of a 3-part government to 'check' one another, preventing one faction from gaining too much power. Additionally, the rights of Americans were explicitly stated in a Bill of Rights, which convinced D-Rep's to ratify the Constitution. This balance of federal power and states'/individual rights was a change to the weak Articles of Confederation, bolstering it while keeping the government within the republican ideals of Americans.

Economically, the US faced problems from the start as well. Individual states were not unified; they acted as separate economic entities. Interstate ~~trade~~ rivalry led to tariffs being levied on imports between states. The currency and exchange of currency between different states were done at varying rates for every state, preventing a uniform national economy. Congress under the Articles also had no taxing power. This meant that as war debts increased, and inflation ran rampant due to lack of stable currency, the country plunged into depression. To combat this, the government under the Constitution was endowed with new power. The government now had the power to tax and regulate currency. This abolished the practice of interstate economic rivalry. Additionally, ~~Secretary of State~~ Alexander Hamilton's loose interpretation of the open-ended Constitution allowed for the formation of a stabilizing National bank, as well as the policy of ~~normalization~~ of the war debt, and redemptions. This gave the US economy more power, and prevented depression of the 1790s from recurring.

Diplomatically, the US was an 'ugly duckling': It was not well-respected by established powers like Britain or France. The

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British took advantage of the lack of a standing army to station troops along US borders. Additionally, the ~~the~~ American economy, with its instability and interstate differences, was in poor condition to trade with foreign countries. ~~The~~ The US had also lost an important trading partner with the revolution; Britain. Thus, America was diplomatically weak, and European powers hungrily eyed US lands. The Constitution's provisions for a standing army and navy, as well as a national bank, and its economic provisions allowed the US to gain status among European powers. Its economic stabilization allowed for the resumption of trade with foreign countries, while a protective tariff taxed on industries provided revenue while trading but also ~~also~~ domestically. Diplomatically, the Constitution allowed for a new trading era with foreign powers; the establishment of defenses also prevented the US from falling as it tried to stand up.

Politically, economically and diplomatically, the US was in a shambles before the Constitution. In its quest to help America spread its wings, the US Constitution bolstered the US economy, government strength and gave it more standing among foreign nations, while keeping safe the ideals of a republic that had concerned the USA.

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In conclusion, the era between 1815 and 1840 produced many profound changes in the American way of life. Some of these were technological, but a major change was in the political scene. More than ever people began to take interest and participate in politics, which caused widespread changes in the government. These changes can still be seen today as remnants of the party system and fierce loyalities still exist.

Part B

On July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1776, America asserted its independence from British rule with the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This effectively made America its own sovereign nation, which meant that it now had to rule itself entirely. The forefathers saw this problem, and thus called together a convention in 1778 to draft a constitution for the infant nation. Soon after, the Articles of Confederation were completed and adopted. The Articles caused many problems for the United States, however, even after the British defeat at Yorktown in 1781. These problems were political, economic, and diplomatic, and from these problems arose a new Constitution which addressed these issues in 1788.

The Articles of Confederation provided for several political problems for the newly won United States. This is mainly due to the fact that the drafters of the Articles were still very wary of the idea of a powerful centralized government. They had been abused by one

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repeatedly during colonial times, and it is clear that that thought was present in the minds of those who created the Articles. Rather than making Congress a parliamentary body, they made it a substitute for the monarchy, which would make all of the important decisions for the nation. Any decisions that were to be made, however, had to have the approval of at least 9 of the thirteen colonies, sometimes even requiring a unanimous decision such as in the case of a new tariff. This lack of centralized government caused problems for America, because it divided the states rather than united them. The states were essentially allowed to do whatever they wished, as the central government could almost never get the right amount of colonies states to approve its measures. And even in the case that something was approved, the central government had no way to enforce it as it had no executive branch, which caused the states to run rampant. The new constitution aimed to solve these problems while still retaining a government that was governed 'by the people, for the people'. Firstly, they gave the central government much more power, making it the supreme law of the land. In order to prevent the government from becoming totalitarian or monarchical, they divided it up into three branches and put in a place an intricate network of checks and balances (to ensure no one branch overtook the others). They also created the bicameral Congress, in which house of representatives politicians as well as the President, were popularly elected. Also, by making



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It so bills only need a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority to become law, it effectively made the government much more powerful. Overall political issues really helped to settle the new constitution's provisions.

Since the central government under the Articles of Confederation had little power over the states and absolutely no power to tax, economic problems arose and festered. Not allowing the central government to tax created problems on multiple layers, the first of which being ~~that~~ the government had no way to raise nearly enough revenue to cover its expenses. Also, this allowed the states to dictate ~~their~~ their own taxes, which also caused problems, most notably Shay's rebellion in Massachusetts. The central government also had very little control over any kind of commerce, international or domestic, which again gave the states the right to mandate their own economies. This caused widespread turmoil and confusion throughout the country, because states engaged in trade wars with each other, putting up interstate tariffs and began printing their own money. This also meant that America was not a unified front when it came to international trade, which caused confusion and very imbalanced distribution of goods. The Constitution addressed these issues head on. First, they gave the central government the ~~old~~ power to tax and control commerce, which quelled the economic turmoil and allowed a national currency to reign. ~~They~~ This also meant that the US became a unified front when it came to international trading, thus ending

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the chaos that had festered there (and also dispelled the idea that America was weak on the international front).

In terms of diplomacy, the Articles were mostly silent, save for getting against permanent alliances. Thus, America quickly ~~came to be~~ perceived as weak on the global scale, as it was never a unified cause, rather a bunch of sovereign states loosely held together by a weak constitution.

The constitution helped to alleviate these problems, by uniting the states, and allowing America to become a contender on the global trading stage.

In conclusion, the Articles of Confederation were a quick solution to the problem of America having no government when it declared independence in 1776. It was not a permanent solution, however, and after the war ended, a new constitution was clamored for that would address the issues caused by the Articles. The new constitution did just that, and as a result, it can be said that the drawbacks of the Articles caused the triumphs of the constitution.

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3C

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The United States Constitution was put in place July 4, 1776, but provisions had to be made due to problems that occurred. The Americans wanted to be free from the ~~from~~ British and known as an "Independent Nation", but because of British control some things worsened. Due to ~~political, economic~~ <sup>economical, political</sup> and diplomatic crises of the 1780s, the constitution to make the US the Independent nation they wanted had to be fixed.

Britain wanted to make money off the Americas, which of course, was an easy task. Increasing tariffs, embargo acts, and controlling production and trade put America off. One major problem was that the Americans imported a lot more than they exported, thus spending money and not making it. The economy seemed okay but the ~~depression~~ of slave trade and the "Triangle Trade" seemed to hurt it.

Britain didn't want America to make the money that they could, so they forced the Americans to send them unfinished products so they could produce them and then America would have to buy them. Excessive spending could really hurt the Americans, thus the constitution had to be fixed so this could be watched. The Americans thus created their own taxes that they were able to control and not the British Government.

Politically, ~~the~~ America favored a less controlling government due to the overall power that they dealt with, when they ruled them. The federalists wanted

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a strong central government but the anti-federalists favored a weak-central government. This caused a lot of tensions which didn't help in writing the constitution. But ideals, such as the New-Jersey plan and the Great Compromise helped the controversy of how the government should be set up. The government included representatives from each state which ~~z~~ helped with equal power, which made the ~~the~~ Americans somewhat satisfied.

Dealing with diplomatic issues posed a problem, in which who to be allies with, receiving land, and their major goal, independence. British wanted control and would fight for it, they claimed that they helped receive the "America" Americans have, therefore should keep control of what they earned. America, of course, disagreed and wanted to push all British Influence out of America. In the Constitution there wasn't ~~anything~~ <sup>anything</sup> put in about ~~buying~~ buying and receiving land, which posed problems in the future. Although fighting against the French and Spanish <sup>War of</sup> ~~in~~ in previous wars with the British (King George III)? the Americans wanted to become Allies with them, and create trade and help them when needed. Therefore the Constitution had to have something about international alliances, trade, and help.

In order for America to become the free and Independent nation they wanted to ~~persecute~~ <sup>persecute</sup> they had

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3C

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to overcome obstacles that were put in their way.  
Thus shaping their constitution and nation after overcoming  
and realizing what they wanted. ~~in a~~

**AP<sup>®</sup> UNITED STATES HISTORY**  
**2011 SCORING COMMENTARY (Form B)**

**Question 3**

**Sample: 3A**

**Score: 8**

This essay has a clear, well-developed thesis that identifies and analyzes political, economic, and diplomatic issues of the 1780s and explains how they shaped the provisions of the Constitution. It presents substantial relevant information, such as the Annapolis Convention, Shays' Rebellion, interstate rivalries, and currency concerns, as well as the issue of the continuing British outposts. The essay notes why the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation were initially supported and then how the various crises led to the call for fundamental change. It indicates what changes were made in the Constitution and how they addressed the specific issues. There are minor errors in attributing a national bank to provisions within the Constitution and in the use of Federalist and Democratic-Republican political perspectives.

**Sample: 3B**

**Score: 5**

This essay (which begins in the middle of a page) has a partially developed thesis addressing the question. The thesis is supported with some relevant historical information, drawing on the adoption of the Articles of Confederation and arguing that the Articles caused political, economic, and diplomatic problems. The identification of each difficulty is immediately followed by discussion and analysis of how the Constitution addressed the given issue. For example, the essay considers the problem of the national government's lack of taxing authority and the states' assertion of their "right to mandate their own economies"; this example is followed by an analysis of how "[t]his caused widespread turmoil and confusion throughout the country" before explaining the corrective action in the Constitution. The treatment of diplomatic challenges is weaker than that of political or economic challenges. Referring to Yorktown as "Yorkshire" and describing the Articles as a "weak constitution" are minor mistakes. However, the essay also errs in stating that the president is directly elected. Still, the amount of correct information and analysis placed this essay in the 5–7 category.

**Sample: 3C**

**Score: 2**

This essay makes a limited attempt to address the issues of the 1780s and their impact on the creation of the federal constitution. Its thesis is muddled. The evidence provided to support the thesis is either vague or has little direct application to the question. The essay is well organized and the writing is adequate, but it is virtually devoid of analysis. The essay's positive qualities, though meager, were sufficient to move it into the bottom of the 2–4 category.