CHAPTER 6

THE REPUBLICAN EXPERIMENT

SUMMARY
After the Revolution, Americans tried to construct practicing governments based on republican principles.

Defining a Republican Culture
In the 1780s, many Americans feared their Revolution could still fail if not grounded in a virtuous republican government, but ordinary folk, influenced by evangelicalism, expected God-given progress founded on “goodness and not wealth.” They expected the Revolution to bring them greater liberty, a voice in government, and an end to special privilege. Others, fearing liberty led to democratic excesses, emphasized the need for order. Sorting out these conflicts generated political debate for a generation.

Living in the Shadow of Revolution
Although less wrenching than the great social upheavals of modern times, the Revolution caused Americans to reevaluate accepted social hierarchies and consider the role of equality in their society.

Social and Political Reform
Fearful of privilege, Republicans insisted on the appearance of equality and some social and political reforms. They abolished remnants of aristocratic privilege like entail and primogeniture, changed electoral patterns in part by lowering property requirements, and moved toward separation of church and state.

African Americans in the New Republic
Some Republicans noted the contradiction between their ideals of virtue and the evils of slavery, and many African Americans issued claims for equality based on that glaring inconsistency and the achievements of their people, including, for example, Benjamin Banneker and Phillis Wheatley. Northerners attacked and abolished the institution, but refused to accept freedmen as their equals. Though many southern Republicans questioned the morality of slavery and some freed their slaves as a result, the economic incentives of slave ownership proved too powerful in the South.

The Challenge of Women’s Rights
By the 1770s, few Americans espoused the previously accepted view of unlimited power for patriarchs. Some women began to demand more of their husbands and society and to claim special responsibility for nurturing in their children the virtues essential to a republican government. Although women made some gains in education and law, society still defined them exclusively as homemakers, wives, and mothers.
Postponing Full Liberty
Republicans of the era made few concrete achievements, but established ideals and assumptions that would influence later generations.

The States: Experiments in Republicanism
After the colonial declaration of independence in 1776, Americans wrote new state constitutions that were often provisional and sometimes experimental. These documents vividly revealed their social and regional differences.

Blueprints for State Government
The new state constitutions reflected certain political assumptions shared by most Americans including an insistence on written documents emerging from their distrust of power.

Natural Rights and the State Constitutions
The new state constitutions tended to emphasize fundamental freedoms, especially those of religion, speech, and press, and to grant great power to legislatures and little to governors. Several states did away with the office altogether.

Power to the People
Massachusetts set an important precedent by drafting its constitution in a special convention called for that purpose. Though the success of the state governments in representing the will of the people remained to be seen, in all states, more of “the People’s men” appeared in governmental office.

Stumbling Toward a New National Government
During the military crisis of the Revolution, the Second Continental Congress assumed national authority, but independence would necessarily result in the creation of greater central authority to conduct the war, borrow money, regulate trade, and negotiate treaties.

Articles of Confederation
Americans created a weak national Congress because they trusted state power more than central power. Most felt only apathy or hostility toward their new government, which they saw as powerless and irrelevant.

Western Land: Key to the First Constitution
The major point of dispute for the new government was the ownership of western lands. Some of the older states claimed them under the auspices of their royal charters, while other states felt such territories should be shared by all Americans, with ownership granted to the new confederation government.
Northwest Ordinance: The Confederation’s Major Achievement
The new national government eventually acquired these lands and provided for their orderly survey, sale, and governance, preventing the chaotic conditions of later settlement in the southwestern part of the new country and providing the new government with an important source of revenue.

Strengthening Federal Authority
Complaints about the Articles of Confederation abounded; most of them reflecting economic frustrations that emerged because recovery after the Revolution was slow.

The Nationalist Critique
The national government lacked the power to do much of anything about several important national problems, including most notably the floundering economy and overwhelming national and state war debts. Such problems led a group of “nationalists,” led by Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, to call for major constitutional reforms that began with an amendment to allow Congress to impose taxes on the nation in an effort to pay its debts.

Diplomatic Humiliation
In foreign affairs too, the Confederation proved inadequate. The U.S. claimed lands occupied by the Spanish and the English, but the Congress did not have the powers necessary to contest the Europeans for control of the land. Internal affairs were not much better as congressional delegates met irregularly, states often failed to even send delegates, and the nation lacked a permanent capital.

“Have We Fought For This?”
Most Americans still feared centralized power, but many prosperous Republicans had come to realize that change needed to occur if the nation were to survive.

The Genius of James Madison
Some Republicans feared that liberty had been taken too far, believing ordinary citizens, who voted in open elections in many states, lacked republican virtue and threatened order. Moreover, the weakness of the Confederation threatened commercial prosperity. Only a strong central government, something that was believed to be antithetical to a republic, could solve these problems. Madison provided these anxious republicans with a theory to sustain their hope for a republic with a strong government. He argued that a large republic could prosper as a variety of interests would develop, check one another, and leave government in the hands of able and virtuous men without undermining liberty.

Constitutional Reform
The nationalist movement to revise the Articles of Confederation grew stronger because of fears aroused by Shays' Rebellion, culminating in the constitutional convention.
The Philadelphia Convention
The fifty-five men who were to write the constitution were mostly young, practical, and prominent nationalists.

Inventing a Federal Republic
They based their work primarily on Madison's Virginia Plan, which called for a strong central government “consisting of a supreme [two-house] Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary.”

Compromise Saves the Constitution
The delegates compromised, especially on the issues of representation and of counting slaves as population, but retained the essentials of the Virginia Plan.

Compromising with Slavery
The slavery issue threatened to disrupt the convention, but the delegates compromised repeatedly in order to complete what most of them saw as their most important responsibility, the establishment of a strong national government. These debates and compromises foreshadowed the sectional conflict that would arise over slavery in the next century.

The Last Details
In a last review of their work, the delegates created a stronger executive by establishing that the president would be selected by an electoral college so that he would be independent from Congress. Some members of the convention pushed for the inclusion of a Bill of Rights before adjourning, but others argued that the document already adequately protected individual rights.

We, the People
To bypass serious difficulties in the various state legislatures for ratification of their handiwork, the delegates called for approval by special state conventions, with the Constitution going into effect when approved by nine states.

Whose Constitution? The Struggle for Ratification
The delegates sent their handiwork to the Congress of Confederation, which submitted it to the states to consider for ratification. No one predicted an easy battle for ratification.

Federalists and Antifederalists
Federalists were better organized, more well-financed, and more capably led than their opponents, but Antifederalist views, especially their aversion to centralized power, had wide popular appeal. The Federalists eventually won the struggle for ratification, but Antifederalist views would remain influential throughout American history.
Adding the Bill of Rights
Among the most important of the Antifederalists’ arguments was a protest of the Constitution's lack of guarantees for individual rights. To overcome those objections without revising the entire document, the Federalists agreed to add a Bill of Rights in the form of the first ten amendments to the Constitution.

Conclusion: Success Depends on the People
By 1789, the first phase of American political experimentation was over, and the people had realized that their sovereignty was the key to a successful Republic. Throughout the 1780s, however, they had come to the conclusion that complete popular sovereignty could cause problems, and they created a new, stronger government based on the Constitution. Though most Americans were optimistic, no one really knew whether this new republican experiment would work.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After mastering this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Explain the principles that led Sam Adams and other Republicans to vehemently oppose the “Sans Souci Club.”

2. Describe the conflict among American Republicans of the 1780s over the relative importance of liberty as opposed to order.

3. Delineate the types and extent of the social and political changes brought by the American Revolution.

4. Describe the post-revolutionary positions on slavery in both the North and the South.

5. Specify the post-revolutionary changes in the expectations, rights, and roles of American women.

6. Describe the major sources and principles of the earliest American constitutions.

7. Identify the major problems of western settlement and evaluate the Confederation Congress's responses to those problems.

8. Identify the major domestic and foreign-policy problems of the Confederation Congress and the nationalists' critique of the congressional responses.

9. Explain how republican ideology contributed to the ills confronting the country in the 1780s, and how Madison proposed to deal with those problems.
10. Trace the development of the movement for a new constitution from the Annapolis convention through Shays’ Rebellion to the Philadelphia convention of 1787.

11. Identify the major differences between the Virginia and New Jersey Plans, then describe the compromise on the issues by the delegates at the convention.

12. Describe the conflict over slavery and its resolution by the delegates to the Philadelphia convention.

13. Identify the major issues separating the Federalists and Antifederalists. Describe and evaluate the positions taken by each.

14. Trace the ratification process from the organization of the opposing sides to June 1788.

15. Describe and explain the major contribution of the Antifederalists to the Constitution.

16. Explain why and how the new government protected the people from themselves.

GLOSSARY

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms:

1. **primogeniture** the right of inheritance by the elder son. "... states abolished laws of primogeniture . . ."

2. **entail** to limit inheritance to an unalterable line of heirs. “States abolished laws of entail.”

3. **muse** a poet or one possessing the powers and talents of a poet. “Phillis Wheatley Boston’s celebrated ‘African muse’. . .”

4. **natural rights** inalienable individual rights derived from nature. "... possessed natural rights over which government exercised no control . . ."

5. **equity** quality of being just, impartial, and fair. "Virginians scoffed at these pleas for equity."

6. **ordinance** a public regulation or statute. "Jefferson . . . drafted an ordinance . . ."

7. **nationalist** an advocate of centralized national power. "... nationalists regarded their opponents as . . . naive."
8. **confederation** a union of nations or states in which sovereignty is retained by each member. "... to divide the United States into separate confederations . . ."

9. **quorum** required minimum number of members present for legal transaction of business. "... postponed for a lack of a quorum."

10. **anarchy** social and political confusion due to absence of governmental authority. "... unrestrained individualism that led to anarchy . . ."

11. **veto** one governmental branch's rejection of a bill passed by another branch. "... armed the chief executive with a veto power . . ."

12. **ratification** formal sanction to make valid. “Ratification would not be easy.”

13. **obstructionist** one who deliberately hinders or blocks. “Their cause seem[ed] far more obstructionist than it was.”

14. **demagogue** one who obtains power by arousing emotions and prejudices of others. "... little demagogue of a petty parish . . ."

**IDENTIFICATION**

Briefly identify the meaning and significance of the following terms:

1. State constitutions

2. Articles of Confederation

3. Land Ordinance of 1785

4. Northwest Ordinance of 1787

5. The Federalist Number 10
6. Shays' Rebellion

7. Virginia Plan

8. New Jersey Plan

9. Antifederalists

10. Bill of Rights

MATCHING

A. Match the following political leaders of the Confederation period with the appropriate description:

_____1. Thomas Jefferson  

_____2. Robert Morris  

_____3. John Jay  

_____4. George Washington  

_____5. James Madison  

a. negotiated a treaty with the Spanish that aroused southern and western hostility  

b. countered Montesquieu's argument against a large republic  

c. proposed a national bank and other controversial financial measures  

d. drafted important ordinance of 1784 that served as basis for later land and northwestern ordinances  

e. confronted frustrated army officers to prevent a potential rebellion  

f. persuaded Congress to sell southeastern Ohio lands to his company
B. Match the following delegates with the role they played at the Constitutional Convention in 1787:

_____1. Patrick Henry  
a. drafted the plan to replace the Confederation with a new federal system

_____2. James Madison  
b. stayed away because he "smelled a rat"

_____3. William Paterson  
c. polished the final wording of the Constitution

_____4. Benjamin Franklin  
d. proposed a plan that would have retained much of the Articles of Confederation

_____5. Gouverneur Morris  
e. presented the "Virginia Plan" to the convention

f. chaired a "grand committee" that arranged some of the convention's important compromises

COMPLETION

Answer the question or complete the statement by filling in the blanks with the correct word or words.

1. Bostonian Republicans regarded the social gathering known as the ____________________________ as too foolish and profligate for Americans.

2. The officers' organization called ____________________________ provoked a similar protest against aristocratic pretension.

3. Women gained some changes in _________________ laws in the post-Revolution period.

4. In a significant change from English tradition, Americans would insist on _________________ constitutions.

5. The Articles concentrated power in the _________________ branch of government.

6. Scotch-Irish frontiersmen called the _________________ protested Pennsylvania's inadequate military defense.

7. The Confederation's land ordinance provided for the survey unit of six miles square, the _________________.

90
8. The argument that a republic could survive only in a small territory was stated by ______________________.

9. Virginian ______________________ wrote the most influential of the Declaration of Rights of the period’s constitutions.

10. _____________ was the most famous settler who moved through to Kentucky.

**TRUE/FALSE**

Mark the following statements either T (True) or F (False):

___ 1. When northerners criticized slavery in the period after the Revolution, southern planters united in almost unanimous defense of the institution.

___ 2. The Revolution raised the expectations of American women because republican ideology assigned them new professional and political roles.

___ 3. The Confederation Congress proved ineffective in foreign affairs, but effective in regulating the domestic economy.

___ 4. Western settlement south of the Ohio was much more orderly than that of the Northwest Territory.

___ 5. Although twelve states supported a 1781 tariff amendment to the Articles, Rhode Island's single opposing vote killed the plan.

___ 6. The Massachusetts adoption of a state constitution in 1780 set a precedent that the definition of fundamental rights should not be left to ordinary officeholders.

___ 7. Madison believed that competing "interest groups" would neutralize one another, leaving the power to govern with the able and virtuous.

___ 8. Angry agrarians joined Shays' Rebellion to protest the Confederation Congress's inability to provide the use of the Mississippi as an outlet for farm products.
9. In return for a prohibition against interference with the slave trade until 1808, Virginians backed down on their demand for a constitutional requirement of a two-thirds vote on trade measures passed by Congress.

10. Alexander Hamilton opposed New York Anti-federalists with a threat to lead New York City to secede from the state unless it ratified the Constitution.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Circle the one alternative that best completes the statement or answers the question.

1. Which best describes the extent of revolutionary-era reforms?
   a. full equality for all White Americans
   b. full equality for all White male Americans
   c. some substantive reforms and an expectation of more to come
   d. no reforms of any consequence

2. In spite of Republican misgivings, Southern slavery survived the post-revolutionary era because
   a. the South had developed a theory of slavery as a "positive social good."
   b. Whites feared the political power of freed Blacks.
   c. planters resented the "meddling" of Northern abolitionists.
   d. there were powerful economic incentives to forced labor.

3. On the whole, authors of the state constitutions supported
   a. the value of the English precedent for a flexible, unwritten constitution.
   b. the need to spell out fundamental or "natural" rights.
   c. the need for a powerful executive to check the power of the legislature.
   d. the need for stable and powerful governments to balance the excesses of liberty.

4. During the Confederation era, western lands became a hotly debated topic because
   a. no state wanted national control of western settlement.
   b. the cost of removing the Native Americans would be astronomical.
   c. the sections disagreed over the expansion of slavery.
   d. all states wanted a share of the expected bounty of land sales.

5. The assumption underlying both the weakness of the Confederation government and opposition to a stronger government was that
   a. only the gentry could govern well.
   b. only the common folk could govern well.
   c. any concentration of power was dangerous.
   d. only elected officials could be trusted with power.
6. Montesquieu proposed that republican government would work best in
   a. a small territory.
   b. a large territory.
   c. a society with social equality.
   d. a primitive society close to a "state of nature."

7. The most divisive difference between the Virginia and New Jersey Plans involved
   a. the counting of slaves as population for both representation and taxation
      purposes.
   b. providing constitutional guarantees for fundamental liberties.
   c. the method of representation in the legislative branch.
   d. the continuation of the slave trade.

8. Those Antifederalists who drew much of their republican thought from the
   "Commonwealth men" feared the Constitution would lead to
   a. representation by powerful men out of touch with constituents.
   b. a national government that could not control majority tyranny.
   c. excessive factionalism that would destroy republicanism.
   d. the same problems suffered by the Articles of Confederation Congress.

9. When compared to their Antifederalist opponents, the supporters of the
   Constitution were more likely to be
   a. state government officials.
   b. subsistence or noncommercial farmers.
   c. residents of commercialized areas.
   d. residents of rural, noncommercial areas.

10. In support of a Bill of Rights, Madison argued that the greatest threat to popular
    liberties came from
    a. the majority.
    b. public apathy.
    c. a powerful minority.
    d. a corrupted gentry.

11. The Articles government’s greatest achievement was its
    a. success against the British and Spanish in the West.
    b. legislation of a system for orderly settlement of the West.
    c. management of the postwar prosperity.
    d. establishment of sound public finance.
12. John Jay’s treaty with Spain (1785) outraged Southern delegates to the Articles of Confederation Congress because it  
a. gave up use of the Mississippi River for twenty-five years.  
b. lost all trade privileges with Spain.  
c. failed to remove Spanish forts from the West.  
d. lost Georgia’s boundary dispute with Spanish Florida.  

13. Madison’s principal nationalist theory held that uniting the states in a larger republic would  
a. defeat the country’s foreign enemies.  
b. keep government closer to the people.  
c. create a variety of interests to check one another.  
d. put Montesquieu’s theory into practice.  

14. The advantages enjoyed by supporters of ratification of the Constitution did not include  
a. the name “Federalist.”  
b. the support of most newspapers.  
c. support in The Federalist essays.  
d. popular suspicion of political power.  

15. A judge knowledgeable about American history would look to which of the following to discover the “original intent” of the Constitution’s framers?  
a. the Journal, Acts and Proceedings of the Convention Assembled at Philadelphia, recorded by the Convention secretary  
b. the Secret Proceedings and Debates of the Convention Assembled at Philadelphia, recorded by Robert Yates and edited by Citizen Genet  
c. the Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787, recorded by James Madison  
d. the records and notes of the various state ratification conventions  

THOUGHT QUESTIONS  
To check your understanding of the key issues of this period, solve the following problems:  

1. Most Americans of the 1780s wanted the kind of government provided by the Articles of Confederation, with all its weaknesses. True or false? Explain your answer.  

2. Was it necessary to replace the Articles of Confederation? Could they have been modified to provide Americans with a successful, democratic, and, perhaps, parliamentary government?
3. Was the nationalist movement for a stronger central government a reaction to excesses following the Revolution?

4. Madison proposed that a large republic would balance and check competing factions (interests) and thus permit able and virtuous men to attain power to govern for the common good. Has the system worked as he hoped?

5. Antifederalists argued that a strong national government, in a distant capital, would escape the political control of the people. Has the system functioned as they feared?

CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISES

Using material in Chapter 6 of the text and the primary sources provided below, please answer the questions that follow the reading selections.

“The Virginia, or Randolph, Plan”
“Federalist Paper #10"

The Virginia, or Randolph, Plan (1787)

1. Resolved that the Articles of Confederation ought to be so corrected and enlarged as to accomplish the objects proposed by their institution; namely "common defence, security of liberty and general welfare."

2. Resolved therefore that the rights of suffrage in the National Legislature ought to be proportioned to the Quotas of contribution, or to the number of free inhabitants, as the one or the other rule may seem best in different cases.

3. Resolved that the National Legislature ought to consist of two branches.

4. Resolved that the members of the first branch of the National Legislature ought to be elected by the people of the several States. . . . to receive liberal stipends by which they may be compensated for the devotion of their time to public service, to be ineligible to any office established by a particular State, or under the authority of the United States, except those peculiarly belonging to the functions of the first branch, during the term of service, and for the space of after its expiration; to be incapable of reelection for the space of after the expiration of their term of service, and to be subject to recall.

5. Resolved that the members of the second branch of the National Legislature ought to be elected by those of the first, out of a proper number of persons nominated by the individual Legislatures, to be of the age of years at least; to hold their offices for a term sufficient to ensure their independency; to receive liberal stipends, by which they may be compensated for the devotion of their time to public service; and to be ineligible to any office established by a particular State, or under the authority of the United States, except those peculiarly belonging to the functions of the second branch, during the term of service, and for the space of after the expiration thereof.

6. Resolved that each branch ought to possess the right of originating Acts; that the National Legislature ought to be empowered to enjoy the Legislative Rights vested in Congress by the Confederation and moreover to legislate in all cases to which the separate States are incompetent, or in which the harmony of the United States may be interrupted by the exercise of individual Legislation; to negative all laws passed by the several States, contravening in the opinion of the national Legislature the articles of Union; and to call forth the force of the Union against any member of the Union failing in its duty under the articles thereof.

7. Resolved that a National Executive be instituted; [to be chosen by the National Legislature for the terms of years; to be chosen by the National Legislature for the terms of years;] to receive punctually, at stated times, a fixed compensation for the services rendered, in which no increase or diminution shall be made so as to affect the
Magistracy, existing at the time of the increase of diminution, and to be ineligible a second time; and that besides a

general authority to execute the National laws, it ought to enjoy the Executive rights vested in Congress by the

Confederation.

8. Resolved that the Executive and a convenient number of the national Judiciary, ought to compose a Council

of revision with authority to examine every act of the National Legislature before it shall operate, and every act of a

particular Legislature before a Negative thereon shall be final; and that the dissent of the said Council shall amount to a

rejection, unless the Act of the National Legislature be passed again, or what of a particular Legislature be again

negatived by the members of each branch.

9. Resolved that National Judiciary be established to consist of one or more supreme tribunals, and of inferior

tribunals to be chosen by the National Legislature, to hold their offices during good behaviour; and to receive

punctually at stated times fixed compensation for their services, in which no increase or diminution shall be made so as

to affect the persons actually in office at the time of such increase or diminution. That the jurisdiction of the inferior

tribunals shall be to hear and determine in the dernier resort, all piracies and felonies on the high seas, captures from an

enemy; cases in which foreigners or citizens of other States applying to such jurisdictions may be interested, or which

respect the collection of the National revenue; impeachments of any National officers, and questions which may

involve the national peace and harmony.

10. Resolved that provision ought to be made for the admission of States Lawfully arising within the limits of the

United States, whether from a voluntary junction of Government and Territory or otherwise, with the consent of a

number of voices in the National legislature less than the whole.

11. Resolved that a Republican Government and the territory of each State, except in the instance of a voluntary

junction of Government and territory, ought to be guaranteed by the United States to each State.

12. Resolved that provision ought to be made for the continuance of Congress and their authorities and

privileges, until a given day after the reform of the articles of Union shall be adopted, and for the completion of all their

engagements.

13. Resolved that provision ought to be made for the amendment of the Articles of Union whenever it shall

seem necessary, and that the assent of the National Legislature ought not to be required thereto.

14. Resolved that the Legislative Executive and Judiciary powers within the several States ought to be bound by

oath to support the articles of Union.

15. Resolved that the amendments which shall be offered to the Confederation, by the Convention ought at a

proper time, or times, after the approbation of Congress to be submitted to an assembly or assemblies of

Representatives, recommended by the several Legislatures to be expressly chosen by the people, to consider and decide

thereon.

Publius (James Madison), Federalist Paper #10 (1788)

. . . [I]t may be concluded that a pure democracy, by which I mean a society, consisting of a small number of citizens,

who assemble and administer the government in person, can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction. A common

passion or interest will, in almost every case, be felt by a majority of the whole; a communication and concert results

from the form of government itself; and there is nothing to check the inducements to sacrifice the weaker party, or an

obnoxious individual. Hence it is, that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have

ever been found incompatible with personal security, or the rights of property; and have in general been short in their

lives, as they have been violent in their deaths. Theoretic politicians, who have patronized this species of government,

have erroneously supposed, that by reducing mankind to a perfect equality in their political rights, they would, at the

same time, be perfectly equalized, and assimilated in their possessions, their opinions, and their passions.

A republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place, opens a

different prospect, and promises the cure for which we are seeking. Let us examine the points in which it varies from

pure democracy, and we shall comprehend both the nature of the cure, and the efficacy which it must derive from the

union.

The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic, are first, the delegation of the

government, in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest; secondly, the greater number of citizens, and

greater sphere of country, over which the latter may be extended.

The effect of the first difference is, on the one hand, to refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them

through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and
whose patriotism and love of justice, will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations. Under such a regulation, it may well happen that the public voice pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good, than if pronounced by the people themselves convened for the purpose. On the other hand, the effect may be inverted. Men of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs, may by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means, first obtain the suffrages, and then betray the interests of the people. The question resulting is, whether small or extensive republics are most favourable to the election of proper guardians of the public wealth; and it is clearly decided in favour of the latter by two obvious considerations.

In the first place it is to be remarked, that however small the republic may be, the representatives must be raised to a certain number, in order to guard against the cabals of a few; and that however large it may be, they must be limited to a certain number, in order to guard against the confusion of a multitude. Hence the number of representatives in the two cases not being in proportion to that of the constituents, and being proportionally greatest in the small republic, it follows, that if the proportion of fit characters be not less in the large than in the small republic, the former will present a greater opinion, and consequently a greater probability of a fit choice.

In the next place, as each representative will be chosen by a greater number of citizens in the large than in the small republic, it will be more difficult for unworthy candidates to practise with success the vicious arts, by which elections are too often carried; and the suffrages of the people being more free, will be more likely to centre on men who possess the most attractive merit, and the most diffusive and established characters.

It must be confessed, that in this, as in most other cases, there is a mean, on both sides of which inconveniences will be found to lie. By enlarging too much the number of electors, you render the representative too little acquainted with all their local circumstances and lesser interests; as by reducing it too much, you render him unduly attached to these, and too little fit to comprehend and pursue great and national objects. The federal constitution forms a happy compromise in this respect; the great and aggregate interests being referred to the national, the local and particular to the state legislatures.

The other point of difference is, the greater number of citizens and extent of territory which may be brought within the compass of republican, than of democratic government; and it is this circumstance principally which renders factious combinations less to be dreaded in the former, than in the latter. The smaller the society the fewer probably will be the distinct parties and interests composing it; the fewer the distinct parties and interests, the more frequently will a majority be found of the same party; and the smaller the number of individuals composing a majority, and the smaller the compass within which they are placed, the more easily will they concert and execute their plans of oppression. Extend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength, and to act in unison with each other. Besides other impediments, it may be remarked, that where there is a consciousness of unjust dishonourable purposes, communication is always checked by distrust, in proportion to the number whose concurrence is necessary.

Hence it clearly appears, that the same advantage, which a republic has over a democracy, in controlling the effects of faction, is enjoyed by a large over a small republic—is enjoyed by the union over the states composing it. Does this advantage consist in the substitution of representatives, whose enlightened views and virtuous sentiments render them superior to local prejudices and to schemes of injustice? It will not be denied, that the representation of the union will be most likely to possess these requisite endowments. Does it consist in the greater security afforded by a greater variety of parties, against the event of any one party being able to outnumber or oppress the rest? In an equal degree does the encreased variety of parties, comprised within the union, encrease this security. Does it, in fine, consist in the greater obstacles opposed to the concert and accomplishment of the secret wishes of an unjust and interested majority? Here, again, the extent of the union gives it the most palpable advantage.

The influence of factious leaders may kindle a flame within their particular states, but will be unable to spread a general conflagration through the other states: A religious sect, may degenerate into a political faction in a part of the confederacy; but the variety of sects dispersed over the entire face of it, must secure the national councils against any danger from that source: A range of paper money, for an abolition of debts, for an equal division of property, or for any other improper or wicked project, will be less apt to pervade the whole body of the union, than a particular member of it; in the sample proportion as such a malady is more likely to taint a particular county or district, than an entire state. In the extent an proper structure of the union, therefore, we behold a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government. And according to the degree of pleasure and pride, we feel in being republicans, ought to be our zeal in cherishing the spirit, and supporting the character of federalists.

Publius
1. The text asserts that “Following the war, Americans aggressively ferreted out and, with republican fervor, denounced any races of aristocratic presence.” What evidence does the author present to support this assertion?

2. Despite the Declaration of Independence’s claim of equality for all, women and African Americans in the new republic were clearly treated as less equal. Using the text, describe the efforts made by each group in the post-Revolution period to improve their position in the society of the new nation.

3. Despite differences over details, early state constitutions revealed many similarities. Using the text, describe the ways in which these state constitutions were most similar.

4. Read the Virginia, or “Randolph Plan” and discuss how this plan would have acted to provide the larger states with more power in the proposed new constitution. Why would the smaller states have opposed it?

5. In “Federalist Paper #10”, why does James Madison indicate that “faction” is one of the major dangers facing the new nation? How does he propose to reduce that danger?