

The Articles of Confederation Activity

Procedures in Detail

1. Now that students have been exposed to different philosophies on government, they are ready to explore the development of the U. S. government. This activity is designed to allow students to feel what it is like to try to make a decision on which nine of thirteen groups with competing interests must agree—the process our new government had to follow under the Articles of Confederation. This experience will serve as an introduction and reference point in examining the failure of the Articles of Confederation in subsequent activities.
2. Explain to students that you recently found a Coat of Arms representing youth from the 1950's. Show students **Overhead Transparency 1.2A: Coat of Arms for Students of the 1950's**. As students look at it, explain to them the function and purpose of a Coat of Arms. Point out the symbols that students of the 1950's chose for their Coat of Arms—scholastic achievement, courtesy and respect, and thrift. Discuss with students why these symbols might have been chosen by young people in the 1950's. (**Note:** Do this quickly. the focus of the activity is not to compare youth of the 1950's with youth today. We include this Coat of Arms only to provide students with an example to pique their interest.)
3. Explain to students that they are going to get a chance to “update” the Coat of Arms to better reflect youth today. Tell them that there are, however, stipulations as to how it will be done. First, tell students that they will be divided into 13 groups. Each group will have one vote in deciding which three of five contemporary symbols—representing music, family, hobbies, and sports, love and friendship, and education—will go on the updated Coat of Arms. Further, the Coat of Arms must be adopted by nine—not just a simple majority—of the groups. (**Note:** If students ask why, simply tell them that this is part of the exercise. You might also add that you want to make sure the Coat of Arms reflects the desires of most of the students. You will have the chance to make the historical parallel after students have gone through the exercise.) Finally, tell students that once they get into their groups, they will be given **Student Handout 1.2B: Symbols for Coat of Arms** that will help guide them in making their choices for the Coat of Arms.
4. Divide the class into 13 mixed-ability groups. (Some groups will be pairs and others will be triads.) Pass out **Student Handout 1.2B** to each group. Note that there are 13 different handouts. It is paramount to the success of the activity that there are exactly 13 groups and that each group gets a different one. Each handout places point values on each of the five possible symbols for the Coat of Arms (See **teacher's Guide 1.2B** for an overview of the point system). Tell students that they will receive “significant extra credit” if a Coat of Arms is adopted with symbols whose sum point value is **equal to six or higher**. The point values for each group's symbols, however, are different. The handout for Group 1, for example, places a four-point value on music, a three-point value on family, a two-point value on hobbies and sports, a one-point value on love and

friendship, and a zero-point value on education. Group 1, then, will try to convince the class that music, family, and hobbies and sports best represent youth today and therefore should be on the Coat of Arms. Groups should vote for any Coat of Arms whose symbols' sum total is six or greater. Thus, a Coat of Arms with music, hobbies and sports, and education would total six points for Group 1 and qualify them for the extra credit if it were approved by nine groups.

5. The activity has been “rigged” so that no combination of the three symbols for the Coat of Arms qualifies more than eight groups for the “significant extra credit.” Thus, no Coat of Arms should be approved by more than eight groups, unless a group decides to forego its extra credit in adopting a Coat of Arms. And if no Coat of Arms is adopted, none of the groups gets extra credit. This simulates the difficulty and frustration of having to make a decision on which nine of thirteen entities—with competing interests—must agree.
6. After you pass out **Student Handout 1.2B** to the groups, direct students to read the directions carefully in order to see how they can earn extra credit. Answer any questions that arise. But do not reveal that the activity is “rigged.” Tell students to follow the directions on their handout carefully and to be prepared to try to persuade the class to include symbols that, for their group, have high point values.
7. Once groups have read **Student Handout 1.2B** and are clear which symbols they want to include on the Coat of Arms, it is time for the class to try to reach an agreement on one. Project **Overhead Transparency 1.2C: Steps for Determining Coat of Arms for Students Today**. This has the rules for determining the new Coat of Arms and a blank Coat of Arms at the bottom in which you can either: a) write the names of the symbols, b) draw symbols, or c) cut the symbols out of the bottom of the overhead transparency to place on the Coat of Arms. Tell students that they now must attempt to decide which symbols should occupy the other three panels. Explain that you will use a modified parliamentary procedure to determine this:
 - A. One group nominates a symbol.
 - B. The nomination must be “seconded” by another group.
 - C. There is a discussion on merits of the nominated symbol.
 - D. Groups vote to decide if the symbol will be included on the proposed Coat of Arms. Majority rules.
 - E. Once three symbols have been approved, groups get one minute to discuss whether to approve the Coat of Arms or not.

- F. There is a vote on the proposed Coat of Arms. It must be approved by nine groups to pass.
- G. If the proposal is rejected, repeat this process.
8. Continue this process until all possibilities have been exhausted—there are nine—or until you think students have experienced the difficulties and frustration of the process. Expect students to argue forcefully, and be prepared for them to be dissatisfied, angry, and let down.

Note: The activity may fail if a group of students does not adhere to the directions and does not pursue their interests as outlined on Student Handout 1.2B. This is a risk inherent in the activity. If it does fail in this way, you may want to point out to students your intentions and/or modify the discussion that follows.

Connecting the Experience to History

1. After the activity ends, hold a discussion to process students' feelings and to draw parallels between their experience and historical reality. Center the discussion on these questions:
 - **What feelings did you experience as you tried to pass a Coat of Arms?**
 - **Why couldn't the class come to an agreement on a Coat of Arms?**
 - **What would have happened if the decision had been based on majority rule?**
 - **What are the weaknesses of this type of decision-making system? What are the benefits?**
 - **Why might a government institute this type of system?**
 - **What do you think might happen in a government with this type of system?**
2. Now introduce the Articles of Confederation. Explain to students that one of the features of this system of government was that passage of a new law required the approval of nine of the thirteen states, each of which had different interests and values. Discuss the parallels between the states and the different groups in this activity. Explain to students that in Activity 1.2 they will be examining the Articles of Confederation in greater detail.



Idea for Class Notes: On the right side of their notebooks, have Students create a T-chart that compares their experience in this activity with the Articles of Confederation. A completed chart might look like this:

<i>Classroom Experience</i>	<i>Articles of Confederation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● class was divided into 13 groups ● each group of students had one vote ● students tried to create a Coat of Arms ● groups whose point value was six or higher had a chance to earn extra credit ● a Coat of Arms was never adopted by the class ● some students became dissatisfied, angry, and frustrated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Confederation Congress was composed of 13 states ● each state had one vote in the congress ● Congress dealt with many problems, such as how to develop the Northwest Territory ● states hoped to increase their size and power by annexing land in the Northwest Territory ● the Confederation Congress developed the Northwest Territory but failed to solve many other problems ● many citizens were concerned that the confederation government was too weak

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Idea for Student Response: On the left side of their notebooks, have Students create an illustrated dictionary entry for the term *confederation*.

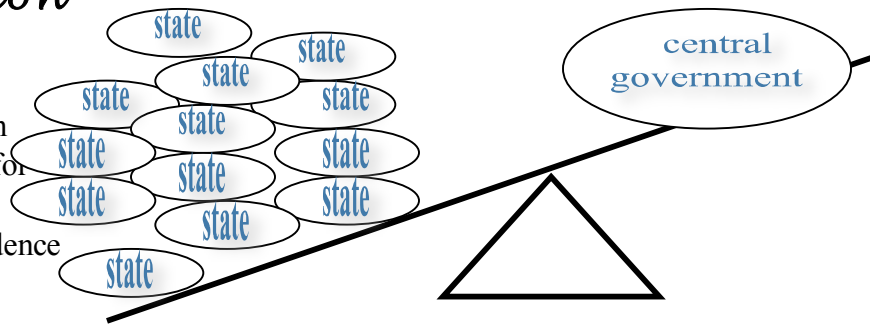
Students should define the term in their own words, draw a symbol to represent the term, and provide a synonym and an antonym. Explain to students that to complete the entry they will need to use their lecture notes, textbooks, and other reference sources, such as thesaurus. A completed dictionary entry might look like this:

Confederation

Definition: type of government in which states join together for common causes but retain their independence

synonym: alliance

antonym: anarchy

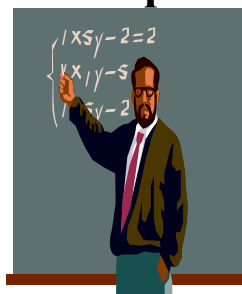


**Coat of Arms
for
Students of the
1950's**

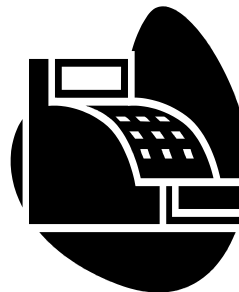


**Scholastic
Achievement**

**Courtesy
and Respect**



Thrift



Symbols for Coats of Arms

Team 1

Directions: Your class is about to decide upon a Coat of Arms representing youth today. Below are five symbols of youth today; only three can be included in the Coat of Arms. Your group's job is to try to convince the rest of the class to adopt the symbols that will give you the highest point values. Be prepared to argue why those are the best symbols. Members of your group will receive significant extra Credit if a Coat of Arms that has three symbols whose sum point total is six or great gets approved. So try to promote a Coat of Arms with symbols that have high values for your group.



Music = 4 points



Family = 3 points



Hobbies/Sports = 2 points



Love/Friendship = 1 point



Education = 0 points

Team 2

Your class is about to decide upon a Coat of Arms representing youth today. Below are five symbols of youth today; only three can be included in the Coat of Arms. Your group's job is to try to convince the rest of the class to adopt the symbols that will give you the highest point values. Be prepared to argue why those are the best symbols. Members of your group will receive significant extra credit if a Coat of Arms that has three symbols whose sum point total is six or greater gets approved. So, try to promote a Coat of Arms with symbols that have high values for your group.



Music = 4 points



Family = 3 points



Hobbies/Sports = 2 points



Love/Friendship = 1 point



Education = 0 points

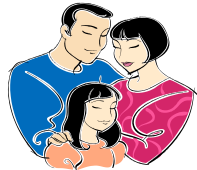
Symbols for Coats of Arms

Team 3

Directions: Your class is about to decide upon a Coat of Arms representing youth today. Below are five symbols of youth today; only three can be included in the Coat of Arms. Your group's job is to try to convince the rest of the class to adopt the symbols that will give you the highest point values. Be prepared to argue why those are the best symbols. Members of your group will receive significant extra Credit if a Coat of Arms that has three symbols whose sum point total is six or great gets approved. So try to promote a Coat of Arms with symbols that have high values for your group.



Music = 4 points



Family = 3 points



Hobbies/Sports = 2 points



Love/Friendship = 1 point



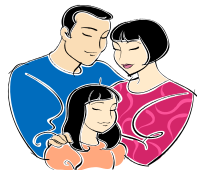
Education = 0 points

Team 4

Your class is about to decide upon a Coat of Arms representing youth today. Below are five symbols of youth today; only three can be included in the Coat of Arms. Your group's job is to try to convince the rest of the class to adopt the symbols that will give you the highest point values. Be prepared to argue why those are the best symbols. Members of your group will receive significant extra credit if a Coat of Arms that has three symbols whose sum point total is six or greater gets approved. So, try to promote a Coat of Arms with symbols that have high values for your group.



Music = 4 points



Family = 3 points



Hobbies/Sports = 2 points



Love/Friendship = 1 point



Education = 0 points

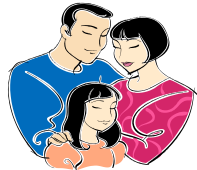
Symbols for Coats of Arms

Team 5

Directions: Your class is about to decide upon a Coat of Arms representing youth today. Below are five symbols of youth today; only three can be included in the Coat of Arms. Your group's job is to try to convince the rest of the class to adopt the symbols that will give you the highest point values. Be prepared to argue why those are the best symbols. Members of your group will receive significant extra Credit if a Coat of Arms that has three symbols whose sum point total is six or great gets approved. So try to promote a Coat of Arms with symbols that have high values for your group.



Music = 4 points



Family = 3 points



Hobbies/Sports = 2 points



Love/Friendship = 1 point



Education = 0 points

Team 6

Your class is about to decide upon a Coat of Arms representing youth today. Below are five symbols of youth today; only three can be included in the Coat of Arms. Your group's job is to try to convince the rest of the class to adopt the symbols that will give you the highest point values. Be prepared to argue why those are the best symbols. Members of your group will receive significant extra credit if a Coat of Arms that has three symbols whose sum point total is six or greater gets approved. So, try to promote a Coat of Arms with symbols that have high values for your group.



Music = 4 points



Family = 3 points



Hobbies/Sports = 2 points



Love/Friendship = 1 point



Education = 0 points

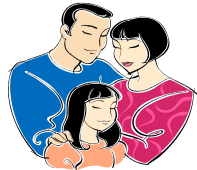
Symbols for Coats of Arms

Team 7

Directions: Your class is about to decide upon a Coat of Arms representing youth today. Below are five symbols of youth today; only three can be included in the Coat of Arms. Your group's job is to try to convince the rest of the class to adopt the symbols that will give you the highest point values. Be prepared to argue why those are the best symbols. Members of your group will receive significant extra Credit if a Coat of Arms that has three symbols whose sum point total is six or great gets approved. So try to promote a Coat of Arms with symbols that have high values for your group.



Music = 4 points



Family = 3 points



Hobbies/Sports = 2 points



Love/Friendship = 1 point



Education = 0 points

Team 8

Your class is about to decide upon a Coat of Arms representing youth today. Below are five symbols of youth today; only three can be included in the Coat of Arms. Your group's job is to try to convince the rest of the class to adopt the symbols that will give you the highest point values. Be prepared to argue why those are the best symbols. Members of your group will receive significant extra credit if a Coat of Arms that has three symbols whose sum point total is six or greater gets approved. So, try to promote a Coat of Arms with symbols that have high values for your group.



Music = 4 points



Family = 3 points



Hobbies/Sports = 2 points



Love/Friendship = 1 point



Education = 0 points

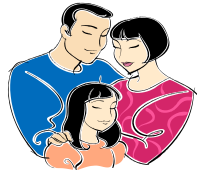
Symbols for Coats of Arms

Team 9

Directions: Your class is about to decide upon a Coat of Arms representing youth today. Below are five symbols of youth today; only three can be included in the Coat of Arms. Your group's job is to try to convince the rest of the class to adopt the symbols that will give you the highest point values. Be prepared to argue why those are the best symbols. Members of your group will receive significant extra Credit if a Coat of Arms that has three symbols whose sum point total is six or great gets approved. So try to promote a Coat of Arms with symbols that have high values for your group.



Music = 4 points



Family = 3 points



Hobbies/Sports = 2 points



Love/Friendship = 1 point



Education = 0 points

Team 10

Your class is about to decide upon a Coat of Arms representing youth today. Below are five symbols of youth today; only three can be included in the Coat of Arms. Your group's job is to try to convince the rest of the class to adopt the symbols that will give you the highest point values. Be prepared to argue why those are the best symbols. Members of your group will receive significant extra credit if a Coat of Arms that has three symbols whose sum point total is six or greater gets approved. So, try to promote a Coat of Arms with symbols that have high values for your group.



Music = 4 points



Family = 3 points



Hobbies/Sports = 2 points



Love/Friendship = 1 point



Education = 0 points

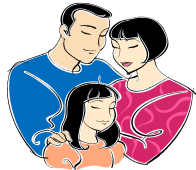
Symbols for Coats of Arms

Team 11

Directions: Your class is about to decide upon a Coat of Arms representing youth today. Below are five symbols of youth today; only three can be included in the Coat of Arms. Your group's job is to try to convince the rest of the class to adopt the symbols that will give you the highest point values. Be prepared to argue why those are the best symbols. Members of your group will receive significant extra Credit if a Coat of Arms that has three symbols whose sum point total is six or great gets approved. So try to promote a Coat of Arms with symbols that have high values for your group.



Music = 4 points



Family = 3 points



Hobbies/Sports = 2 points



Love/Friendship = 1 point



Education = 0 points

Team 12

Your class is about to decide upon a Coat of Arms representing youth today. Below are five symbols of youth today; only three can be included in the Coat of Arms. Your group's job is to try to convince the rest of the class to adopt the symbols that will give you the highest point values. Be prepared to argue why those are the best symbols. Members of your group will receive significant extra credit if a Coat of Arms that has three symbols whose sum point total is six or greater gets approved. So, try to promote a Coat of Arms with symbols that have high values for your group.



Music = 4 points



Family = 3 points



Hobbies/Sports = 2 points



Love/Friendship = 1 point



Education = 0 points

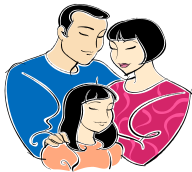
Symbols for Coats of Arms

Team 13

Your class is about to decide upon a Coat of Arms representing youth today. Below are five symbols of youth today; only three can be included in the Coat of Arms. Your group's job is to try to convince the rest of the class to adopt the symbols that will give you the highest point values. Be prepared to argue why those are the best symbols. Members of your group will receive significant extra credit if a Coat of Arms that has three symbols whose sum point total is six or greater gets approved. So, try to promote a Coat of Arms with symbols that have high values for your group.



Music = 4 points



Family = 3 points



Hobbies/Sports = 2 points



Love/Friendship = 1 point



Education = 0 points

Steps for Determining Coat of Arms for Students Today

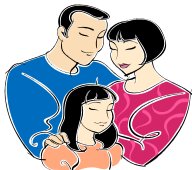
- A. One group nominates a symbol.
- B. The nomination must be “seconded” by another group.
- C. There is a discussion on merits of the nominated symbol.
- D. Groups vote to decide if the symbol will be included on the proposed Coat of Arms. Majority rules.
- E. Once three symbols have been approved, groups get one minute to discuss whether to approve the Coat of Arms or not.
- F. There is a vote on the proposed Coat of Arms. It must be approved by nine groups to pass.
- G. If the proposal is rejected, repeat this process.

Coat of Arms
for
Students Today

*Music
Education*



Family



Hobbies/Sports



Love/Friendship

