The Role of Compromise in Creating American Government

- Met Philadelphia in the State House, now called Independence Hall
- Intended to revise Articles of Confederation
- Scrapped the Articles and started over
- 75% of the men had been in the Continental Congress
- 55 delegates in all attend
- Meet in secrecy

The Convention Convenes
- George Washington (VA) elected President of the Convention
- James Madison (VA) kept notes and does much of the writing of the Constitution
  - “Father of the Constitution”
- 81-year-old Ben Franklin (PA) attends
- Thomas Jefferson and John Adams are notable absences from the conventions
  - Both are Europe representing the country as ambassadors
    - Jefferson is in France
    - Adams is in England

Major Issues Addressed
- Government strong enough to protect rights of the people
  - Not too strong to be controlled
- Structure of Government
- Congressional Representation
- Slavery and population
- Regulation of Trade

Structure of Government
- Convention agreed on creating Three Branches of Government
  - Executive: enforce the laws
  - Legislative: make the laws
  - Judicial: interpret the laws

Structure of Legislature
Two Plans
Virginia Plan
- Bicameral Legislature
- Number of representatives in each house based on states population and/or wealth
- Legislature would have power to tax, regulate trade and make laws that states are unable to make
Structure of Legislature
Two Plans

New Jersey Plan
- Single house Legislature
- Each state would have one vote
- Similar to Articles of Confederation
- Same powers as Virginia Plan

Constitutional Compromise

Great Compromise - Representation
Compromise between the Virginia and New Jersey plans for representation
- 3 branches of Government
  - Executive, Legislative and Judicial
- Legislature would be Bicameral
  - Senate – 2 representatives per state (equal representation)
  - House of Representatives – representation based on population

Constitutional Compromise

Commerce Compromise - Regulation of Trade
Congress would have power to regulate trade with foreign nations, amongst the states and with Native Americans
- Congress can tax imports
- Congress NOT allowed to tax exports
- Southern economy is based on exports of tobacco, cotton etc.
- Congress would not be able to regulate the slave trade for at least 20 years – until 1808

Constitutional Compromise

Slavery and Population
Disagreement on how to count slaves as part of population for the purpose of taxation and representation
- South wanted slaves counted as population for representation but not taxation
- North wanted slaves counted for taxation but not population

Constitutional Compromise

3/5 Compromise - Slavery and Population
- Every 5 slaves would count as 3 free persons when calculating population for taxation and representation

Signing of the Constitution

- September 17, 1787
- Sent to states for ratification
- Had to have ¾ of states approval to become law of the land
  - 9 of the 13 states had to ratify the document for it to become our system of government
"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."