



Power Struggle

Directions: Read the two primary source excerpts below. Then answer the analysis questions using evidence from the documents and your knowledge of the Articles of Confederation.

Document A: From the Articles of Confederation (1781)

"Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every power... not expressly delegated to the United States."

"Expenses of the United States shall be supplied by the several states... according to the value of all land within each state."

Document B: Letter from George Washington to James Madison, 1786

"We are either a united people, or we are not. If the former, let us, in all matters of a general concern, act as a nation... If we are not, let us no longer act a farce by pretending what we are not."

"The [national] government is little more than the shadow without the substance."

1. Based on Document A, who held most of the power under the Articles of Confederation? Explain your reasoning.
2. According to Document A, how did the national government get money? What problem could this cause?
3. In Document B, what concern does George Washington express about the national government?
4. Using both documents, explain one reason why some leaders wanted to change the Articles of Confederation.
5. In one or two sentences, explain how this problem helped lead to the Constitutional Convention of 1787.