

**The Constitution in a Box  
5<sup>th</sup> grade**

**Developed for  
Kansas Historical Society at the  
Library of Congress Midwest Region  
“It’s Elementary: Teaching with Primary Sources” 2012**

**By Rene’ Appelhans  
Highland Park Central, USD 501, Topeka, KS**

**Overview**

This is a lesson/activity that will use primary resources that will help the students learn about the Constitution of the United States. Learning is presented in a mystery/clue format that involves cooperative groups. Each group will be given nine clues to use in discussing and making predictions related to the mystery item. When all groups have made their prediction of the mystery item, the teacher will reveal what the mystery item is (Constitution of the United States). A self-assessment of the lesson/activity is provided for students to record their learning. The activity is designed to last 15 to 30 minutes, based on the amount of discussion the students have on each clue.

**Standards**

**History Standard**

Benchmark 4, Indicator 2: The students will examine multiple primary sources to understand point of view of an historical figure.

Benchmark 4, Indicator 4: The students use information including primary sources to debate a problem or an historical issue.

**Common Core ELA**

**Speaking and Listening**

SL.5.1: The students will engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

c. Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.

**Objectives**

**Content**

- The students will examine primary resources.

- The students will discuss each primary resource to identify the document that became known as the Constitution of the United States.

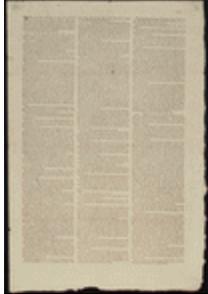
### **Skills**

- The students will use context clues within each primary resource to identify the document that became known as the Constitution of the United States.
- The students will work in cooperative groups to solve clues using primary resources to identify the document that became known as the Constitution of the United States.

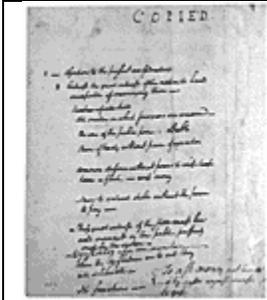
### **Essential Questions**

- Why is the Constitution of the United States an important document?
- Why was it important for the leaders of our country to create the Constitution of the United States?
- What would our country have been like if we didn't have the Constitution?

## Resource Table

Image	Description	Citation	URL
	<p><b>Clue 9:</b> Text of the U.S. Constitution as ratified by the Constitutional Convention on Sept. 17, 1787. Date of publication from Evans. Text in three columns. Evans 20822</p>	<p>Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Continental Congress &amp; Constitutional Convention Broadside Collection</p>	<p><a href="http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/bdsbib:@field(NUMBER+@band(bdsdc+c0802))">http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/bdsbib:@field(NUMBER+@band(bdsdc+c0802))</a></p>
	<p><b>Clue 5:</b> George Washington, first president of the United States. From the original series painted by Stuart for the Messrs. Doggett of Boston.</p>	<p>Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [reproduction number, e.g., LC-USZ62-110212]</p>	<p><a href="http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/presp:@field(NUMBER+@band(cph+3a09915))">http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/presp:@field(NUMBER+@band(cph+3a09915))</a></p>
	<p><b>Clue 1:</b> Shows the thirteen colonies and as far west as the Mississippi River, including the 'Western Territory' [Old Northwest], 'Kentucky and Tennessee'; as far north as the tip of Lake Superior including 'Upper' and 'Lower Canada' and 'New Brunswick'. Scale [ca. 1:10,137,600].</p>	<p><b>A map of the United States of America: with part of the adjoining provinces from the latest authorities,</b> Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library. 1791</p>	<p><a href="http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/fawbib:@field(DOCID+@lit(agf0013))">http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/fawbib:@field(DOCID+@lit(agf0013))</a></p>

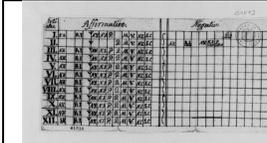
	<p><b>Clue 2</b> Painting— “Washington as it Was.”</p>	<p>Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Theodor Horydczak Collection [please give the reproduction number, e.g., LC-H824-0224].</p>	<p><a href="http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/horyd:@field(NUMBER+@band(thc+5a44143))">http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/horyd:@field(NUMBER+@band(thc+5a44143))</a></p>
	<p><b>Clue 8:</b> Painting.”Signing of Constitution” by Howard C. Christy I.</p>	<p>Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Theodor Horydczak Collection [please give the reproduction number, e.g., LC-H824-0224].</p>	<p><a href="http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/horyd:@field(NUMBER+@band(thc+5a50826))">http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/horyd:@field(NUMBER+@band(thc+5a50826))</a></p>
	<p><b>Clue 4:</b> A N.W. view of the state house in Philadelphia taken 1778 / C.W. Peale delin. ; J.T. sculp.</p> <p>Illus. from: The Columbian magazine, or, Monthly miscellany. Philadelphia : Printed for Seddon, Spotswood, Cist, and Trenchard, 1787 July, opp. p. 516.</p> <p>Fielding, 1710</p>	<p>Published in: The American Revolution in drawings and prints; a checklist of 1765-1790 graphics in the Library of Congress / Compiled by Donald H. Cresswell, with a foreword by Sinclair H. Hitchings. Washington : [For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. Govt. Print. Off.], 1975, no. 589.</p> <p>Exhibited in: "Creating the United States" at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 2010-2011.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004671521/">http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004671521/</a></p>



**Clue 3:** Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804), lawyer, Revolutionary patriot, and delegate to the Continental Congress, made these notes in preparation for a major speech delivered on 18 June 1787 at the Constitutional Convention assembled in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Library of Congress, Manuscript Division

[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mcc:@field\(DOCID\)%2B@lit\(mcc/018\)\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mcc:@field(DOCID)%2B@lit(mcc/018)))



**Clue 6:** The Thomas Jefferson Papers Series 1. General Correspondence. 1651-1827

Jefferson, Thomas. *Chart of State Votes on the United States Constitution*. 1788. From Library of Congress, *The Thomas Jefferson Papers Series 1. General Correspondence*. 1651- 1827.

<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mtj1&fileName=mtj1page010.db&recNum=678>

## Lesson Plan

### Day 1

1. Pass out a folders or box containing the nine clues to each group.
2. Instruct the groups that they are to work together to solve the overall question of “What item is being described by the clues?”
3. Give the students time to work in groups to solve the clues. If they are struggling, assist the groups to think about how each clue goes with the other clues.
4. When groups think that they have figured out the mystery item, have them write their prediction on a sticky-note.
5. When all groups have written down their predictions, talk about what they thought the item was.
6. Reveal that the mystery item is the Constitution of the United States.
7. After the reveal have students work with their group to complete **The Constitution in a Box Analysis** sheet.

### Assessment

- Students will complete **The Constitution in a Box Analysis** graphic organizer.
- Teacher will also do an informal assessment of the students during the activity, to evaluate each student’s cooperative learning abilities.
- Optional assessment: **3-2-1** exit slip:

### For the Teacher

**Note:** There is advance preparation needed for this lesson. You will need to print each of the primary resources and paste it onto construction paper, so that the construction paper can be folded to conceal the item. On the outside of the construction paper write the clue number from 1 to 9. This will be the order in which the students are to open the clues. Lamination is optional, but recommended. Each group of four or five students will need one set of the nine clues (primary resources).

- This lesson can stand alone or be incorporated into a unit on the Constitution.
- On each clue you may want to include a short description related to the primary resource is. Just remember not to use the words “The Constitution” in the description.
- Attached to this lesson is a print of each clue with a suggested description. There are eight primary resource clues and one secondary clue provided for this activity.
- No matter the order of the clues the Constitution is the last clue.
- An additional assessment for the end of this lesson would be a 3-2-1 exit slip.

## The Constitution in a Box Analysis

Name \_\_\_\_\_

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Confirm</b></p> <p>Explain how the artifact confirmed what you already knew about this document.</p> <p>1.</p>  <p>2.</p>  <p>3.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Surprise</b></p> <p>Explain why you were surprised to see this artifact in a box about the document.</p> <p>1.</p>  <p>2.</p>  <p>3.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Question</b></p> <p>Write questions you have about this document and/or the artifacts.</p> <p>1.</p>  <p>2.</p>  <p>3.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Add</b></p> <p>Identify artifacts that could be added to the box to improve the description of this document. Explain why the item should be added on another piece of paper.</p> <p>1.</p>  <p>2.</p>  <p>3.</p>

**3 - 2 - 1**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Write three things that you learned about the Constitution.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Write two adjectives that describe the Constitution.

- 1.
- 2.

Write one question that you have about the Constitution.

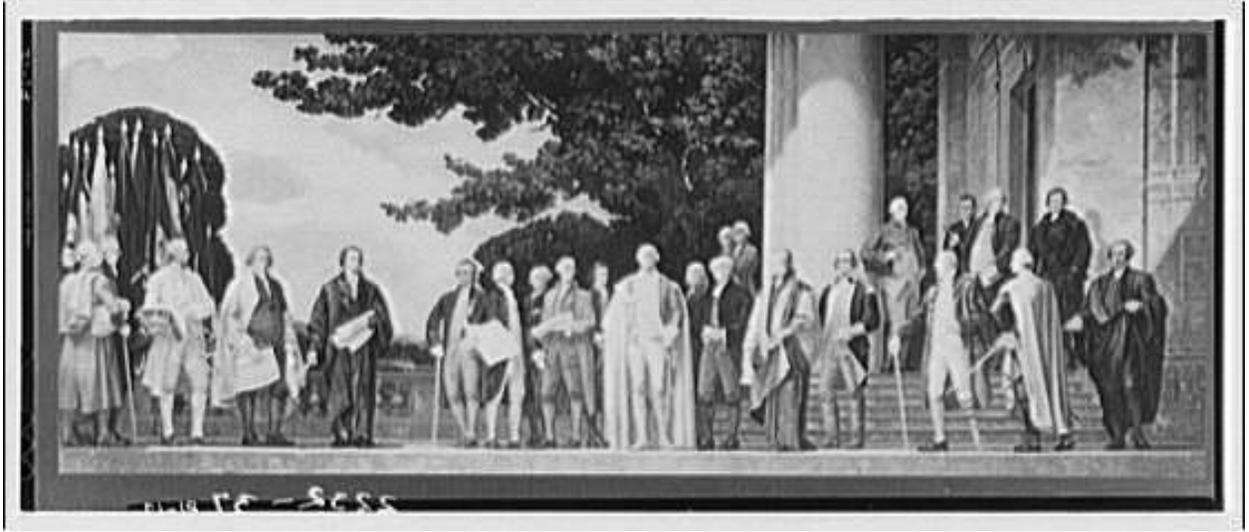
- 1.

Clue 1



A map of the United States drawn around the time that the mystery item was created.

Clue 2



A photo of delegates from the twelve states.

Clue 3

C O P I E D.

I — Objections to the present confederation  
I Entrust the great interests of the nation to hands  
incapable of managing them —  
~~Treaties of all kinds~~  
All matters in which foreigners are concerned —  
The care of the public peace: Debt  
Power of treaty, without power of execution  
Common defence without power to raise troops  
have a fleet — raise money  
— Power to contract debts without the power  
to pay —  
— Their great interests of the state must be  
well managed or the public prosperity  
must be the system —  
Legislates upon committees  
Where the Legislatures are to act they  
will deliberate —  
No sanction — { To ask money not to be  
— & by other unjust means —  
to get

989

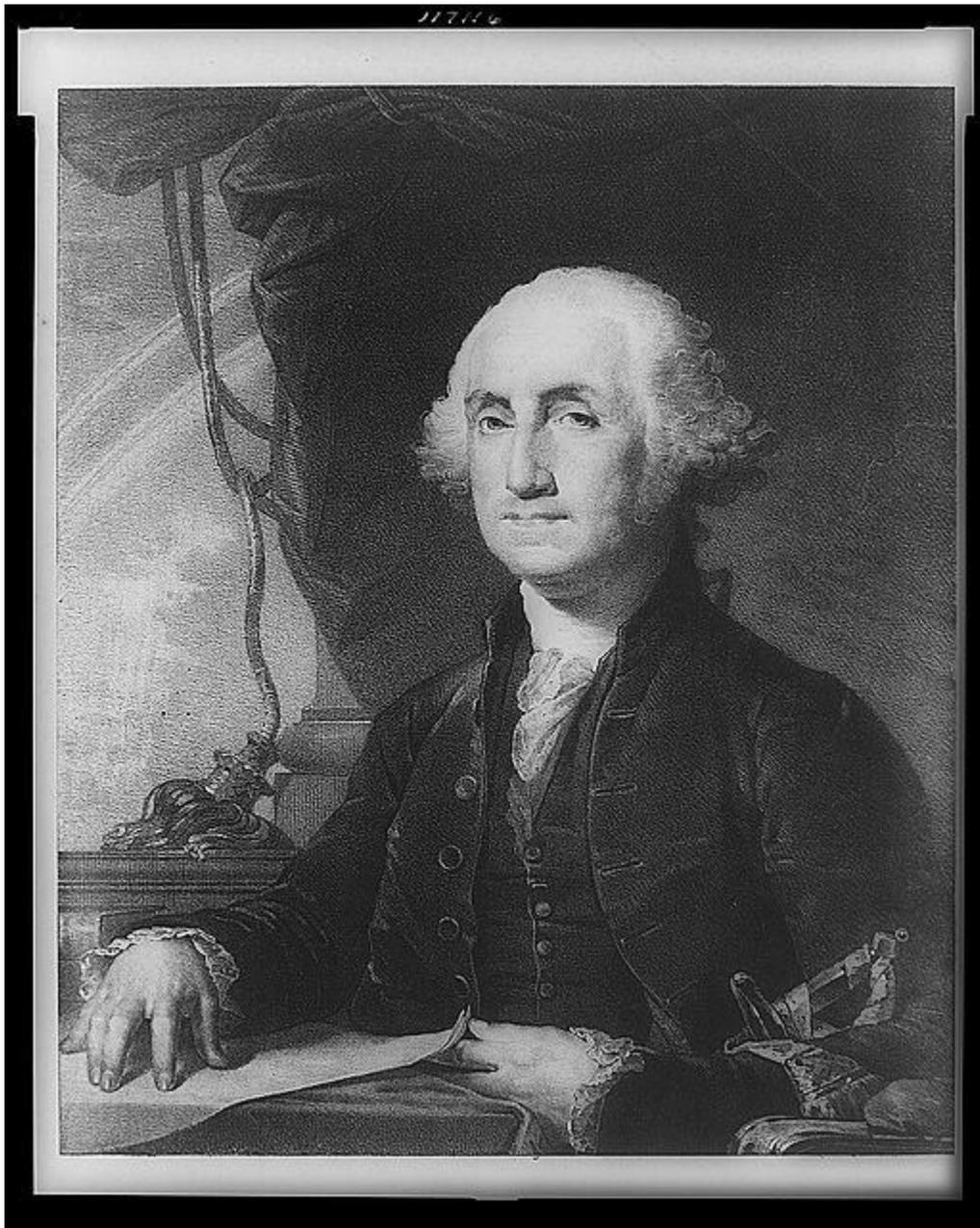
Alexander Hamilton's notes in preparation for a major speech delivered on 18 June 1787 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Clue 4



The state house in Philadelphia, PA. The place where meetings about this mystery item took place.

Clue 5



George Washington, first president of the United States was present at the signing of this mystery item.

Clue 6

C 778 J

1776 cler.		Affirmative.										Negative										
I.	N.H.	R.I.	Y.	N.	J.	P.	D.	M.	V.	N.C.	S.C.											
II.			Y				2	M.	V.	N.C.	S.C.											
III.	N.H.	R.I.	Y.	N.	J.	P.	2	M.	V.	N.C.	S.C.											
IV.	N.H.	R.I.	Y.	N.	J.	P.	2	M.	V.	N.C.	S.C.											
V.	N.H.	R.I.	Y.	N.	J.	P.	0	M.	V.	N.C.	S.C.											
VI.	N.H.	R.I.	Y.	N.	J.	P.	0	M.	V.	N.C.	S.C.											
VII.	N.H.	R.I.	Y.	N.	J.	P.	0	M.	V.	N.C.	S.C.											
VIII.	N.H.	R.I.	Y.	N.	J.	P.	0	M.	V.	N.C.	S.C.											
IX.	N.H.	R.I.	Y.	N.	J.	P.	0	M.	V.	N.C.	S.C.											
X.	N.H.	R.I.	Y.	N.	J.	P.	0	M.	V.	N.C.	S.C.											
XI.	N.H.	R.I.	Y.	N.	J.	P.	0	M.	V.	N.C.	S.C.											
XII.	N.H.	R.I.	Y.	N.	J.	P.	0	M.	V.	N.C.	S.C.											

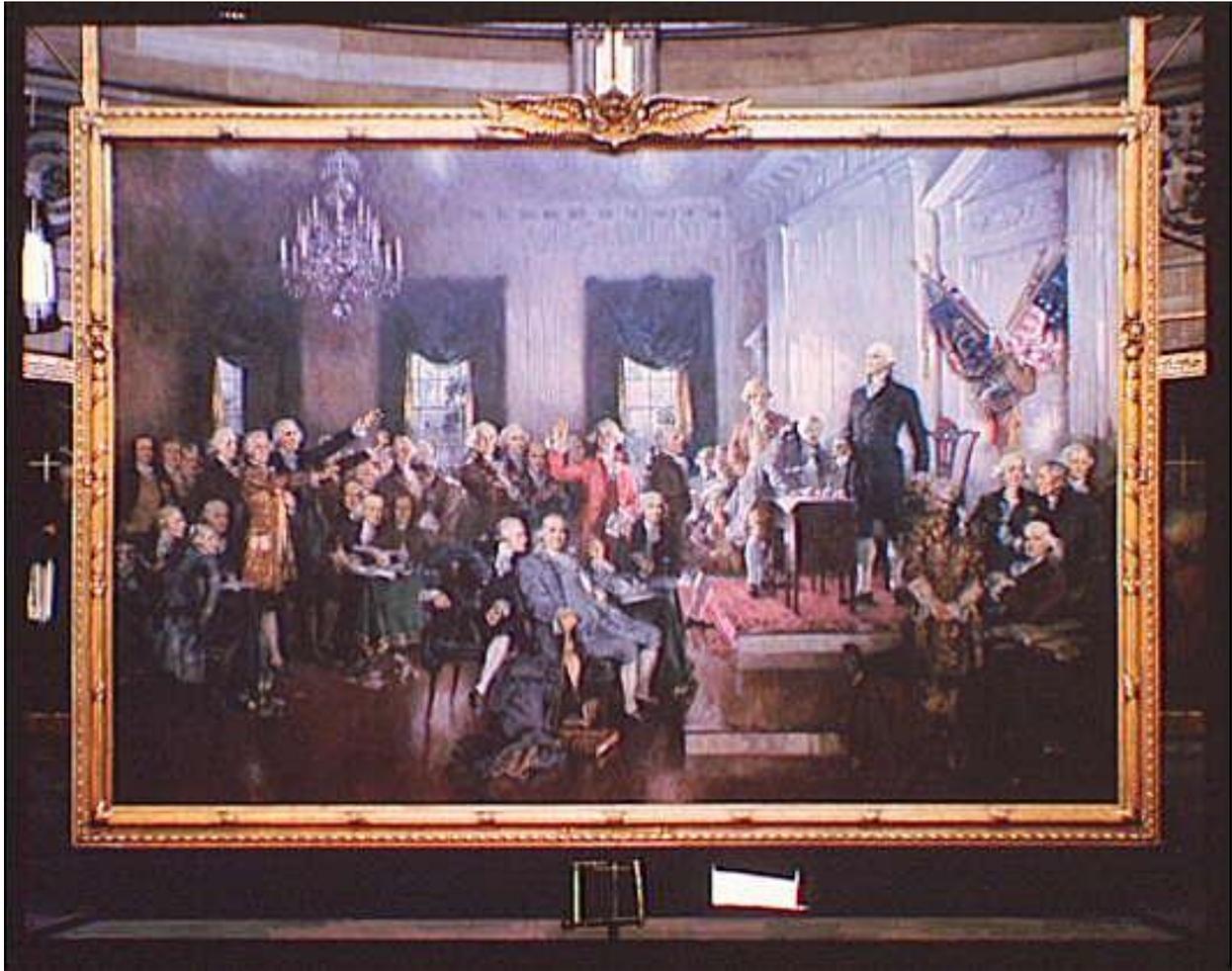
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The record of how each colony voted in approving this mystery item.

### **Clue 7**

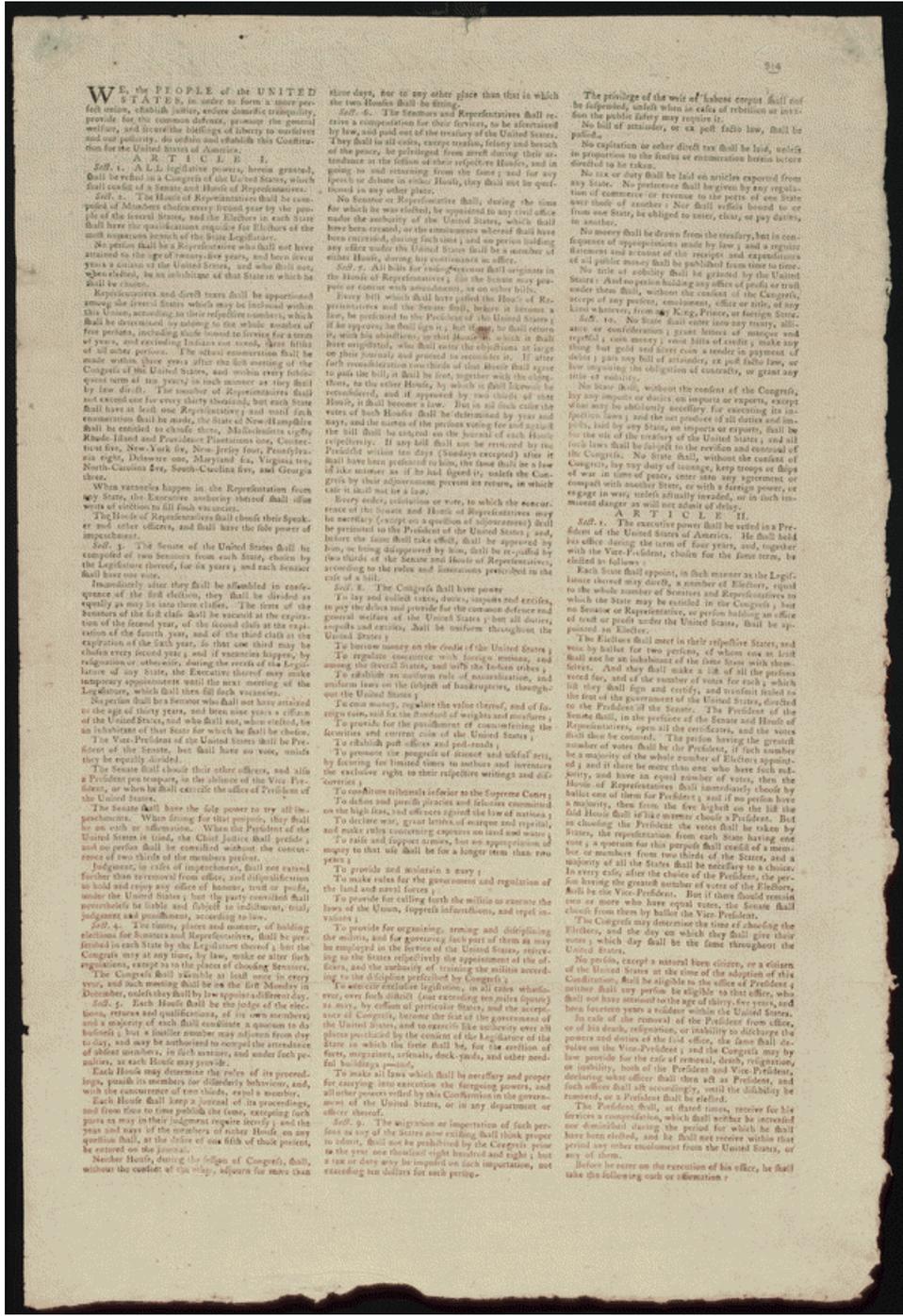
They met in Philadelphia in May 1787. Fifty-five men from 12 different states gathered, intending to revise the Articles of Confederation. As they began their meetings, however, Virginia Governor Edmund Randolph presented a plan prepared by James Madison.

Clue 8



A painting illustrating the signing of this very important document in our nation's history.

# Clue 9



This is a just the first page of this famous document that governs our United States today.