

TERMS TO UNDERSTAND



equal representation
Great Compromise
New Jersey Plan
proportional representation
Virginia Plan

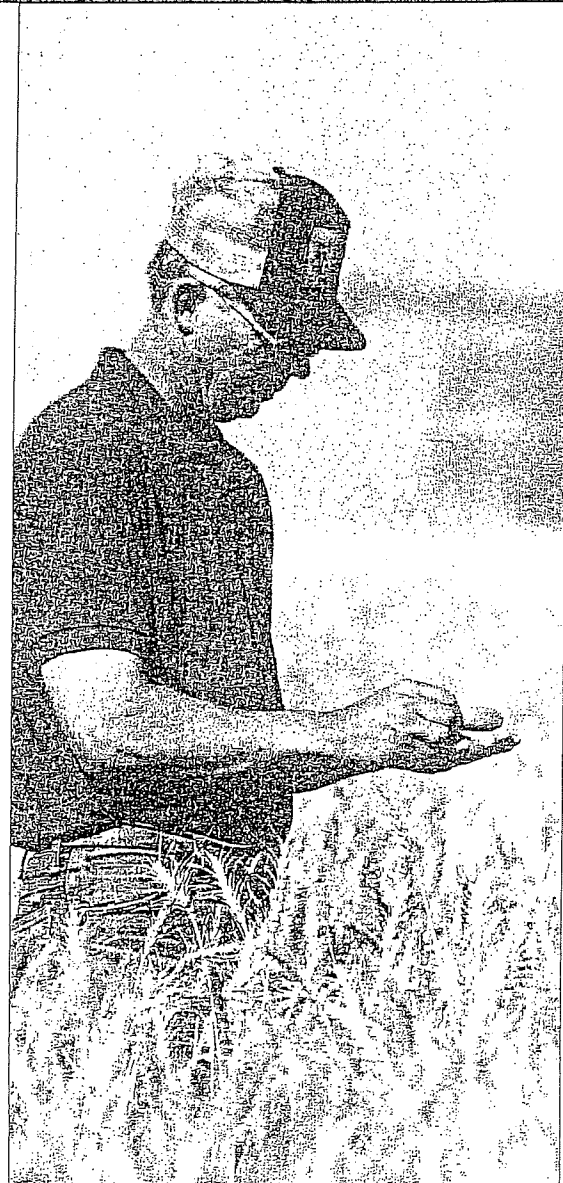
Source Document

What important conflict existed between the large and small states?

One of the most important conflicts at the Philadelphia Convention was about representation. The Framers disagreed about how many representatives each state should be able to send to Congress. The conflict was between delegates from states with small populations and delegates from states with large populations.

Small states. The small states feared that the states with larger populations would control the national government. To avoid this problem, the small states wanted each state to have the same number of representatives in Congress. This is called equal representation.

Large states. The delegates from the states with larger populations thought that equal representation was unfair. A state with more people should have more votes. The large states wanted to base the number of representatives in Congress on the number of people living in a state. This is called proportional representation.



Why might people in states with smaller populations favor equal representation?

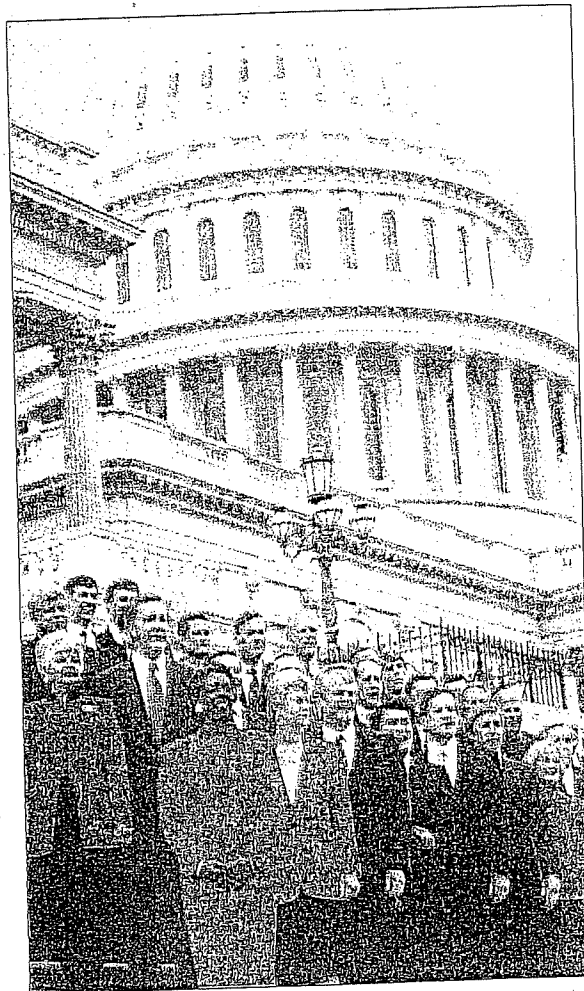
How did the Great Compromise solve the problem of representation?

The committee appointed to solve the problem of representation came up with the Connecticut Compromise. It is now called the Great Compromise. The Great Compromise has three parts.

- Congress would have two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives.
- Membership in the House would be based on proportional representation. The House would have the power to develop all bills dealing with taxes and government spending. As you learned from Lesson 5, a bill is a proposed law.
- Membership in the Senate would be based on equal representation. At first, the Senate only had power to accept or reject bills related to taxes and spending passed in the House. This power was later modified to let the Senate make changes to bills involving taxes and spending developed in the House.

As in most compromises, each side received a little and each gave up a little. The small states got equal representation in the Senate. The large states got proportional representation in the House. Also, the House would have important powers related to taxing and spending.

The compromise meant that the large states would have slightly more influence over issues of taxes and spending. In the Senate, the small states could check the large states by changing or rejecting taxes and spending bills passed in the House. The Great Compromise was hotly debated. It finally passed by one vote.



Can you name your representatives in the House and Senate? To find out the names of your representatives in Congress, go to www.senate.gov and www.house.gov.

The idea of equal representation was contained in a plan created by the delegates from New Jersey. It was called the **New Jersey Plan**. The New Jersey Plan called for only one house of Congress. Each state would have an equal number of representatives in Congress.

- **Large population states.** The delegates from the states with larger populations thought this was unfair. They argued that a state with more people should have more representatives in Congress. Their plan was called **proportional representation** and was a part of Madison's **Virginia Plan**. The Virginia Plan called for two houses in Congress.

The Framers were divided on this issue. They could not reach a decision. Neither side was willing to give in. A special committee of one delegate from each state was asked to develop a solution.

Problem solving

Developing a solution on representation

Your class should be divided into committees of about six students each. Each committee should contain some students who represent the small states and some who represent the large states. The task of each committee is as follows.

1. Meet and develop a plan for the number of representatives each state should be allowed to send to Congress. Should Congress have one or two houses?
2. Select a spokesperson to present your committee's plan to the entire class. All members of the committee may help to

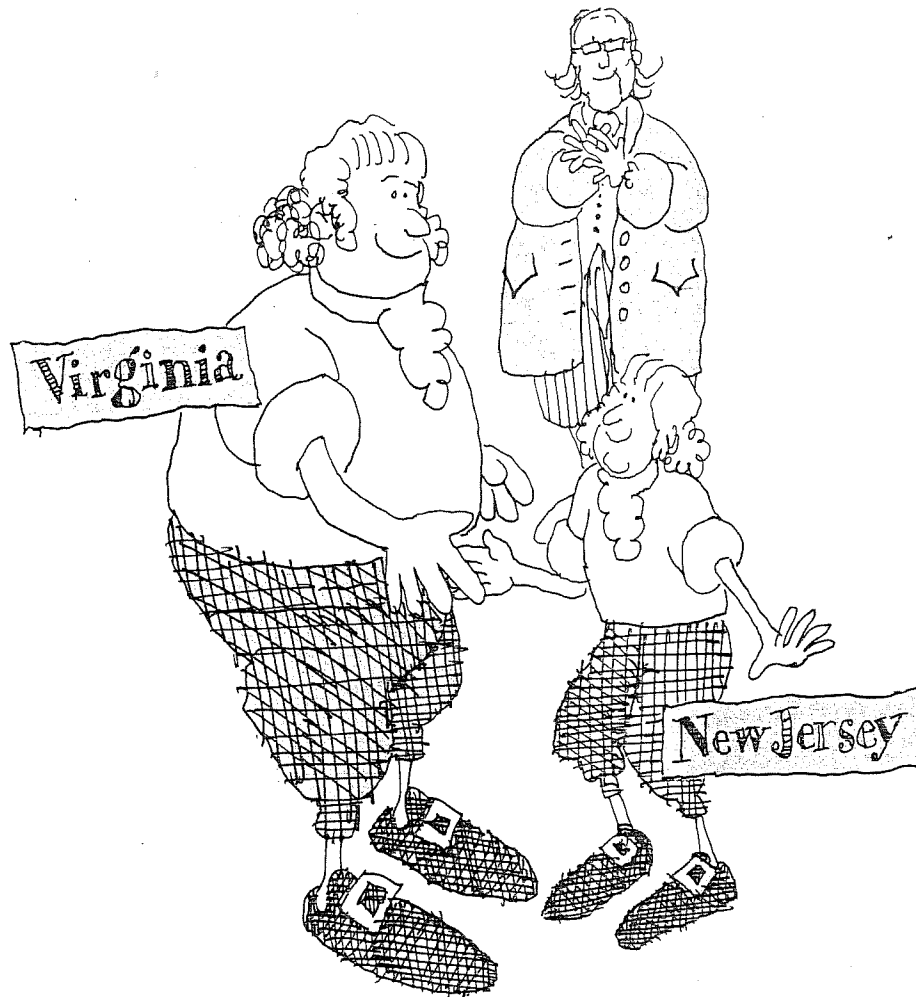
clarify the plan and defend it against criticisms by members of the other committees.

3. Each committee may then revise its plan if it wishes, and put it on the board or chart paper.
4. Finally, the entire class should compare the plans made by each committee. The class should try to reach an agreement on the question of representation. Compare the plan you have developed with the plan arrived at by the Framers.

The Great Compromise

The committee appointed by the Framers to solve the problem you have just discussed recommended a compromise known both as the **Great Compromise** and the **Connecticut Compromise**. Its solution, first suggested by Benjamin Franklin, contains three important parts.

- Congress would have two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives.
- The House of Representatives would be elected on the basis of proportional representation. The House would be given the power to develop all **bills** (proposed laws) for taxing and government spending.
- The Senate would be elected on the basis of equal representation. At first, the Senate was limited to either accepting or rejecting bills for taxing and government spending passed by the House. This was later changed to let the Senate



How did the Great Compromise solve the problem of representation?

amend (change) money bills developed in the House.

As in most compromises, each side received a little and each gave up a little. The small states received equal representation in the Senate. The large states won control of the House of Representatives based on proportional representation. Also, the House was given important powers related to taxing and spending.

The result was that the large states would have slightly more influence over the creation of laws on taxation and how money would be spent. Bills passed by the House could always be checked, or rejected, by the Senate where the small states had equal representation.

The compromise was hotly debated. It finally passed by one vote.

Reviewing and using the lesson

1. Explain the difference between equal representation and proportional representation. Which plan did the states with large populations support? Why?
2. Refer to the chart on page 50. List some of the large and small states that you think were probably on opposite sides of the question on representation.
3. What position would you take on the issue of equal and proportional representation if it were raised today? Explain your answer.

ONE DELEGATE FROM EACH STATE GOT TOGETHER AND CREATED:

THE GREAT COMPROMISE —

- ALSO KNOWN AS THE CONNECTICUT COMPROMISE
- ① • CONGRESS WILL HAVE TWO HOUSES: SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
- ② • HOUSE = PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION, IT WILL ALSO HAVE THE POWER TO DEVELOP BILLS FOR TAXING AND GOVERNMENT SPENDING
- ③ • SENATE = EQUAL REPRESENTATION, IT CAN AMEND (CHANGE) MONEY BILLS DEVELOPED IN THE HOUSE
- GREATLY DEBATED, PASSED BY ONE VOTE

THREE — FIFTHS COMPROMISE

- SHOULD SLAVES COUNT IN POPULATION REPRESENTATION?
- AGREED THAT SLAVES COUNTED AS THREE-FIFTHS OF A PERSON FOR REPRESENTATION AND TAXATION PURPOSES.
- SO, FOR EVERY FIVE SLAVES ONLY THREE WILL COUNT TOWARDS REPRESENTATION AND TAXATION