

**Module 3: Building a Government - The 1780s**  
**Topic 1 Content: Problems with the Articles of Confederation Notes**

**Introduction**

**Problems with the Articles of the Confederation**

1 **Political**  
Learn about the political problems created by the Articles of Confederation. Click **START** to begin.

2 **Economic**  
Learn about the economic problems created by the Articles of Confederation. Click **START** to begin.

3 **Foreign Relations**  
Learn how foreign relations were impacted by the Articles of Confederation. Click **START** to begin.

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EDUCATION


The Articles of Confederation served as America's first attempt to establish a workable government. Too many weaknesses existed with the Articles, forcing America make a second attempt at establishing a government through the Constitution. Click **START** learn about the political, economic, and foreign relations problems associated with the Articles of the Confederation.

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### Topic 1 Content: Problems with the Articles of Confederation Notes

#### Political

**1** Political



- Each state was granted one vote regardless of size.



Each state, regardless of its size or population, was given one vote in Congress. States with larger populations did not receive additional representation in the national government. Smaller states, such as Maryland and Delaware, held the same political authority as larger states, such as Virginia and Massachusetts.

In order to amend the Articles of Confederation, all thirteen states had to approve. This limited the power of Congress. If any amendments to the Articles were proposed, the disapproval of one state could stop the amendment process.

Even if Congress did pass a law, the law was not able to be effectively enforced. The Articles of Confederation did not provide for the election of a president, or the establishment of an executive or judicial system. A judicial system was needed to settle disputes between states, as well as interpret the written laws.

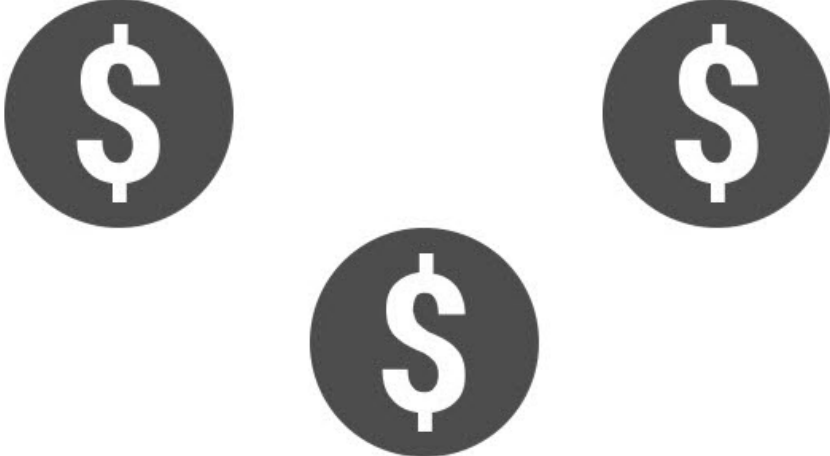
The Articles of Confederation created a lack in military support. If Congress needed money or soldiers to support the Continental Army, it had to ask the states. The states were not required to support the Continental Army with either money or soldiers.

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**Economic**

**2 Economic** 

- Without a common currency, Congress was unable to pay off debts.



The Articles of Confederation limited Congress' ability to establish a common currency. Congress had the right to print money. However, the states had the power to print money, as well. Without a common form of currency for the nation, the buying and selling of goods became very complicated. Determining the true value of different forms of currency quickly became an impossible task.

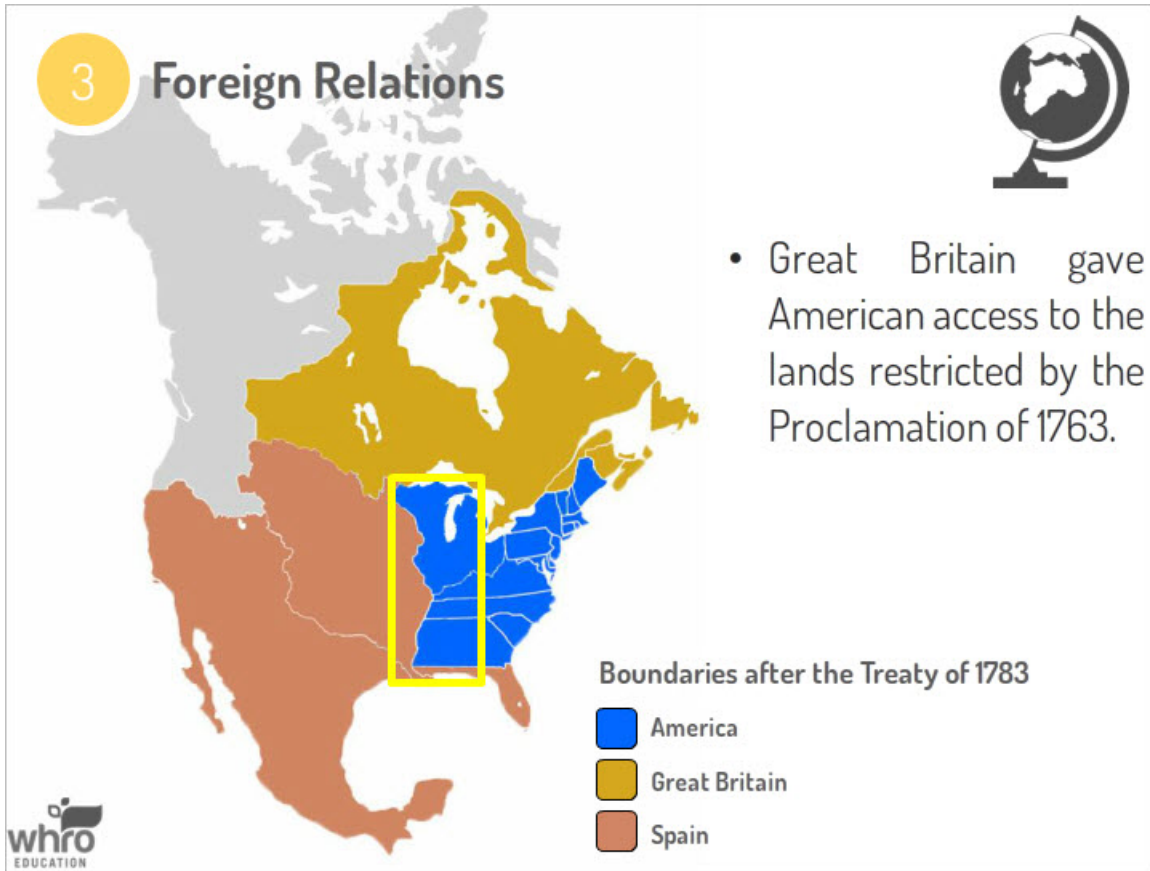
Congress borrowed a large amount of money from foreign nations to help fund the Revolutionary War. The total estimated cost was nearly \$200 million. Without the power to tax, Congress had a difficult time raising the funds to repay the nation's debt. In an effort to generate revenue, Congress requested that the states approve a tax on imported goods. The states denied the request and national government continued to remain poorly funded. Congress was rendered powerless to change its economic standing.

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#### Foreign Relations

### 3 Foreign Relations



- Great Britain gave American access to the lands restricted by the Proclamation of 1763.

Boundaries after the Treaty of 1783

- America
- Great Britain
- Spain

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The Treaty of Paris (1783) marked America's victory in the Revolutionary War. In the treaty, Great Britain acknowledged America's independence and gave the country access to the lands that had been restricted from them by the Proclamation of 1763.

Spain had established settlements in this area and was displeased with America's newly granted access to the region. Worried that America's westward expansion would eventually lead to a war between the two countries, Spain closed the Port of New Orleans and blocked America's access to the Mississippi River.

After the end of the War, British troops continued to remain in America. America had yet to repay its debt to British merchants. As a result, British troops held their posts in the Northwest Territory.