

Module 3: Building a Government - The 1780s

Topic 2 Content: New Government Notes

Introduction

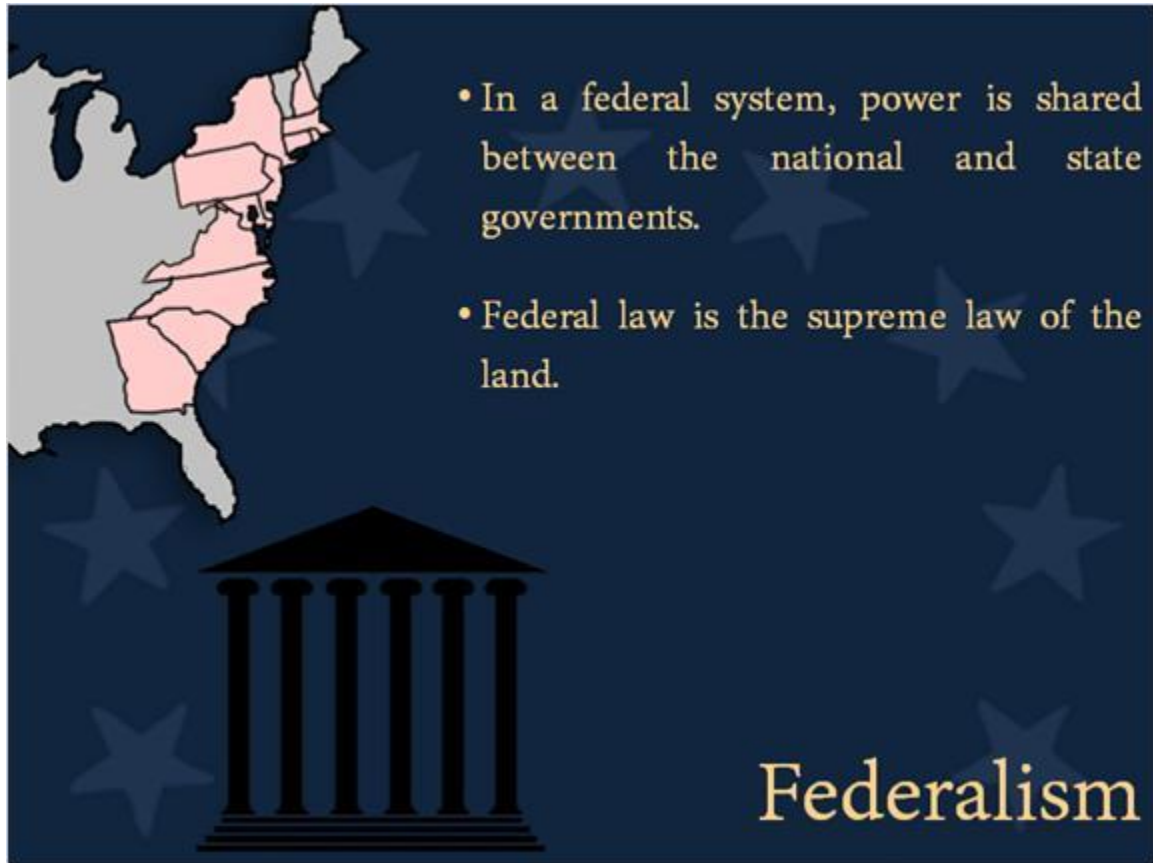


One of the major goals of the delegates at the Constitutional Convention was to establish a national government that was strong enough to address the issues of the nation, but not too powerful as to suppress the state governments. In this interactivity, explore the plan for the structure of the new government. Click **START** to begin.

Module 3: Building a Government - The 1780s

Topic 2 Content: New Government Notes

Federalism



- In a federal system, power is shared between the national and state governments.
- Federal law is the supreme law of the land.

Federalism

The delegates organized America's new government as a federal system, a system in which power is shared between the national and state governments. Both the national and state governments would be given certain powers, including the power to create laws. In America's federal system, if there is ever a conflict between a national law and a state law, the national law will be upheld.

Module 3: Building a Government - The 1780s

Topic 2 Content: New Government Notes

Government's Powers



Many powers were granted to the Federal Government by the Constitution including:

- Control of foreign affairs;
- Regulating interstate trade; and
- Coining money.

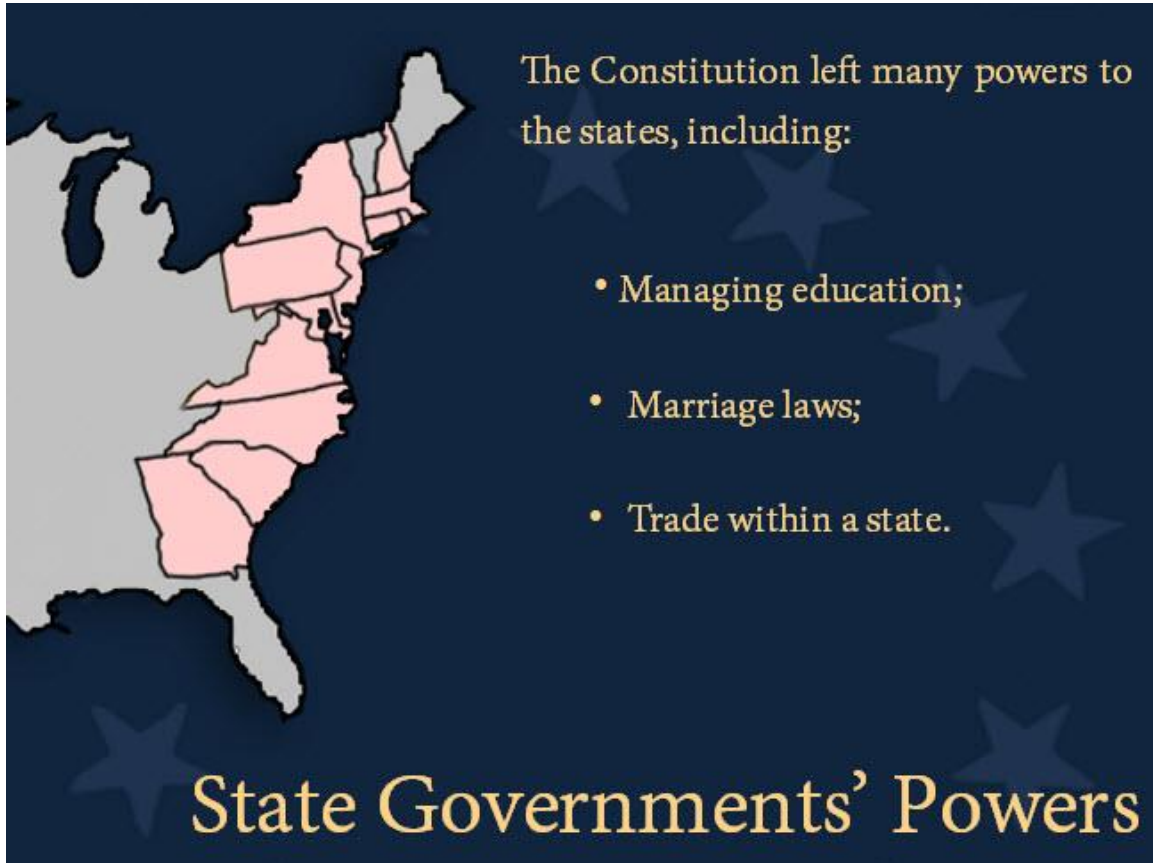
National Government's Powers

Some of the powers granted to the national government by the Constitution include: authority over foreign affairs, the power to regulate trade between the states, and the power to coin money.

Module 3: Building a Government - The 1780s

Topic 2 Content: New Government Notes

State's Powers



The Constitution left many powers to the states, including:

- Managing education;
- Marriage laws;
- Trade within a state.

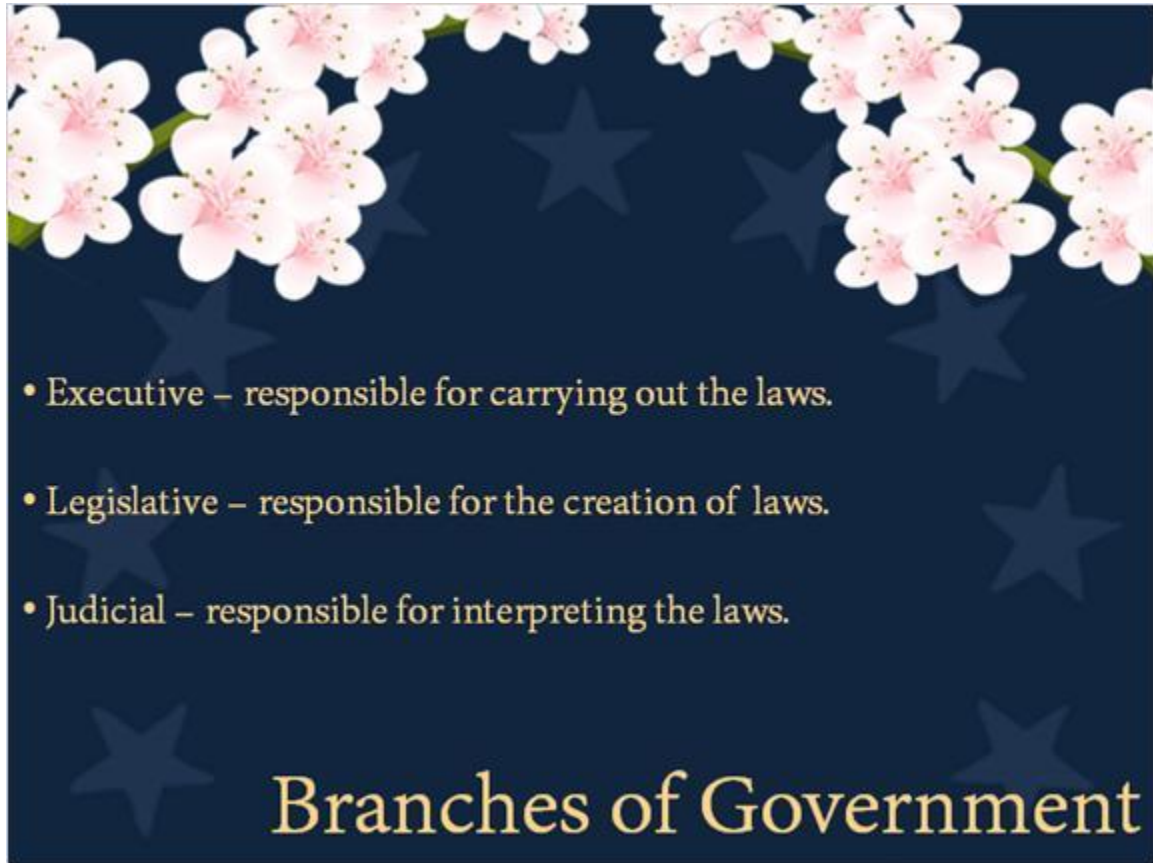
State Governments' Powers

Some examples of the powers left to the states include: managing education, marriage laws, and trade within a state.

Module 3: Building a Government - The 1780s

Topic 2 Content: New Government Notes

Separating Power

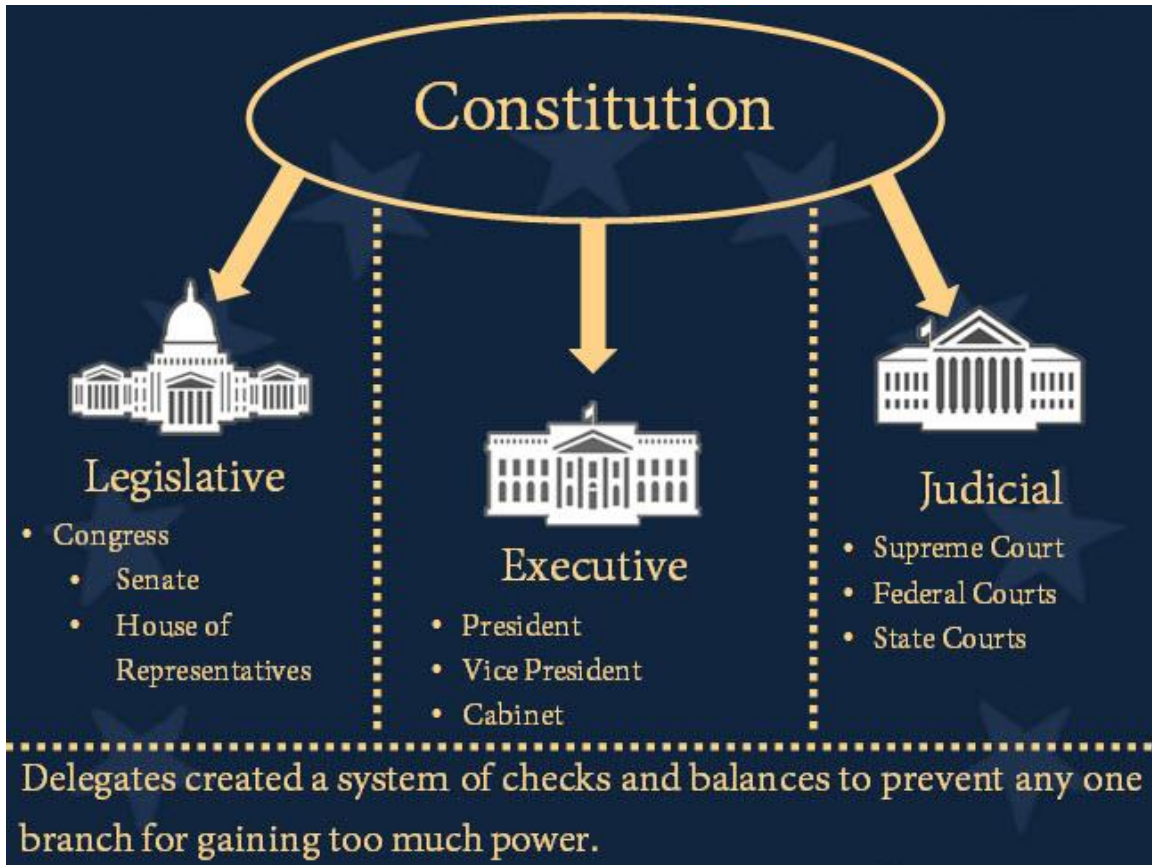


In order to limit the power of the national government, the delegates decided to divide its power into three branches: legislative, executive, and judicial. This separation of powers was based on James Madison's Virginia Plan. In this system, the legislative branch creates the laws. The executive branch carries out the laws. The judicial branch interprets the law.

Module 3: Building a Government - The 1780s

Topic 2 Content: New Government Notes

Checks and Balances

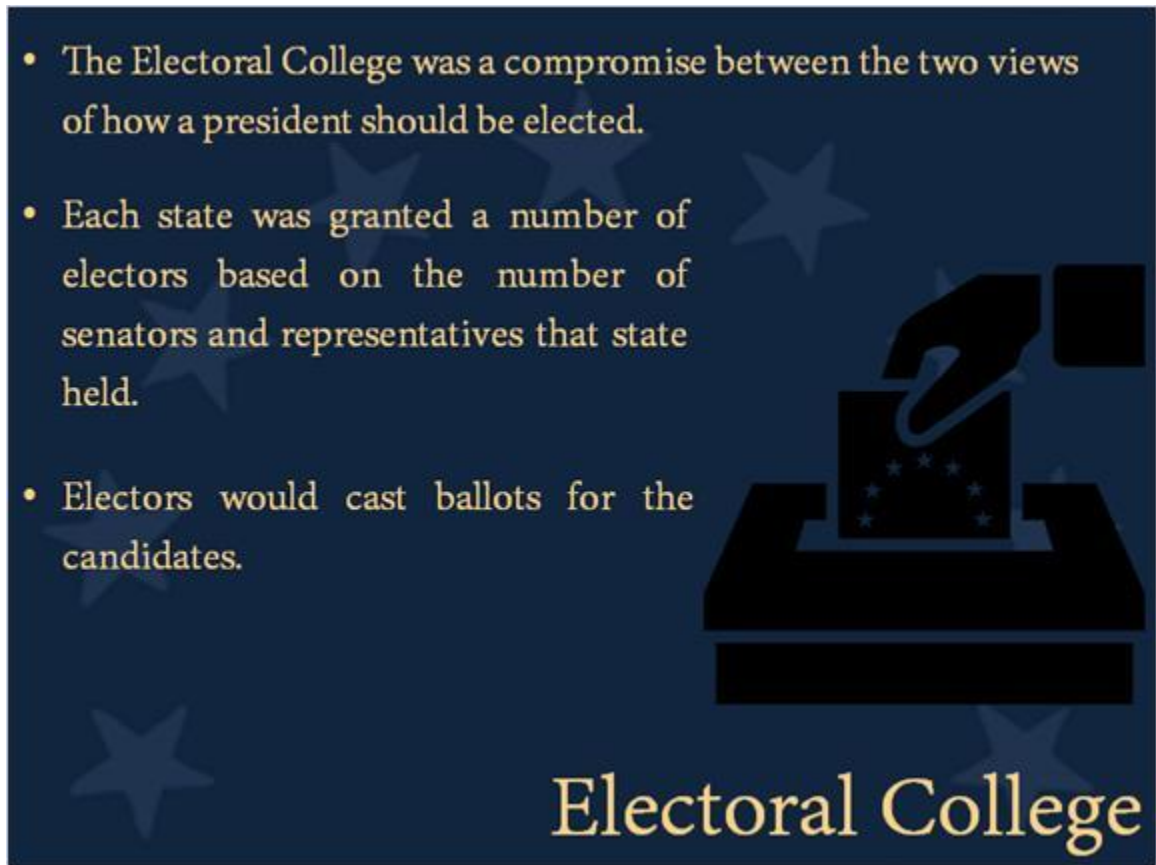


The Senate and the House of Representatives, collectively known as Congress, comprise the legislative branch. The executive branch, led by the president, is also composed of the vice president and the members of the cabinet. The judicial branch is comprised of the Supreme Court and other federal courts. A system of checks and balances ensures that no one branch becomes too powerful.

Module 3: Building a Government - The 1780s

Topic 2 Content: New Government Notes

Electoral College



The infographic features a dark blue background with several light blue stars. On the right side, there is a silhouette of a hand dropping a ballot into a box. The text is written in a light yellow, serif font. At the bottom right, the words 'Electoral College' are written in a larger, light yellow, serif font.

- The Electoral College was a compromise between the two views of how a president should be elected.
- Each state was granted a number of electors based on the number of senators and representatives that state held.
- Electors would cast ballots for the candidates.

Electoral College

Many delegates at the Convention believed that the president should be elected by the people directly. Others felt that it would be too risky to leave the election of the nation's leader in the hands of the public. They felt that members of Congress should elect the president. The Electoral College was a compromise between these opposing views.

Each state would be granted a number of electors equal to the state's number of senators and representatives in Congress. The people would vote in the presidential elections, to show the popular vote. The electors would then cast their ballots of behalf of their state's voters. It is the votes of the Electoral College that determines the outcome of the presidential election.