

Name _____

The First American Government: Exploring the Articles of Confederation

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. The main purpose of the Articles of Confederation was to preserve state sovereignty while creating a central government. The Founding Fathers were cautious about a strong central government because they had recently fought against British rule, which they saw as overly controlling and oppressive. They wanted to avoid creating a similar situation in their newly formed country.
2. Two significant weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation were the inability to levy taxes and the difficulty of amending the document. The lack of taxing authority made it challenging for the government to raise funds, leading to financial instability. The requirement for unanimous approval for amendments made it nearly impossible to adapt the government to changing needs.
3. The process for amending the Articles of Confederation required unanimous approval from all thirteen states, making it impractical and often unachievable. This inflexibility hindered the government's ability to adapt to new circumstances.
4. The Philadelphia Convention of 1787 played a crucial role in drafting the United States Constitution, which replaced the Articles of Confederation. The delegates recognized the shortcomings of the Articles and sought to create a stronger central government that could address the nation's needs more effectively. The result was the U.S. Constitution, which established the framework for the government we have today.

