Unit 3: The New Nation

**Turning Point: Constitutional Convention**

After Shays’ Rebellion, political leaders met in Philadelphia at the Constitutional Convention to try to improve the national government; The AOC was replaced with the Constitution which gave the national gov’t more power over the state gov’ts

**Strengths of AOC**: Protected personal liberty and states’ rights; Dealt with Western lands (Land Ordinance of 1785, Northwest Ordinance of 1787)

**Weaknesses of AOC**: No national unity; Gave power to states with an overly weak national gov’t; National gov’t did not have power to tax the states, no president, no national court system, no national currency; Difficult to pass laws or amend the framework of government

1783

1787

1789

1792

1796

1800

Articles of Confederation

Constitution

President Washington

President Adams

**Turning Point: Shays’ Rebellion**

Revolutionary veteran Daniel Shays led a rebellion of frustrated farmers in Massachusetts who were afraid of losing their farms; the rebellion proved the weaknesses of the AOC because the gov’t could not raise an taxes or an army to stop the rebellion

**Constitutional Concepts:**

* **Limited Government**: The Constitution created   
  a stronger national gov’t than the AOC, but only the powers explicitly listed (or implied) in the Constitution were granted to the gov’t (other powers were reserved to the states and the people)
* **Popular Sovereignty**: The Constitution created a democratic republic in which citizens vote for politicians who make decisions based on the will of the people
* **Separation of Powers/Checks and Balances**: The Constitution created three equal branches of gov’t, each with distinct duties and powers over other branches
* **Federalism**: The national gov’t (expressed powers) and state governments (reserved powers) both have ability to make laws over citizens

**Organization of the Constitution:**

* **Article I**: Legislative Branch; Congress is a bicameral legislature made up of the House of Reps and Senate (Powers: tax, make laws, impeachment, ratify treaties and ambassadors, coin money, regulate trade, declare war)
* **Article II**: Executive Branch; President, VP, cabinet, executive bureaucracy (Powers: Enforce the law, veto, negotiate treaties, appoint judges and ambassadors)
* **Article III**: Judicial Branch; Supreme Court and national courts (Powers: Interpret the law, declare laws unconstitutional called judicial review)

**Compromises of the Constitution:**

* **Great Compromise**: settled VA Plan and NJ Plan
* **Three-Fifths**: how slaves are counted as population
* **Slavery**: No discussion of slavery until 1808

**Key events of Washington’s two terms:**

* Judiciary Act of 1789
* Created the first cabinet: Hamilton (Sec of Treasury), Jefferson (Sec of State), Knox (Sec of War), Randolph (Attorney General)
* Hamilton’s Financial Plan: Bank of the US, Funding/Assumption
* Whiskey Rebellion in 1794
* Neutrality Act with England and France
* Farewell Address: two term precedent, preserve neutrality,   
  avoid sectionalism
* Hamilton (Federalists) and Jefferson (Democratic-Republicans) created the first political parties

**Key events of Adams term:**

* The first “party president” (Federalist)
* Neutrality with England and France
* XYZ Affair almost led to war with France
* Alien and Sedition Acts (1798) limited free speech, hurt the Federalist Party, led to the Virginia and Kentucky Resolves
* Defeated by Thomas Jefferson in the Revolution of 1800