

# Creating a New Form of Government: A Classroom Constitutional Convention

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## Students will learn...

- To empathize with the process of choosing a new government.
- To focus on core values like fairness and democracy.
- To work as a team to create a plan.

## You will need...

- Copies or images of the [Virginia Plan](#), the [New Jersey Plan](#), the [Hamilton Plan](#), and [George Mason's Anti-federalist Critique](#).
  - A copy of questions for students to consider. Present the questions in any format that best fits your classroom- ex. whiteboard, interactive whiteboard, poster, or individual handouts.
  - *Optional:* [Race to Ratify](#)
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## Opener: Providing Context

- Discuss the following quote:

It has been said that **democracy** is the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time. *Winston Churchill*

- Ask the students about their perceptions of a monarchy. Ex. Who holds the power? What do they do? How do you feel about that?
- Provide some context:

While the Founding Fathers hated a monarchy, they did not all agree on which form of government to adapt. Groups came up with different plans to present at the 1787 Continental Convention to make their case. (Show pictures or copies of those plans)

- Ask the students what form of government is in the classroom. They may compare it to a monarchy with the teacher at the head.
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## Task: Creating a New Government

- Divide the students into groups and tell them that they will come up with an answer to the following question: If the teacher left, how would you organize yourselves?
  - Display or give students a copy of the questions provided (or your own) for them to consider when discussing.
  - *Optional:* Have the students write their answers or discuss.
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## Closer: Discussion

- Reflect on the process and ask some follow up questions-
  - Do you think you could convince the whole class to adopt your plan? How?
  - What question was the hardest?
- When discussing the last question, point out those who were missing from the original Constitution- all non-white property owners.
- *Optional:* Make this into a whole lesson. Have the groups present their plans and collectively agree on one. Guide the discussions to get the students to think about their plans in more detail by giving them scenarios to consider. Ex. What could the class do if you thought a new rule was unfair?