LOC TPS AP Gov What did the Anti-Federalists want?

Grades 9-12
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This activity is sponsored in part by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program, coordinated by Waynesburg University.

Two class periods of 45 – 60 minutes
Description of activity: Students will analyze a political cartoon commenting on concerns and beliefs related to the ratification of the Constitution. After individual examination and analysis with a partner, the class will discuss their reflections and question the arguments for and against the ratification of the federal system. Students will then write a list of the concerns held by the Anti-Federalists. After close examination of George Mason’s concerns, students will revisit their list and add to it. After a close reading of Anti-Federalist writings, students will write a response to the question - What did the Anti-Federalists want?

Focus Question: What did the Anti-Federalists want? What fears did they have about the ratification of the Constitution? Were those fears valid?

Context: This activity would fit best during a study the founding principles and documents. Before implementing the lesson, students should have completed a thorough examination of the Constitutional Convention, excerpts from Madison’s Notes on the Convention, and Federalist 10, 15, and 51. Students will develop a greater appreciation for the Anti-Federalists’ concerns as valid and practical. They were not simply dissenting to be contrary and some of the protections they demanded (through the inclusion of the Bill of Rights) helped protect against the creation of a tyrannical government.

Objectives:
Virginia SOLS
STANDARD GOVT.1 a, b, c, d, e, f, g
The student will demonstrate mastery of the social studies skills citizenship requires, including the ability to
a) analyze primary and secondary source documents;
b) create and interpret maps, diagrams, tables, charts, graphs, and spreadsheets;
c) analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media;
d) distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information;
e) evaluate information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion;
f) identify a problem and prioritize solutions;
g) select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate.

STANDARD GOVT.3a, b, c, d, e
The student will demonstrate knowledge of the concepts of democracy by
a) recognizing the fundamental worth and dignity of the individual;  
b) recognizing the equality of all citizens under the law;  
c) recognizing majority rule and minority rights;  
d) recognizing the necessity of compromise;  
e) recognizing the freedom of the individual.

STANDARD GOVT.11d  
The student will demonstrate knowledge of civil liberties and civil rights by  
d) exploring the balance between individual liberties and the public interest.

AP US Gov  
Skill 1: Describe and explain constitutional and political institutions, principles, processes, models, and beliefs.  
Skill 2: Explain connections among political behavior, political institutions, beliefs, and cultural factors.  
Skill 4: Read, analyze, and interpret qualitative sources.  
Skill 5: Develop an argument about political principles, processes, behaviors, and outcomes.  
LO 1.A.2: Explain how democratic ideals are reflected in U.S. foundational documents.  
EU 1.A: A balance between governmental power and individual rights has been a hallmark of American political development.  
EU 1.C: The Constitution creates a complex and competitive policy-making process to ensure the people’s will is accurately represented and that freedom is preserved.  
EU 2.A: Provisions of the Bill of Rights are continually being interpreted to balance the power of government and the civil liberties of individuals.

Assessment: Supporting questions guide thinking and provide structure. Formative assessments check in on learning for accuracy and understanding. Summative assessments gauge the level of actual understanding and provide valuable practice on written assessments. Final written work will be graded for understanding of concepts, use of supporting evidence, and effort at thoughtful reflection.

Activity Details  
Primary Sources: find below  
Procedure: Supporting questions guide student inquiry. Formative assessments check for understanding. The teacher should lead a class debriefing after completion of the formative assessment before asking students to move on to the summative assessment and action steps.

What you will need before implementing:  
This lesson is dependent on computer and internet access for all students. The documents and directions should be shared digitally with all students (through Google Classroom or another format).
The Looking Glass for 1787  
Amos Doolittle  
[New Haven]: 1787.  
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/creating-the-united-states/convention-and-ratification.html#obj14

Interpret the imagery to identify concerns and beliefs related to the ratification of the Constitution. Record your observations, reflections, and questions on the primary source analysis tool and then share with a partner. Next the class will discuss their reflections and question the arguments for and against the ratification of the federal system.

Write up a list of the concerns held by the Anti-Federalists.

“Objections to the Constitution of Government Formed by the Convention,”  
George Mason. ca. September 17, 1787.  
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/creating-the-united-states/convention-and-ratification.html#obj9  

After close examination of George Mason’s concerns, revisit your list and add to it.
Anti-Federalist letters to newspapers

After close reading of excerpts of Anti-Federalist writings Centinel XII and Brutus XV, respond to the question - What did the Anti-Federalists believe?


also found at http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/centinel-xii/
also found at http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/brutus-xv/

What was the impact of these concerns and insistence on greater protections on individual freedoms and greater restraints on the power of the national government?

Summative Assessment Task
Write an essay or create a short video to answer these questions: What did the Anti-Federalists want? Were the beliefs/fears of the Anti-Federalists well-founded? Did they foreshadow any issues or problems that we face today?

Taking Action
Could we take a lesson from this chapter in our history about the value of compromise?
Write a letter to a member of Congress/create a public service announcement that makes this argument OR addresses the need for a reasonable compromise on a particularly difficult issue in order to move the country forward.