

DBQ

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“The Constitution represents the subversion of the Revolution.” Assess the validity of the statement.

Directions: The prompt is based on the accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.

In your response you should do the following:

- State a relevant thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question.
- Support the thesis or a relevant argument with evidence from all, or all but one, of the documents.
- Incorporate analysis of all, or all but one, of the documents into your argument.
- Focus your analysis of each document on at least one of the following: intended audience, purpose, historical content, and/or point of view.
- Support your argument with analysis of historical examples outside the documents.
- Connect historical phenomena relevant to your argument to broader events or processes.
- Synthesize the elements above into a persuasive essay.

Document A → Source: *Amos Singletree*, 1788.

These lawyers, and men of learning, and moneyed men, that talk so finely, and gloss over matters so smoothly, to make us poor illiterate people swallow down the pill, expect to get into Congress themselves...and then they will swallow up all us little folks, like the great Leviathan.

Document B → Source: Richard Henry Lee, 1787

It cannot be denied with truth, that this new constitution is, in its first principles, most highly and dangerously, oligarchic.

Document C → Source: *Chart: Composition of State Assemblies in the 1780's*, Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

Politics and Society in Post-Revolutionary America

Composition of State Assemblies in the 1780s					
State	Farmers	Large Landowners	Artisan	Professional	Merchant
Massachusetts	47	1	12	13	20
New York	37	8	10	18	19
Pennsylvania	37	2	22	15	20
South Carolina	14	32	3	15	13
Virginia	20	36	3	21	10

“The Constitution represents the subversion of the Revolution.” Assess the validity of the statement.

Document D → Source: *Speech on the Constitutional Convention on a Plan of Government*, Alexander Hamilton, 1787

All communities divide themselves into the few and the many. The first are the rich and well born, the other the mass of the people.... The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right. Give therefore to the first class a distinct, permanent share in the government. They will check the unsteadiness of the second, and as they cannot receive any advantage by change, they therefore will ever maintain good government.

Document E → Source: *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville, 1835.

The doctrine of self-interest properly understood does not inspire great sacrifices, but every day it prompts some small ones; by itself it cannot make a man virtuous, but its discipline shapes a lot of orderly, temperate, moderate, careful, and self-controlled citizens. If it does not lead the will directly to virtue, it established habits which unconsciously turn it that way.

Document F → Source: *Interpreting the Founding, 2nd Edition*, Alan Gibson, 2009.

“... the moderns [founders] developed a “new science of politics” that was predicated on radically different beliefs than classical republicanism and sought to achieve radically different ends. Whereas the ancients [Greeks, Romans] had believed with Aristotle that man is a political animal... the moderns envisioned a ...”state of nature” in which man in his essence was free, equal, independent and dominated by a concern for self-preservation and material comfort. Instead of trying to foster common belief among the citizenry and suppress their passions and interests, the ... [founders] ... concentrated on “what men do,” and accepted them “as they are.”

Document G → Source: *Antiquity Surpassed*, Paul Rahe, 1994.

[In two letters to Mercy Otis Warren in January and April 1776, John Adams writes]

There must be a positive Passion for the public good, the public Interest, Honour, Power, and Glory, established in the Minds of the People, or there can be no Republican Government, nor any real Liberty. And this public Passion must be Superiour to all private Passions. Men must be ready, they must pride themselves, and be happy to sacrifice their private Pleasures, Passions, and Interests, nay their private Friendships and dearest Connections, when they stand in Competition with the Rights of society.

[Rahe adds of Adams] He was afraid that the “rage for Profit and Commerce” so evident “among all ranks and Degrees of men even in America” would be fatal to liberty’s cause for he had learned from studying the ancients that “the spirit of Commerce... is incompatible with that purity of Heart, and Greatness of should which is necessary for an happy Republic.” If the Revolution was to succeed, “every Man must seriously set himself to root out his Passions, Prejudices, and Attachments, and to get the better of his private Interest. The only reputable Principle and Doctrine must be that all Things must give Way to the public.”