**EOCT Review**

**Chapter 3 – US Constitution**

* The Articles of Confederation created a weak central government— a “league of friendship” between the states. Each state had one vote in the Confederation Congress. There was no national executive or judicial branch. The Confederation Congress could not raise its own troops or tax citizens or states directly.
* The Confederation Congress passed the Land Ordinance (1785) and the Northwest Ordinance (1787). These ordinances (laws) established rules for the Northwest Territory. The Land Ordinance divided the territory into townships of 36 sections, with one section set aside to support public schools.
* The Northwest Ordinance established a procedure for the admission of territories as new states on an equal footing with existing states; it also prohibited slavery and guaranteed freedom of religion and the right to a trial by jury throughout the Northwest Territory.
* Because the national government was so weak, many Americans feared their country could not stand up to foreign nations.
* Daniel Shays led a rebellion of poor farmers and debtors in Massachusetts. Shays’ Rebellion was suppressed but there was no national army to stop it if it had spread. This led many Americans to call for a stronger national government.
* In May 1787, delegates gathered in Philadelphia to revise the Articles of Confederation. Instead, they set about writing a new constitution altogether. The delegates quickly agreed to create a national government with three separate branches: a legislature (Congress), an executive (the President) and a judiciary (the Supreme Court).
* Delegates disagreed over representation in Congress. Virginia, a large state, proposed two houses based on proportional representation— larger states would have more members. New Jersey, a small state, proposed each state have equal representation. The delegates finally adopted the “Great Compromise”: each state would have two Senators in the Senate and a number of members in the House of Representatives proportional to its size.
* Delegates from slave and non-slave states also disagreed on whether slaves should be counted in calculating a state’s representation. They reached the “Three-Fifths Compromise”: three-fifths of a state’s enslaved population would be counted for purposes of both representation and taxation.
* A key feature of the new Constitution was the principle of “limited government”—the new federal government could only exercise those powers given to it by the Constitution.
* Other key constitutional principles were federalism (division of power between the federal and state governments), the separation of powers (division of power between the 3 branches) and checks and balances (ability of one branch to stop others).
* Anti-Federalists opposed ratification (approval) of the Constitution because they feared the new government would threaten individual liberties. Anti-Federalists also objected that it contained no bill of rights.
* Federalists argued that a stronger government was needed and that constitutional principles like federalism and the separation of powers would prevent the new government from becoming too strong. Federalist arguments were best expressed in The Federalist Papers by Hamilton, Madison, and Jay.
* The first ten amendments, added in 1791, are known as the Bill of Rights. The First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech, of the press, of religion, and of assembly, and the right to petition the government.