Despo- US History-Honors

Fall 2018

**James Madison and the Federal Negative**

Please complete this handout as you read the assigned pages in James Madison, the “Federal Negative,” and the Making of the U.S. Constitution. The purpose of this handout is to help yu prepare to discuss the case. In advance of the class discussion, you should develop a command of the key facts of the case, but you should also be prepared to weigh in on larger questions—such as why the Articles of Confederation were adopted, why Madison and others ended up concluding that the Articles were inadequate, what were some fo the main ideas that guided the drafting of the Constitution, and whether you would have supported Madison’s proposal for a “federal negative” Ideally, therefore, you should try to focus on what seems most important in the case and why, rather than simply attempting to memorize facts in isolation. Answering the question below should should be helpful as you prepare. In addition, you should mark up the reading or take notes on SPOP.

**Pages 1-5**

1. How did the Articles of Confederation allocate powers to the states versus the federal government?

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| **States** | **Federal** |
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1. Why, in your view, did the Americans divide powers in this way under the Articles of Confederation?
2. Would you have voted to ratify the Articles of Confederation? Why or why not?

**Pages 6-8**

1. List two different approaches that states took when their citizens-in the face of an economic downturn-were having trouble repaying their debts in the mid-1780s.
2. Would you have supported Daniel Shays?

**Pages 8-11**

1. What was Madison’s main concern about majority rule? Was there evidence from the “critical period” that supported his concern?
2. Identify at least two changes Madison recommended to help remedy what he saw as “vices” in the new nation’s political system.
3. Do you agree with Madison’s strategy for addressing these vices? Give 1-2 reasons why or why not?

**Pages 11-15**

1. Do you think the Constitutional Convention was a response to the critical period? Why or why not?
2. If you had been a delegate at the Convention who worried about the various problems that emerged during the critical period, what powers would you have granted to the federal government under the new constitution, and what powers-if any-would you have denied to the states?

List any drawbacks that might result from following your recommendation in the previous question.

1. List 1-2 advantages of both an absolute Federal Negative and a limited Federal Negative

*Absolute Version Limited Version*

**Comprehensive Discussion Question:**

**If you had been a delegate at the convention in 1787, would you have supported the inclusion of a “federal negative” in the Constitution? If so, would you have favored the absolute version or the weaker version? If not, why not? Provide an answer that includes at least three reasons and support with reasoning.**