

Activity 2**Document-Based Activity**
Debating the Constitution**DOCUMENT 3**

Before You Read The following words in the document below may be new to you: *vested, perpetual, prerogative, pretence*. You may want to use a dictionary to look them up.

In the first place the office of President of the United States appears to me to be clothed with such powers as are dangerous. To be the fountain of all honors in the United States, commander in chief of the army, navy and militia, with the power of making treaties and of granting pardons, and to be vested with an authority to put a negative upon all laws, unless two thirds of both houses shall persist in enacting it, and put their names down upon calling the yeas and nays for that purpose, is in reality to be a KING as much *a King as the King of Great-Britain*, and a King too of the worst kind;—an elective King . . . The election of a King whether it be in America or Poland, will be a scene of horror and confusion; and I am perfectly serious when I declare that, as a friend to my country, I shall despair of any happiness in the United States until this office is either reduced to a lower pitch of power or made perpetual and hereditary.— When I say that our future President will be as much a king as the king of Great-Britain, I only ask of my readers to look into the constitution of that country, and then tell me what important prerogative the King of Great-Britain is entitled to, which does not also belong to the President during his continuance in office . . .

If we are not prepared to *receive a king*, let us call another convention to revise the proposed constitution, and form it anew on the principles of a confederacy of free republics; but by no means, under pretence of a republic, to lay the foundation for a military government, which is the worst of all tyrannies.

—An Old Whig

Essay V, November 1, 1787

Independent Gazetteer, Philadelphia

1. What flaw does the author find in the proposed Constitution? How does he support his argument?

2. What changes to the proposed system of government does the author suggest?
