

Activity 2**Document-Based Activity****Debating the Constitution****DOCUMENT 7**

Before You Read The following words in the document below may be new to you: *replete*, *confute*, *dispatch*. You may want to use a dictionary to look them up.

I congratulate you my fellow-citizens on the ratification of the new constitution. This event, replete with advantages, promises to repay us for the toils, dangers and waste of the late revolution. Merely to have established independence was but half the work assigned to this generation. Without an efficient government to protect our rights, in vain have our heroes spilt their blood in emancipating us from Great-Britain . . .

Had not the present constitution, or something equivalent been adopted, no one can compute the confusion and disorder which would probably have taken place from the jarring interests of such an ungoverned multitude. The articles of confederation were of too feeble a texture to bind us together, or to ward off threatened evils . . .

We have now in our view the fairest prospects of political happiness; the wisdom, energy and well poised ballances of our new system, promise to confute the assertions of those who maintain "that there are incurable evils inherent in every form of republican government." From the federal house of representatives we may expect a sympathy with the wants and wishes of the people—from the senate, wisdom, unity of design and a permanent system of national happiness.—from the executive, secrecy, vigor and dispatch. In short, our new constitution is a happy combination of the simple forms of government and as free from the inconveniences of each, as could be expected . . . It unites liberty with safety, and promises the enjoyment of all the rights of civil society, while it leads us up the steep ascent to national greatness.

—David Ramsay, delegate to the South Carolina ratifying convention
Speech in Charleston, South Carolina, June 5, 1788

1. What does Ramsay say would have happened had the Constitution not been adopted?

2. How does Ramsay assess the system of government created by the Constitution?
