

Ratifying the Constitution

Congress convened a Constitutional Convention in May 1787. Delegates from all the states except Rhode Island gathered to work on the new U.S. Constitution. The delegates were challenged with finding a balance between large and small states, between northern and southern interests, and between those who wanted a strong national government and those who were in favor of more states' rights.

The delegates approved the Constitution in September of 1787. It was then sent to Congress with an order that it be sent to the state legislatures for approval by their own conventions of delegates. Nine states needed to approve, or ratify, the Constitution before it would go into effect. After this total was reached, the government declared the Constitution in effect on March 4, 1789.

Use the table below and the map on the following page to complete the Map Activity and answer the questions that follow.

Ratification of the Constitution	
State	Date Ratified
Connecticut	January 9, 1788
Delaware	December 7, 1787
Georgia	January 2, 1788
Maryland	April 28, 1788
Massachusetts	February 6, 1788
New Hampshire	June 21, 1788
New Jersey	December 18, 1787
New York	July 26, 1788
North Carolina	November 21, 1789
Pennsylvania	December 12, 1787
Rhode Island	May 29, 1790
South Carolina	May 23, 1788
Virginia	June 25, 1788

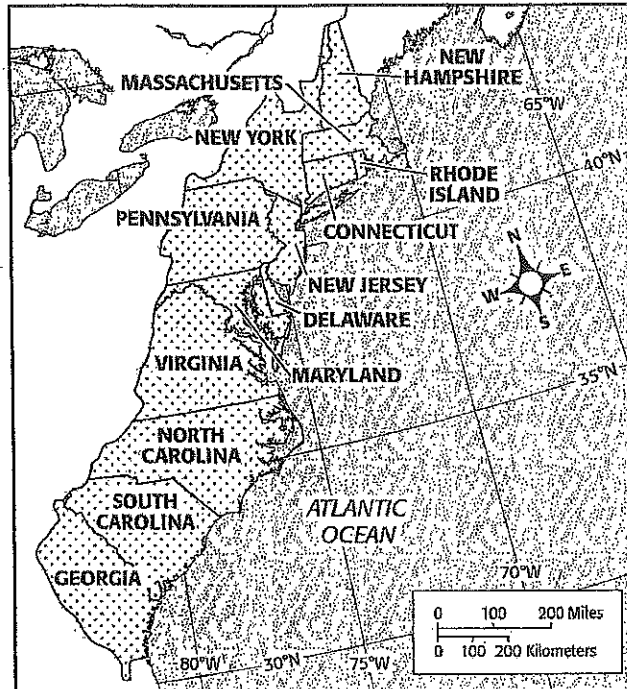
MAP ACTIVITY

1. In each state, write the year in which the state ratified the Constitution.
2. Using a different color pen, write a number in each state that indicates the order in which the states ratified the Constitution, "1" being first and "13" being last.
3. Create a key in which you indicate the significance of the years and numbers that you have written on the map.

Creating a New Government

History and Geography

Ratifying the Constitution



ANALYZING MAPS

- Place** Which was the first state to ratify the Constitution?

- Analyze** Which was the 9th state to ratify? Why was this significant?

- Place** Which states ratified the Constitution after it went into effect?

- Place** Which was the last state to ratify the Constitution?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

The delegates of some states ratified the Constitution unanimously the first time they voted on it. Other states also ratified on their first vote, but not unanimously. Still other states took several votes to ratify the Constitution. Pick a state and research the constitutional issues that concerned it during its ratification debates. Write a short essay in which you explain why the state ratified the Constitution as quickly or slowly as it did.