

# TODAY *in* GEORGIA HISTORY

## January 2, 1788: Georgia Ratifies the United States Constitution Daily Activity

### Introduction:

The daily activities created for each of the *Today in Georgia History* segments are designed to meet the Georgia Performance Standards for Reading Across the Curriculum, and Grade Eight: Georgia Studies. For each date, educators can choose from three optional activities differentiated for various levels of student ability. Each activity focuses on engaging the student in context specific vocabulary and improving the student's ability to communicate about historical topics.

One suggestion is to use the *Today in Georgia History* video segments and daily activities as a "bell ringer" at the beginning of each class period. Using the same activity daily provides consistency and structure for the students and may help teachers utilize the first 15-20 minutes of class more effectively.

### Optional Activities:

**Level 1:** Provide the students with the vocabulary list and have them use their textbook, a dictionary, or other teacher provided materials to define each term. After watching the video, have the students write a complete sentence for each of the vocabulary terms. Student created sentences should reflect the meaning of the word based on the context of the video segment. Have students share a sampling of sentences as a way to check for understanding.

**Level 2:** Provide the students with the vocabulary list for that day's segment before watching the video and have them guess the meaning of each word based on their previous knowledge. The teacher may choose to let the students work alone or in groups. After watching the video, have the students revise their definitions to better reflect the meaning of the words based on the context of the video. As a final step, have the students compare and contrast their definitions to their textbook, dictionary or other teacher provided materials definitions.

**Level 3:** Provide the students with the vocabulary list and have them use their textbook, a dictionary, or other teacher provided materials to define each term. After watching the video, have the students write a five sentence paragraph based on the provided writing prompts.

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## Vocabulary/Writing Prompts:

### Vocabulary Terms

Contentious  
Sacred  
Charter  
Controversy  
Delegates  
Revise  
Fractious  
Grudging  
Branches  
Ratify  
Unanimously

### Writing Prompts

1. Have you ever thought of the Constitution as controversial? Have you ever heard news stories discussing the constitutionality of a law or court decision? In a five-sentence paragraph discuss some of the ways the Constitution is still controversial.
2. What role did the states play in creating the Constitution? In a five-sentence paragraph summarize how the State of Georgia was involved in the ratification of the United States Constitution. Be sure to include the importance of Abraham Baldwin and William Few.
3. In a five-sentence paragraph explain two reasons why the Constitution was a document full of compromises.

## Related Georgia Performance Standards:

### Reading Across the Curriculum (Grades 6-12)

#### SSRC1 Students will enhance reading in all curriculum areas by:

- c. Building vocabulary knowledge
  - Demonstrate an understanding of contextual vocabulary in various subjects.
  - Use content vocabulary in writing and speaking.
  - Explore understanding of new words found in subject area texts.
- d. Establishing context
  - Explore life experiences related to subject area content.
  - Discuss in both writing and speaking how certain words are subject area related.
  - Determine strategies for finding content and contextual meaning for unknown words.

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**Grade 8 Georgia Studies**

**SS8H4 The student will describe the impact of events that led to the ratification of the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights.**

- a. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of both the Georgia Constitution of 1777 and the Articles of Confederation and explain how weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation led to a need to revise the Articles.
- b. Describe the role of Georgia at the Constitutional Convention of 1787; include the role of Abraham Baldwin and William Few, and reasons why Georgia ratified the new constitution.

**United States History, 9-12**

**SSUSH5 The student will explain specific events and key ideas that brought about the adoption and implementation of the United States Constitution.**

- a. Explain how weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation and Daniel Shays' Rebellion led to a call for a stronger central government.
- b. Evaluate the major arguments of the anti-Federalists and Federalists during the debate on ratification of the Constitution as put forth in *The Federalist* concerning form of government, factions, checks and balances, and the power of the executive, including the roles of Alexander Hamilton and James Madison.
- c. Explain the key features of the Constitution, specifically the Great Compromise, separation of powers (influence of Montesquieu), limited government, and the issue of slavery.
- d. Analyze how the Bill of Rights serves as a protector of individual and states' rights.
- e. Explain the importance of the Presidencies of George Washington and John Adams; include the Whiskey Rebellion, non-intervention in Europe, and the development of political parties (Alexander Hamilton).

**Grade 4 United States History to 1860**

**SS4H5 The student will analyze the challenges faced by the new nation.**

- a. Identify the weaknesses of the government established by the Articles of Confederation.
- b. Identify the major leaders of the Constitutional Convention (James Madison and Benjamin Franklin) and describe the major issues they debated, including the rights of states, the Great Compromise, and slavery.
- c. Identify the three branches of the U. S. government as outlined by the Constitution, describe what they do, how they relate to each other (checks and balances and separation of power), and how they relate to the states.

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- d. Identify and explain the rights in the Bill of Rights, describe how the Bill of Rights places limits on the power of government, and explain the reasons for its inclusion in the Constitution in 1791.
- e. Describe the causes and events of the War of 1812; include the burning of the Capitol and the White House.