1776 – 1791

Put the Events in Order

Name _____ Date _____

These 10 events from the Constitutional Convention timeline are out of order. Write a number from 1 to 10 in each box, from the earliest event (1) to the latest (10).

☐ **Declaration of Independence**
The Continental Congress declares independence from Britain on July 4, 1776, announcing that the thirteen colonies are now the United States — but leaving the question of how to actually govern the new nation entirely unresolved.

☐ **The Great Compromise**
The Convention deadlocks between large states (wanting representation based on population) and small states (wanting equal votes); Roger Sherman's Connecticut Compromise breaks the impasse by creating a two-chamber Congress — proportional House, equal Senate.

☐ **Constitutional Convention Opens**
Fifty-five delegates from twelve states (Rhode Island boycotts) gather at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, officially to revise the Articles — but within days they agree in secret to scrap the Articles entirely and write a new constitution.

☐ **Articles of Confederation Ratified**
The thirteen states ratify the Articles of Confederation — their first constitution — creating a Congress but giving it almost no real power: it cannot levy taxes or regulate trade, important laws need the votes of 9 of the 13 states, and changing the Articles needs all 13.

☐ **Ratification Debate and The Federalist Papers**
A fierce public debate erupts over ratification; Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay write 85 essays (The Federalist Papers) defending the Constitution; by June 1788, nine states have ratified, but Virginia and New York ratify only after recommending amendments, and Federalists pledge to add a bill of rights.

☐ **Shays' Rebellion**
Armed farmers in Massachusetts, crushed by debt and taxes after the Revolutionary War, rebel against the state government; the national government under the Articles can ask the states for soldiers but has no money to pay them, and Massachusetts ends the uprising with militia paid for by Boston merchants, exposing the complete helplessness of the existing system.

☐ **Bill of Rights Ratified**
The first ten amendments to the Constitution — the Bill of Rights — are ratified on December 15, 1791, guaranteeing freedom of speech, religion, and the press; the right to a fair trial; and protections against government overreach.

☐ **Constitution Signed and Sent to States**
The Convention produces a finished Constitution on September 17, 1787; thirty-nine of the fifty-five delegates sign it; it is sent to the states, where nine of thirteen must ratify it to take effect.

☐ **The Three-Fifths Compromise**
Northern and Southern delegates clash over whether enslaved people count for representation; they agree to count three of every five enslaved people when dividing House seats and direct taxes among the states.

☐ **First Government Begins**
George Washington is inaugurated as the first President on April 30, 1789; the first Congress meets; the new government begins to function under the Constitution for the first time.

1776 – 1791

Put the Events in Order: Answer Key

1776 — 1. Declaration of Independence

1781 — 2. Articles of Confederation Ratified

1786–87 — 3. Shays' Rebellion

May 1787 — 4. Constitutional Convention Opens

July 1787 — 5. The Great Compromise

1787 — 6. The Three-Fifths Compromise

September 1787 — 7. Constitution Signed and Sent to States

1787–88 — 8. Ratification Debate and The Federalist Papers

1789 — 9. First Government Begins

1791 — 10. Bill of Rights Ratified