American history and government textbooks, national education standards, and the making of the United States Constitution

Ray J. Curtis
The University of Montana
Permission is granted by the author to reproduce this material in its entirety, provided that this material is used for scholarly purposes and is properly cited in published works and reports.

** Please check "Yes" or "No" and provide signature **

Yes, I grant permission  
No, I do not grant permission

Author's Signature

Date 8/27/98

Any copying for commercial purposes or financial gain may be undertaken only with the author's explicit consent.
AMERICAN HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT TEXTBOOKS,
NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS,
AND
THE MAKING OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

By
Ray J. Curtis
B.A. The University of Montana, 1984
presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Interdisciplinary Studies
The University of Montana
1998

Approved by:

[Signatures]
Co-Chairperson

[Signatures]
Co-Chairperson

Dean, Graduate School

Date
8-27-98
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One: The Failure of High School Government and History Textbooks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship on the Framers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship and Education in a Democracy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Standards to Protect American Democracy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Texts</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remaining Thesis Chapters</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two: New Thoughts on the Framers</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks Ignore Historical Studies</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Delegates</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Philadelphia Convention</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ratification Campaign</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Americans Should Know</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three: National Education Standards</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of History is Important</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calls to Improve What Americans Know About Our History</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Standards Published</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four: Evaluating and Combining Textbook Standards</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Texts are Needed</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Standards to Improve Textbooks</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Standards Based Textbook Assessment Tool</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five: Using Standards to Evaluate Current High School Texts</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selecting Textbooks for this Study</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter One:
The Failure of High School Government and History Textbooks

Current high school government and history textbooks fail to help American students to understand the political process used to create the United States Constitution and the historical significance, even though national education standards mandate these learning outcomes. This is a significant problem because the mischaracterization and oversimplification of the Founding Fathers' motives by texts can affect the operation of American democracy and alter how Americans view politics and politicians today. Textbooks omit vital work by respected constitutional scholars, and hence students do not have access to some essential historical scholarship produced about our democracy and the origin of the United States Constitution.

Scholarship on the Framers

Students in American high school government and history classes do not learn that there exists a "wide range of viewpoints on the roles, motivations, and aspirations of the Founding Fathers of the Constitution" (Levy xxxiv). "To put it plainly," in Civitas the Center for Civic Education (CCE) maintains, "we are becoming civically illiterate as a nation" (xxv). Americans are neither participants in or even aware of the debate started in 1913 by Charles Beard over the economic motives of the Framers. Students don't encounter the
people who devote their lives to the study of the creation of the Constitution such as Beard, Gordon S. Wood, John P. Roche, Leonard W. Levy, and Jack N. Rakove. Textbooks don't encourage students to ask the questions about the Constitution's founders that these scholars ask: "Were its framers enlightened, disinterested statesmen seeking to rescue a nation drifting toward anarchy, or were they conspiratorial representatives of a rising financial and industrial capitalism? [Was the] creation of the Constitution fought between men of nationalist principles and states' rights or was it a clash between an aristocratic elite and the localist forces of a democratic majoritarianism?" (Levy back cover). Most texts used by high school students in government and history classes fail to raise these questions, let alone attempt to answer them.

Most scholars believe along with John P. Roche that the Framers were "first and foremost, superb democratic politicians, who sought to further their personal agendas as well as advance the interests of a fledgling nation according to the rules of the game" (Levy 176). The Framers, while inarguably great, were nevertheless men, subject to impulses and opinions which Madison said were natural to all men. Especially important to us, these men "fixed the terms for the future discussion of American politics," according to noted historian Gordon S. Wood (Creation 562).

Of course high school students do not need to know Bruce A. Ackerman's theory of dualism nor do they need to know every historical theory concerning the creation of the Constitution. Indeed, Forrest McDonald warns in his book Novus Ordo Seclorum that "Fashions in historical interpretations come and go" (McDonald vii).
But standards demand that students be familiar with the significant theories embraced by eminent historical scholars such as Beard, Wood, and Roche, because as citizens of a democracy they are to be entrusted with the operation of their own government.

American students are presently given a lopsided view of their own history because history and government textbooks ignore this historical scholarship. Thus, today's politicians pale in comparison when we read of the Framers as an assembly of demigods, gathered to selflessly do what was best for the nation. Too often, now, politics are viewed negatively, in part because it appears the Framers could not have stooped to manipulating the public to pass their agenda. Valid information about the founding is critical to a student's valid understanding of politics today.

Citizenship and Education in a Democracy

Encouraged by the growing support for better history in the schools, the National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS) boldly asserted that "[few] things are more important to a democratic society than this: knowledge of history is the precondition of political intelligence" (1). It is not controversial to believe that citizens to be effective need to understand their past. Historian Dixon Wecter warns that, "Ignorance about what happened in our town, state, region and country...is bad citizenship in any policy-making democracy...but today, when we find ourselves the foremost champion of democracy in times of unprecedented physical power,
such ignorance is not only shameful but dangerous" (American Heritage 106-7).

Students may not have been taught what Gordon Craig calls "critical history", the "part of history relevant to one's current problems," because there is now much evidence that Americans are drifting away from their civic duties (NCHS 1). Professor Jean Bethke Elshtain from the University of Chicago cites study after study which shows that citizens are not participating in politics. Perhaps more important than the statistics, which show Americans' failure to be involved in the running of their democracy, is the reason why. Elshtain believes that non participation is due to the fact that citizens have not been properly educated about politics throughout America's history (3). Accurate information concerning the political activity and political philosophies surrounding the founding of our nation is critical to contemporary citizens' understanding of today's politics. The Center for Civic Education thinks that "effective and responsible participation requires the acquisition of a body of knowledge" about our past (Nat. Stand. 1). Consequently, without this knowledge a truly effective democracy can not exist.

The mythology surrounding the creation of our democracy by the Founding Fathers contributes to the notion that good leaders are somehow apolitical. If citizens had an improved understanding of the Framer's motives, and the means they used to create a new government, the strong mistrust contemporary Americans feel towards politics might be alleviated. Citizens might then relieve today's politicians of the need to live up to the pristine ideals of their canonized predecessors, who utilized sometimes questionable means
to achieve a noble end. Then, too, American citizens might take their civic duties seriously and engage in their democracy.

In the eyes of the CCE, schools bear a responsibility for the development of civic competence: "formal instruction in civics and government should provide students with a basic understanding of civic life, politics and government" (Nat. Stand. 1). A well known Thomas Jefferson quotation is used in CCE's preface of National Standards for Civics and Government to show that in a democracy education has a civic mission: "if we think them [citizens] not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion" (v). The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) concurs, maintaining that "as a people, then, our first priority, our first public policy goal, must be to ensure our survival as a free nation through the development of students who can assume the office of citizen" (xix).

Making Standards to Protect American Democracy

In 1983 a national panel, brought together by the U.S. Department of Education to assess the state of American education, warned in its report, A Nation at Risk, that American education was woefully lacking in many areas, including social studies, and that steps had to be taken to protect our nation. The Nation at Risk panel recommended the adoption of "more rigorous and measurable standards and higher expectations for academic performance" (12). National standards have since been established by organizations
hoping to insure that students receive the education necessary for a
democratic society to survive and to help correct inadequacies in the
social studies education of American students. The creation of
national standards by the NCSS, CCE, and NCHS provide more rigorous
learning goals than what we have in the past expected students to
achieve. These new standards require that students study the
Framers in depth: their ideas, failures, opponents, and political
tactics. They ask students to be historians and question what
happened in 1787.

Improving Texts

The "Nation at Risk" panel recognized textbooks' role in
contributing to inadequacies in the education of American students
and recommended that "Textbooks be upgraded and updated to
assure more rigorous content" as called for in national standards (16).
Sadly, fifteen years later, high school government and history texts
fail to comply with the knowledge standards concerning the political
process used to create the United States Constitution and its historical
significance. Students do not learn by reading a typical high school
textbook that, "For nearly two centuries, scholars have argued over
the framing of the U.S. Constitution" (Levy xxxiii). Catherine Drinker
Bowen writes in the introduction to her book, Miracle in Philadelphia,
"Considering the immense amount of literature on the subject, it is
surprising how little the average American knows about the making
of our Constitution. He confuses the Federal Convention with the
Confederation Congress, sitting in New York at the same time. He
even confuses the Constitution with the first ten amendments -- the Bill of Rights" (Bowen xiii).

Kenneth Davis, best-selling author of Don't Know Much About History, writes, "much of what we remember about our history is either mistaken or fabricated." The reason for the shortcomings is simple. "Most of us learned history from textbooks that served up the past as if it were a Hollywood costume drama. In schoolbooks...the warts on our Founding Fathers' noses were neatly retouched" (Davis xi-xii). Textbooks recount events, but they fail to explain the course of those events and to analyze relationships among the various forces that influenced the ways events unfolded (NCHS 64).

Historian Dixon Wecter said, "The American record is not flawless....But on the whole, from the Founding Fathers on, the American panorama is one we need not blush to own, one in which we may often take hearty pride." It is a history good citizens need to know to understand and improve their world. With America's majority government, we see the importance of self-knowledge for those expected to do the thinking and voting. But, Wecter complained, "A great many school texts are pretty repulsive.... After diligently harvesting the grain of fact, too few investigators seem to have time left for threshing out the chaff or milling the flour." As a result, texts continue to present history as "a succession of facts marching straight to a settled outcome" (American Heritage 40-41). Understanding history goes beyond a simple description of events, but that is how textbooks portray the framing of the United States Constitution. Texts overlook the politics and political tactics that
historical research demonstrates the Framers employed to pass the new Constitution.

While the source of a student's knowledge comes from more than textbooks, textbooks typically lay the foundation that teachers build upon. Before a United States Department of Education task force published *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 and standards in social studies were created, textbooks set curriculum standards. The Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory (McRel) recently reported that "in the past, it is understood, teachers relied heavily upon textbooks to determine what is important to teach in each discipline...so much so that textbook manufacturers have become the defacto standard-setting group for the content area"(1). Not much has changed; textbook publishers today provide scope and sequence outlines, readings, activities, audio-visual aids and lesson plans for teachers to follow.

If textbooks still set curriculum for classroom teachers, it is critical that textbooks be as good as possible. What high school history and government textbooks tell students about the framing of Constitution is precisely what the majority believe happened. James Loewen, author of *Lies My Teachers Told Me*, has determined that most students will have but one opportunity to learn what went into making the United States Constitution. Lowen claims that five-sixths of students will never take another course in history after high school. In other words, five-sixths of students will not know that the Framers were skilled politicians.

What texts fail to tell students is that the politics we so disdain are as old as our nation itself, starting with these men who created
and adopted the United States Constitution. If texts used national standards and went beyond a one-dimensional description of the making of the Constitution, teachers' and students' understanding of the founding period would be less superficial. Students would not be surprised to know that politics, what the CCE standards defines as "the process by which a group of people with varying opinions and/or interests seek power to influence," were prevalent during the Constitutional period (CCE 90). High school history and government textbooks rarely mention the process of conniving, compromising, contriving and manipulation used to establish a new form of government for the United States. If textbooks did these things then students might realize that politicians today are not unlike the Framers who used politics to advance not only the best interests of the fledgling nation, but also their various personal agendas. Textbooks must be upgraded to match the national standards so that students may understand the complexities of political activity during the Constitutional Era on up to contemporary times.

Remaining Thesis Chapters

In the next chapter I will examine to what degree textbooks are one of the causes of a lopsided view of the American Founding Fathers by reviewing current scholarship on the framing of the Constitution. The NCSS, CCE, and NCHS all believe that standards should be "intellectually demanding and based upon the best historical scholarship." The second chapter is a review of current studies on the framing of the Constitution that ought to be utilized by
the makers of standards and eventually textbooks too. Chapter two relies on the perspectives of many different historical scholars, such as Jack Rakove, Leonard W. Levy, Charles Beard, John P. Roche, and Gordon Wood. The principal conclusion for this analysis is that the delegates "were above and foremost astute politicians" (Levy176).

Chapter three starts with a description of the movement to improve civic education since *A Nation at Risk* was published. Reports by the Bradley Commission, William Bennnett, The National Governors' Association, the Congress of the National Council on Education, and the commissions which have published standards have all offered explanations why a rigorous and accurate understanding of history is critical. *Civitas*, published by the CCE, actually describes in detail what every American citizen ought to learn while in school. These publications all agree with the National Council for the Social Studies that "our first priority, our first public policy goal, must be to ensure our survival as a free nation through the development of students who can assume the office of citizen."

Chapter three will also look at the various sets of standards made to replace the less rigorous benchmarks of past history and government texts. Standards published by the National Council for the Social Studies, the National Center for History in the Schools, and the Center for Civic Education are reviewed here. A publication by the Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory is important too, since it sought to bring all these standards together to make them more practical to use, just as I hope to do.

In chapter four I bring together the educational standards which relate to the framing of the U.S. Constitution to make an
assessment tool. Standard makers are adamant that text books ought to follow the guidelines they establish to improve the education of American students. I used these standards to evaluate how well current high school American history and government textbooks help students gain an accurate understanding of the founding period. It was difficult to take many different standards and reduce them to a manageable, efficient format, so I explain in chapter four some of the considerations I used to retain the necessary objectivity.

In the fifth chapter I use standards to evaluate what current high school textbooks say regarding the constitutional era. After looking at the recent scholarship on the framing of the Constitution and new national standards and building a textbook assessment tool from the standards, I analyze high school history and government textbooks to see if they meet the national standards. I use eleven of the most current and widely-used secondary textbooks for American government and history from eight major publishers. How I chose and evaluated the texts is described in this chapter. My conclusions as to whether the texts meet national standards conclude this chapter.

In chapter six, as a result of the discrepancy between standards and the textbooks, I create my own version of what a high school textbook should include about the delegates to the Constitutional Convention and ratification. The historical scholarship, the national standards, and textbook accounts I have described in earlier chapters will be incorporated in my "more perfect" description of the creation of the United States Constitution.
To conclude I end with some observations and suggestions I have formed while writing my thesis. For example, although I have concentrated upon the role high school textbooks play in a student's understanding of the Framers and American politics, I realize it is not just textbooks which bear the blame for poor student performance. There are many other factors: lack of time and public commitment, inadequate preparation of teachers and certification standards, low teacher motivation, and questionable pedagogy. Textbooks, then, are but one of many resources which might be improved.
Chapter Two:
New Thoughts on the Framers

Jack Rakove, in his book *Original Meanings*, wrote that historical research should be easy to apply to the task of writing the story of the Constitution. Yet in practice, textbooks have added little from the numerous histories of the Constitution to bolster students understanding of the Constitution (Rakove 13). There are "certain stock themes" in most textbook accounts of the Constitution. Examples include the central actors Madison, Washington, Franklin, Sherman; the climactic "great compromise," and Franklin's conclusion that it was a rising, not a setting sun behind Washington's chair. To historians such as Rakove, such drama and details are less important than the intellectual and political issues the delegates sought to resolve. Rakove would agree that the historical research I describe in this chapter should be incorporated into textbooks just as they have become the basis for national education standards. Questions about the making of the Constitution matter because they help readers understand the significance of part of American History (Rakove 14).

Textbooks Ignore Historical Studies

Textbooks presently teach little about the politics behind the framing of the United States Constitution. Leonard W. Levy, in his collection, *Essays on the Making of the Constitution*, brings together a wide range of viewpoints on the roles, motivations, and aspirations of the Founding Fathers that high school textbooks do not consider. One
of the most significant is Charles Beard's essay, published in 1913, in which he argued that the Constitution was the product of economic interests rather than of altruistic motives. *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* created significant scholarly debate since its publishing, yet most textbooks do not mention this scholarship.

When most high school students read textbook accounts of the creation of the United States Constitution, they study only the basic outline of events: The Articles of Confederation were too weak, 55 young and educated delegates attended the convention, the delegates held public offices, Patrick Henry "smelt a rat," rifts occurred between large and small states as well as between slave and free states, there were compromises, and the Federalist papers were written to win ratification. Students do not realize that for nearly two centuries, scholars who study the events of 1787 have wondered:

> Were its framers enlightened, disinterested statesmen seeking to rescue a nation drifting toward anarchy, or were they conspiratorial representatives of a rising financial and industrial capitalism? Some believed that the political conflict surrounding the creation of the Constitution was fought between men of national principles and advocates of states' rights; others upheld that it was a clash between an aristocratic elite and the loyalist forces of democratic majoritarianism (Levy back cover).

Using today's textbooks, students do not read analysis but rather thin narratives of historical events. If they read history they might discover that the men who wrote the Constitution and the men who opposed it were not only political "giants" but also "passionately
selfish and self-interested men" (Adair 25). High school students are not given the perspective that James Madison presented in *Federalist 51*: men are not angels. Students should discover that the Framers were, what John P. Roche claimed, "first and foremost superb democratic politicians" (Levy 176). They plotted to call a convention in Philadelphia; then once convention delegates met they again set the stage for achieving their goals; and in the midst of ratification debates they changed their strategy in order to win over the very class of society they distrusted. Gordon Wood declared, "the founders gave future Americans more than a new Constitution. They passed on ideals of standard political behavior" (Beeman 109).

The Framers Call for a Convention

Students can begin to learn what historians have discovered about the Framers political skills by reading that the Constitutionalists conspired to use a national convention to create a stronger national government. James Madison, in particular, knew obstacles had to be overcome. For some time he had plotted to change the national government which he feared was controlled by rural interests in the states (Rakove 39). Previous meetings to change the Articles were not well attended and therefore ineffective. As Madison himself realized, his ideas of reform struck "deeply at the old Confederation" (Wood *Creation* 473). He and other nationalists had to convince others that change was necessary.

Nationalists abandoned the strategy of gradual reform and exaggerated a crisis, for example, their warnings that the "situation is
critical and dangerous" (Levy 183). Benjamin Rush said publicly that the American people were on the verge of "degenerating into savages or devouring each other like beasts of prey." Even the typically sober and restrained George Washington spoke of the "astonishing changes a few years are capable of producing...to be so fallen! So lost! It is really mortifying" (Beeman 71). "Actually, the country faced no such emergency," concluded constitutional scholar Jackson Turner Main (Beeman 71). The sense of crisis was, in Main's words, "conjured up" by the Federalists. Historian John P. Roche, agreed with his colleague Merrill Jensen, whom he said, "seems to be quite sound in his view that for most Americans, engaged as they were in self-sustaining agriculture, the 'Critical Period' was not particularly critical" (Levy 183-184).

When Alexander Hamilton, a Federalist leader, proposed a convention in Philadelphia to take one more shot at the Articles, Federalists could hardly be stopped. Before the Continental Congress could act, Virginia had voted unanimously to approve the Annapolis recommendation for another convention and had already appointed an impressive delegation. Congress merely authorized states to attend. John P. Roche maintains, "the great achievement of the Constitutionalists was their ultimate success in convincing representatives....that change was imperative" (Levy 184). In this newest attempt to change the Articles, the Constitutionalists managed to get every state but Rhode Island to appoint delegates. When the results were in, "it appeared [Nationalists] dominated the delegations" (Levy 185-6).
Perhaps because of overconfidence generated by the failure of all previous efforts to alter the Articles, the opposition did not strongly oppose Hamilton's call for another convention (Levy 184). Reformers got the jump on the opposition at the outset with the demand for the Convention. Their "opponents were caught in an old political trap: they were not being asked to approve any specific program of reform, but only to endorse a meeting to discuss and recommend needed reform....the Constitutionals could go to the people with a persuasive argument for 'fair play'-"How can you condemn reform before you know precisely what is involved?"
(Levy 185).

The Delegates

The men who intended to strengthen national government had some advantages. They were the towering intellectuals of the time: men like James Madison (who would come to be known as the father of the Constitution), Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and, despite their absences abroad, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. They were a "small group of political leaders with a continental vision" who had "energy and youth in their leadership" (Levy 184). Rakove believes that the men who called for the Philadelphia convention were "statesmen who knew what they wanted and how to get it" (33). Their political maneuvering began early with the call for a convention in Philadelphia and did not end until New York had ratified.
Nationalists also knew a convention could not be successful without the attendance of the most prominent man in America, George Washington. He was so well admired that some of his followers earlier had urged him to declare himself King of America. Washington declined then, and he again hesitated when asked to attend the Philadelphia convention. Madison coaxed and urged him in a letter to participate. Reluctantly, Washington agreed to make the trip to Philadelphia.

Madison in particular took the offensive before the convention began to keep the opposition on the defensive. The Virginian prepared by pouring over two trunks of books Thomas Jefferson sent to him from France. But, Wood writes, Madison didn't pay as much attention to the books as he did to a strategy to impose a strong central government (Creation 532). "As much as his strategy for the Convention supposed that reason and justice would prevail, he could not escape regarding the grand meeting in Philadelphia in political terms" (Rakove 56). Madison intended to seize the initiative and "take every opportunity to lay his new theory of republican government before the Convention" (Rakove 61).

While many people from various backgrounds believed that the Articles of Confederation needed amendment, few thought that the document needed to be thrown out. It seemed to many that the problems with the Articles of Confederation could be fixed on a piecemeal basis. Meeting to "revise" the Articles of Confederation was an excuse to change radically a form of government which seemed too democratic and decentralized to the Federalists (Wood Creation 471). "The opposition awoke too late to the dangers that confronted
them in 1787" (Levy 186). They didn't realize the political advantages the Constitutionalists had amassed.

The Philadelphia Convention

The convention was scheduled to begin May 14, 1787, and because most delegates were slow in arriving in Philadelphia the start was delayed until a quorum was reached on May 25. Students rarely read that this bothered Washington, but Madison took advantage of the opportunity and met with other delegates two to three hours a day prior to the May 25 start. At these meetings, he had the opportunity "to form a proper correspondence of sentiment" (Rakove 59).

Historian John P. Roche writes that "once business got under way, the framework of discussion was established on Madison's terms. There was no interminable argument over agenda; instead the delegates took the Virginia resolutions as their point of departure" (Levy 186). Roche also believes that delegates were a "remarkably homogeneous body" (Levy 187). The differences of opinion which emerged were not ideological; they were structural. States rights opponents, such as Robert Yates and John Lansing, left the Convention. "The hard core of delegates accepted a grinding regimen throughout the attrition of a Philadelphia summer precisely because they shared the Constitutionalist goal" (Levy 187).

When disagreements did occur they were settled for the most part with compromise and acts of statesmanship, according to Rakove (92-3). The famous debates over representation and commerce are
examples of this. The bargains over slavery, on the other hand, Rakove wrote, were "the fruits of expediency. It was a sacrifice to attain a tangible political end" (93).

Some delegates feared that they were overstepping the bounds set by Congress. "When William Patterson argued on June 16 that the Convention could not 'discuss and propose' amendments that would violate the Articles in substance and form, Edmund Randolph replied that it could ignore its nominal mandate because 'our business consists in recommending a system of government, not to make it,' while James Wilson observed that he felt completely 'at liberty to propose anything' because he had the power 'to conclude nothing'" (Rakove 102).

Before the convention ended, the framers again maneuvered to give their cause many advantages during the ratification process. First, they managed "to hammer out a document that the great majority of them could sign." (Levy 254-5) When it came to signing, "a neat phrase introduced by Benjamin Franklin (but devised by Governor Morris) made their decision sound unanimous" (Levy 208). The motion by Franklin, according to Bowen, was a "calculated trick of language" to fool dissenters by making it appear that states, rather than individual delegates, unanimously approved (256-7). Not every delegate signed, but every state in attendance appeared to be in agreement.

Before signing the Constitution himself, Franklin expressed his own concerns about the Constitution. Then he attempted to disarm those delegates in the opposition, who would soon be referred to as Anti-federalists, by claiming a second constitutional convention could
not conceive a better document. Further, he claimed that the Constitution, despite its faults, would "astonish our enemies, who are waiting with confidence to hear that our councils are confounded" (Bowen 255). He concluded with a plea to delegates not to publicly voice their objections and undermine not only the institution, but also the young nation. If delegates did not appear united, Franklin warned, foreign nations would be waiting to watch the nation fall apart.

Built into the Constitution were the rules for ratification, which were written by the Federalists. Under the Articles of Confederation, amendments required unanimous approval by the thirteen states, a task which proved impossible during the years the Articles were in effect. Realistically, the Framers knew that they could not expect every state to agree. Rhode Island did not even attend, and a few other states would be difficult to convince. On August 13, a committee proposal was debated which left a blank for the number of states which should be required for ratification. Delegate Pierce Butler, Brown tells us, cleverly suggested nine, telling his colleagues they were voting for safety and order rather than an innovative and dangerous new government (Bowen 227).

The Federalists set the terms of ratification in such a way as to give the maximum advantage to energy and purpose. Only nine states had to ratify before the Constitution would go into effect. Not only would this rule out the possibility of one or two states holding up the entire effort, but it meant that the Confederation would be automatically destroyed before...difficult battles in New York and Virginia had to be faced (Levy 255).
The managers of the ratification campaign believed that several states could be counted on to ratify immediately, and, according to Elkins and McKitrick, a snowball effect would then help gather support for the document. Serious fighting would take place in only two or three states (Levy 255).

The notion of using state conventions rather than state legislatures for ratification was discussed by convention delegates. For several reasons, they decided that ratification by legislatures would doom the Constitution. Randolph pointed out that state legislatures were likely to vote against ratification, not wanting to lose their power to a new central government (Bowen 228). Delegates voted to "circumvent the vested interests of the legislatures and the ruling coteries that frequented the stated capitals" (Levy 255) and staged state ratification conventions which would be attended by delegates elected solely for that purpose. The state convention format devised by the Federalists enabled men who would not normally take part in state politics to run, and if these newly elected delegates harbored Anti-federalist sentiments, there was still the chance the Constitutionalists could convince them otherwise when the convention met (Levy 255-56).

The Framers' maneuvering did not go unnoticed. The Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer reported that the Federalists had moved quickly: "The elections of the members of the state convention were moreover made in the first moments of blind enthusiasm when every article was practiced to prejudice the people against those who had the enlightened patriotism to oppose this system of tyranny"
(Kaminski 16: 190). In the end, many delegates were indeed elected to state conventions to vote for a new government.

The Framers' decisions were political decisions based upon strong beliefs. They felt strongly that state legislatures should not be in a position to vote on a Constitution that would supersede their own power. The potential conflict of interest was clear. "I consider," said Madison, "the difference between a system founded on legislatures only, and one founded on the people, to be the true difference between a league or treaty and a constitution" (Bowen 229).

The Ratification Campaign

In almost every history and government textbook students can read the U.S. Constitution was signed in Philadelphia on September 17, 1787 by only 38 men. In secrecy, energetic delegates had met behind four walls to create a radically new government for the country. Students read very little about scholarship concerning the ratification debates held in the open throughout the land.

If the young Framers of the proposed U.S. Constitution wanted their four months of work in the sweltering summer of 1787 to become reality for the fledgling nation, they had to somehow gather wide support from the populace, support they initially did not have. On the other side of the debate, the Anti-federalists, who considered themselves to be the true Federalists, intended to hang onto the popular support they enjoyed. The analysis of scholars shows Anti-federalists would be outdone by the momentum and formidable political skills of the resourceful Framers. Elkins and McKitrick state
in their essay, *Youth and the Continental Vision*. "Though it would be wrong to think of the Constitution as something that had to be carried off in the face of deep and basic opposition, it certainly required a series of brilliant maneuvers" (Levy 246).

Many historians agree that the Framers were "masterful professionals who pursued the task of radically reconstructing the American constitutional system according to the rules of the game" (Levy 176). Historian Charles Warren concluded in his book, *Making of the Constitution*, "that a line of division between Anti-federalists and Federalists should be noted which has been little commented upon - the line of age" (Levy 214). Elkins and McKitrick expanded Warren's suggestion by associating energy, will, a desire for change, and a continental outlook with youth. Added to youth and energy the Federalists had vast political talent. Their "preemptive skill made their issue 'The Issue.' Their communications network was far superior to anything on the opposition side. [They] kept the locally oriented opposition permanently on the defensive" (Levy 184).

Wills says in his introduction to *The Federalist Papers* that a:

massive effort at persuasion was incumbent on those presenting such a radical plan. Those who finished the draft in Philadelphia could not leave for home with any sense their work was over. They must now mount a propaganda campaign in every state, conscious that their opponents would be doing the same thing (vi).

The effort would include all segments of society and therefore be more democratic than anything the young country had yet seen.
Once the Constitution was signed, Madison became "the campaign manager in ratification," according to Roche, and "his first task was to get the Congress in New York to light its own funeral pyre by approving amendments to the Articles and sending them on" (Levy 288). Anti-federalists demanded a second convention to consider possible changes. Madison refused to compromise and told Congress to choose between national salvation or a nation without a promising future. Congress did not approve "the amendments" (the new constitution), but they did give Madison the second best thing, a unanimous resolution to pass the Constitution on to the states to take action (Levy 207).

The Federalists used all means available to sway and win over the public's opinion. The reason they were successful is because, much like influential politicians of today, they managed to involve a wide spectrum of people, use many forms of media to pass on their message, and generate both intellectual and emotional support. They used clear messages which all levels of society could understand and agree with. "To justify ...their new government they were pressed to write both originally and extensively about politics, using a wide variety of 18th century instruments: newspapers, pamphlets, state papers, poetry, plays and of course, letters" (Wood Leadership 65). Federalist leaders used parades and rallies. Symbolism and figures, which people knew and trusted, such as George Washington, the number thirteen (to represent the thirteen states), and even God were used. They addressed as many people as they could, and they did it over and over again to sell the Constitution to the masses.
While Federalists and Anti-federalists maneuvered, citizens eagerly waited for information. Amidst steadily growing rumors about conflicts and compromises, the delegates' agreement that their discussions would be private had caused, "a great excitement in the public mind in many localities" (Kammen 86). The media played an integral role in spreading word of the new document: "Newspapers everywhere published the Constitution as they lay hands on it" (Bowen 267). The Pennsylvania Packet published the entire Constitution two days after signatures were applied. This document was not the revision or a few amendments to the Articles of Confederation that readers had expected. Instead, the proposed Constitution would change the nation's government radically and thus the lives of its citizens. People were eager to read the document for themselves and decide what position to take.

Since most citizens had not yet seen the Constitution or heard it discussed, they could not very well be Constitutionalists. "The Anti-federalists at this early stage were thought to have numbers on their side almost overwhelmingly" (Bowen 271). If an enfranchised voter was not apathetic about the Constitution as many were, they tended to oppose it (Roll 21). Thomas Rodney, a leading Anti-federalist from Delaware, wrote in his journal that "the better sort ...seem much afraid of the Federal Constitution in its present form without a Bill of Rights,...the inferior class are totally against it" (Cornell 1149).

Building on their early support, the opposition to the Constitution rushed to provide their own "explanation" of its content. Elbridge Gerry and Edmund Randolph published their objections. On
October 4 the Pennsylvania Packet published delegate George Mason's long list of criticisms (Bowen 268).

Wood claims that the Anti-federalists saw the Federalists as "groups of interested men trying to foist an aristocracy on to republican America and they said so, just as Federalists had feared, in pamphlets, newspapers, and the debates in ratifying conventions" (Beeman 91). The most thoughtful and comprehensive arguments against the newly drafted Constitution are attributed to Richard Henry Lee and Robert Yates in the "letters of the Federal Farmer" and the "Essays of Brutus," respectively. These writers covered major Constitutional questions, but they failed to get the attention of the larger population. Because Lee and Yates' believed, "We are not competing for the characters of men," (Storing 32) and "what ought to count most in political debate is what is said" (Storing 25), many Americans did not get their message. Anti-federalist essays may have represented the Constitution's opposition taking the initiative, but they were not enough to capture the public's interest. The Anti-federalist effort did not seek out support with the energy of the Federalists. Elkins and McKitrick accurately observed that, "with no program, no really viable commitments, and little purposeful organization, the Anti-federalist somehow always managed to move too late and with too little. They would sit and watch their great stronghold...snatched away from them" (Levy 252).

While their arguments were not embraced by the masses, the "Federal farmer" and Brutus" did receive the attention of Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay, authors of the famous Federalist papers (Dry 10). Published in October 1787, the Federalist
papers, served as the Constitutionalists' counter arguments. They were also written to gain support for ratification in New York, a state believed to have the strongest opposition. According to Wills, "Hamilton decided a propaganda effort more intense and ambitious than any other would be needed to sway the voters of New York" (ix). Hamilton intended to publish Federalist arguments four times a week in newspapers, with Madison and Jay's assistance. In all, 85 essays were published in New York stating the Federalists' position, and emphasizing that this was a Constitution for the people.

A significant problem with the Constitution written in Philadelphia, the Anti-federalists insisted, was that it was too complicated for the average American to comprehend. Throughout the debates for ratification during 1787-1788, many Anti-federalists insisted that a constitution should be simple enough so anyone could understand it (Kammen 756). George Washington, however did not appear to believe that each citizen should be able to read and understand the document in order to embrace its content. In a letter to the Marquis de Lafayette, he responded, "there are many things in the Constitution which only need to be explained, in order to prove equally satisfactory to all parties" (Kammen 75). Federalists needed to "explain" the Constitution using a means every citizen could understand in order to win popular support for it. When it was time to win support for ratification Federalists discarded their elitist philosophies, at least for the benefit of their public, and told the people what they wanted to hear. During debates in the Philadelphia convention, "the men who drew up the Constitution [had] believed Hobbes' notion that men are selfish. To them, a human being was an
atom of self interest. They did not believe in man, but they did believe in the power to control him." (Hofstadter 3).

The defenders of the Constitution knew very well that the Constitution would be attacked on grounds that it would establish a strong central authority that people could not trust. Hence the proponents of the Constitution in subsequent debates had to stress over and over the popular and "strictly republican" character of the new federal government. Madison wrote in Federalist no. 39, "We may define a republic to be ... a government which derives all its power directly or indirectly from the great body of the people. It is essential ... that it be derived from the great body of society, not from an inconsiderable portion, or a favored class" (Wills 190). Men who only a few month earlier had voiced deep misgivings over popular rule now tried to outdo their opponents in expressing their enthusiasm for the people (Wood Leadership 75).

As thoughtful strategists, the Framers understood that their message had to reach many people in many different social situations. "That the Federalists sought purposely to include men of lower status amongst their ranks was not improper, dishonest or hypocritical...they were only doing what their liberal education in rhetoric had taught them: adapting their arguments to the nature and needs of their audience" (Wood Leadership 75).

The Federalists began their ratification campaign with the pen. The Federalist Papers, written "to the people of the state of New York" were written for everyone. "Publius" knew not everyone would read them, but rather that they would ripple throughout society by other means. Washington had said, "Much will depend upon literary
abilities. The recommendation by good pens should be openly, I mean publicly, afforded in the Gazettes" (Bowen 278).

So much was written and published during the ratification debate that The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution totals over 10,000 pages of essays and letters. In the midst of the debates Henry Knox wrote to John Sullivan in January of 1788 complaining, "Much paper is spoiled on the subject, and many essays are written which perhaps are not read by either side" (Bailyn 327).

There was so much written that members of the popular masses did not know or, in many cases, did not care whom to believe. For most it was difficult to know truth from rumor. Indeed, how could they argue against experienced politicians who were sharp with each other and even more outspoken? Arguments between leaders of the Federalists and Anti-federalists were not intended for the uneducated masses. Wood tells us that leaders, who were members of the gentry class, "believed that their speeches and writings did not have to influence directly and simultaneously all of the people but only the rational and enlightened part, who then in turn would bring the rest of the populace with them" (Leadership 67).

Newspapers in 1787-1788, which now included many dailies, reported The Federalist to a political audience who were expected to pass on the Federalists' plan to those who were incapable of following the essays themselves. Hamilton, in Federalist no. 37, shows that the Federalists knew they had to satisfy their initial audience, "the candid and judicious part of the community" and that it would
require some flattery. He called these people "advocates of good government" and "Men of Character." In his article, the Political Psychology of "the Federalist", Howe says that Publius was "an advocate, a campaigner. He had to combine rationality with motivation in order to persuade effectively" (497). Once these moneyed gentlemen were convinced, they would become Federalist campaigners themselves.

The strategy proved sound as much support amongst less illustrious men was generated by gentlemen supporters of the Constitution. These gentlemen knew how to sway the opinions of those who gave them "deferential respect" (Wood Leadership 67). "Enlightened men" continued to flood the papers with essays, but they also used poems, songs, cartoons and letters which asked the great body of people to support a government which they themselves would control. This more personal form of persuasion would have a substantial impact.

The Federalists anticipated that "what citizens looked for was fireworks" (Bowen 268). They further anticipated what they would have to do to light the "fireworks." The second flood of literature, then, connected "a larger group of prudent men capable of understanding their enlightened self interest, and the turbulent masses, who are typically motivated by passion and immediate advantage" (Howe 496). Writers wrote with emotion and self-interest. "Ministers of the gospel of every denomination are now unified, from one end of the continent to the other, in praying with the same zeal that they did for preservation of our liberties in the years 1775 and 1776, for the establishment of the new federal
government" reported the Pennsylvania Packet on January 14, 1788 (Kaminski 15: 370). The Connecticut Journal printed a letter written December 12, 1787: "The mercantile interest in the town, and the majority of inhabitants of the state are in favor of the new federal plan, yet ... it will be strongly opposed by some men of great influence activated by a dread of the loss of their own popularity" (Kaminski 15: 559).

Citizens from all walks of life joined in the campaign. "Landholder" complained, in a letter printed several times in four states, that, "when trade is embarrassed the merchant is the first to complain, but the farmer in event bears more than his share of the loss," and that the only remedy was adoption of the Constitution (Kaminski 15: 369). In a speech given on November 8, 1787, and reprinted throughout the states, convention delegate Hugh Williamson, himself a teacher, minister, physician and merchant, told citizens the Constitution created "a government that gives the fairest prospect of being firm and honorable, safe from foreign invasion, by which the value of lands and produce will increase" (Kaminski 15: 208). Reports lacked detail, but they repeatedly told citizens what Federalists wanted them to hear:

"There would not be a dissenting voice in the convention of Maryland against the new Constitution."
"At least nineteen-twentieths of the yeomanry of Virginia are on the side of George Washington, the man of the people."
"Unanimous ratification of the federal government by the state of New Jersey shows there is not despotism in the new Constitution. The yeomanry of New Jersey love liberty" (Kaminski 15: 558).
The Federalists cultivated the common man by shifting the fight for ratification of the Constitution to the streets and the taverns of America. It took place between farmers, politician, artisans, merchants, and intellectuals. The Federalists succeeded in staging the fight on their terms. State conventions throughout the nation listened to the opinions of its various citizens. Men like Jonathan Smith were listened to. Bowen recounts what Smith told the Massachusetts' convention:

"Mr. President," I have lived in a part of the country where I have known the worth of good government by the want of it...when I saw this Constitution, I found that it was a cure for these disorders... I did not go to any lawyer, to ask his opinion... I formed my own opinion, and was pleased with this Constitution (287).

Song was also a popular means of spreading the Federalist message. Francis Hopkison's "The History of a New Roof" used symbols to portray the government formed under the Articles of Confederation as a mansion with a decaying roof. Despite the short period of use, "it needed repair and its owners called in architects to recommend how to proceed. They found that thirteen key rafters were unconnected by the kinds of braces...necessary for effective union" (Warren-Findley 24). The song was soon heard throughout the country in ratification parades (26).

With ratification of the Constitution still in question during most of 1788, Federalists discovered another method which could bring a sense of unity in a society riddled with conflict. "Great Processions" were "invented and realized" by the Federalists
The first of the "Great Processions" was held in Boston. Massachusetts became on February 6 the sixth state to ratify. The celebration that followed began "a wave of public celebrations which swept through the thirteen American states from New England to Georgia" (Heideking 367).

The Boston procession contained symbolism which was easy for citizens of all levels to make sense of. Despite little time to plan and prepare, the procession was well organized and attended. "The centerpiece of their procession was a ship, the 'Federal Constitution,' drawn by thirteen horses, symbolizing the embarkation of the new government on the sea of Liberty" (Klein 18). The February 8 procession included woodcutters, farmers, artisans, militia companies and mechanics carrying banners. Throughout the day Boston citizens sang all thirteen verses of the Yankee song. After five hours of marching, the day ended with a great banquet at Boston city hall.

What the Federalists of 1788 did was to fill symbols, rituals and images with a new meaning, a new ideology. Often, little was said about the Constitution and the ideas it contained. But the message was that Americans could not return to the old, dilapidated confederate form of government, and the new Constitution was the alternative.

The figure of George Washington played a prominent role in most processions. He was seen as both a revolutionary hero and as the leader of the future American nation. Brown describes a print, published by Bigherstaff's Boston Almanac in 1788, "the year of our Redemption,": "Driving the federal chariot are Washington and Franklin, while thirteen freemen, representing the states, pull the
vehicle toward ratification. Washington holds in hand the Constitution...overhead a bright sun has emerged from behind the dark clouds" (Brown ii). For the most part, though, Washington, did not personally participate in the ratification debates, although he was encouraged to do so by Madison (Kaminski 16: 463). Federalists knew the value of "exploiting Washington's prestige to bring about a political revolution" (Levy 87). His image was used everywhere by the Federalists.

Maryland ratified in April of 1788. South Carolina followed suit the next month. "Within eight months after the delegates set their name to the document, eight states had ratified" (Levy 202). On June 21 New Hampshire became the ninth and final state required by the Constitution to ratify. "At first the campaign for ratification went beautifully," according to Roche (Levy 202). But everyone knew a union could not exist if the larger states, Virginia and New York, did not go along.

At this point, "the Constitutionalists clearly out maneuvered their opponents, forced them into impossible political positions, and won both states narrowly" (Levy 207). In New York, Federalist convention delegates Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, James Duane, and Robert Livingston insisted on debating the Constitution section by section so they could out argue the Anti-federalists on every issue and, more importantly, delay the vote until New Hampshire and Virginia had a chance to ratify (Levy 256). Hamilton stalled and awaited news from the horse relay system he and Madison had set up to quickly carry news from Virginia northward. By the time the New York convention was ready to vote, Elkins and McKitrick
observe, the Anti-federalists sat and watched their two-to-one majority slip away (Levy 256).

In Virginia, the Anti-federalists did not stand a chance. The Federalist plan to manage debate held as its premise that "Patrick Henry had to be contained" (Roche 208). Every statement Henry made was attacked. On the topic of military power, former revolutionary soldier Harry Lee observed that while he was in the trenches fighting, Henry was sitting in Richmond. When Henry alleged that Jefferson was opposed to Virginia's approving the Constitution, Madison took his turn at pulling Henry apart. Madison first pointed out that, being out of the country, Jefferson could not form an adequate opinion. Secondly, it was up to the Convention, not Jefferson, to decide the issue. Thirdly, if one were to seek the opinion of outsiders, then surely George Washington should be considered and finally, since he had personally communicated with Jefferson, he knew in fact that Jefferson strongly favored the Constitution" (Levy 208). Federalists' arguments were so well thought out and planned that they proved impenetrable. In Virginia the fight was over. On June 26, 1788, Virginia became the tenth state to ratify.

Anti-federalists did manage to put together a campaign of sorts. Letters to newspapers suggested that the Federalists tampered with their mail. "The post offices are also under the influences of these sons of power, so much so that a paper printed at New York cannot find its way to Philadelphia, Baltimore or any of the other" (Kaminski 16: 551). Fictitious Anti-federalist letters, allegedly from
Benjamin Rush to Alexander Hamilton, were printed in the *Philadelphia Freeman's Journal*.

Despite their efforts, the Anti-federalist leaders simply lacked the revolutionary drive of the younger Federalists. While the Federalists united the nation's people, the divided Anti-federalists were forced to address their own differences. Madison for example, explained that "a few of those opponents- the Anti-federalists in the Congress and in state legislatures- would be frustrated in their desires to make fundamental changes [to the Constitution], but the rest... could be won over as new and loyal supporters of the Constitution" (Goldwin 148).

A Federalist promise to add a bill of rights to the Constitution took the wind out of Anti-federalist's sails. Madison, during the convention a staunch opponent of a bill of rights, began making "a general nuisance of himself by demanding consideration of constitutional amendments that he had recently crafted" (Goldwin 156). In the end, with a promise, some Anti-federalists turned to favor the Constitution. "The defection... helps explain the Federalists' ability to capture enough votes at ratification conventions in the key states of Massachusetts, Virginia, and New York to carry the Constitution despite their minority status" (Bowen 218).

When New York delegates voted on July 26, the political struggle finally ended. Besides being elated, the likes of Hamilton, Morris, Wilson, Washington and Madison must have been relieved. They had expended enormous energy in their effort for ratification.

The revolutionary verve and ardor of the Federalists, their resources of will and energy, their willingness to scheme
tirelessly, campaign everywhere, and sweat and agonize over every vote meant in effect that despite all the hair-breadth squeezes and rigors of struggle, the Anti-federalists would lose every test (Levy 256).

What Americans Should Know

That the Federalists' maneuvering was meticulously planned and brilliantly executed should not remain a mystery to Americans. Textbooks can help citizens learn that the political campaign to call, write and ratify the Constitution was as significant an accomplishment as drafting the document itself. Students can study what scholars know and gain a better sense of politics in America.

Elkins and McKitrick seem to complain that since the Constitution was written, Americans have viewed the Framers too narrowly as "fathers" or "conservatives" looking after a particular interest. Examining the enormous political effort orchestrated by the Federalists may allow us to view them in a new dimension -- that of the consummate politician. They designed a new government for a variety of reasons, and they used all of their skills to realize that goal.

Calculated political moves and propaganda enabled "the Federalists to succeed in creating an atmosphere which made the adoption of the Constitution and the establishment of a new political system possible" (Heideking 376). They used what Wood defines as rhetoric: "The art of relating what was said and how it was said to the needs and requirements of the audience" (Leadership 71). The message was secondary to the means of communicating the message.
Approval of the Constitution required the skill of practical politicians who were able to use rhetoric. Herein lies the key to understanding the Federalists.

In Jensen's view, "the methods by which they were ultimately to achieve success...are a commentary on [the Framers] political philosophy" (Levy 87). At the Philadelphia convention, burdened by differences and difficulties, Federalists were forced to use a great deal of wisdom, patience, willingness to compromise, and careful management to produce a plan acceptable to the young nation (McDonald 224). With the exception of willingness to compromise, the Framers used these same skills in the ratification process.

The extraordinary draft which called for a new republic required an equally extraordinary ratification effort. Hamilton, in writing about the nation's defense, explained in Federalist No. 23 the political philosophy of the Federalists: "The 'means' ought to be proportioned to the 'end'; the persons, from whose agency the attainment of any 'end' is expected, ought to possess the 'means' by which it is to be attained." It was clear to the Federalists that they had to use whatever "means" they possessed to attain the lofty "end" they desired. This approach was not necessarily evil as many perceived it to be. Instead it was an affair of great craft, which the Framers had.

Textbooks should tell American students what scholars know about the Framers, that they were "men of ideas and thought...but they were as well...politicians" (Wood Leadership 64). In the following chapter I will take a closer look at how the movement to improve civic education has resulted in the creation of national
education standards which recommend that textbooks make students aware of the most current Constitutional scholarship.
Chapter Three:
National Education Standards

The publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 by the National Commission of Excellence in Education brought to the forefront the need for reform in American education. Since then numerous other commissions, laws, and research studies have added to the call for education reform, particularly in higher expectations for student achievement. Prior to the establishment of national standards for student achievement by a wide range of social studies organizations, "identification of important knowledge, skills, and performances had been relegated to textbook and test publishers" (McRel 1). The National Assessment of Educational Progress, for example, found that textbooks were often the curriculum that was taught and how it was taught: "textbooks were the most common method of instruction in civics classrooms" (CCE Civitas xvi). While textbooks continue to determine content for most teachers national standards are now readily available for teachers, administrators, and publishers in building curriculum.

Knowledge of History is Important

The nation's first priority, to ensure our survival as a free nation, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) states, ought to be preparing students adequately so they can assume "the office of citizen" (xix). Keeping the republic and extending the blessings of
liberty to all citizens requires that United States citizens labor vigilantly to preserve this form of government (NCSS xix). Without education, America's democratic system cannot function properly. In the forward to Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, it is maintained that the three branches of government depend upon individuals who understand the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Further, Goals 2000 legislation emphasized that it is one of the fundamental tasks of public education to provide this understanding.

National social studies standards written this decade most often begin with an explanation of why a strong and accurate understanding of history is critical. The National Commission for History in the Schools (NCHS) wrote, "without history we cannot undertake any sensible inquiry into the political, social, or moral issues in society" (1). Today's political processes make sense when connected to those of the past. Without this connection, citizens share no common memory of where they have been or what decisions of the past account for present circumstances.

The NCHS argues even more strongly, "Without historical knowledge and inquiry, we cannot achieve the informed, discriminating citizenship essential to effective participation in the democratic processes of governance and the fulfillment for all citizens of the nation's democratic ideals" (11). To understand politics today, citizens must realize their roots in American history.

Students must somehow gain "the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to understand, respect, and practice the ways of the scholar, the artisan, the leader and the citizen" in order to occupy the
most important position in our government: the office of citizen (NCSS, xx).

Calls to Improve What Americans Know About Our History

In the past fifteen years the nation's governors and Presidents Reagan, Bush, and Clinton have called for reform of America's system of civic education. Leaders in the development of social studies standards over that time include the National Center for History in the Schools, the National Council for the Social Studies, the National Center for History Education (NCHE), and the Center for Civic Education (CCE). All of these groups have commented in particular about the state of American civic education.

The importance of civic education, described by the CCE as education in self-government, has been recognized since the early days of American independence. Benjamin Rush wrote in 1786 that youth should be educated to "watch for the state as if its liberties depended upon [their] vigilance alone." Many others have felt that the participation of informed and responsible citizens, skilled in the arts of deliberation and effective action, is vital to democracy. The editors of Civitas, a collaboration between the CCE and the Council for the Advancement of Citizenship, remind us that "Concerned voices from Thomas Jefferson to John Dewey to the present have insisted that enlightened citizens...are necessary for both the perpetuation and the continuous renewal of the republic" (3).

A Nation at Risk began the most recent process of civic education reform by warning of "a rising tide of mediocrity that
threatens our very future as a Nation and a people.... The people of the United States need to know that individuals in our society who do not possess the levels of skill, literacy, and training essential to this new era will be effectively disenfranchised... from the chance to participate fully in our national life" (1-2). Although a high level of education is essential to a free democratic society, citizens do not continue their formal study of the past nor do they take advantage of what is offered while in school (Butts 2). Unfortunately, it seems there is little time for studies "...that so enrich daily life, help maintain civility, and develop sense of community" (Butts 3).

A Nation at Risk made several recommendations for improving the civic education of America's students. The commission proposed that, at a minimum, three years of social studies be required to earn a diploma and that "the teaching of social studies in high school should be designed to...enable students to understand how our political system functions...so as to fix their places and possibilities within [it]. An understanding of these is requisite to the informed and committed exercise of citizenship in our free society" (8). The commission also recommended "that schools ... adopt more rigorous and measurable standards, and higher expectations, for academic performance" (3). They also believed that the curriculum itself should also meet higher standards. "This will help students do their best educationally with challenging materials in an environment that supports learning and authentic accomplishment" (3).

Five years after A Nation at Risk, standards had not yet been written, but "the fires of reform were still being stoked" by commission after commission on school reform (Butts 13).
Responding to the *Nation at Risk*, then-U.S. Secretary of Education William J. Bennett released in 1988 *James Madison High School: A Curriculum for American Students*. He wrote, "This document is an attempt to add substantive expectations to the graduation standards established in *A Nation at Risk*" (2). Bennett wrote that there remains a common body of knowledge that virtually all students can attain. Further, most Americans want students to know how to think for themselves, respond to important questions, weigh alternatives, solve problems, pursue an argument, defend a point of view and understand its opposite. Those who created our present form of government certainly learned those lessons. They are things that contemporary students must also know. *James Madison High School* recommends three years of social studies, but emphasizes that the amount of "time a student spends on any subject is no guarantee he will master it. What goes into classes--their content and quality-- is every bit as important as their number...In the end, it is content-- what is taught-- that is key." (2) Bennett concludes that realizing curricular improvements, which he equates with "improved textbooks," will take work. He added that although making improvements may seem impossible, they are "a national imperative" (5).

In *James Madison High School*, Bennett argued that the "importance of history to a good education is beyond dispute" (20). One thing history does is connect us to the development of our nation's politics. "All Americans should know about their civilization, the chronology of its development, ideas and traditions upon which it
rests, and the political system it has and enjoys. History curriculum ought to include an in-depth study of American democracy" (21).

In 1988 the Bradley Commission also issued a report, Building a History Curriculum: Guidelines for Teaching History in the Schools. The Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McRel) summarizes that the Bradley report, although "general in scope... does provide a focus on the historical perspective students should acquire in their study of history" (5). Paul A. Gagnon, the principal investigator for the Bradley Commission, strongly stated the case that history is the indispensable study in the education of citizens in a democracy (CCE Civitas xxi).

Finally, the development of internationally competitive national standards of excellence for the nation's schools received support. "The emphasis on education reform in the 1980's led to the National Governors' Association's articulation of national education goals" (NCSS viii). Six education goals were drafted by the nation's fifty governors in their 1989 meeting in Charlottesville, Virginia. The third of their goals identified history as one of the five school subjects for which challenging new achievement standards should be established.

These goals were endorsed by the Bush administration, and in 1992 Congress passed the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, the purpose of which was to "codify goals and sanction the development of national education standards as a means of encouraging and evaluating student achievement" (NCSS viii). The act proposes that "by the year 2000, all students will demonstrate competency over subject matter including... history, civics and government... so that they may be prepared for responsible citizenship." It also specified
that every adult American "will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship" (CCENat. Stand. v).

In the Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994, the civic mission of schools was reaffirmed. Goal Three stated that "by the year 2000 students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including...civics and government...so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship." Goal Six said that "by the year 2000 every American adult will...possess the knowledge and skills necessary to...exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship" (CCE Nat. Stand. v).

In 1996, another organization developed recommendations for improving history education motivated by the publication of disappointingly low results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress U.S. History test. Although the NCHE did not produce standards, it did suggest that content be "centered to the teaching of U.S. History." The NCHE believed that students should experience active engagement in the process of historical inquiry and understand the methods of investigation by which historians reach their conclusions. "History education should include fundamental knowledge and understanding of the way such knowledge is discovered" (NCHE 4). The NCHE expected its recommendations to form the backbone of a 50-state initiative to improve history education in the United States.
National Standards Published

The publication of curriculum frameworks and specific standards in civics, government and history followed the general call for reform of American civic education. In 1994 the first national standards specific to the Framing of the U.S. Constitution were issued. The NCSS Task Force on Standards for Social Studies wrote social studies standards "in order to ensure that, in the 'era of standards,' an integrated social science approach for achieving academic and civic competence was available" (NCSS xvii). "The more accurately the 6-12 social studies program addresses the contemporary conditions of real life and of academic scholarship, the more likely such a program is to help students develop a deeper understanding of how to know, how to apply what they know, and how to participate in building a future" (NCSS 5).

The NCSS standards do not provide focused and enhanced content detail; these are left to the individual discipline standards. What the social studies standards do address is overall curriculum design and should be used to establish academic program frameworks. They further serve as a guide for curriculum decisions by providing student performance expectations. As curriculum standards, they are statements of what should occur in the formal schooling process, as opposed to what students should know within a specific discipline. It was hoped that "curriculum experiences will enable students to exhibit the knowledge, skills, scholarly perspective, and commitments to American democratic ideals" (NCSS 14).
While the NCSS worked on its curriculum framework, individual disciplines developed more specific standards. "In October 1992 President Clinton (sic) reaffirmed the need to establish world class standards, specifically to include history" (NCHS 8). That same year, the report to Congress of the National Council on Education Standards and Testing, Rising Standards for American Education, stressed the importance of national standards in history. In this robust climate of education reform, the National History Standards Project was born. The National Endowment for the Humanities and the U.S. Department of Education funded the project in the spring of 1992 to develop consensus for what constitutes excellence in the teaching and learning of history in the nation's schools. The NCHS was founded to develop standards based upon its Lessons from History: Essential Understanding and Historical Perspectives Students Should Acquire. The NCHS sponsored the History Standards Project and published National Standards for United States History in 1995.

The National Center for History Standards adopted criteria to guide the development of history standards with the publication of National Standards for U.S. History. A panel of historians, educators, and public officials convened by the Council for Basic Education found the actual standards for student achievement relatively acceptable (McRel 4). These standards were to:

- be demanding and reflect the best historical scholarship;
- strike a balance between emphasizing broad themes and probing specific historical events, ideas, movements persons and documents;
promote the essential ability to detect and evaluate distortion and propaganda by omission, suppression, or invention of facts;

- contribute to citizenship education through developing understanding of our civic identity and shared civic values, through analyzing major issues in the nation's history;

- address the historical origins of the nation's democratic political system; and

- integrate fundamental facts of human culture such as politics and government (NCHS 4).

At the same time, the CCE also developed their National Standards for Civics and Government with the support of the U.S. Department of Education. These standards are "intended to help schools develop competent and responsible citizens" (v). In its publication Civitas, the CCE said the "increase in apathy and decline in public confidence cannot go unchallenged" (xv). The standards created by the CCE "could not alone improve student achievement...but they could be an important stimulus for change" (vi). These standards specified what students should know and be able to do in the field of civics and government as they leave grades 4, 8, and 12. Formal instruction in civics and government, according to the CCE, should provide students with a basic understanding of civic life, politics, and government" (CCE Civitas 1).

Within this large body of curriculum frameworks and standards, there is considerable variety in approach. McRel published Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education which combined standards by the NCHS, CCE, and NCSS "in an effort to bring consistency....and present the social studies
curriculum standards in a roughly usable and common format" (3). McRel noted that "clearly there is a need of subject area guidance" and set out to "in short, establish standards in a rigorous and systematic way" (McRel 1). McRel provides a one-stop reference to all standards for educators and publishers.

There exists today, then, a strong set of curriculum standards for the broader field of social studies as well as the specific disciplines of history and government. These standards set out what students should know about the design and politics of the framing of the U.S. Constitution. The following chapter will explore how standards relevant to the framing of the U.S. Constitution can be combined into an assessment tool for history and government texts currently in use in American high school classrooms.
Chapter Four:
Evaluating and Combining Textbook Standards

Textbooks are the traditional and primary way that students encounter the curriculum. If considerable expertise has been involved in the construction of social studies standards, it is reasonable to expect that their recommended content be reflected in textbooks. This chapter will address the quality of textbooks and how important it is that they reflect the best social studies standards. My intent in Chapter four is to explain how a composite of curriculum standards should be directly connected with textbook content. In chapter five I will assess how well a set of history and government textbooks reflect those standards.

Better Texts are Needed

The Nation at Risk report said that school curricula were homogenized, diluted, and diffused, a statement that could very well be a description of textbooks. "We have the fattest textbooks in the world," says Marc Tucker, president of the National Center on Education and the Economy, because these books are focused more on sales than substance. "Since they want to sell textbooks with the largest appeal, they put everything in, in a kind of smorgasbord approach" (Hiraoka 19).

"Too few experienced teachers and scholars are involved in writing the textbooks," the Nation at Risk report complained (7). A recommendation made by the National Commission on Excellence in
Education, which produced *A Nation at Risk*, advocated more rigorous standards and higher expectations for student content and academic performance. One suggestion for implementing this recommendation was that "textbooks...should be upgraded with the help of scholars and teachers" and that "they should assist willing publishers in developing the products or publish their own alternatives where there are persistent inadequacies" (*Nation at Risk*, 16).

It is often the case that textbooks do little to "challenge the students to whom they are assigned," according to the Education Products Information Exchange (*Nation at Risk* 9). Their study revealed that a majority of students were able to master 80 percent of the material in some subject matter texts before they had even opened the books. "Texts have been 'written down' by their publishers to ever-lower reading levels in response to perceived market demands" (*Nation at Risk* 10).

Students need access to the best materials to be effective citizens. The NCSS believes that "if we want our students to be better thinkers and decision-makers, they must....be copious readers of the best media." (7). The NCHE added, "content should be central to the teaching of...United States History" (2). Social studies textbooks too should reflect the changing nature of knowledge and scholarship, the NCSS report emphasized (5 & 7). The key, according to the NCHE, is to "identify the best resources and materials for teaching and learning history" (1).

The authors of standards are emphatic that standards can be used to improve textbook content. The CCE specifically said that standards can be "useful in the development of...textbooks" and that
while "standards alone can not improve student performance... they can be an important stimulus for change" (Nat. Stand, vi). If high quality standards, based upon new scholarship, are used by textbook publishers, what students read in textbooks will likely improve.

All the standards maintain that good textbooks should, in reality, be scholarly books. A Nation at Risk recommended that, "New instructional materials should reflect...the best scholarship in each discipline and research in learning and teaching" (Nation at Risk, 13). The National Standards for U.S. History declare, "if students are to achieve the understandings and thinking skill specified in the United States History Standards, they must have equal access to engaging, balanced, accurate, and challenging curricular materials" (3). The standards of the NCHS also articulated that students should be able to comprehend "thick narratives" which delve into how change occurs in a society, how human intentions matter and how ends are influenced by the means of carrying them out. To the NCHS "nothing is more dangerous than a simple monocausal explanation of past experiences" (65). Teachers themselves have identified the need for high quality textbooks so that students may engage in meaningful learning (NCSS 10). Good teachers want publishers to include information that good scholarship contains: arguments, quotes, a range of opinion, interpretation, footnotes, primary sources, and detail.

The bottom line is that textbooks ought to reflect standards rather than set them. John S. Kendall and Robert J. Marzano believe, "it is now understood that in the past, teachers have relied heavily upon textbooks to determine what is important to teach in each
discipline, so much so that textbook manufacturers have become the de facto standard-setting group for the content areas" (McRel 1). But standards, rather than textbooks and their publishers, can only determine what is taught in America if school boards, administrators, teachers, and publishers use standards. Otherwise, the situation described by Marc Tucker will continue: "In this country, curriculum is constructed not by ministries or state departments of education but by textbook publishers who send salesmen around to talk to teachers and ask them what should be in books" (Hiraoka 19).

Using Standards to Improve Textbooks

A Nation at Risk recommended that states and school districts, in considering textbooks for adoption, should evaluate texts on their ability to present rigorous and challenging material clearly, and require publishers to furnish evaluation data on the materials' effectiveness (Nation at Risk, 13). Although the NCSS does not specifically suggest that textbook publishers should use social studies standards, they do believe that standards can be used by districts to "review & evaluate" classroom materials, including textbooks (NCSS 15).

In purchasing texts, a wide range of sometimes arbitrary criteria are used to make the decision of which text to use. Teachers may consider loyalty to a particular publisher, extra audio/visual materials, or computer-generated textbook materials as important factors in their decision. An individual sales representative may influence a teacher's choice, or other teachers may put pressure on
staff members to select a particular text. Reading level, graphics, and content come into play as well.

Evaluations of government and history textbooks have been done using other criteria, but the CCE, NCSS, and NCHS designed their national curriculum standards for this purpose (Butts 13). All the standards in social studies, civics and government, and history cover the era in which the U.S. Constitution was created. Yet they are not identical. In addition they do not limit themselves to content. Standards differentiate between what students should know in the end and what students should be able to do based upon what they have been taught (McRel 10). Nonetheless, they can all be used to determine what students should find in a textbook.

Of all the standards related to the U.S. Constitution, the NCSS standards are the broadest, but none of them specifically mentions delegates, Federalist or Anti-federalist positions, or tactics employed to gain ratification. These standards can nonetheless be used to assess textbooks because they call for high school social studies programs to help students understand the nature of historical inquiry, the processes and sources used to understand the past, how individuals and groups can be influenced by a variety of situations, and how public policy can be influenced by civic participation. All of this is relevant to a student's understanding of what took place in Philadelphia.

Because the NCSS intended for their standards to be used as an umbrella for the other standards, its performance expectations are broad in comparison to those created by the NCHS and the CCE. The NCSS has ten thematic strands that form the basis of the specific
standards. Culture, time, people, places, identity, institutions, groups, authority, and civic ideals and practices are among those thematic strands which apply to the study of the U.S. Constitutional Convention.

The NCHS standards provide much more detailed expectations about the Constitutional Convention, just as the NCSS hoped individual disciplines would. The NCHS standards, for example, expect students to know about the Federalists and Anti-federalists. Students are also expected to study the background and political experiences of both sides as well as the various delegates' service during the revolution (NCHS 85).

All standards delve into the influence on delegates' positions on issues. Both the CCE and NCSS standards want students to learn how constitutions "promote the interests of particular groups." The NCHS standards ask students to consider alternative plans which the delegates considered. NCHS and CCE standards expect students to know both arguments for the Constitution and arguments against. Both ask students to examine major Federalist writings for the Constitution.

NCHS standards recognize that the study of history must have relevance today. Accordingly, the NCHS standards connect knowledge about constitutional politics and politicians to contemporary politics. To understand the present, then, students are asked to understand the past.

The CCE especially wants students to understand the political struggles that took place during the writing of the Constitution. In Civitas, the CCE argues that some of the "ingredients...toward the
practice of civic virtue" which students should learn at some point include how citizens in the early republic organized and influenced public opinion using campaigns, parades, and demonstrations and how compromise was used (12-13, 49, 405). CCE content standards ask students to define politics, explain the necessity of politics, and understand why politics is found wherever people gather and how the outcome of collective decisions are influenced by politics.

Although CCE standards are not as specific as some, they are a clear statement that "if American constitutional democracy is to endure its citizens must recognize that 'it is not a machine that would go of itself.'" Citizens "must also be aware of the difficulty of establishing free institutions, as evidenced by the experience of the founders" (135). CCE standards expect students to recognize current opportunities to influence government and participate in America's political culture, opportunities that were shaped in early American history.

An important aspect of the movement to design and use curriculum standards is the recognition of the changing nature of knowledge. The Center for Civic Education maintains that "standards should not be considered a static or finished document" (vi). The National Center for History in the Schools supports this view, arguing that, "standards should be intellectually demanding and reflect the best historical scholarship" (3). Standards should, therefore, form the basis for continuing discussion and be revised periodically in light of new scholarship and public commentary (vi).
A Standards-Based Textbook Assessment Tool

To begin to explain how standards should relate to the textbook content students experience, I have compiled those standards relevant to the Constitutional period and included them in the assessment tool. The tool includes standards that are unique to the period, as well as some that cross many time periods. Where the standards were identical, they were combined.

As noted in Chapter three, the Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory also combined standards, citing the lack of "consensus as to what form standards should take or how they should be used." I used McRel's Content Knowledge related to the social studies curriculum to validate my list of standards that relate to the Constitutional period. My intent was to construct a brief, useful list of standards against which to assess current history and government textbooks.

One could assume that the better American history and government textbooks include more information than others. In fact, the better textbooks may not be the those which meet the greatest number of standards. Hence, I decided to measure the quality of the information a textbook contained using a Likert scale. With this in mind, I added an A, B, C, D, F scale to the chart next to the list of NCSS, NCHS, and CCE standards that outline what students should know about this period of our history. I also added space for notes or comments regarding each standard. The assessment tool also includes title, author, publisher, year of publishing, and number of pages devoted to the Constitutional era. The next chapter evaluates eleven
high school history and government textbooks using the assessment tool.
Chapter Five:
Using Standards to Evaluate Current High School Texts

In this chapter I evaluate how well high school history and government textbooks reflect the national standards related to the framing of the U.S. Constitution. I selected eleven textbooks for evaluation, far fewer than the total number available. I will first describe the criteria used in selecting the eleven texts for evaluation.

Selecting Textbooks for this Study

There are now hundreds of textbooks which attempt to describe the framing of the Constitution. Many publishers offer more than one title. McDougal Littel-Houghton Mifflin, for example, offers at least six history or government textbooks. There are also many editions, such as Prentice Hall's Magruder's American Government, whose first edition goes back to the start of the century. Scientologist L. Ron Hubbard even offers a textbook.

I used a set of four criteria in determining whether I would include a textbook in my review. First, a book had to be either a government or history text published since 1994, the year standards were published. I used the most recent editions available. The text had to be high school level, since the standards and the assessment tool were for grades nine through twelve. Next, I used only those texts from major publishers. Both Brown's Directory of Instructional Materials and the Montana Educational Services Association (MESA) compile lists of major publishing companies and the materials they
publish. I used these to find the titles that might be used by high school students to study the Constitutional Convention. Here I discovered that there are relatively few publishers, as many have merged. For example, Houghton-Mifflin, Heath, and McDougal-Littel are all one company now. Glencoe has merged with McGraw-Hill. Even so, 38 books met this set of criteria.

I reduced the list further by selecting the books most often used by high school history classes in America. These were the books pushed by sales representatives from the major publishers as their best selling text. Two of the textbooks that met the criteria are virtually the same book, despite having different authors and publishers. West's American Government, edited by Roger Leroy Miller and Glencoe's United States Government followed the same outline up to ratification, and often times said nearly the same thing in the same words.

Eventually, four government books and six American history books met these criteria for review. The one exception to the criteria that I added to the evaluation list was CCE's We the People. It is not widely used relative to other textbooks, nor was it listed by Brown's or MESA. It is not published by a major publisher. But, We the People is published by one of the standard setters, the Center for Civic Education. I wanted to see how it compares with other texts in its adherence to national standards. The list of the eleven titles and publishers evaluated will be familiar to teachers throughout America. (See Table 1).
Table 1: Selected Textbooks

**America: Pathways to the Present.** Cayton Andrew, Elisabeth Israels Perry, Allan Winkler. Needham, NJ: Prentice Hall. 1998

**The Americans.** Gerald A. Danzier, J. Jorge Klor de Alva, Louis E. Wilson, Nancy Woloch. Evanston, IL: McDougal Littell. 1998


**We the People.** Duane E. Smith, general editor, Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education. 1995
It should be noted that only student editions were used, even though I found some interesting material in teacher's editions that I hope somehow reaches students. If material included in teacher's editions had been included in students' books, some texts might have scored higher. For instance, *Pathways to the Present* mentions nothing about Charles Beard's interpretation in student texts, but provides this information for teachers. There is no guarantee that students will see excerpts from Bowen's *Miracle in Philadelphia* in the back of Prentice-Hall, or *Letters from Brutus* at the beginning of Glencoe, so I chose to assess only what students would see in their own books rather than assume that teachers would pass on certain information to their students.

Textbook Evaluation

I read the appropriate sections of each of the eleven books selected and evaluated them using the tool described in Chapter Four (see Table 3). Rather than review each of the eleven books here individually, I will describe instead the notable results of comparing books to the standards and to each other. The summary results of my evaluation, in which each of the thirteen standards were scored A, B, C, D, or F, are included in Table 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Ave. score</th>
<th>Out of 4.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Am. Gov't.</td>
<td>(Houghton-Mifflin)</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.0/4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>Magruder's Am. Gov't.</td>
<td>(Prentice-Hall)</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>2.0/4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>Gov't. in America</td>
<td>(Longman)</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.0/4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>We the People</td>
<td>(CCE)</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0/4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>The Am. Nation</td>
<td>(Holt)</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.0/4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>U.S. History</td>
<td>(West)</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.0/4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>U.S. Government</td>
<td>(Glencoe)</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.0/4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>Pathways to the Present</td>
<td>(Prentice Hall)</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.0/4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9</td>
<td>The U.S. and Its People</td>
<td>(Addison-Westley)</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1.0/4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>The Americans</td>
<td>(McDougal Littell)</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.0/4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#11</td>
<td>History of a Free Nation</td>
<td>(Glencoe)</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.0/4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Ave. score | 3.1 | 2.36 | 2.73 | 2.0 | 2.27 | 3.0 | 2.55 | 1.27 | 3.18 | .18 | .73 | 2.55 | 2.09 |
Table 3: Assessment Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. analyze the factors involved in calling the Convention? (NCHS, 84)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. analyze differences between leading Federalists and Anti-Federalists in terms of background, political experience, and service during the Revolution? (NCHS, 85)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. develop argument how delegates' positions on issues were influenced? (NCHS, 85; CCE 104; NCSS, 37-8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. analyze the alternative plans considered by the delegates? (NCHS, 84)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. develop argument as to what extent compromises reached in the Convention were the result of economic and political interests of particular groups? (CCE, 95; NCHS, 85; NCSS, 38)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. compare and analyze the major arguments for and against the Constitution in leading Federalist and Anti-Federalist writings and debates? (NCHS, 85; CCE, 104 &amp;149)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. assess relevance of Federalist and Anti-Federalist arguments during ratification debates to late Twentieth-Century politics? (NCHS, 84)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. explain the foundations, shared ideas and values of American political culture as set forth in Federalists and Anti-Federalists writings? (CCE, 99&amp;104)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. explain the source of basic principles established by the Constitution? (NCHS, 85)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. describe politics as the process by which a group of people with varying opinions and/or interests seek power to influence and reach decisions, and accomplish goals? (CCE, 90;)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. explain why politics is found wherever people gather as a group? (CCE, 90)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. describe the many ways to participate in the political process? (CCE, 136; NCSS, 45)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. employ processes of critical historical inquiry, such as using a variety of sources and viewpoints? (NCSS, 34)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If standards were written with the goal of academic excellence in mind, the textbooks overall do not succeed. On the other hand, they do not fail entirely. One textbook, *American Government* published by Houghton Mifflin, was outstanding. Most textbooks, though, do at best an average job of describing the framing of the Constitution; the average score was 2.13 on a 4.0 scale.

American government books were better than American history books, with a 2.55 average for the former, compared to a 1.77 for the latter. The top four books were government titles. The fifth government book, Glencoe's *United States Government*, was ninth overall. It was the only government book that scored below a "C." Only one American history book, Holt's *American Nation*, earned above a "C" average at 2.08. Glencoe's history text was last overall, with a 1.51. Oddly enough, it did one of the better jobs in describing the political process used by the Framers. It is both interesting and sad that the history book which the district where I teach has selected to purchase is McDougal-Littel's *The Americans*. It scored 1.61, finishing second to last.

Strength of a book cannot be simply determined by who publishes it. True, Glencoe published both the worst history and government books and Prentice Hall's government and history books were both average. But, while McDougal-Littel/Houghton-Mifflin offers the second-to-last *The Americans*, it also sells the overall best textbook, *American Government* by James Q. Wilson and John J. Dilulio, Jr. That text by McDougal-Littel/Houghton-Mifflin is often the text selected for Advanced Placement (AP) government. For ten of the thirteen standards, it received an "A" and was the only book to
cover politics in the chapter on the Framers. Its score of 3.6 was one full point more than the next highest rated book, *Magruder's American Government*. It seems to be the kind of book that standard setters have in mind for all students studying the framing period, not just those few enrolled in AP classes.

One reason the Wilson book was the best text was because it uses a variety of sources, a list of suggested readings, various viewpoints, and quotes from historians and historical figures. The next three highest rated books do, also. Conversely, the bottom eight books earned six "D's" on the standard of "critical historical inquiry" because they often ignored the work of scholars. When historians are mentioned, it is rare and brief and typically only in the teacher's edition. *Pathways to the Present* uses the views of "historians" in its text. Only Wilson and *We the People* names scholars within the text. To its credit, Longman's *Government in America* identifies scholars in footnotes. Longman, in fact, seems to be the most willing of all texts to hypothesize, saying that small states got more power with the Connecticut Compromise and that "votes in Philadelphia do not support the interpretation" that a conflict over representation was between large and small states (34). In my experience, the various viewpoints of scholars and their arguments and theories are what makes history and government interesting to students.

The lowest rated textbooks typically lacked primary sources. For instance, only three books attempt to use the Federalist and Anti-federalist writings. When primary sources are used, they are not often written within the text but instead removed to either a separate section, the back of the book, or the teacher's edition. For
example, Prentice-Hall's *Pathways to the Present* places an article from the *Providence Gazette* in a separate section it calls the "Historian's Toolbox." It places Hamilton's and Jefferson's views on popular sovereignty and human nature elsewhere in a "Resource Directory," and arguments made by Ben Franklin along with a passage from *Miracle in Philadelphia* are on pages 1,051-1,054 in the back of the book. Because these materials are separate, students often may not find and much less read them. Perhaps publishers believe that students are not capable of reading primary source material when it is incorporated into the text.

In Chapter Two I described the scholars' view that the Framers were astute politicians. Despite this scholarship, textbooks did not meet the CCE standard to "describe politics" and explain why "politics is found wherever people gather as a group." Most likely this information is elsewhere in other units in textbooks, but if students are to learn who the Framers were and what really happened, this is one place where "politics" belongs.

When a high school student today picks up a textbook to read of delegates gathering in Philadelphia to write a new constitution, the myth that these men were disinterested "angels" and above politics is perpetuated. Framers of the Constitution are described as "men of prestige," "outstanding personalities," and "remarkable" (McClenaghan 63). American students, in part because of the texts they use, have what historian Douglass Adair calls "a trained-in tendency to exaggerate the stature of the revolutionary generation" (27). Textbooks, such as the 1997 edition of McGruder's,
claim that they are "always up to date," but in terms of constitutional scholarship and national standards this claim is not true.

Textbooks' Strengths

The textbooks I examined are not without merit, however. They received the highest marks for explaining the basic principles established by the Constitution. Every book printed something about the principles of separation of powers, checks and balances, judicial review, and federalism. Most included the concepts of limited government and popular sovereignty. The NCHS standards expect texts to explain the source of these principles, too. By virtue of being included with the section on the convention, textbooks were given credit for identifying the convention debates as each principle's source. For this standard, no book received a mark below a "B."

Textbooks earned a composite score of 3.0 for comparing Federalist and Anti-federalist arguments, even though they seldom use original writings to do so. Most texts have a separate section for the two arguments. We the People goes the furthest, and has a chapter for both Federalist and Anti-federalist positions in the debate about ratification.

I was surprised that books did as well as they did (scoring 2.55) in assessing the relevance of Federalist and Anti-federalist arguments to politics today. Nine books made a statement similar to Remy's: "The Federalist essays remain an authoritative explanation of the Constitution and the American form of government" (70). Four books, Glencoe's U.S. Government, West's U.S. History, Holt's American
Nation, and Houghton-Mifflin's American Government, were outstanding, with sections that describe modern debates on the Constitution. American Government devotes four pages towards explaining that, "As in the Eighteenth Century [there are today] two kinds of critics: those who think the federal government is too weak, and those who think it is too strong" (Wilson 44). The Americans assesses the relevance of the U.S. Constitution to South Africa's current reform movement. Students can learn that the debates in Philadelphia were important to politics today, even on an international level.

Another strength that current textbooks have is their discussion of the positions of delegates. I graded most books as acceptable because they included traditional large-state versus small-state controversies and northern versus southern influences. Some books included more recent views of the Framers. Pathways to the Present says that Framers were "looking after their own interests" (Cayton 137). We the People includes the description of contemporary observers that delegates were "an assembly.... respectable for talent, knowledge, disinterestedness, and patriotism," but adds, "We should remember, however, that some of the Framers were men of modest abilities or questionable motives" (Smith 61). American Government again shines with a section entitled, "Motives of the Framers," which includes sub-sections titled "Economic interest at the convention" and "Economic interest and ratification." The work of Charles Beard and Forrest McDonald are prevalent in these sections.
The standard which earned more "A's" than any other was the factors involved in calling the convention. Six books earned "A's" by listing specific trade disputes, problems with Spain and Britain, the inability to amend the Articles of Confederation, or the unequal division of property along with the other familiar problems with the Articles of Confederation. Some books, though, had little, or in the case of The Americans, nothing to say about this topic.

Textbooks Can Be Improved

Standards set goals for high quality curriculum content. Despite the development of new standards since A Nation at Risk was issued, textbooks have generally not been "upgraded" to meet the more demanding and rigorous criteria. When textbooks are not demanding, students believe that the Constitution was written in a one-dimensional, simplistic fashion. High school history and government texts do not as a rule include sufficient scholarship to help students understand how complex and political the process of writing the Constitution was. Students do not learn about the political tactics employed by the Framers to pass the new Constitution. Textbooks could do all of these things. In Chapter Six, I will present an outline of a model chapter to show that textbooks can achieve the goals set forth by national standards by including accurate historical scholarship along with supporting primary sources.
Chapter Six:
What Texts Should Say about the Making of the U.S. Constitution

This chapter sets out what textbooks ought to convey about the constitutional convention era. Although chapter six is not finished text intended for inclusion in any textbook, it does outline my suggestions for the best information that all textbooks ought to contain. I have divided the content into sections and identified the appropriate curriculum standards. For each section, I outline the content and describe in some detail the information that ought to be included in high school textbooks. My suggestions are linked to those texts I reviewed for this study.

My goal in this chapter is to provide students with the essential information on this topic that standards suggest they should have. This chapter relies heavily upon Houghton Mifflin's American Government, which came closest to achieving the national standards related to this topic. This "ideal" chapter also uses recognized historical scholarship about the framing of the U.S. Constitution.

This vital three-year period should be covered in some depth. Houghton Mifflin uses forty-two pages, six times what Glencoe does. I am not suggesting that the mere number of pages devoted to a topic is indicative of how well that topic is presented. Surely, adherence to standards is more important than volume alone. However, some topics simply cannot be adequately explored when so little text is allotted them.

To make my "ideal" chapter as useful to students and teachers as possible, I followed the topic outline that most of the textbooks
employ. This "ideal" chapter begins with the call for a national convention in Philadelphia and ends with the principles of American government established with the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

Textbook Section One: Factors Leading to Philadelphia

This section of the chapter would list problems with the Articles of Confederation and identify the Nationalists, their political goals, and the action they took to force change. Here, students should learn why and how a convention in Philadelphia was called. Standards 1, 10, 11, and 12 from the assessment tool can be addressed here. Throughout all sections, critical historical inquiry, found in Standard 13, should be employed.

This section should most likely begin with some background:

The long Revolutionary war ended on October 19, 1781. America's victory was confirmed by the Treaty of Paris in 1783. With peace, however, the new nation's economic and political problems came into sharp focus. The weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation soon surfaced (McClenaghan 37).

All texts should make some effort to list problems with the Articles of Confederation. The following details comprise such information:

- The nation could not levy taxes since "the Articles of Confederation created little more than a league of friendship" (Wilson and Dilulio 23).

- The articles clearly stated that each state kept its "...sovereignty, freedom and independence" and therefore Congress could not force anyone to obey the laws it passed. (Smith 57) "The country lacked
national unity. Each state functioned independently by pursuing its own interests rather than those of the nation as a whole" (Danzier et al. 128).

- Even though Congress had the power to make agreements with foreign nations, it did not have the power to make state governments live up to those agreements. "As a result, few Americans paid their post-war debts to British merchants, even though the Treaty of Paris required such a payment... Great Britain refused to abandon its ports in North America on these grounds" (Boyer 143).

- "In 1784, Spain closed the Mississippi River to American navigation. This deprived western farmers of a means of shipping their crops to eastern markets through New Orleans. Though northerners were willing to give up navigation rights on the Mississippi in exchange for more profitable trade concessions, westerners and southerners insisted on access to the Mississippi. Thus, negotiations with Spain failed" (Danzier et al. 129).

- The Barbary pirates caused the most humiliating foreign relations problem for the nation. "Four North African states made a practice of capturing the ships and crews of nations who refused to pay them an annual tribute, a payment to sail in their waters. No longer protected by the British fleet and treasury, American ships were subject to attack" (Bragdon, McCutchen, and Ritchie 151).

- Laws needed the approval of nine of the thirteen states making it impossible to pass laws. "Usually, delegates from only nine or ten states were in Congress at any given time....in addition, each state had only a single vote. Therefore, the votes of only five of the smaller states could block a measure that eight of the larger states, representing a majority of the people in the nation, supported (Remy 62). Some saw this situation as unequal because "the political power of Georgia, with a population of 2500 in 1770, was equal to that of Massachusetts, with a population of 270,000 (Danzier et al. 128).

- Because Congress did not have the power to regulate trade, disputes broke out amongst states. For examples, there were reports that Pennsylvania and Virginia went to war near Pittsburgh over trade issues in unsettled western lands (Wilson and Dilulio 24).
- The government had no national court system, it did not have an executive branch, and amending the Articles required the consent of all the states (Remy 62).

- Violence broke out in a number of places as a result of the economic chaos. Most notably was Shays Rebellion, which shook the economic elite. "Neither Congress nor the state was able to raise a militia to stop Shays and his followers, and a privately paid force was assembled to do the job, which fueled the dissatisfaction with the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation system" (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry 31).

Beyond this overview of problems with the Articles of Confederation, texts should provide students with examples of how constitutional scholars do their work. Government in America does this. It takes a unique and interesting approach in describing what was happening in America. It uses a study done by historian Jackson Turner Main, in which he concluded, "Voters had ceased to confine themselves to an elite, but were selecting instead men like themselves. Americans were in the process of becoming the most liberal, the most democratic, the most commercially minded, and the most modern people in the world" (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry 30). Government in America uses a chart that Main created in a 1966 article for the William and Mary Quarterly to illustrate this point.

Textbooks should include a description of the economic chaos of the time, as nine of the textbooks provide. A depression left small farmers unable to pay their debts and moved economic issues to the top of the political agenda (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry 30). Students should understand how state legislators, like Rhode Island's, listened to the demands of small farmers and printed tons of paper
money and passed "force acts" which required creditors to accept this worthless paper money as payment.

Here it needs to be emphasized, as several books do, that a small group, or, as they are labeled in other books, "factions," "nationalists," "well-to-do Americans," and "young politicians," took the political lead to demand a stronger, more effective national government. The Articles, in their minds, created a government unable to deal with the nation's troubles. Magruder's calls this time the "Critical Period" but it may have only been critical to Nationalists.

Textbooks can tell students more about the "process by which a group of people....with varying interests seek power to influence and reach decisions," the goal of Standard 10. It has always been common and natural that a group of people, of which the Nationalists are an example, would want the power to influence government decisions. Texts can relate that Nationalists may have had their own economic interests at heart, as Beard suggested, and that others, like McDonald, believe that they were looking after the interests of their state and nation.

Students should read that men such as Hamilton, Washington and Madison worked to see their ideas become reality. They did not wait for Congress to act, and used "an American invention" -- the Convention-- to discuss Constitutional changes (Smith 60). For example:

Ignoring Congress [Maryland and Virginia] agreed to a conference on their trade problems. Representatives from the two states met in Alexandria, Virginia, in March 1785. At George Washington's invitation, they moved their sessions to his home at nearby Mt. Vernon. Their negotiations proved so successful, that on January 21, 1786, the Virginia Assembly
called for 'a joint meeting of all the states to recommend a federal plan for regulating commerce' (McClenaghan 38).

That meeting took place later that year when:

In September 1786, a handful of continental leaders assembled at Annapolis to discuss problems with the Articles of Confederation and suggest solutions.... only five states were represented at the meeting. This small and unofficial band of reformers (who held most of their meetings at a local tavern) issued a call for a full-scale meeting of the states in Philadelphia the following May-- in retrospect, a rather bold move by so small a group" (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry 31).

Texts should inform readers that it was with some hesitation that Congress gave its consent to hold a convention in Philadelphia. Many texts reviewed in this study point out that when Congress did grant its approval the Convention was to be "for the sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation." Students should be aware that Madison had a different agenda: He wanted to lay the foundation for a federal, as opposed to a confederate form of government.

Textbook Section Two: The Players

Section Two covers details the background, experience, and the influences on the delegates and their opponents. Here Standards 2 and 3 from the assessment tool should be met.
All textbooks should, and do, identify the delegates as young, politically-experienced, and well-educated white men. An ideal text would provide more than these few details. For instance, it is telling that in a country where fewer than one percent of the population finished college, half of the delegates did (Downey, Giese, and Metcalf 155). Textbooks can remind students it is "... not surprising that delegates were white men in a society that denied political and economic power to women and non-whites" (King, McRae, and Zola 139). Many of the Framers owned slaves and considered slavery immoral, but were unable or unwilling to do anything about this contradiction (Cayton, Perry, and Winkler 137). In many texts, the delegates are labeled as practical, prominent, and political leaders. They were "hardly average citizens" (Boyer 146). In summary:

They may not have been demigods, as Jefferson perhaps sarcastically called them, but they were certainly a select group of economic and political notables. They were mostly wealthy planters, lawyers and merchants, and men of independent wealth. Many were college graduates, mostly from Princeton, Yale, William and Mary, Harvard, Colombia and the University of Pennsylvania. Most were coastal residents, rather than the residents of the expanding western frontiers, and a significant number were urbanites rather than part of the primarily rural American population (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry 30-31).

Magruder's has a section that I would include because it supplies readers with other influences on the political thoughts of delegates:

The Framers were familiar with the governments of ancient Greece and Rome and those of contemporary Great Britain and Europe. They knew the political writings of their time, of such works as William Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England, the Baron de Montesquieu's The Spirit of the Laws,
Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract*, John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*. They were familiar with the Second Continental Congress, the Articles of Confederation, and their own state governments. Much that went into the Constitution came directly from the Articles. A number of provisions were drawn from the several state constitutions, as well (45).

I would also add information, found in *American Government*, about the state constitutions of Pennsylvania and Massachusetts:

The Pennsylvania constitution, adopted in 1776, created the most radically democratic of the new state regimes....To Madison and his friends the Pennsylvania constitution demonstrated how a government, though democratic, could be tyrannical as a result of concentrating all powers into one set of hands. The Massachusetts constitution, adopted in 1780, was a good deal less democratic. Both voters and elected officials had to be property owners. The principal officeholders had to swear that they were Christians (Wilson and Dilulio 25).

In this section students should learn about both supporters and opponents of the Convention. *We the People* begins with an announcement that the book cannot tell students everything they need to know about the Framers: "Most of the Framers' stories are worth telling in detail, but here we are limited to introducing to you those who are most important" (61). This is welcome encouragement for students to pursue more information on their own. *We the People* does not stop there, but goes on to state, "We will also mention some leaders who did not attend the Convention but who played a part in the establishment of our constitutional government" (61). Most texts tell students Patrick Henry "smelt a rat" but a better book would explain what he meant.
The NCHS, CCE and NCSS expect that students can develop arguments as to how delegates' positions on issues were influenced. Here students need to learn that some historians, such as Beard, McDonald and McGuire, have come to the conclusion that it "is truly astonishing that economic interests played only a modest role in delegates' deliberations (Wilson and Dilulio 41). It would help students understand better both the Framers and the work of scholars to read that in the 1980s a new study found evidence that the economic position of states had a greater effect on votes than [delegates'] own monetary condition. This helps to explain the northern versus southern state division familiar to readers of most texts.

Students can learn a great deal about politics from textbooks that report convention delegates did not all share the same political philosophy. For example, Franklin and Hamilton held different views about democracy. Hamilton could "hardly hide his disgust for democracy" (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry, p. 32). Students should also know the "common center" Framers shared about human nature, the causes of political conflict, and the nature of a republican government. These came into focus as the delegates began to share their plans for a new government.

Textbook Section Three: Plans for a New Government

This section covers what every good textbook should have: an account of the Virginia Plan, the New Jersey Plan, and the Connecticut Compromise. Textbooks should inform students that there were
many other ideas proposed during the 1787 Convention. Standards 4 wants students to know and analyze the alternative plans considered by the delegates. This means that texts must inform students of the various plans, as well as the reasons plans were proposed, and the consequences of these plans.

Good coverage of this topic might begin with historian Rakove's view that Virginia delegates used the time before a quorum was attained to start the Convention to "agree to put Madison's plan forward as a basis for the Convention discussions" (Smith 65). By reading the provisions of the Virginia Plan students should know that Nationalists had no intention of revising the Articles of Confederation.

Provisions of the New Jersey plan should be included in textbooks. Students should be asked to consider what might have happened if the New Jersey Resolutions had been presented first: "It is quite possible that they would have become the framework for the document that finally emerged" (Wilson and Dilulio 31). Students should be given some insight into what delegates thought of the plans. Charles Pinckney of South Carolina, for instance, considered the New Jersey Plan a bluff saying, "Give New Jersey an equal vote and she will dismiss her scruples and concur in the national system." (King, McRae, and Zola 142).

Textbooks need to describe the danger of the Constitutional Convention's collapse because small and large states quarreled over the provisions of the Virginia and New Jersey Plans. Washington wrote to friends that he had lost all hope for the Convention and regretted having anything to do with it. Readers should learn that,
"on June 19 the first decisive vote of the convention was taken: seven states preferred the Virginia Plan, three states the New Jersey Plan, and one state was split" (Wilson and Dilulio 31). That vote was followed by another on July 2, "The Framers voted on whether there should be equal representation in the upper house of Congress. The result was a tie, five states to five, and delegates began to fear the Convention would end in disagreement and failure" (Smith 68). Students should read how a solution to this problem was hammered out by the Federalists:

Then a special committee, composed of one delegate from each state, was formed. This committee was responsible for developing a plan to save the situation. The result of the special committee's work is known as the Connecticut Compromise or Great Compromise. The committee adopted a proposal previously suggested by Connecticut delegates Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth (Smith 69).

The Plans presented by other delegates during the Convention require textbook coverage. Madison's desires for a limited democracy and nullification of state laws should be mentioned. Students should be told that Hamilton left the Convention in disgust because he felt the plan did not give central government enough power. They should read that, "a handful of delegates, led by Franklin, suggested that national elections should require universal manhood suffrage....but the suggestion was too democratic" (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry 36). "Elbridge Gerry proposed to the convention that a federal bill of rights be drafted" but was soundly denied (Wilson and Dilulio 38). Textbooks make clear that towards the end many details were resolved by, "the
'Committee of Detail' of five delegates. The committee hardly contented itself with mere details, however. It inserted some new proposals and made changes in old ones" (Wilson and Dilulio 32).

Textbooks should report that plans were often made with a calculated and deliberate political strategy in mind. Ratification is one such example:

The Framers were political realists. They knew that they would have a difficult time winning approval of the proposed Constitution from all thirteen states. But they also knew that they had a good chance of getting nine or ten of the states 'on board' and that the rest would follow (Danzier et al. 157).

Textbook Section Four: Compromises

The fifth standard from the assessment tool covers compromises and, importantly, the economic and political interests behind them. The traditional description of the split between large and small states and northern and southern states should be included but there needs to be room to introduce other interpretations as well. In this section, government and history books have an excellent opportunity to tell students about compromise as a political tactic, as required by Standard 10.

Textbooks should give an account of the Great Compromise to end the stalemate between large and small states in which both groups wanted to ensure political clout. We the People offers an adequate version:

As in most compromises, each side gained a little and lost a little. The small states received the equal representation in
the Senate that their delegates wanted to protect their interests.... The large states kept their control of the House of Representatives. The House was also given important powers regarding taxation and government spending (Smith 69-70).

Most texts point out that the Great Compromise led to other critical questions which seemed to split northern and southern states. Textbooks should report that Madison noted that conflict arose "from the effects of [states] having or not having slaves" (King, McRae, and Zola 142). A table of slave populations living in the states in 1790 used by Magruder's is useful in showing why southern states were so concerned and refused to budge on the issue of slavery. Students need to read in textbooks that the Founders' compromised on slavery questions in order to create the badly needed government. An example is what American Government writes, "There are three provisions bearing on the matter, all designed to placate the slave-owning states" (Wilson and Dilulio 39). It then goes on to explain, twice as a matter of fact, and at length, the Three-fifths Compromise and the Importation and Escape provisions. It also tells, as textbooks should, how Americans at the time felt about slavery:

The blunt fact, however, was that any effort to use the Constitution to end slavery would have meant the end of the Constitution. The southern states would never have signed a document that seriously interfered with slavery. Without the southern states, there would have been a continuation of the Articles of Confederation.... thus the Framers compromised with slavery; political scientist Theodore Lowi calls this their Greatest Compromise (Wilson and Dilulio 40).
There were other compromises including how to choose the president, how long terms should be, and who should select Supreme Court members. A result of the Electoral College compromise should be added:

The Electoral College was a device to allow the people to feel as if they were participating in the choice of their president, while ensuring that electors or members of Congress would make the actual selection, or so the writers of the Constitution thought (Cayton, Perry, and Winkler 141-42).

In this section texts ought to make students aware of various historical research on the economic and political interests of delegates. One study uses the voting record of delegates to show that they were not divided by large and small states, but instead, the division was between those who wanted states represented and those who believed people should be (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry 39). Beard's assertion that delegates voted with their economic interests in mind is one of the most famous essays. Government in America uses a table to show the economic elite wanted stability (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry 36-7). It also says, "The best evidence about the Framers' motivation indicates they were concerned with building a strong economy rather than increasing their personal wealth" (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry 37). A model for this section could be from American Government's section entitled, "The Motives of the Framers." It concludes:

In sum, the Framers tended to represent their states' interests on important matters. Since they were picked by
the states to do so, it is exactly what one would expect. If they had not met in secret, perhaps they would have voted even more often as their constituents wanted. But except with respect to slavery, they usually did not vote their own economic interests. They were reasonably but not wholly disinterested delegates who were probably influenced as much by personal beliefs as by economics (Wilson and Dilulio 42).

Delegates learned to compromise. Texts can remind students that "The Founding Fathers were shrewd because, politically, they had to be" (Remy 68). Good textbooks ask students to ponder, as delegates most likely did, the alternative to "the spirit of accommodation" which emerged.

Textbook Section Five: Preparing for Ratification

This section provides one of the best opportunities to describe politics, explain how the political system works, and the many ways citizens can participate in it. This information pertains to the assessment tool Standards 10, 11, and 12. "Our awe of the founders sometimes blinds us to the bitter politics of the day" (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry 41). In this atmosphere the Framers had to be masterful politicians when it came to getting approval for their work. This section should tell students what this group of men did to give themselves political advantages in order to win ratification.

All textbooks should note that on August 6 the Committee of Detail report was submitted to the convention. It was debated, item by item, revised, amended, and finally, on September 17, approved by all twelve states in attendance. Textbooks should explain, as I
indicated in Chapter Two, that the Framers, concerned with the need for the appearance of unanimity, reported that the new document had the support of all of the states even though not all delegates approved.

Textbooks should explain, as Pathways to the Present does, that Federalists further prepared for the fight by devising a "bold strategy" that favored its ratification. The Federalists determined nine states were sufficient for ratification "argue[ing] that the Constitution was meant to replace, not amend, and thus, they could throw out the Articles of Confederation requirement for all thirteen states to agree" (Cayton, Perry, and Winkler 145).

We the People's account of another Federalist strategy, the use of ratifying conventions, is one other texts should emulate:

The Federalists knew that many members of Congress and state government were against the new Constitution, largely because it reduced their powers. So, the Federalists decided not to ask Congress or state governments to approve the Constitution, even though they were expected to do so. James Madison developed the plan to go directly to the voters to get them to approve the Constitution.... Once they had agreed on their strategy, the Federalists encouraged their associates in the states to organize the state conventions and elect delegates to them as quickly as possible.... the Federalists had worked on the Constitution for almost four months. They knew the arguments for and against it and had gathered support. They thought that if the conventions acted quickly, the Anti-federalists would have little time to organize their opposition to the Constitution's ratification (Smith 87).

Students should learn from textbooks that when the Convention ended the Framers were uncertain about the future. When the Constitution was signed "the members themselves adjourned to a
tavern. The experience of the last few hours, when conflict intermingled with consensus, reminded them that implementing this new document would be no small feat" (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry 41). Federalist John Marshall suggested, "It is scarcely to be doubted that in some of the adopting states a majority of the people were in opposition" (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry 41). Textbooks can add that Washington was hopeful, to a degree. He remarked to a fellow delegate, "I do not expect the Constitution to last for more than twenty years" (Danzier et al. 136).

Textbook Section Six: The Ratification Campaign

Several assessment standards can be addressed by studying the fight for ratification of the Constitution. Standard 6 calls for students to "compare and analyze the major arguments for and against the Constitution," while Standard 7 wants students to be able to assess the relevance of those arguments today. Students can also read in this section and learn from the Framers "the many ways to participate in the political process," the goal of Standard 12. This section also offers an excellent opportunity for students to achieve Standard 13: use critical historical inquiry by using many sources and looking at many viewpoints.

Comparing and analyzing the major arguments for and against the Constitution can probably best be done by using the writings of both Federalists and Anti-federalists to show how their views differed. United States Government uses those of Madison and "Brutus." An ideal text would include these and other views within
the text narrative. This section should also have a description, used by some scholars, of Federalists and Anti-federalists as nationalists and states'-righters to give students a better sense of who these men were.

*We the People* does an excellent job of explaining who the Federalists and Anti-federalists were and what their views and strategies were. It gives students a lengthy four-page "lesson" for each side of the ratification debate. Both Federalists and Anti-Federalists, according to *We the People*, engaged in an "intense and sometimes bitter political struggle "filled with skillful maneuvering and argument (Smith 87).

Students should be challenged to read how Federalists and Anti-federalists debated the issues. A good example is the Bill of Rights disagreement:

Some insisted that a bill of rights be added to the Constitution. Madison gave his answer to these criticisms in the Federalist Papers 10 and 51. It was a bold answer, for it flew squarely in the face of widespread popular sentiment and much philosophical writing. Following the great French political philosopher Montesquieu, many Americans believed that liberty was safe only in small societies, governed either by direct democracy or large legislatures with small districts and frequent turnover among members. Madison argued quite the opposite—that liberty is safest in large republics (Wilson and Dilulio 36).

All textbooks should enumerate the many tactics Federalists used to win ratification:

-the Federalist ratification plan was "technically illegal. The Articles of Confederation, which still governed, could be amended only with the approval of all thirteen state
legislatures. The Framers wanted to bypass these legislatures" (Wilson and Dilulio 35).

-Federalists wrote an enormous amount of correspondence, essentially campaign literature, during the time. Historians have compiled over 10,000 pages of material thus far. (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry 42)

-The Federalist stronghold of New York City threatened to secede from the state if it did not ratify. (Edwards, Wattenberg, and Lineberry 42)

-There may have been a deal with John Hancock to win ratification in Massachusetts. Hancock changed his opinion and threw his endorsement towards the Constitution, allegedly after being offered the office of Vice-President. (Bragdon, McCutchen, and Ritchie 160)

-Parades, processions, and celebrations were organized to demonstrate popular support for ratification. A new symbol—a ship, sailed down the streets of New York, Boston and Philadelphia. (Cayton, Perry, and Winkler 144-6)

-The testimony of common men was often used to show there was wide-spread popular support for ratification. (Boyer 150)

-Federalists labeled their opponents, Anti-Federalists, a name that was purposely misleading. (Downey, Giese, and Metcalf 161).

An ideal textbook section on the Framing of the U.S. Constitution should also provide a clear description of the Anti-federalists position. Anti-federalists were not opposed to federalism:

The Constitution, they charged, gave too much power to the central government at the expense of the power of the states. The Anti-Federalists did not want another level of government with the power to tax the people. Finally, the
Anti-Federalists believed without a bill of rights, the Constitution did not adequately protect individual liberties (Downey, Giese, and Metcalf 161).

Textbooks need to explain why the Anti-federalist campaign was ineffective. "Several factors worked against the Anti-Federalists. Their campaign was a negative one. They attacked almost everything about the Constitution.... but had nothing to offer in its place" (Bragdon, McCutchen, and Ritchie 160). "In politics, then as now, you cannot beat something with nothing" (Wilson and Dilulio 37).

The relevance of ratification arguments today should be a part of this section. The major debate between nationalists and states-righters continues today: "In general there are today, as in the eighteenth century, two kinds of critics: those who think the federal government is too weak and those who think it is too strong" (Wilson and Dilulio 44).

In this section textbooks have the opportunity to use primary sources with frequency and should. Quotations from sources, such as the Federalists papers, Letters from the Federalists Farmer, or the thousands of articles, letters, and pamphlets written during the debate, should be included. Pathways to the Present, for example, uses an article from the Providence Gazette to show how writers used symbols "to influence the reader's understanding of the central issues" (Cayton, Perry, and Winkler 143). Students should also be told by textbooks that drawings and songs were created to influence public opinion.
Standards 8 and 9 asks students, respectively, to "explain the foundations of shared ideas and values of American political culture as set forth in the writings of Federalists and Anti-Federalists" and "explain the source of basic principles established by the Constitution." There are other places that textbooks could describe the basic principles of American government established during the constitutional era. Currently, students encounter this information most often in a section following a description of ratification. Textbooks should use the writings of the time to show why the principles of limited government, checks and balances, separation of powers, democracy, federalism and judicial review are important.

*We the People* is an example of what this section should look like. It has a unit of five lessons entitled, "How did the Values and Principles Embodied in the Constitution shape American Institutions and Practices?" which lists basic principles of government found in the U.S. Constitution and explains to students how this form of government works. *We the People* adds clarification from the *Federalist* papers.

The *Federalist* papers are often described as an excellent commentary on the U.S. Constitution and the principles of American government. If they are "among the best political writings in the English language" as Magruder's claims, students should read excerpts from them as part of their textbooks.
A chapter on the Constitutional Era must accomplish several tasks, as laid out in the national standards. Primarily, the text should offer students several different viewpoints from respected scholars and encourage students to engage in historical scholarship themselves. Students should come to understand, through use of their history and government textbooks, that the study of history represents historians' interpretation of the past, and that viewpoints therefore vary from scholar to scholar. By asking students to analyze and compare differing interpretations of the past, critical thinking skills can be developed.

Students must be challenged to study material from primary sources. Current textbooks tend to shy away from asking students to engage in the reading and examination of primary sources, undoubtedly because publishers fear that such a book will not sell. The inclusion of primary sources, however, is an important means of understanding this period of history. Textbook writers and publishers should accept the challenge of meeting high curriculum standards. They should provide texts that expect more intellectually from students and teachers alike.
Chapter Seven:
Conclusions and Observations

As many of the reports calling for national reform have implied, textbooks are not as good as they could be. I have suggested in this study that textbooks do a particularly poor job of informing students about the history and politics of the framing of the U.S. Constitution. Rather than helping to meet higher national standards, texts are still "written down" to the level at which publishers apparently feel most students are capable of performing. While there might be varied reasons for the low expectations publishers extend to American students, it is clear that as a result our students fulfill our low academic hopes for them.

Texts must be improved, but they are only one factor related to student learning. In my own career as a teacher I have encountered a lack of professionalism among teachers and limited resources, time to improve content knowledge, and district support. Also, it seems each week I hear another report about the general decrease of participation by citizens in our country. These range from Montana Secretary of State Mike Cooney's announcement that turnout in our state has dropped to the Commission on Civic Participation's report of a crisis of civic involvement. Nevertheless, the major focus of civic educators should be those identified by A Nation At Risk and other more recent studies: besides better classroom materials, the nation needs higher learning expectations, better teachers and training for them, time to implement standards, public commitment to better educate students, and a search for the best materials available.
Need for High Quality Texts

After reviewing eleven history and government textbooks, I have concluded that most of them can be improved if the goal is increased academic performance by students. There are good and even some superior texts on the market. But if those superior texts are not used by every student, Americans are not being adequately educated to participate as informed citizens in a democratic government. For the health of our democracy, it is clear that all texts must meet rigorous standards.

While teachers, schedules, class size, and student characteristics vary from school to school and year to year, textbooks are a consistent source of information for all students, nation-wide. If every student has a good textbook in hand, they have access to information that will help them reach academic and civic competence. Students should not have to look to standards to see what they ought to learn; instead, they should be able to rely on the textbooks issued to them in their government and history courses.

I concluded that a major problem with most texts is that they do not remind students that history is made up of what men think happened. *U.S. Government* by Wilson is an exception. It tells students that "Historians feel...," "Some historians think...," "Beard believes..." In contrast, most texts are one-sided and simplistic. Textbooks do not remind students that books provide only an interpretation of history. The best texts ask students to think, not memorize.
Unfortunately, most textbooks do not sufficiently encourage high-level academic skills. If textbooks were to follow accepted national standards, inconsistencies and misinformation would likely be eliminated. All texts meeting the standards would use the best available scholarship.

The National Council for the Social Studies and National Center for History Education call for an increased commitment to education on the part of the American public, but textbooks had better be good until greater interest and support surfaces. Students may not be exposed to the best possible teachers, school environment, or curriculum, but one thing every student can have in hand is the best materials. Textbooks are vital to teachers, too. Realistically, they serve as curriculum guides; teachers generally do not refer to national standards or district curriculum guides to determine what to teach. If nothing else is done to improve public education, it is essential that textbooks be improved.

More Than Just Textbooks

Even if textbooks did meet national standards, they should not be the only source of information for students. The NCHE recommends that, "Classroom practices should go beyond the textbook to include multiple materials and venues," and "textbooks should be only one part of a variety of sources for historical study" (NCHE 4). Additional information can come from primary sources, the arts, other schools, historical institutions, and corporations. Technology, such as the Internet and web sites such as Thomas or
the National Archives home pages, can expose students to an enormous variety of historical resources.

Students, like historians, should seek out information from a variety of sources. In fact, students enrolled in history classes should become historians; they should be required to use monographs on history and government which would serve as commentary. For some, the reading might be demanding. Rather than shy away from it, expectations should be raised and students should be challenged. I thought Leonard Levy's collections of historians' essays would make a great companion book for students. It could introduce them to the historical debates surrounding the framing. High school seniors could understand the companion book to the recent Public Broadcasting documentary "Liberty!" and, with the help of their teachers, Rakove's Original Meanings. Because we are a democracy, even more so now than when the Constitution was framed, our history should not be well understood by just scholars and elites.

Schools should encourage the use of good quality audio-visual materials. Students learn in many ways besides reading. One such example is "Liberty!" which took pride, and deservedly so, for its use of primary sources. Schools should have the resources to acquire these materials.

Besides media such as text, film, fine art, television and the Internet, students can be exposed to and excited about information presented in other ways. NCHE standards ask that schools and scholars form partnerships. Historians and political scientists should go to the schools, sharing their expertise in a face-to-face, personal venue. In turn, schools should go to sites of historical and
governmental importance. A variety of programs exist that provide for student tours of Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. While not as feasible for students from Montana because of distance, time, and expense, such travel constitutes a legitimate use of resources.

Teachers are a Resource

In contemporary American society, public school teachers are rarely considered "scholars." While it seems obvious that teachers need to be reliable and knowledgeable sources of information for students, often a public school teacher's understanding of history and government is only a few short steps ahead of their senior students. A social studies teacher with a degree in education, for example, may leave the university with limited background in political science or history. To be certified to teach American history or government, I was only required to earn fifteen quarter credits in each and all could be at the freshman level. Such a teacher is tempted to rely heavily on texts for classroom presentations. "Linda Darling-Hammond, a professor at Columbia University's Teachers College who is an expert on teacher training...says, 'Most education schools have operated bureaucratically, assuming that teachers didn't need to know many things: just give them a textbook and send them on'" (Shenk 91). If students are to be scholars, their teachers must be as well. As the National Center for History Education recommended, "Teachers of history should be well-grounded in the areas of history that they teach" (NCHE 3).
The Madison Institute was created to address this problem. The Institute recognizes that teachers are frequently under-prepared to teach students about the U.S. Constitution. It has benefited me greatly to examine various sources, read the work of respected scholars and survey textbooks during my tenure as a Madison Fellow. My enhanced knowledge about the Constitutional Era has surely benefited my own students.

Weighing knowledge against technique is a common exercise in teaching. Missoula County Public Schools has asked questions in interviews about whether it is more important for teachers to be knowledgeable or talented as a teacher. The answer is obvious. A teacher without knowledge has nothing to teach. A teacher without a method to share knowledge cannot do so. Teachers need both, and schools of education must insist that their graduates become scholars of their disciplines as well as master pedagogues.

Presently, teaching does not attract the best and the brightest, as a recent Massachusetts certification tests showed and as a sampling of student teachers passing through our high schools suggests. American education will not thrive as long as the demands for membership are nearly as low as the salaries. John Silber in the New York Times wrote that low standards "repel the highly qualified students who are desperately needed in our schools." In Montana, since 1988, average teacher salaries have declined 8.1% when adjusted for inflation. Raise standards and pay, and the best students may opt to teach.
Usable Standards

National education standards created by the National Council for the Social Studies, the National Center for History in the Schools, and the Center for Civic Education were a step in the right direction towards raising expectations for textbooks, students, and teachers. Sitting in a curriculum meeting recently, a colleague picked up a copy of the NCHS standards and asked: "Who will really use these?" My colleague had a legitimate concern. The standards need to be written so that more people in the education process will use them. If standards were made more accessible, students could see exactly what they are expected to learn, parents would be aware of the expectations for their children, teachers could use them as a checklist to plan units and select materials, and textbook companies would know what they should publish.

As it is, most people involved in the educational process are both unaware of the national standards or unwilling to use them. It is clear from my study that teachers should use standards. But for this to happen, teachers need time to read and use them and they need to be written with clarity and more "user friendly." In my mind, the Civitas list of what should be taught is much more meaningful than standards which use buzzwords such as students shall "analyze, describe, develop...". For this round of social studies curriculum designing in the Missoula County Public Schools, teachers were actually given a list of these words to be plugged randomly into learner outcomes.
In the face of the imposition of national standards, there is some anxiety among local educators about losing control of the school curriculum. While I understand the concerns about local control of schools, there are inarguably some topics that every student in America ought to understand. Every local district in America does not need to reinvent the wheel writing learner outcomes for American history and government. The existing duplication of effort wastes precious time.

Finding the Best Textbooks

My last major concern is how social studies textbooks are purchased nation-wide. The task has a certain air of casualness about it. For example, teachers in the Missoula County Public Schools district are asked to look at the collection of textbooks at the district office and cast a vote for the one they prefer. We do not evaluate them based on national standards. Most veteran teachers are unaware of the standards, haven't read them, disregard them, or opt to rely on their own limited experience with various texts. Very little discussion surrounds the selections. No structured method is followed to evaluate the appropriateness of the books for our curriculum and our student population. Frequently, we favor the sales representative who has served us best by getting us samples, allowed us to try classroom sets, or took us to dinner. Some teachers press the selection of a certain text, for whatever reason, calling every night to encourage a "vote" for a text. My point is, the choice of a text can be
very unscientific. The result of such a haphazard selection process can be poor textbooks as judged by the criteria of my study.

In contrast, I have devoted hundreds of hours to the examination of books for this study. Obviously, teachers need more time and structure during the process of text selection. One other solution would be the use of consultants to evaluate textbooks for adoption based on district needs and national standards.

Textbooks publishers, according to a sales representative, are well aware of the national history and government standards. Magruder's includes an outline of the National Standards for Civics and Government for grades 9-12 and indicates which of its chapters focus on each standard. Purchasers can demand that a new text follow standards. The sales representative told me, however, that meeting national content standards is not what sells books. He confided that what sells are textbooks that will help teachers get through the day. Consumers of textbooks seek "the bells and whistles": CD-roms, test banks, and visual aids. The content of a book is not what is important, he suggested, recounting the story of a competitor who re-packaged a book without changing the content at all. What the book looks like and how it is "accessorized" are most important.

If textbooks are to be written to meet national standards, they must be as dynamic as the standards are. Rather than being revised only to meet the changing graphic, linguistic and technological needs of each decade, texts should be revised to reflect the best current scholarship within their discipline. My hope is that someday government and history textbooks will reflect top scholarship and be
tools to help students become better educated, more thoughtful citizens. That goal will be reached only through a massive national commitment to both education and the survival of our democracy.
Works Cited

Adair, Douglass. "Fame and the Founding Fathers." Moravian College, 1967


Klein, Milton M. "The Constitution as Myth and Symbol" this Constitution, fall 1987


Loewen, James K. Lies My Teacher Told Me. New York: W.W. Norton 1995


Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory. Content Knowledge. Aurora, CO: McRel, 1996


Roll, Charles. "We, Some of the People." *Journal of American History*, June 1969


Smith, Duane E. general editor. *We the People*. Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education, 1995


