



Delaware Day 4th Grade Competition

Lesson Four

Big States versus **Small States** **What is Fair?**

Students will be able to:

- Explain why Delaware gets only one representative in the House of Representatives (Panel 3:5)
- Express an opinion regarding the fairness of the Great Compromise (Panel 3:6)

This lesson contains information, resources and ideas to help students understand why the Constitution was written. Teachers will determine best practices and methods for instruction.

1. Introductory Activity

Distribute Document 1: *Big Class versus Small Class - what is fair?*
Give students time to discuss their answers.

2. Historical Background

Explain that when the framers were writing the Constitution, the big states and the small states argued over how the states should be represented. Virginia liked the idea of a House of Representatives where the number of representatives would be based on the population of a state. Small states did not like that idea. Delaware's delegates along with other small states' delegates argued in favor of a Senate where every state would have equal representation. The large states did not like this idea.

2. Activity: *The Great Compromise*

- a. Distribute Document 2: *Big state versus Small State: The Great Compromise*. Allow time for reading, writing and discussion.
- b. Explain that the bicameral bicameral (two house) solution (*The Great Compromise*) may have saved the Constitution. In the end, *The Great Compromise* - which Delawareans John Dickinson and Gunning Bedford, Jr. helped develop - meant there would be both a Senate and a House of Representatives. The compromise meant that Virginia and other large states were better off than they were under the Articles of Confederation and that small states still retained a fair amount of power.

Big Class versus Small Class: What is Fair?

Delaware Elementary School is a brand new K-5 grade school, but unfortunately, the builders did not make all the classrooms the same size. Mrs. A has the largest 4th-grade room and she has 30 students. Mr. B's medium sized 4th-grade classroom has 20 students. Ms. C has the smallest 4th-grade classroom and she has 10 students.

Each grade needs to pick a class president and representatives for the student council. Choose the answer you like best and explain why you selected it.

1. How should the class president be selected?

- a. Each student should get to vote for a total of 60 votes.
- b. Each classroom should get one vote for a total of 3 votes.
- c. Mrs. A's class should get to choose the president since the decisions will affect more of her students than any other class.

Explain why your choice is the fairest choice:

2. How should class representatives be selected?

- a. Each classroom should have one representative.
- b. Each classroom should have two representatives.
- c. There should be one representative for every ten students.
(Mrs. A gets 3, Mr. B gets 2, Ms. C gets 1)

Explain why your choice is the fairest choice:



Big States versus **Small States: The Great Compromise**

When the delegates met in Philadelphia in 1787 to fix the Articles of Confederation, they replaced it with the Constitution. They argued about many issues including slavery, how to elect the President, and whether larger states should be able to have more representatives than small states. Virginia had around 750,000 people in 1787 whereas Delaware had around 50,000 people. (*1790 Census*)

Under the Articles of Confederation, each state got one vote. The small states thought that was fair. They were afraid if larger states got more votes, the small states would be ignored.

1. Which states do you agree with: the larger states or the smaller states?

The delegates eventually came up with The Great Compromise where the legislative branch would get two houses: The House of Representatives where larger states would get more representatives than smaller states, and the Senate where each state would have two senators.

2. Do you think the Great Compromise was a good idea? Explain.

Populations Between 300,000 and 750,000

Populations Between 50,000 and 250,000

