

# The Articles of Confederation: A Comprehensive Study Guide for the United States Supreme Court

The Articles of Confederation, ratified in 1781, served as the first constitution of the United States. It established a loose confederation of sovereign states, each retaining significant autonomy. This study guide provides a comprehensive analysis of the Articles of Confederation, exploring its historical context, key provisions, strengths and weaknesses, and the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Articles.



## Study Guide for United States Supreme Court's Articles of Confederation by Course Hero

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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## Historical Context

The Articles of Confederation emerged in the aftermath of the American Revolutionary War. The Declaration of Independence in 1776 had proclaimed the colonies' independence from Great Britain, but it did not establish a new government. The Continental Congress, a body composed of delegates from each colony, assumed governing responsibilities during the war.

However, the Continental Congress lacked the authority to raise taxes or regulate commerce, and its powers were limited. To address these deficiencies, the Articles of Confederation were drafted in 1777 and ratified in 1781.

## **Key Provisions**

The Articles of Confederation established a weak central government composed of a Congress of Delegates. Each state had one vote in Congress, regardless of its population. Congress was responsible for conducting foreign policy, declaring war, and mediating disputes between states. However, it lacked the power to enforce its decisions.

The Articles of Confederation also established a system of taxation, but the states were responsible for collecting taxes and sending them to the central government. This system proved to be inefficient and unable to generate sufficient revenue.

## **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The Articles of Confederation had several strengths. It protected the sovereignty of the states and prevented the creation of a powerful central government. It also provided a framework for cooperation and coordination between states.

However, the Articles of Confederation also had significant weaknesses. The lack of a strong central government made it difficult to address national problems, such as foreign affairs and economic regulation. The inability of Congress to enforce its decisions weakened the authority of the central government.

## Supreme Court Interpretation

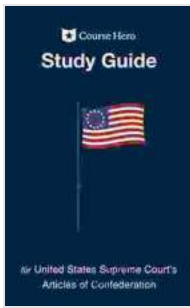
The Supreme Court has infrequently interpreted the Articles of Confederation but has played a role in shaping their interpretation.

In *Chisholm v. Georgia* (1793), the Court held that the Articles of Confederation did not grant immunity to states from lawsuits brought by citizens of other states. This decision was later overturned by the Eleventh Amendment to the Constitution, which granted states immunity from such lawsuits.

In *Ware v. Hylton* (1796), the Court held that the Virginia statute confiscating debts owed to British citizens during the Revolutionary War violated the Articles of Confederation's prohibition on states impairing contracts. This decision established the principle that the federal government has the power to review state laws and ensure their compliance with the Constitution.

The Articles of Confederation were a flawed but important first attempt at establishing a government for the United States. They provided a framework for cooperation between states and protected their sovereignty. However, their weaknesses became apparent, leading to the drafting of the U.S. Constitution in 1787.

The Supreme Court has played a limited role in interpreting the Articles of Confederation but has contributed to shaping their understanding. By examining the historical context, key provisions, strengths and weaknesses, and Supreme Court interpretation, this study guide provides a comprehensive analysis of this pivotal document in American history.



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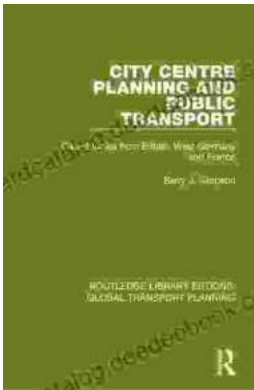
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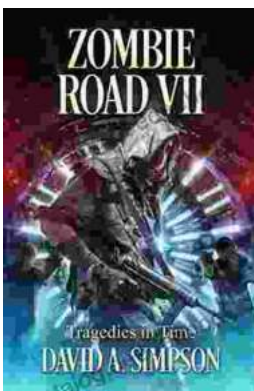
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