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Date: _____

WORKSHEET

**Chapter 1: American Government and Citizenship
Section 2: Shaping American Government**

Using Primary Source Documents: Federalists versus Antifederalists

After the U.S. Constitution was written, there was great debate across the country about whether it should be ratified. Adoption of the U.S. Constitution was by no means certain. Read the two excerpts that follow. One is from a Federalist publication and one is from an Antifederalist perspective.

From *The Federalist Papers*, describing the United States:

Instead of being “joined in affection” and free from all apprehension of different “interests,” envy and jealousy would soon extinguish confidence and affection, and the partial interests of each confederacy, instead of the general interests of all America, would be the only objects of their policy and pursuits. Hence, like most other bordering nations, they would always be either involved in disputes and war, or live in the constant apprehension of them.

An Antifederalist point of view by a Mr. Singletary during the ratification debates of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, January, 1788:

These lawyers, and men of learning, and moneyed men, that talk so finely, and gloss over matters so smoothly, to make us poor illiterate people swallow down the pill, expect to get into Congress themselves; they expect to be managers of this Constitution, and get the power and all the money into their own hands, and then they will swallow up all us little folks.... This is what I am afraid of.

Directions: After reading the excerpts, answer the following questions.

1. What was the main argument of the Federalists in favor of supporting the U.S. Constitution?

2. What was the main argument of the Antifederalists for not supporting the U.S. Constitution?

3. What might the United States have been like if the Antifederalists had been successful?

