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| **U.S. CONSTITUTION AND SHAYS’ REBELLION** |

In this activity, you will be introduced to Shays’ Rebellion, the weakness of the Articles of Confederation, and how Shays’ Rebellion helped lead to the Constitutional Convention.

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Read these two excerpts and identify the perspectives expressed by George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Underline words that help you understand each man’s perspective.

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| George Washington’s 1787 letter to Henry Knox: |
| “[I shall] be extremely anxious to know the issue of the movements of the forces that were assembling, the one to support, the other to oppose the constitutional rights of Massachusetts. – The moment is, indeed, important! – If government shrinks, or is unable to enforce its laws; fresh maneuvers will be displayed by the insurgents – anarchy & confusion must prevail – and everything will be turned topsy/turvey in that State; where it is not probable the mischiefs will terminate.” |
| What is Washington’s main idea? |

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| Letter from Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, December 20, 1787: |
| “I own I am not a friend to a very energetic government. It is always oppressive. The late rebellion in Massachusetts has given more alarm than I think it should have done. Calculate that one rebellion in 13 states in the course of 11 years, is but one for each state in a century & a half. No country should be so long without one. Nor will any degree of power in the hands of government prevent insurrections. . . .” |
| What is Jefferson’s main idea? |

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| Who do you find more persuasive, and why? |
| What are the strengths and weaknesses of each view? |
| Jefferson | Washington |
| Strengths: | Strengths: |
| Weaknesses: | Weaknesses: |
| How might views like those of Washington influence the founders when crafting the U.S. Constitution? |
| How might views like those of Jefferson influence the founders when crafting the U.S. Constitution? |