

## Sample Question:

Discuss in an expository, five paragraph essay how the Constitutional Convention dealt with the question of representation, include discussion of the Virginia and New Jersey plans and the compromise that was reached.

## Sample Essay:

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Of the many questions the Founding Fathers dealt with in Philadelphia, certainly the question of how the various states would be represented in the new national legislature was one of the most important. On this question possibly hung the future strength and longevity of the NARROW proposed government. By examining the proposals for a national legislature by both Virginia and New Jersey as well as the compromise that resulted, it is possible to see how the Founding Fathers successfully solved this dilemma.

THESIS

TRANSITION

TELLS WHAT THE PARAGRAPH WILL BE ABOUT

The first proposal was known as the Virginia plan or large-state plan. The plan called for a national legislature whose representation would be determined by population. The greater the population the more representatives the state would have. The larger states who favored this proposal felt states possessing more of the nation's people should have a greater say in the national government. It was also clear those states feared too much or equal power given to the smaller states.

TRANSITION

TELLS WHAT THE PARAGRAPH WILL BE ABOUT

With the Virginia plan on the negotiating table, the New Jersey or small-state plan was then presented as an alternative. The plan called for a legislature based on equal representation. Each state, regardless of size or population, would have the same number of representatives. Clearly, the smaller states felt this plan would give them an equal say in government and, at the same time, prevent the larger states from taking advantage of them.

TRANSITION

TELLS WHAT THE PARAGRAPH WILL BE ABOUT

Once these proposals were presented, it was up to the Founding Fathers to accept one or the other. In the end, they came up with the wise choice of taking both. That decision is now referred to as the "Great Compromise." They decided the legislature would have two "houses." The larger house, the House of Representatives, would incorporate the large-state plan and have representation based on population. The other house, the Senate, would incorporate the small-state plan and have equal representation. By having the wisdom to incorporate both plans, they were able to create a plan for the national legislature that, ultimately, would be acceptable to the nation.

TRANSITION

ENDING TO THE "STORY"

Finally, despite some struggle, the Constitution was approved by the states. When the Constitution was ratified in 1788, it became the law of the land. Thus, having looked at both the large and small state plans and the compromise that was created from them, it is clear the Founding Fathers were able to successfully deal with the question of representation.

RESTATING OF THE THESIS IN THE PAST TENSE