The Great Compromise and the Three-Fifths Compromise

Virginia Plan

* Called for a bicameral legislature (2 houses)
* Gives power to larger states
* Representatives are based on population
* 1 vote for every 1 representative
* Supreme power would go to the federal government

New Jersey Plan

* Called for a unicameral legislature (1 house)
* Gave equal power to large and small states (2 votes each)
* Federal government could tax
* Federal government could regulate business (commerce) across state boundaries (interstate)

Great Compromise

* Combined parts of the two plans
* Upper House (Senate) created for small states (equal voice)
* Lower House (House of Reps created for larger states (population)
* 2 house legislature called bicameral

Three-Fifths Compromise

* 3/5 of a slave or 3 out of 5 slaves counted as population
* To add more population, thus getting more representation
* More voice in government by having more representatives

Summary

Because delegates at the Constitutional Convention had to come to a series of compromises in order to get agreement by Federalists and Anti-Federalists. If our representatives can’t agree on things, how are 9 out of 13 states going to agree to ratify this Constitution? If they want to get this Constitution signed, passed, and ratified by the states, each side has to give up a little of what they want to get agreement. By combining the New Jersey and Virginia Plans into the Great Compromise, the small states get their equal representation in the Senate and the large states get their representation by population in the House of Representatives. The Three-Fifths Compromise was the next task the delegates faced. States that had larger slave populations wanted to count their slaves as population while states with little to no slave population believed that to be unfair to them. As such, another compromise was worked out to count 3 out of 5 slaves as population in order to satisfy the states that needed to use slave population to boost their representatives in Congress.