

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your Task:

The Constitution is a written document that outlines the republican form of government we have today. After much compromise, 39 of the 55 delegates that attended the Constitutional Convention signed the document.

Howard Chandler Christy’s painting of the signing of the United States Constitution was custom-made in 1939 as part of the congressional celebration of the Constitution’s 150th anniversary. Finished in 1940, the scene is among the most well known images in the United States Capitol. It is on display in the east grand stairway of the House wing.

Christy’s painting is highly praised as the best single picture ever created of the founding of America. However, it is not the only one that exists, and each day new artists are creating their own interpretations of historical events based on historical data. There is talk about commissioning a modern artist to create a new painting that will replace Christy’s interpretation of the signing. Critics have questioned its historical accuracy and intended message. Like all artistic pieces, one must question whether it displays the spirit of the time captured, the opinion of the author, or perhaps both.

You have been selected to be part of a group to determine whether the artist’s political message displayed in the image is one that justifies its display in its Washington D.C. location. To determine this, you must critically analyze the image, determine the artists intended message, determine the author’s use of his craft to portray that message, and lastly, determine if the painting portrays the spirit of the Constitution and the Constitutional Convention of 1787.

Objectives:

I will be able to…

* + cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of the painting *Scene at the Signing of the Constitution of the United States*.
  + cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
  + identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose.
  + Integrate visual information with other information in print resources.

Discussion Questions--Before Investigating the Text:

* Knowing the painting’s location, what do you predict the message of the painting to be about?
* What would you expect to see in the painting based on prior knowledge about the time period?

