

CREATING THE CONSTITUTION

Primary Source

In 1787, a group of men known as the Federalists came together to encourage ratification of the Constitution through a series of essays known as the Federalist Papers. James Madison wrote *The Federalist*, No. 10, arguing that a strong national government could better defend citizens against the ills of factionalism than smaller state governments. Whether Madison or Alexander Hamilton wrote *The Federalist*, No. 51, is unknown, but the writer argues for the separation of powers and a system of checks and balances, both essential parts of our government under the Constitution.

◆ *Read the excerpt from The Federalist, No. 10, in your textbook and the excerpt from The Federalist, No. 51, below. As you read, think about how a separation of powers defends against factionalism. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

The Federalist, No. 10 and No. 51**from The Federalist, No. 51**

[How shall we maintain] in practice the necessary partition of power among the several departments, as laid down in the Constitution? The only answer that can be given is . . . by so contriving the interior structure of the government [so] that its several constituent parts may . . . be the means of keeping each other in their proper places. . . . In order to lay a due foundation for that separate and distinct exercise of the different powers of government, which to a certain extent is admitted [by all] to be essential to the preservation of liberty, it is evident that each department should have a will of its own . . . [yet] have as little agency as possible in the appointment of the members of the others.

If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.

In the extended republic of the United States, and among the great variety of interests, parties and sects which it embraces . . . there [is little reason] to provide . . . a will independent of the society itself. [T]he larger the society . . . the more duly capable it will be of self-government.

Questions to Think About

1. Why does the author believe that the separation of powers is important?
2. What two groups does the author say that a government needs to control?
3. **Draw a Conclusion** What conclusion can you draw about factions and republics from *The Federalist*, No. 10 and No. 51?
4. **Activity** On a separate sheet of paper, make a table with two columns. At the top of the first column, write "Separation of Powers." At the top of the second column, write "Checks and Balances." Use the information in your textbook to list examples of each category as indicated by the U.S. Constitution.