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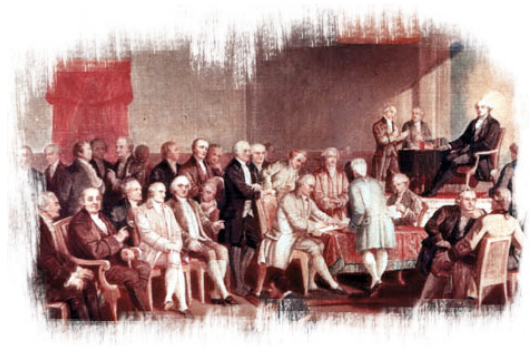
# Lesson Plan Unit

## The Founding Fathers and the

### Constitution

Kathleen Kelley  
Final Project  
November 11, 2010





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# The impact of the Constitution and the need to ratify!

## INTRO Narrative

To appreciate the immense influence the U. S. Constitution has on your life, imagine for a moment that it had never existed. The U.S. might have remained the loose confederation of highly independent, bickering states as it was in 1787. Some of these states may have broken off and become separate nations. What if you had to produce a passport to go from Massachusetts to Rhode Island? Or perhaps someone of your race or religion would not be allowed in Rhode Island. What if you complained about the government and the government ordered you to jail for years. Americans don't even notice how much the Constitution impacts their lives. The Constitution affects most of what we do. It provides laws to control the food that sits on the supermarket shelves and the schools we attend. Most important it allows us to live our lives largely the way we choose. It was a difficult road of compromise that got us to the government we have today.

The first attempt at forming a central government in the United States was the Articles of Confederation. The Articles established a virtually powerless government. It only had one branch, the legislation, it was missing the judicial and executive branches. It had no power to tax, no power to make treaties or raise a military. If the central government wanted money it had to politely request money from the states. The problem at the time was the country had a huge wartime debt and no way to pay it off. The Americans were petrified to give the central government too much power.

The post war depression made things even harder for Americans. Men like Daniel Shay, a tax paying farmer from Massachusetts, were saying, "The pursuit of

happiness is great, but we are starving over here." Shay led 2,000 farmers through Massachusetts to close the banks and courts so they would not have to pay the taxes. The central government could do nothing about it. This event exposed the weakness of the Articles of Confederation and they now knew something had to change.

A Convention gathered in 1787, and they created a Constitution. The United States Constitution is not a perfect document. It was fashioned via arguments and political compromise. The Founding Fathers, were smart enough to realize they may have forgotten something and maybe someday it would need to be changed. So they wrote into the Constitution a way to amend the document therefore allowing it to change with time.

The most difficult decisions were about power. Who should have the power and how should it be divided up. A debate was launched, between the Federalist, led by Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, and the Anti-Federalists, led by Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry, over exactly how much power and authority to give Congress and the other central branches of the new government. Hamilton argued that a strong central government would be essential to the nation's survival and prosperity, while his opponents insisted that most of the nation's power should rest within the state and local governments. They even had conflicting views over the definition of a republic. John Adams wanted to give the President more power to insure the Congress would not become an Aristocracy. While Thomas Jefferson, thought the Senate should have more power to keep the President from becoming too powerful and turn into a Monarch! Some of the other ideas that ended up on the cutting room floor were, Alexander Hamilton wanted the president and senators to hold their posts for life. George Mason originally wanted to have three presidents. Others proposed that the person elected to the president had to be



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**Lesson Plan #1 DAY 1**

# Founding Fathers Web Search

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**Guiding Questions**

What was the nature of the debates held during the Constitutional Convention?

In what ways do the debates represent "a model of cooperative statesmanship and the art of compromise"?

Are today's politicians able to work the same type of compromise?

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**Objective**

To gain a better understanding of compromise the Founding Fathers experienced while writing and ratifying the Constitution.

1. Students will question why some of the deputies of the Constitutional Convention did not agree with the document created.
  2. Students will judge the importance of the individual Founding Fathers.
  3. Students will list the main ideas and problems with the Constitution.
  4. Students will research using multi-media, readings, text books, and the Internet.
  5. Students will present their findings of the founding fathers.
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**Materials**

- Hand-out #1 WEB QUEST Hand-out #4 pre-homework
- Computer lab
- Printer
- Internet

**Pre-lesson Plan Homework**

Students will research one of the signers of the Constitution. Each student will share interesting information about their signer. See Hand-outs for HW handout #1 and #2.

**In the Classroom****Activity #1**

1. Students present information about their Constitutional signers.

### Activity #2

2. Students will work alone

3. Students will read the WEB Quest directions and answer the questions

4. Students will use the listed web sites to get their answers.

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### Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on their homework assignments on their founding father and the presentation of the material.

Students will be assessed and given a grade on the Web Search.

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### Standards Massachusetts State Curriculum

USI.7 Explain the roles of various founders at the Constitutional Convention. Describe the major debates that occurred at the Convention and the "Great Compromise" that was reached. (H, C)

Major Debates

the distribution of political power

the rights of individuals

the rights of states

slavery

Founders

Benjamin Franklin

Alexander Hamilton

James Madison

George Washington

Seminal Primary Documents to Read: the U.S. Constitution

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**Lesson Plan #2 DAY 2**

# High School Constitution

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**Guiding Questions**

What planning goes into writing a Constitution?

What important rules and regulations do you what in your school?

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**Objectives**

To gain a better understanding of compromise the Founding Fathers experienced while writing and ratifying the Constitution.

1. Students will judge the importance of the input of the individual Founding Fathers.
  2. Students will use critical thinking to gain knowledge of both the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists points of view.
  3. Students will dramatize the writing of a constitution.
  4. Students will construct a constitution.
  5. Students will brainstorm ideas in a group setting.
  6. Students will role play the Founding Fathers.
  7. Students will present their constitution.
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**Materials**

- Chart paper
  - Markers
  - Text with the Constitution
  - Handout #3
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**Procedures****Pre-lesson Plan Homework**



1. Students will answer the question, Why do we need a Constitution?

### **In the Classroom**

2. Break the students up into groups of 4-6 students.

3. Each group will get a piece of chart paper and some markers.

4. Students will have to write a school Constitution.

5. Students can use the U.S. Constitution to mimic the proper wording of a Constitution.

6. Students are to address things they believe are unfair in school and write rules to right those wrongs.

7. Their Constitution should represent what a school Constitution would be in their perfect world.

8. The groups will then share their Constitutions with the rest of the class.

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### **Evaluation**

Students will be evaluated on their homework assignments.

Students will be assessed on the presentation of their constitution.

Students will be assessed on the writing of the constitution.

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### **Standards Massachusetts State Curriculum**

USI.7 Explain the roles of various founders at the Constitutional Convention. Describe the major debates that occurred at the Convention and the "Great Compromise" that was reached. (H, C)

#### Major Debates

the distribution of political power

the rights of individuals

the rights of states

slavery

#### Founders

Benjamin Franklin

Alexander Hamilton

James Madison

George Washington

Seminal Primary Documents to Read: the U.S. Constitution

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**Lesson Plan #3 Day 3 and 4**

# The Federalist v The Anti-Federalist Debate

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**Guiding Questions**

- Why did some of the founding fathers refuse to ratify the constitution?
- What did the Federalist do to try and get the Anti-Federalists to ratify?
- Where there any compromises made in the end to get the ratification?
- Why were the Anti-Federalist called "anti" anything, did they name themselves?
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**Objective**

1. Students will prepare the necessary information for a debate.
  2. Students will debate the arguments for either the Federalist or the Anti-Federalists.
  3. Students will prepare arguments for both the Federalists and Anti-Federalists.
  4. Students will distinguish between the ideas of Federalist and Anti-Federalist.
  5. Students will role play the Founding Fathers.
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**Materials**

- hand-outs # for the Federalist and Anti-Federalists
  - computer lab
  - stop-watch
  - debate scoring cards
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**Procedures****Pre-lesson Plan Homework**

1. Students will research the Federalists and the Anti-Federalist ideas on the Constitution and complete the questionnaires for both sides for homework.

**Day-three Computer Lab**

2. Students will be appointed to either the Federalist or the Anti-Federalists
  - b. Anti-Federalist and Federalist will work as separate groups.
  - c. Students will discuss the questions they answered for homework and come up with a plan for a debate.
  - d. Each student will choose a Founding Father, research their arguments and be one of these men during the debate.
  - e. students will complete their research for homework

### **Day-Four Classroom**

3. The debate begins. The teacher will hand out the directions for the debate. (SEE HAND-OUT #3) Each student will be responsible for participating in the debate. The teacher will time the student's input and assess each student as they argue their side.

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### **Evaluation**

Students will be evaluated on their homework assignments.

Students will be assessed during the debate, the teacher can observe the input of individual students.

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### **Standards Massachusetts State Curriculum**

USI.7 Explain the roles of various founders at the Constitutional Convention. Describe the major debates that occurred at the Convention and the "Great Compromise" that was reached. (H, C)

Major Debates

the distribution of political power

the rights of individuals

the rights of states

slavery

Founders

Benjamin Franklin

Alexander Hamilton

James Madison

George Washington

Seminal Primary Documents to Read: the U.S. Constitution

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USI.8 Describe the debate over the ratification of the Constitution between Federalists and Anti-Federalists and explain the key ideas contained in the Federalist Papers on federalism, factions, checks and balances, and the importance of an independent judiciary. (H, C)

Seminal Primary Documents to Read: Federalist Paper number 10

Seminal Primary Documents to Consider: Federalist Papers numbers 1, 9, 39, 51, and 78

USI.9 Explain the reasons for the passage of the Bill of Rights. (H, C)

- A. the influence of the British concept of limited government
- B. the particular ways in which the Bill of Rights protects basic freedoms, restricts government power, and ensures rights to persons accused of crimes

Seminal Primary Documents to Read: the Bill of Rights (1791)

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## Extensions

1. Once the Constitution was ratified was the debate between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalist over? This theme could continue into the first administrations. Students will be able to take their knowledge and better understand the strict v loose constructionists in the first three administrations.
  2. Students could research the Tea Party Movement that has emerged since 2009. They could look at this new conservative movement and maybe compare the problems between the Democrats and Republicans today, with the Federalists and Anti-Federalists of the Founding period.
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## Suggested Readings

### Founding Fathers

Wood, Gordon S. "The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin" Penguin Books, 2004.

### The Origins of the American Constitution

A documentary History, Edited by Michael Kammen Penguin Books, 1986.

### The Founding Fathers Reconsidered

R. B. Bernstein, Oxford University Press, 2009.

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## Links

The Charter of Freedom: [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution\\_founding\\_fathers.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_founding_fathers.html)

Thoughts on Government, John Adams: <http://www.liberty1.org/thoughts.htm>

Social Contract, Jean Jacques Rousseau: <http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon.htm>

The Spirit of Laws, Baron de Montesquieu: <http://www.constitution.org/cm/sol.htm>

Thomas Jefferson on Politics and Government: <http://etext.virginia.edu/jefferson/quotations/jeff0950.htm>

House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov/house/Educate.shtml>

Teaching American History: <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?category=1>

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# Teacher Hand-outs for Lesson Unit: The Founding Fathers and the Creation of the Constitution

## Signers of the Constitution HW

### Hand-out #1

### Homework Assignment

You will be assigned one of the following signers of the Constitution. Your job is to research your person and present your information to the class. Complete the handout with the proper information.

### Founding Fathers WEB Site

[http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution\\_founding\\_fathers](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_founding_fathers)

1. Washington, George, VA
2. Franklin, Benjamin, PA
3. Madison, James, VA
4. Hamilton, Alexander, NY
5. Morris, Gouverneur, PA
6. Morris, Robert, PA
7. Wilson, James, PA
8. Pinckney, Chas. Cotesworth, SC
9. Pinckney, Chas, SC
10. Rutledge, John, SC
11. Butler, Pierce, SC
12. Sherman, Roger, CT
13. Johnson, William Samuel, CT
14. McHenry, James, MD
15. Read, George, DE
16. Bassett, Richard, DE
17. Spaight, Richard Dobbs, NC
18. Blount, William, NC
19. Williamson, Hugh, NC
20. Jenifer, Daniel of St. Thomas, MD

21. King, Rufus, MA
22. Gorham, Nathaniel, MA
23. Dayton, Jonathan, NJ
24. Carroll, Daniel, MD
25. Few, William, GA
26. Baldwin, Abraham, GA
27. Langdon, John, NH
28. Gilman, Nicholas, NH
29. Livingston, William, NJ
30. Paterson, William, NJ
31. Mifflin, Thomas, PA
32. Clymer, George, PA
33. FitzSimons, Thomas, PA
34. Ingersoll, Jared, PA
35. Bedford, Gunning, Jr., DE
36. Brearley, David, NJ
37. Dickinson, John, DE
38. Blair, John, VA
39. Broom, Jacob, DE

# Teacher Hand-outs for Lesson Unit: The Founding Fathers and the Creation of the Constitution

## Hand-out #2 Signers of the Constitution Worksheet

Student's Name:

Teacher's Name:

Course Name:

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### Response Worksheet

1. Which founding father did you read about? Give some background on him.

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2. Did he support or oppose the US Constitution?

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3. Why did he take his stand?

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4. What state did he represent? Did the other delegates agree with him?

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# Teacher Hand-outs for Lesson Unit: The Founding Fathers and the Creation of the Constitution

## Founding Fathers Web Search

### Hand-out #3

Student's Name:

Teacher's Name:

Course Name:

**Directions: Use the following web sites to complete the questions below. Be sure to answer them in complete sentences.**

The Charter of Freedom: [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution\\_founding\\_fathers.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_founding_fathers.html)

Thoughts on Government, John Adams: <http://www.liberty1.org/thoughts.htm>

Social Contract, Jean Jacques Rousseau: <http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon.htm>

The Spirit of Laws, Baron de Montesquieu: <http://www.constitution.org/cm/sol.htm>

Thomas Jefferson on Politics and Government: <http://etext.virginia.edu/jefferson/quotations/jeff0950.htm>

House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov/house/Educate.shtml>

1. What delegates did not agree with the Constitution and therefore would not sign the Constitution?

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2. Choose one delegate and explain his reason for not signing the Constitution.



# Teacher Hand-outs for Lesson Unit: The Founding Fathers and the Creation of the Constitution

3. How many states needed to ratify the Constitution to make the document legal?

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4. Where there any states that did not ratify the Constitution? Why?

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5. How long was the Constitutional Convention?

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6. How were the delegates appointed to the Constitution?

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7. How much did compromise play a part in the making of the Constitution? Give three examples.

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8. Did the personalities of the founding fathers affect the decisions in creating the Constitution? Give examples.

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# Teacher Hand-outs for Lesson Unit: The Founding Fathers and the Creation of the Constitution

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9. List three major political players missing from the Constitution Convention and explain why they were not present.

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10. Did any of the missing leaders contribute to the Constitution even if they were not present? In what context?

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11. Are there any original ideas on government in the Constitution? What are they?

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12. Where did the delegates get some of the ideas for the Constitution? Give three examples

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13. When was the Constitution ratified? Was this before the Bill of Rights was added? Explain.

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14. How can the Constitution be changed? Explain.

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# Teacher Hand-outs for Lesson Unit: The Founding Fathers and the Creation of the Constitution

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15. If you could meet any of the Founding Fathers who would it be? What question would you ask him and why?

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# Teacher Hand-outs for Lesson Unit: The Founding Fathers and the Creation of the Constitution

## Hand-out #5

### Writing a School Constitution

Would you join an organization without rules? It would probably fall apart before it ever started. Think about why we need rules and then create the rules you think are necessary to organize and run a school.

Use your copy of the Constitution to get ideas about the correct wording of you articles.

You will work with your group and create a constitution for \_\_\_\_\_ High School. You will need to address a few items in-order-to complete the task.

1. The name of your organization: Be concise and descriptive. Catch the essence of your organization in the name.
2. A statement of purpose, what goals do you want to achieve, sort of like a mission statement.
3. Member requirements: for example all genders welcome, must be a student or teacher, must have a certain GPA. You decide!
4. What are procedures of expelling someone? Punishments if needed? Will there be hearing board? Who will make up the members?
5. How many officers? Will they be elected? Describe their duties.
6. Will there be advisors? How often will students meet with advisors? How many students are in the school?
7. Will there be any cost for the school to the students? Do they pay dues for athletics? Will there be athletics? If no dues how will you provide the services? Will you be able to amend your constitution? if yes how will it be done? Do students get a vote?
8. Will you add a Bill of Rights?

Groups will share their constitutions with the class.

# **Teacher Hand-outs for Lesson Unit: The Founding Fathers and the Creation of the Constitution**

## **Federalist v Anti-Federalist Debate**

### **Hand-out #6**

**Instructions: Preparation for debate**

#### **Class work and Homework**

- 1. Use your text books to read about the Federalists and the Anti-federalists and use the documents found on the Teaching American History web site, Founding Era <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?category=1>**
- 2. Familiarize yourself with the materials and both sides of the debate**
- 3. Answer the following questions (according to both positions)**
  - a. What is the role of government?**
  - b. What are the natural tendencies of man?**
  - c. Who better able to serve the country as an elected official?**
  - d. Whose interests does your preferred form of government best protect?**
  - e. Why is your form of government less prone to corruption and how is your form of government set up to adequately address these threats?**
  - f. What weaknesses does your government have?**
  - g. Why? Why not are the Articles of Confederation an effective form of government?**

#### **Instructions for debate**

##### **Day One**

**You will be assigned a side, Federalists or Anti-Federalists**

**Each student will choose one of the Founding Fathers to role play during the debate. Students will be given the period to work with their team to come up with an angle and decide their characters. Students will research their person and each student must develop at least five questions of your own to ask the opposing team. Students should comb the hand-outs and the computer**

# **Teacher Hand-outs for Lesson Unit: The Founding Fathers and the Creation of the Constitution**

for questionable material. Remember your objective is to make your government seem as if it's the only solution. Each student must develop at least five questions of your own to ask the opposing team. Here you should comb your packets of questionable material. Please put each question an index card for easy reference. Students should complete the research for homework.

## Citations

Founding Fathers Info The Federalist Papers

<http://www.foundingfathers.info/federalistpapers/fedindex.htm>

Teaching American History.org Partner with the Ashbrook Center on a American History Grant, Founding Era Documents, Federalist Documents, Anti Federalist , Federalist Papers

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?category=1>

American History a Survey Text Book

Alan Brinkley

The Charter of Freedom: [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution\\_founding\\_fathers.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_founding_fathers.html)

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A documentary History, Edited by Michael Kammen Penguin Books, 1986.

### The Founding Fathers Reconsidered

R. B. Bernstein, Oxford University Press, 2009.

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# Teacher Hand-outs

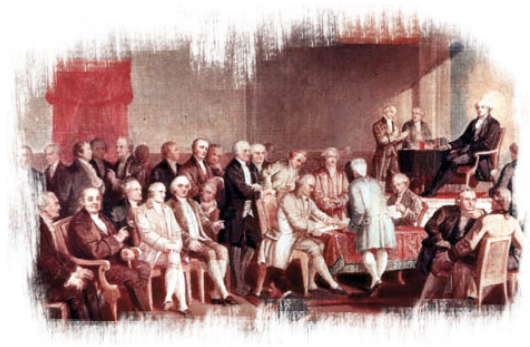
## The Founding Fathers and the

### Constitution

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