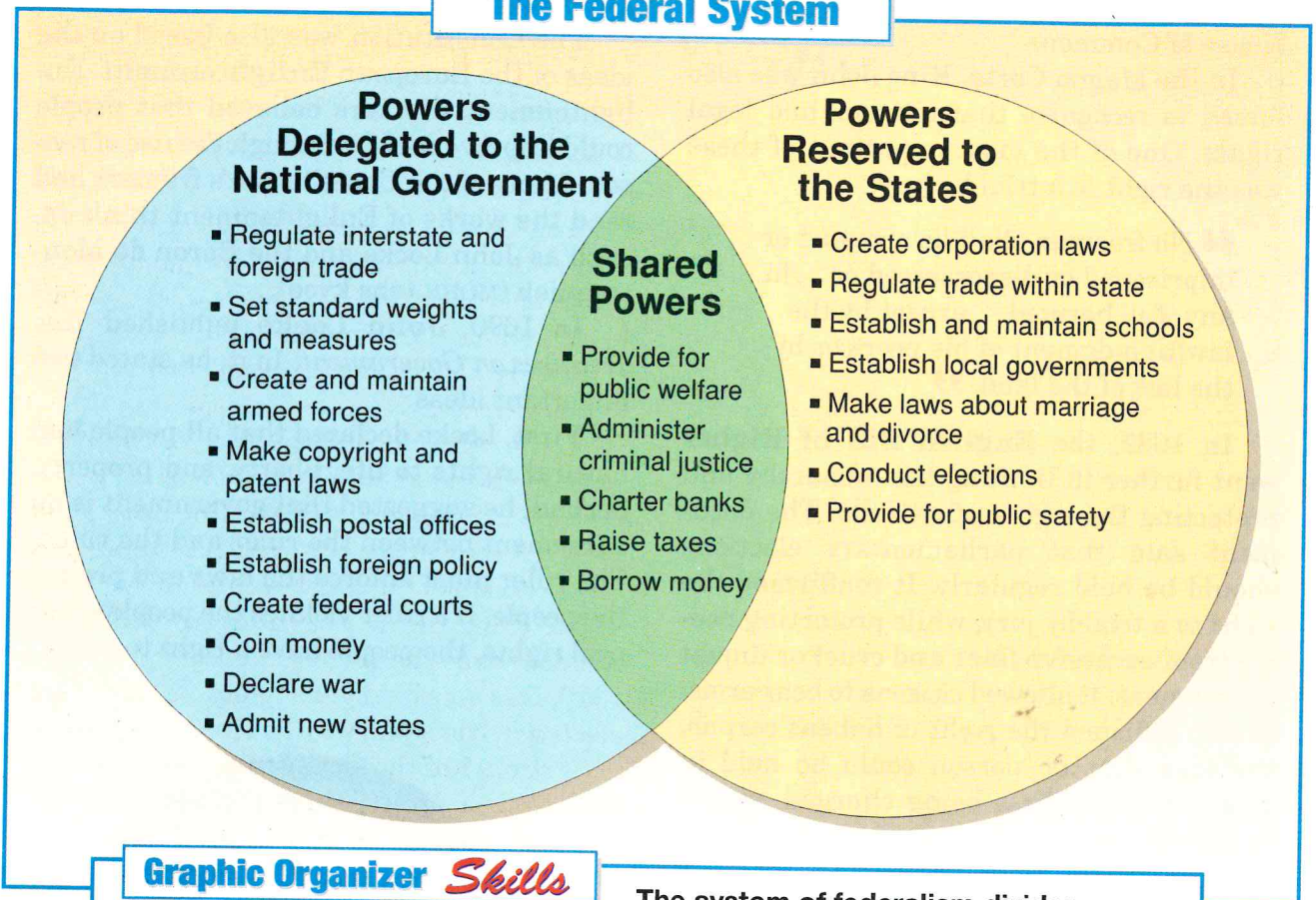


The Federal System



Graphic Organizer Skills

The system of federalism divides power between the national government and state governments.

- 1. Comprehension** (a) List two powers shared by national and state governments. (b) List two powers reserved to the states.
- 2. Critical Thinking** Why do you think the power to create and maintain armed forces was delegated to the federal government?



Locke's ideas were popular among Americans. The framers of the Constitution wanted to protect people's natural rights and limit the power of government. They saw the Constitution as a contract between the people and their government.

In 1748, the French thinker Baron de **Montesquieu** published *The Spirit of the Laws*. He urged that the power of government be divided among three separate branches: the legislative, executive, and judicial. This idea, known as the **separation of powers**, was designed to keep any person or group from gaining too much power.

Montesquieu stressed the importance of the rule of law. The powers of government, he

said, should be clearly defined. This would prevent individuals or groups from using government power for their own purposes. In the Constitution, the framers set out the basic laws of the nation, defining and limiting the powers of the government.

A Federal System

The framers had to decide how to divide power between the national government and the states. Under the Articles of Confederation, states had more power than Congress. Under the Constitution, states delegated, or gave up, some of their powers to the national government. At the same time, the states reserved, or kept, other powers. This division