

Pro-Con Worksheet: Debate over a National Bank [Sample Answers]

*When you've faced a difficult decision in life, a family member, friend, or teacher may have suggested that you make a "pros and cons list," categorizing the reasons **in favor of** making a certain decision (merits/benefits/advantages) and the reasons **against** making that decision (costs/downsides/dangers). For this activity, you are going to think about and list the pros and cons of adopting either Hamilton's or Jefferson's (or Madison's) position with respect to whether it is constitutional or not for the federal government to create a national bank.*

Pros	Cons
<p><i>What are the main reasons in favor of adopting either Hamilton's or Jefferson's (or Madison's) interpretation of the Constitution?</i></p> <p><i>What are the merits/benefits/advantages of adopting either position with respect to the policies that the federal government would or would not be permitted to pursue?</i></p> <p>Hamilton's Position: Has a more compelling interpretation of the true meaning of the Constitution (e.g., "necessary" does <u>not</u> mean "absolutely necessary")</p> <p>Hamilton's Position: Enables the government to accomplish its constitutional purposes effectively</p> <p>Hamilton's Position: Allows the government to adopt more good policies for the nation</p> <p>Jefferson's (and Madison's) Position: Has a more compelling interpretation of the true meaning of the Constitution (e.g., "necessary" does <u>not</u> mean "convenient")</p> <p>Jefferson's (and Madison's) Position: Protects federalism/the role of the states by strictly limiting the federal government's powers</p>	<p><i>What are the main reasons against either Hamilton's or Jefferson's (or Madison's) interpretation of the Constitution?</i></p> <p><i>What are the costs/downsides/dangers of adopting either position with respect to the policies that the federal government would or would not be permitted to pursue?</i></p> <p>Hamilton's Position: Has an unpersuasive interpretation of the Constitution (e.g., "necessary" does <u>not</u> simply mean "useful")</p> <p>Hamilton's Position: Fails to provide sufficient (or any) limits on the federal government</p> <p>Hamilton's Position: Enables policies that would be bad for the nation</p> <p>Jefferson's Position: Has an unpersuasive interpretation of the Constitution (e.g., "necessary" does <u>not</u> mean "absolutely necessary")</p> <p>Jefferson's (and Madison's) Position: Makes it more difficult for the federal government to achieve its constitutional purposes</p> <p>Jefferson's (and Madison's) Position: Prohibits policies that would be good for the nation</p>

Jefferson's (and Madison's) Position:

Prevents abuses of federal power by strictly limiting powers

Madison's Position

Balanced: By insisting on both "necessary" and "proper", limits federal power to the means of achieving enumerated powers (unlike Hamilton) without crippling almost all congressional discretion in executing those powers (like Jefferson)

Madison's Position

Somewhat vague/harder to apply clearly than either Jefferson or Hamilton