

The Federalist Papers

James Madison



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The Federalist Papers is a collection of 85 articles and essays written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay promoting the ratification of the United States Constitution. Seventy-seven were published serially in The Independent Journal and The New York Packet between October 1787 and August 1788. A compilation of these and eight others, called The Federalist; or, The New Constitution, was originally published in two volumes in 1788 by J. and A. McLean.

Highlights abound in the essays of The Federalist. Federalist No. 10, in which Madison discusses the means of preventing rule by majority faction and advocates a large, commercial republic, is generally regarded as the most important of the 85 articles from a philosophical perspective; it is complemented by Federalist No. 14, in which Madison takes the measure of the United States, declares it appropriate for an extended republic, and concludes with a memorable defense of the constitutional and political creativity of the Federal Convention.

In Federalist No. 84, Hamilton makes the case that there is no need to amend the Constitution by adding a Bill of Rights, insisting that the various provisions in the proposed Constitution protecting liberty amount to a "bill of rights".

Federalist No. 78, also written by Hamilton, lays the groundwork for the doctrine of judicial review by federal courts of federal legislation or executive acts.

Federalist No. 70 presents Hamilton's case for a one-man chief executive. In Federalist No. 39, Madison presents the clearest exposition of what has come to be called "Federalism".

In Federalist No. 51, Madison distills arguments for checks and balances in an essay often quoted for its justification of government as "the greatest of all reflections on human nature."



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