

STUDY GUIDE: *THE FEDERALIST, NUMBER TEN*

I. **Background research** – The information for this section can be found in your textbook and in Carol Berkin’s *A Brilliant Solution*. You may also use any other sources you wish.

1. Identify: *The Federalist*
A collection of eighty-five essays written to explain the theory behind the U.S. Constitution and to answer its critics
2. Who were the three authors of *The Federalist*? Did they sign their names to their writings? If not, to whom were the essays attributed? Were all of the authors participants at the Constitutional Convention? Explain. (See Berkin, p. 62)
James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay did not sign their names to the essays. Instead, the essays were signed “Publius.” John Jay was barred from the New York delegation because his political opponents considered him to be too much of a nationalist. Both Madison and Hamilton participated in the Convention.
3. What was the authors’ main objective in writing *The Federalist*?
To promote the ratification of the new U.S. Constitution
4. Identify: Federalists, Anti-Federalists (see Berkin, p. 175)
Those who supported the Constitution took the name “Federalists” even though they were really in favor of nationalism rather than the division of power known as federalism. However, they did not want to appear merely as opponents of a political idea.
5. Define: republic, republican government
A republic is a government in which the people choose representatives to their government. A republican government is a representative government.
6. Considering that Great Britain did not have a republican government, what experience/knowledge of republican government might the Founding Fathers have had?
From the study of ancient Greece and Rome
7. Based on this knowledge (#6), what caused the Founders to be worried?
The republics of Greece and Rome failed.
8. Who is the author of *Federalist #10*?
James Madison

II. Reading and interpretation – As you read each paragraph of the essay, answer the corresponding question(s).

Paragraph 1

1. The Founding Fathers were aware of the skepticism and problems that would have to be overcome in order for republican government to succeed in the U.S. *Federalist #10* addresses one of these problems. What is the problem that is identified in this paragraph? (Hint: This problem causes government to be unstable and contributes to its “unsteadiness and injustice.”)

Factions. Madison argues for the general political importance of breaking and controlling factions and points in particular to the “factious spirit” that “has tainted our public administration” of that time.

Paragraph 2

2. Define: faction

A faction is defined as “a number of citizens...united and actuated by some common impulse.”

3. In your own words, explain why the author considers factions to be dangerous to republican government.

Madison (and others, no doubt) believes that factions operate in their own interest and ignore the rights of other citizens and/or the interests of the community.

In paragraphs 3 through 6, the author presents a number of “straw arguments.” These are arguments that are given and then “shot down.”

Paragraph 3

4. What are the two ways in which factions can be cured?

By removing the causes or by controlling the effects

Paragraphs 4 through 6 discuss the possibility of removing the causes.

5. How does the author “shoot down” the first “cure” for factions?

- Explain: “the first remedy (is) worse than the disease”

The first way to remove the causes of factions is to destroy the liberty that allows them to exist. Madison believes that destroying freedom is worse than the factions themselves.

- Explain: “the second (remedy) is impracticable”

The second way to eliminate the causes is to give every person the same opinions. Obviously, this is not practical.

- What evidence is offered for the claim (stated at the beginning of paragraph 7) that “the latent causes of faction are ...sown in the nature of man”?

Madison states, “As long as the reason of man continues fallible, and he is at liberty to exercise it, different opinions will be formed.” And, “As long as the connection subsists between his reason and his self-love, his opinions and his passions will have a reciprocal influence on each other.”

Paragraphs 7 through 9

6. What is the most common cause for the development of factions? Is it eliminable?

The most common source for faction is the unequal distribution of property.

7. What is the traditional role of government on this issue?

People look to government for the protection of property and to regulate the competing interests concerning property.

8. The author states “No man should be judge in his own case.” However, legislators (“a body of men”) are inevitably interested parties in much of the legislation that they consider. Is there a remedy for this?

Only if it were possible to have “enlightened statesmen” who are only concerned with justice and the public good. But enlightened statesmen will not always be available or in power.

9. Summarize the author’s four arguments as to why it is not possible to remove the causes of factions.

- a. It is not desirable to eliminate the freedom that allows for the expression of differing opinions.*
- b. It is not possible to make every person in society have the same opinions.*
- c. Factions generally arise out of a concern for property, and it is one of the duties of government to protect property and to balance its regulation.*
- d. It will not always be possible to have “enlightened” legislators who can rise above their own interests.*

Paragraph 10

10. In ruling out these possibilities, the author implies that if the causes of factions cannot be eliminated, then the only alternative is to

Control its effects.

Paragraph 11

11. How can a minority faction be controlled?

It will be defeated by a regular vote.

Paragraph 12

12. How can a majority faction be controlled?

It may be controlled either by preventing it in the first place or by making it incapable of putting its schemes into effect.

Paragraph 13

13. Define: pure democracy

In a pure democracy each citizen represents himself.

14. Why is pure democracy often considered the ideal government?

It would seem best for each person to speak and vote for himself.

15. Why, according to the author, can't pure democracies deal justly with majority factions?

There is nothing to control a majority interest; political equality does not translate into equality of possessions, opinions and passions.

Paragraph 14

16. In this paragraph, the author presents his solution to the problem of factions. The cure is (tah dah....)

A republic, or representative government

Paragraph 15

17. How is it that republics, especially large ones, can deal more effectively with the problems generated by majority factions? (look for two reasons)

*Republics can represent larger numbers of citizens.
Republics may extend over a larger territory.*

Paragraph 16

18. What is the major advantage of the first reason given in question 17?

The effect of having elected representatives is to refine and enlarge the public views by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of its wiser citizens. The public voice of the elected representatives may better reflect the public good than the direct pronouncements of the people.

19. What, “on the other hand,” might be the major disadvantage of this reason or characteristic?

The representatives may not be well acquainted with local circumstances and with the minority’s interests.

20. The author then poses a rhetorical question and proceeds to answer it.

- The question: *Are small or extensive republics more favorable to the election of representatives who will protect the public interest?*
- The answer: *Extensive republics provide the best safeguard to protecting the public interest.*

Paragraphs 17-18

21. Explain the two reasons why the author came to this answer (question #20).

- a. *Large republics offer better options for electing representatives of fit character, as there will be more to choose from.*
- b. *It will be more difficult for unworthy candidates to become elected when they are under the scrutiny of a larger electorate.*

Paragraph 19

22. In trying to anticipate any possible arguments against his reasoning, the author acknowledges that representative government requires a balance between too many electors and too few electors.

What is the problem with too many electors? *The representative may be too little acquainted with their particular interests.*

What is the problem with too few? *The representative may be too attached to their interests and not able to objectively view national issues and interests.*

23. Why does the author believe that the (new) federal Constitution provides the necessary balance?

The Constitution provides for two distinct legislatures: a national legislature to decide “great and aggregate interests” and state legislatures for local and particular interests.

24. Identify the principle that the author is defending.

Federalism

Paragraph 20

25. What argument does the author make to support his claim that large (in terms of numbers of electors) and extensive (in terms of territory) republics afford the best control of factions?

Extended republics encompass a greater variety of parties and interests, making it less probable that a factious majority can be formed or that it can act.

Paragraph 21

26. For what three reasons does the author believe that large republics have an advantage over small ones and that the Union (national government) has over small republics (the states)?
- a. *Representatives of the Union are more likely to be enlightened and virtuous, and less likely to be tainted by local prejudice and injustices.*
 - b. *The Union (national government) is more secure against oppression from a factious party because of the greater variety of parties and interests it encompasses.*
 - c. *The Union, because of its size, poses greater obstacles to a majority faction’s taking concerted action.*

Paragraph 22

27. In this paragraph, the author presents two more arguments in favor of large republics being able to control factions:
- a. *Factious leaders or religious sects may come to dominate a particular state or region, but are very unlikely to dominate the entire nation.*
 - b. *Improper or unjust projects will be less likely to pervade the entirety of the nation.*

Paragraph 23

28. What does the author mean by the statement “we behold a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government”?

The solution to the problem of factions arising in a republic lies in very nature of (an extensive) republican government.

III. Conclusions – Be prepared to give your answers to the following:

1. Summarize, in your own words, the author’s thesis and cite three arguments he uses to defend his thesis.

Thesis: The problem of factions will be negated by the nature of republic government, and particularly by an extensive republican government.

- a. *The causes for factions cannot be eliminated, but factions can be controlled.*
 - b. *A republic is the remedy for the problem of factions in a republic.*
 - c. *If a faction represents a majority opinion, it will be controlled by a simple vote.*
 - d. *If a faction represents a majority opinion, it will be controlled in an extensive republic.*
 - e. *With a large number of electors, interests will be quite varied and no single set of interests will dominate.*
 - f. *With an extensive territory, a faction or factious leader will be unable to gain control and dominate.*
 - g. *The division of power between the national and state governments (federalism) will allow for consideration of “great” interests which affect the public welfare of all people, as well as the particular interests of a state or region.*
2. Why do you think *Federalist #10* is considered one of the most important documents in U.S. History?

(Answers will vary.) Federalist #10 ...

- a. *perpetuates the idea that government should represent the people.*
- b. *refutes a claim that a pure democracy is the best form of government.*
- c. *concur that factions are dangerous to democratic government.*
- d. *states that factions can be controlled by republican government.*
- e. *claims and defends the argument that large and extensive republics do the best job of controlling factions, thereby paving the way for both increased population and territory of the U.S. This point somewhat refutes common sense that a smaller republic would be the most representative and therefore the best government.*

