

## Handout B: Bundle of Compromises Answer Key

### Great Compromise

Combined elements from the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan to create a bicameral legislature in which the Senate would have equal representation for each state, and membership in the House of Representatives would be based on population.

### Three-Fifths Compromise

Delegates from southern slave-holding states wanted to count their slaves in determining population for representation, but delegates from northern states felt slaves should not be counted toward representation. This compromise provided that every five slaves would be counted as three individuals in determining a state's population for determining the number of representatives the state would have. It did *not* mean that each slave was legally considered three-fifths of a person. It had nothing to do with any individual's right to vote. The right of slaves to vote was never recognized, and even free African-Americans were denied suffrage not only in the South but almost everywhere in the North.

### Commerce Compromise

Northern delegates wanted the national government to be able to impose tariffs on goods in order to protect emerging American industry from foreign competition. Southern delegates, whose economy was very dependent on foreign trade, expected that high tariffs would harm foreign trade. This compromise determined that the national government would be able to tax only imports from foreign countries but not exports.

### Slave Trade Compromise

Opponents of slavery wanted to end the foreign slave trade. Delegates from southern states did not want the national government to interfere with slavery, and believed the questions related to slavery and the slave trade should be decided at the state level. This compromise left the foreign slave trade undisturbed for 20 years; Congress would then have the power to ban the importation of slaves.

### Election of the President

The method of electing the president was one of the topics on which the delegates continued to debate throughout the convention. Some people supported popular election of the president, but others believed the electorate was likely to be too poorly informed to make a good choice. They considered having the Congress elect the president, but that would make the president dependent on Congress and would invalidate the separation of powers. They decided to invent the Electoral College, in which the citizens vote for electors who then vote for the president.