

## Handout D: Executive Comparison

**Background:** *Under the Articles of Confederation submitted to the states for ratification in 1777, there was no executive branch. The only reference to the office of president is a brief description in Article IX, the same article that lists the powers of Congress. This individual, a member of Congress, would preside over meetings of Congress and chair the Committee of the States (consisting of one delegate from each state) that met when Congress was in recess. He would perform some other administrative functions, but there were no clear guidelines or authorization — suggesting that these functions were expected to be very limited in their scope.*

**Article IX.** The United States in Congress assembled shall have authority ... to appoint one of their members to preside, provided that no person be allowed to serve in the office of president more than one year in any term of three years.

### Critical Thinking Questions

1. Given Americans' recent colonial experience (1763 – 1776), why do you think this document did not provide for a strong chief executive?
2. Compare the brief description above to Article II of the U.S. Constitution of 1787 and note several important differences in the approach to the executive.
3. What experiences in the decade prior to 1787 may account for a different approach to the executive position?