**Standard 8-3:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of South Carolina’s role in the development of the new national government.

**Enduring Understanding:**

Independence from Great Britain made the creation of a new national government and individual state governments imperative. To understand how and why these governments were created, the student will. . .

**8-3.2 Explain the role of South Carolina and its leaders in the Constitutional Convention, including their support of the Three-Fifths Compromise and the Commerce Compromise as well as the division among South Carolinians over the ratification of the Constitution.**

**It is essential for students to know:**

The problems of the United States government under the Articles of Confederation were similar to the economic problems of indebtedness and depression faced by South Carolinians after the Revolutionary War (8-3.1). Political tensions between the coastal elite and the backcountry folk in Massachusetts [Shays’ Rebellion] were instrumental in bringing about the call for a stronger central government that could control this type of rebellion.

South Carolinians played a role in the writing of the Constitution in 1787. The Philadelphia Convention was called to solve the problems of the government under the Articles of Confederation. Delegates from South Carolina took positions on all of the subjects that were debated. On the issue of amending the Articles or writing a new constitution, the South Carolinians supported the establishment of a stronger national government in a new constitution. They supported the creation of a three branch government with a legislature, judiciary, and executive [Virginia Plan]. On the issue of how representation was to be allocated in the new legislature, they supported the plan that based representation on population supported by large states [Virginia Plan] rather than the plan that called for equal representation of the states that was supported by the smaller states [New Jersey Plan]. This would give South Carolina and other populous states more voice in the new government. However, South Carolina supported the Great Compromise [Connecticut Compromise] that provided for equal representation in the Senate and proportional representation in the House of Representatives.

The Great Compromise raised the issue of whether or not slaves should be counted for the purposes of determining representation in the new government. Of course, South Carolina, as a slaveholding state, wanted slaves to be counted. Northern states, many of which were emancipating their slaves in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, did not. South Carolina did not support the Three-Fifths Compromise that resolved this debate. South Carolina delegates were also concerned that a stronger national government might attempt to regulate trade. They objected to any regulation of exports since South Carolina exported its cash crops and they feared any control of the international slave trade through a tax on imports. A compromise was reached that promised that the federal government would not tax exports or attempt to regulate the international slave trade for at least 20 years. This agreement is known as the Commerce Compromise. On the issue of how strong the president should be, they supported a strong executive with a term of six or seven years, rather than the 4 year term included in the final document. As representatives of the elite, they advocated an aristocratic republic in which only property owners could hold office. States were given the authority to determine voter qualifications. Although South Carolina delegates did not get everything they wanted in the Constitution, they were satisfied with the new document and returned to South Carolina to lobby for its ratification.

Political tensions between the Lowcountry and the Upcountry (8-3.1) played a prominent role in the ratification of the Constitution. The South Carolina ratifying convention was held in Charleston despite the fact that the state capital had already been moved to Columbia. Not only did the Lowcountry elite have more representation, just as they did in the state legislature, but it also was easier for even non-delegates to influence the proceedings that were held in their city. The Upcountry men lived too far away to have a voice. These backcountry opponents of the new constitution in several states were called the anti-Federalists because they opposed a stronger federal government. They feared that the elite would have too much power in such a government and abuse the rights of the individual. They also feared that the national government would be located far away from the people who had enough trouble influencing their own state government. Charles Pinckney and other members of the elite, who called themselves Federalists, argued for a strong government that could be influential in foreign affairs and establish better trade relations that would restore economic stability. The anti-Federalists were outvoted and South Carolina ratified the Constitution, thus making it the 8th state to join the United States of America. Opposition to ratification by anti-Federalists in several states, prompted the Federalists to promise to add a Bill of Rights to the Constitution. This was done by the First Congress.