



The Art of the Deal

In 1790, after the Revolution, the new United States faced a major disagreement. Alexander Hamilton wanted the federal government to take on the states' war debts to strengthen national credit, but southern leaders like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison opposed the plan. They felt it favored the North. To break the deadlock, the three men met privately over dinner in what became known as the "Compromise of 1790." Hamilton got his financial plan passed, and in return, Jefferson and Madison secured the new U.S. capital's location on the Potomac River — what would become Washington, D.C. This backroom deal shaped the political and geographic future of the nation and showed how compromise, even among rivals, can move a country forward.

Writing Prompt:

Think about the “deal” struck between Hamilton, Jefferson, and Madison — each gave something up to get something they valued more. Have you ever made a deal, trade, or compromise that turned out to be important? Write about a time when you had to negotiate or find middle ground with someone.

- What did each person gain and what did they have to give up?
- Why can compromise sometimes be the best — or hardest — choice?