



Harvard Model Congress

Boston 2024

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Constitutional Convention at Harvard Model Congress! Our names are Henry, Alex, Conner, Matt, and Nicole, and we will be your committee chairs this year.

Alex is a Junior living in Cabot house from the San Francisco Bay Area. He studies Chemical & Physical Biology with a concurrent master's degree in Chemistry. He conducts gene editing research at the Broad Institute and enjoys playing football, basketball, and volleyball. This is Alex's 3rd conference and he could not be more excited to welcome you all to this year's HMC!

Henry is a senior and fourth-time HMC staffer studying history. He was also in your shoes as an HMC delegate junior and senior years of high school. He is also a part of the Harvard radio station WHRB, spinning some jazz tunes on Thursday mornings (you should tune in). He is writing his thesis on the history of education in Ghana in the 20th century – but loves all types of history! Fun fact: He was IN ConCon as a senior in high school!

Matthew is a first-year from New York studying government and French. In addition to HMC, he is involved with the Institute of Politics Conferences Committee, the Harvard Undergraduate Legal Committee, and The Harvard Crimson. He loves talking about current events, debating, and writing poetry. He is also oddly passionate about pedestrian-friendly street design, so if you want to start a conversation, ask him about curb extensions.

Conner is a Junior and third-time HMC staffer living in Dunster House from Seattle, WA. He studies Government and History. In his free time, you can find him doing research with the Harvard Government Department, singing with the Harvard Glee Club, or training with the Army ROTC.

Nicole is a sophomore from California living in Winthrop House and studying Psychology and Economics. In addition to HMC, Nicole is a part of The Harvard Crimson and Harvard Latinxs in Finance and Tech (LiFT). In her free time, she loves to go on brunch dates with her roommates and discover new music on Spotify. Fun Fact: Nicole spent 136,392 minutes (which adds up to approximately three months) listening to Spotify in 2022!

Constitutional Convention is unique among all committees at HMC for many reasons. First, all of you are historical rather than modern characters. Second, your assignment is rather vague: write a Constitution! We will operate under the assumption that we have decided to abolish the Articles of Confederation and are looking to write a new Constitution. Beyond that, you have free reign over where this committee will go. While some of the events in our committee may mirror actual events, **our goal is not to construct a replica of the Constitution as it was written**; depending on the actions you take we may come up with something totally different.

As a result of the historical nature of this committee, some of the views held by the characters you are assigned are anachronistic and problematic. Many of the figures at the Convention owned slaves and advocated explicitly or implicitly for racial or gender-based inequality. You are expected to take on the views of your character, **but we will keep our discourse aligned with modern standards**, meaning that while you may propose something along the lines of what became the 3/5 Compromise, you may not use anything resembling racist language in espousing your proposal. HMC is an inclusive community and this committee is meant to be educational and fun for all.

We would also like to encourage you to think of solutions the framers did not propose, and think about the long-term effects of this theoretical Constitution. What problems will your document face hundreds of years later, and how might you make it malleable to societal changes over time? Think about modern Constitutional problems. We still have arguments over a loose or strict Constitutional interpretation; could the founders have nullified this debate with a single sentence? This is meant to be an educational committee, based on the real Constitutional Convention. One of its goals is for you to reckon with the consequences of the real Constitution, and think about ways the founders could have written it better within the lens of their day. Hindsight is 20-20, and we are not writing a document with modern ethics, but a little bit of hindsight is bound to, and should, creep into debate.

In terms of your research and preparation for the conference, we recommend that you look into your character's views on the main issues of the day; you should have an understanding of how your character viewed every provision of the Constitution that was eventually written, as well as how your character viewed each Article of Confederation. This will be a fast-paced and exciting committee, and your research will be crucial to your individual success and the success of the committee overall in writing a good Constitution. Good luck!

We are excited to meet you all soon! Have fun researching!

Best,
Henry, Alex, Conner, Matt, Nicole