

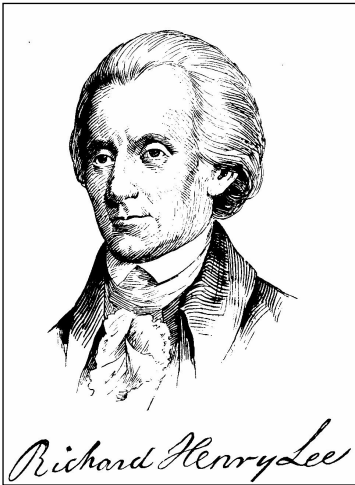
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ per: \_\_\_\_\_

# Defending the Articles of Confederation

## *Primary Source Analysis*

The Articles of Confederation created a weak federal government and failed to address many needs facing our new nation. The Articles were eventually thrown out, but not all Americans shared the *perspective* that doing so was a good choice or even necessary.

In 1785, Richard Henry Lee, a wealthy and influential Virginian, spoke in defense of the Articles and said:



*“I think Sir that the first maxim<sup>#</sup> of a man who loves liberty should be, never to grant to Rulers an atom of power that is not most clearly & indispensably necessary for the safety and well being of Society ... [T]he Confederation should not be presumptuously called an infallible<sup>\*</sup> system for all times and all situations ... no change should be admitted until proved to be necessary by the fairest, fullest & most mature experience.”*

*#maxim: saying, adage, proverb*

*\*infallible: perfect, foolproof, or flawless*

1. Does Lee SUPPORT or OPPOSE a strong federal government? \_\_\_\_\_  
Underline the specific words in the quote that justify your support/oppose conclusion.

2. Lee does not indicate he is completely opposed to changing the Articles.  
*In your own words*, when does Lee say it would be acceptable to alter the Articles?

3. If someone didn't agree with Lee's *perspective*, what might they argue in response?  
Look in your class notes from today on the Articles to help support your answer.

4. What does this statement tell us about the era and government leaders' view of their role?