Collective Action, the American Constitution, and Federalism

Please respond to each of the five short response questions posted below.  Your answers should be short, focused, and complete, ranging from one to three paragraphs.  Please make sure to answer each specific part of every question.  Successful answers will provide details and context that support your arguments and explain your position to the readers. You may also want to provide real world examples taken from the readings, lectures, group discussions, or your own independent thinking.

For example, in your answer on collective action you may find it useful to talk about specific examples of collective action problems that governments solve. In your response to the questions on federalism you may wish to identify and discuss historical examples of conflict or cooperation between the national and state governments.  These illustrations can be from the course materials or your own ideas.  Providing this context and being able to apply the material to YOUR OWN understanding of politics really shows us that you have mastered the material.

Each answer will be worth 20 points, for 100 points total.  The Question Set is due on Canvas at 11:59 pm on Monday, October 19th.  You should write plan on uploading your response as a docx file or PDF to this Question Set #1 assignment tab. We will be using *Turnitin* for the assignment.

1. Briefly identify and describe two different collective action problems that governments help solve, and provide a specific example for each. Why do societies face this kind of collective action problem? How was government able to help resolve each specific problem (both generally and in your example)?  Do you believe government’s use of power to resolve this problem of collection was justified and beneficial?  Why or why not? (You are welcome to discussion collective action in the government's COVID-19 response, environmental policy-making, national defense, or any other contemporary or historic issue area.)
2. How does the Constitution differ from the Articles of Confederation? (highlight at least three main differences) What problems does the Constitution solve that the Articles of Confederation was susceptible to? How? What problems did the Constitution, as ratified, introduce? Have these been fixed through amendments, or do you believe the US Constitution continues to have significant issues that need reform?
3. The United States is a representative democracy. Why did the Framers view this as necessary? What does Madison say about this in Federalist #10? Does Madison argue for addressing the problem’s causes or effects? Why?
4. What are some benefits of having a federal system? What are some drawbacks? In addition to the logical arguments, provide an example of federalism being beneficial, and an example of it being problematic. Drawing on these arguments, do you think a stronger national government would be better or worse? (Be clear about what you mean by “better” or “worse” and why). Feel free to use examples from current American politics to highlight your argument.
5. The role of the national government (relative to state/local governments) is (somewhat) clear in the constitution. Why has the national government expanded over our nation’s history? Make sure and draw on both historical and logical reasons, and describe particular pieces of the constitution that have aided in this expansion.