

Civics

Grade 7 Social Studies

Week 1

Your Week at a Glance

- Day 1 - Enlightenment Influences
- Day 2 - Influences on Colonial Views
- Day 3 - Road to the Declaration
- Day 4 - Declaration of Independence
- Day 5 - Articles of Confederation



FLORIDA JOINT CENTER FOR CITIZENSHIP

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

SS.7.C.1.1 Recognize how Enlightenment ideas including Montesquieu’s view of separation of powers and John Locke’s theories of natural law and how Locke’s social contract influenced the Founding Fathers.

Directions: Use the Content Vocabulary and Content Background Information to complete the attached Activities.

Civics Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Part of Speech	Definition
checks and balances	phrase	a principle of the federal government, according to the U.S. Constitution, that allows each branch of government to limit the power of the other branches
consent of the governed	noun	an agreement made by the people to establish a government and abide by its laws
Enlightenment	proper noun	a period in European history when many educated people stressed the importance of learning and reasoning; education was considered the key to understanding and solving society’s problems
individual liberty	noun	a person’s ability to be free and independent
influence	verb	having an effect or impact on the actions, behavior, opinions, etc., of another or others
natural law	noun	laws passed by government to protect natural rights
natural rights	noun	the belief that individuals are born with basic rights that cannot be taken away by governments; life, liberty, and property
separation of powers	noun	the structure of the federal government, according to the U.S. Constitution, that sets up three branches with their own distinct powers and responsibilities
social contract	noun	an implied agreement among the people of an organized society that defines the rights, duties, and limitations of the governed and the government

Essential Content Background Information

This section addresses the following issues:

1. What are Enlightenment ideas?
2. John Locke and Natural Rights theory
3. Montesquieu's ideas on creating a "just government"

1. What are Enlightenment ideas?

"Enlightenment" is the term used to describe a Western philosophy that emphasizes reason as its primary basis. Enlightenment emerged from Europe in the 18th century, and represents a departure from the legitimacy of government that comes from a religious authority such as a theocracy or the divine right of kings. Core enlightenment values include an emphasis on liberty, individual rights and reason. Governments that reflect these values grant more freedom for the common people based on self-governance, natural rights, and natural law. Historians of America's founding argue that Enlightenment philosophy was read by those who signed key governing documents in the United States including the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Key Enlightenment philosophers whose writings impacted the founding documents of the United States include Baron de Montesquieu and John Locke. Montesquieu is best known for advocating separation of powers and checks and balances for an effective government (reflected in the U.S. Constitution) while John Locke's views are best reflected in the U.S. Declaration of Independence, particularly regarding those components focusing on the law of nature and social compact.

2. John Locke and Natural Rights theory

The founding fathers were deeply concerned about government abusing its power. It was reasoned that when a government abused its power, it deprived the citizens of their liberty. As liberty was a fundamental God given right, assurances had to be put in place to protect the people from government abusing its power.

The founding fathers consulted the works of many political philosophers when they developed government structures that protected the people from government abusing its powers. One of the most influential works was John Locke's *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (1690).

John Locke (1632-1704) was a British political philosopher who wrote extensively on the relationship between government and the society. It was Locke's view that there was a social contract between the government and society in a civil (citizen based) government. This civil government was based on natural law, which is fundamentally tied to natural rights.

According to Locke, men lived in a "state of nature" which meant that one is allowed to conduct one's life as one best sees fit, free from the interference of others. There is no government in a state of nature, and people are assumed to be equally responsible for protecting each others' "life, health, liberty and possessions". The laws by which people lived were derived from God, and these laws included the notion that people were forbidden from harming one another. Thus, the state of nature is a state of liberty where persons are free to pursue their own interests provided that in doing so they do not harm one another.

Still, it is not uncommon for property disputes to arise. Under the state of nature there is no government to appeal one's grievances against a person who stole property or liberty (i.e. making a person a slave). Under the law of nature, men are allowed to defend their lives and their property, which includes the right to kill others who threaten their property or liberty. This meant that there was no civil authority to settle disputes, and put the community at risk for an outbreak of war due to the lack of a civil government.

According to Locke, civil governments were established for the sake of protecting property. Because of the state of nature and law of nature from which civil governments were derived, a contract between the government and the governed had to be in place in order for that government to be legitimate. Property is the basis for Locke's argument for both a social contract and civil government because it is the protection of that property (property protection extends to a person so that one has dominion over their own bodies) that compels men to choose a civil government and abandon the notion of living in a state of nature. The social contract is a voluntary agreement between the people and the government.

These ideas show that people are born with God given (natural) rights that are protected by civil governments. Governments are created to protect that which belongs to the people. However, governments are limited in their regulation of human behavior to the extent to which the people themselves believe does not infringe on their God given freedoms. The people enter into a social contract voluntarily provided that the government is formed in a way that respects natural rights and is derived from the consent of the governed.

3. Montesquieu's ideas on creating a "just government"

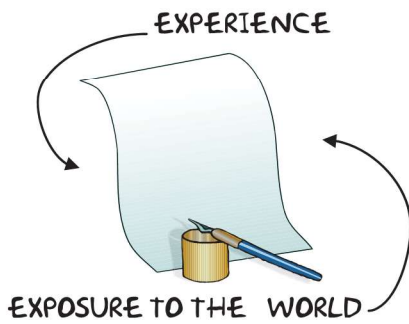
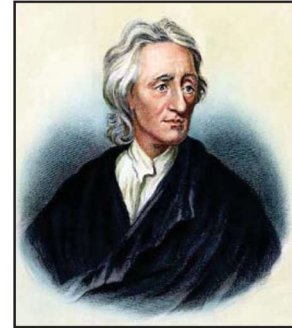
The U.S. Constitution is organized around a separation of powers system that utilizes checks and balances. The power to legislate, enforce and adjudicate are separated into three different branches of government. These branches may not function with complete independence. The founding fathers feared that branches functioning independently might still abuse their power. Thus, while there are separate branches of government, each vested with specific powers, this does not mean that each branch operates without some level of oversight from one or both other branches.

Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755) was a French political philosopher whose written works on the theory of separation of powers and checks and balances had a strong influence on the founding fathers. His 1748 work, *The Spirit of the Laws* (French: "L'Esprit des Lois") was originally published anonymously and received high praise outside France, especially in Britain. Montesquieu argued that "government should be set up so that no man need be afraid of another", which was well received by the founding fathers, particularly James Madison, who believed that a clearly defined and balanced separation of powers system that utilized checks and balances would provide a stable foundation for the new government.

Montesquieu argued that government should be created to accommodate separate branches of government with equal but different powers. This way, power would not be concentrated with one individual or group of individuals. Liberty was threatened if power became concentrated in one place; thus, no branch of government could threaten the freedom of the people.

John Locke

A Man with Many Hats



The Blank Slate

tabula rasa

Natural Rights

natural rights

Life
Liberty



Property

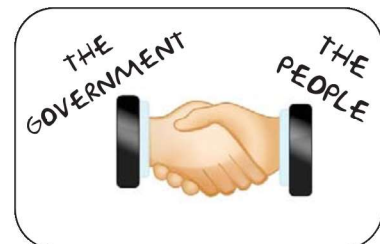


Why do we need a government?

state of nature

Social Contract

social contract



INFLUENCES FROM THE ENLIGHTENMENT | JOHN LOCKE

According to the text, whom did John Locke influence? _____

Vocabulary Graphic Organizer			
Directions , while you read identify and write down the evidence from the text that defines the term. Define the term in your own words and create a picture, symbol or visual representation of the term.			
Concept	Evidence from Text	Definition in your own words	Visual Representation
natural rights			
social contract			

According to John Locke, how are the concept of social contract and the purpose of government related? What evidence in the text led you to your answer?	
Evidence from Text	Answer

Additional Vocabulary Terms	
natural law	
consent of the governed	

Baron de Montesquieu

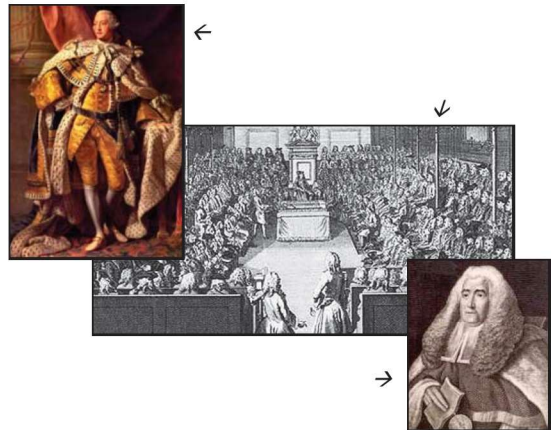
A Baron is Born



Follow the Rules

liberty

Separate...



separation of powers.

...but Equal



checks and balances

Sound Familiar?



Congress

President

Courts

INFLUENCES FROM THE ENLIGHTENMENT | BARON DE MONTESQUIEU

According to the text, what document did Montesquieu influence? _____

According to the text, how did Montesquieu define liberty and how did he explain the relationship between liberty and government? What evidence in the text led you to your answer?	
Evidence from Text	Answer

Vocabulary Graphic Organizer			
Directions, while you read identify and write down the evidence from the text that defines the term. Define the term in your own words and create a picture, symbol or visual representation of the term.			
Concept	Evidence from Text	Definition in your own words	Visual Representation
separation of powers			
checks and balances			

According to the text, how did Montesquieu’s ideas influence the U.S. Constitution? What evidence in the text led you to your answer?	
Evidence from Text	Answer
Impact of Montesquieu’s Influence:	



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INFLUENCES ON COLONISTS' VIEWS OF GOVERNMENT

SS.7.C.1.2 Trace the impact that the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, Mayflower Compact, and Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* had on the colonists' views of government.

Directions: Use the Content Vocabulary and Content Background Information to complete the attached Activities.

Civics Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Part of Speech	Definition
<i>Common Sense</i>	proper noun	a pamphlet published by Thomas Paine in 1776 to convince the American colonists to support becoming independent from England
compact	noun	an official agreement made by two or more parties
due process	noun	the right of people accused of crimes to have laws that treat them fairly, so that they cannot lose their life or freedom without having their legal rights protected
English Bill of Rights	proper noun	a government document that expanded the powers of the English Parliament and expanded the rights of the people, as well as further limited the rights of the king; written by the members of the English Parliament in 1689
limited government	proper noun	a government that has been limited in power by a constitution, or written agreement
limited monarchy	noun	a system of government in which the king or queen shares authority with an elected legislature and agrees to be bound by a constitution or a set of laws, also known as a constitutional monarchy
Magna Carta	proper noun	a government document that limited the power of the king of England and protected the rights of the nobility; written by the English nobles in 1215
Mayflower Compact	proper noun	an agreement between individuals that created a government that would provide order and protect the rights of the colonists; written by a group of English Puritans in Massachusetts in 1620
Preamble	proper noun	the introduction to the U.S. Constitution
rights	noun	a set of things that people believe they should be free to do
rule of law	noun	the idea that those who govern must follow the laws; no one is above the law
self-government	noun	popular or representative system where the people create and run their own government
Thomas Paine	proper noun	the colonial journalist who wrote <i>Common Sense</i> in 1776

Essential Content Background Information

This section addresses the following issues:

1. Core documents that impacted the colonists' view of government
2. Document analysis of the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, Mayflower Compact, and *Common Sense*
3. Mayflower Compact text (spelling and capitalization in original)

1. Core documents that impacted the colonists' view of government

Several core documents impacting the colonists' views of government reflect Enlightenment values. These documents include the English Magna Carta, the English Bill of Rights, the Mayflower Compact and *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine.

2. Document analysis of the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, Mayflower Compact, and *Common Sense*

Document Name	Date	Document Country of Origin	Purpose of Document	Core Themes and Influences
Magna Carta (The Great Charter of Freedoms)	1215	England	<p>Required King John of England to protect certain rights</p> <p>Limited King's powers</p> <p>Protected subjects' privileges</p> <p>(Note: While these goals were not achieved, the document became an important symbol for those who wished to show that the king was bound by law)</p>	<p>Writ of <i>habeas corpus</i></p> <p>Rule of constitutional law</p> <p>Development of common law</p>
Bill of Rights (An Act Declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject and Settling the Succession of the Crown)	1689	England	<p>Restate in statutory form the Declaration of Rights presented by the Convention Parliament to William and Mary inviting them to become joint sovereigns of England</p>	<p>Lists rights for citizens and permanent residents of a constitutional monarchy</p> <p>Included the right to petition the monarch</p> <p>Included the right to bear arms in defense</p> <p>Emphasizes the importance of the consent of the people</p>

				Influenced the U.S. Bill of Rights (1791)
Mayflower Compact	1620	American colonies	Set up a government and write first written laws for the new settlers arriving at Plymouth Rock (now Provincetown Harbor, Cape Cod, Massachusetts)	Fair and equal laws for the general good of the settlement Will of the majority Social contract where the settlers consented to follow the Compact's rules for the sake of the survival of the new colony John Adams and others have referred to it as the foundation of the U.S. Constitution
<i>Common Sense</i> by Thomas Paine (published anonymously)	1776	American colonies	Placed the blame for the British colonists on King George III Challenged the authority of the British government and the royal monarchy Published anonymously, the document advocated that the colonists declare their independence from the British crown	Advocated a movement for sovereignty of the people, a written constitution, and effective governmental checks and balances

3. Mayflower Compact text (spelling and capitalization in original)

In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James, by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, etc.

Having undertaken, for the Glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith and Honour of our King and Country, a Voyage to plant the First Colony in the Northern Parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, Covenant and Combine ourselves together into a Civil Body Politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod, the 11th of November, in the year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King James, of England, France and Ireland the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domini 1620.

Colonial Influences

Name: _____



The U.S. Constitution is based on a handful of "big ideas". Brainstorm the meaning behind each big idea in the areas provided, then see what they mean in the American system of government.

The Big Idea	I think it means...	The Class Definition
Rule of Law		
Self-Government		
Due Process		
Limited Government		
Rights		



Anticipation Activity

Colonial Influences

Name: _____



Hey! Anyone Have Any Good Ideas?

Our Founding Fathers did not invent the American system of government out of thin air. They, like the other colonists, were influenced by many different ideas and traditions. The biggest influence came from their British heritage. (Remember the colonists WERE British until the American Revolution!) Events in British history and things that were happening during their own time affected the way the Founders thought government should work.

The Founders didn't have the Internet, so they got their ideas from books and other printed materials. What would have been on the minds of American colonists on the verge of a revolution? Let's take a peek at what might have been on the shelf of a private colonial library ...

King v. Nobles: Round One

Way back in the Middle Ages, England was ruled by a king who shared some of his powers with the wealthy nobility. The nobility would carry out the king's wishes, and the king would allow the nobles to make some local decisions. But in the early 1200s, King John tried to take all the power for himself! The angry nobles fought back. In 1215, they created a document called the **Magna Carta** that limited the power of the king and protected certain rights for the nobles. The nobility was powerful enough to force King John to sign the Magna Carta. This was a big deal because it introduced the concepts of *limited government*, *rule of law*, and *due process*. It also helped create the nation's Parliament (kind of like Congress in the U.S.).

The Magna Carta

We, the nobles, demand:

- A limit on the king's powers
- Laws and punishments to be fair and equal
- Due process of the law and fair trials
- Property rights

Before After

The Mayflower Compact

When we land, we will:

- create our own government
- agree that the laws will be followed by everyone
- make sure that the new government will serve the common good

I Think We Took a Wrong Turn!

Fast forward over 400 years. The next document in the colonial library is the **Mayflower Compact**. It was written to solve a basic problem: Who is in charge? The Pilgrims left England in a ship called the Mayflower headed for the Virginia colony in 1620. A strong storm blew the ship off course, and they ended up in what is now Massachusetts. This area was not under the control of the company that sent them, so the Pilgrims were in independent territory. They needed a government—fast! The men agreed to create a new government and to follow its rules. In exchange, they would all protect each other. This is called *self-government*.

Colonial Influences

Name: _____

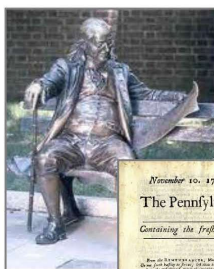
King v. Nobles: Round Two

Meanwhile, back in England, the Parliament had been battling it out with the king in a series of civil wars. Parliament eventually came out on top and passed the **English Bill of Rights** in 1689. Like the Magna Carta, this document expanded the rights of the Parliament and the people, while limiting the powers of the king even more. This document was well-known because it affected people living in Britain and the new British colonies in America.

The English Bill of Rights

As Englishmen, we demand:

- Free elections to Parliament
- The rights to bear arms, to petition the government, and to a fair trial
- No excessive bail or fines or cruel and unusual punishment



Ben Franklin and his newspaper



Breaking News... Colonist Style!

In addition to older documents, the colonists kept track of what was happening in Britain and around the colonies. They couldn't phone, blog, tweet, or watch tv-- so how did they keep up with the news of the day?

Hot Off the Press

In the 1720s, authors using the fake names Cato the Elder and Cato the Younger published a series of newspaper editorials in Britain. The authors argued against the king's heavy-handed rule. These articles were titled **Cato's Letters**, and they were also published in colonial American newspapers. Cato's Letters became so popular that they were collected into a book. Half of the private libraries in colonial America owned a copy! Cato's Letters discussed many different ideas, such as *freedom of expression*, which became very influential in the colonies.

Daily Debate

Editorial

Without free speech and expression, you have no liberty.

-Cato & Cato

Why should we break away from Britain?
It's Common Sense!

Calling for Independence

By the 1700s, King George III and Parliament were making more and more demands on the colonies. Many were getting fed up and began to meet and discuss breaking away from Britain. In the mid-1770s, representatives from most of the 13 colonies met in Philadelphia. Here, the Founders discussed the options for the future. While these meetings were happening, a journalist named Thomas Paine published a pamphlet called *Common Sense* in 1776. In *Common Sense*, Paine did not introduce any new ideas. Instead, he explained the arguments for independence in a way that was easy for everyday colonists to understand. He encouraged them to support the fight for independence from Britain. Just six months later, the Declaration of Independence was signed.



Reading, p2

Understanding the Influence

Directions: Using your reading, explain the main purpose of each document, identify the “big idea” that emerged from the document and explain the big idea and its relationship to the document in your own words.

Document	Main purpose of the document	Big idea from the document	Explanation of big idea
Magna Carta			
Mayflower Compact			
English Bill of Rights			
Cato’s Letters			
<i>Common Sense</i>			
Summary Statement			



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COLONIAL CONCERNS AND THE WRITING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

SS.7.C.1.3 Describe how English policies and responses to colonial concerns led to the writing of the Declaration of Independence

Directions: Use the Content Vocabulary and Content Background Information to complete the attached Activities.

Civics Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Part of Speech	Definition
duty	noun	a tax
export	noun	goods sent to another country
goods	noun	merchandise or objects for sale or trade
import	noun	goods brought into the country
individual rights	noun	rights guaranteed or belonging to a person
legislature	noun	governing body responsible for making laws
levy	verb	to collect by legal authority
oppression	noun	the use of authority or power in a cruel or unjust manner
Parliament	proper noun	the English legislature
representation	noun	a person or group acting on behalf of another person or group
tax	noun	money charged by a government for specific facilities or services
taxation without representation	noun	the idea that it is unfair to tax someone without giving them a voice in government

Essential Content Background Information

This section addresses the following issues:

1. Core Themes in the Declaration of Independence Reflecting Colonial Concerns
2. Reasons for Drafting the Declaration of Independence
3. Declaration of Independence Timeline

1. Core Themes in the Declaration of Independence Reflecting Colonial Concerns

There are three core themes, and multiple subthemes, found in the Declaration of Independence. It is a common misunderstanding that the Declaration of Independence formed a government which it did not. This concept is important because the Declaration of Independence focuses instead of what the colonists found to be unacceptable governance. These unacceptable governance practices fell into three broad categories:

A. Power was concentrated in one place (unitary government). The concentration of power contributed to the abuse of power. The form of government that created this concentration of power was going to be avoided for this reason. Generally speaking, the new government that would be created would do its best to avoid the abuse of power.

For example, the preamble includes the following phrase:

“...whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness.”

B. The colonists were denied acceptable representation in the legislature (“He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.”). Accordingly, the new government would guarantee representation in the legislature. Many historians and political scientists argue that the colonists identified representation in the legislature to be of key importance because the legislative power is the greatest among the three powers of government (legislative, executive, judicial). The legislative power is the greatest among the three powers of government because only laws can be enforced or adjudicated. The absence of laws means no adjudication or enforcement.

C. States’ rights were denied. King George III denied the states a voice in governance (“He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people.”). This meant that the new government would respect states’ rights for, among other reasons, states are closest to the people, and would more likely garner the people’s consent.

Together, the Declaration of Independence outlined the colonists’ concerns about how King George III treated them. While the Declaration does not itself form a government, it does indicate what the colonists would avoid (abuse or power, or tyranny) or pursue (representation in the legislature, states’ rights) when they did form governments in the future. The two governments that were eventually formed were organized under the Articles of Confederation (1781-1789) and the U.S. Constitution (1789-present).

2. Reasons for Drafting the Declaration of Independence

The colonists’ decision to draft the Declaration of Independence followed several years of conflict between the British crown and the colonists. Historians argue that this relationship started to deteriorate in 1763 following the end of the Seven Years War. The Seven Years War resulted in significant debt for the British government. As a way to emerge from this debt, the British Parliament passed several laws that taxed the colonists including the Stamp Act (1765) and the Townshend Acts (1767). In 1774, the Parliament passed the Coercive Acts as a way to punish the colonists living in Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party. The Coercive Acts compelled the First Continental Congress to meet in Philadelphia to agree on a response, which included a boycott of British goods and petitioning the king for a repeal of these acts. King George III did not respond to the colonists’ requests for relief on the principle that the colonists did not have the right to make such requests. The colonists generated a second petition in 1775 which was rejected by the king, and Common Sense was published in early 1776.

Between 1763 and 1776, the relationship between the colonists and the king deteriorated. The deterioration of this relationship was tied to taxes enacted by the British Parliament, and the king's refusal to redress the colonists' grievances.

3. Declaration of Independence Timeline

Source: "Brief History of the Declaration of Independence" by Robert Longley; available at: <http://usgovinfo.about.com/cs/historicdocuments/a/bldechist.htm>

May 1775 - The Second Continental Congress convenes in Philadelphia. A "petition for redress of grievances," sent to King George III of England by the First Continental Congress in 1774, remains unanswered.

June - July 1775 - Congress establishes the Continental Army, a first national monetary currency and a post office to serve the "United Colonies."

August 1775 - King George declares his American subjects to be "engaged in open and avowed rebellion" against the Crown. The English Parliament passes the American Prohibitory Act, declaring all American sea-going vessels and their cargo the property of England.

January 1776 - Colonists by the thousands buy copies of Thomas Paine's "Common Sense," stating the cause of American independence.

March 1776 - Congress passes the Privateering Resolution, allowing colonists to arm vessels in order to "cruize [sic] on the enemies of these United Colonies."

April 6, 1776 - American seaports were opened to trade and cargo from other nations for the first time.

May 1776 - Germany, through a treaty negotiated with King George, agrees to hire mercenary soldiers to help put down any potential uprising by American colonists.

May 10, 1776 - Congress passes the "Resolution for the Formation of Local Governments," allowing colonists to establish their own local governments. Eight colonies agreed to support American independence.

May 15, 1776 - The Virginia Convention passes a resolution that "the delegates appointed to represent this colony in General Congress be instructed to propose to that respectable body to declare the United Colonies free and independent states."

June 7, 1776 - Richard Henry Lee, Virginia's delegate to the Continental Congress, presents the Lee Resolution reading in part: "Resolved: That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved."

June 11, 1776 - Congress postpones consideration of the Lee Resolution and appoints the "Committee of Five" to draft a final statement declaring the case for America's independence. The Committee of Five is composed of: John Adams of Massachusetts, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Robert R. Livingston of New York and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia.

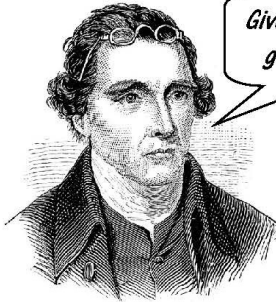
July 2, 1776 - By the votes of 12 of the 13 colonies, with New York not voting, Congress adopts the Lee Resolution and begins consideration of the Declaration of Independence, written by the Committee of Five.

July 4, 1776 - Late in the afternoon, church bells ring out over Philadelphia heralding the final adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

August 2, 1776 - The delegates of the Continental Congress sign the clearly printed or "engrossed" version of the Declaration.

Hey, King: Get Off Our Backs!

Name: _____



Patrick Henry

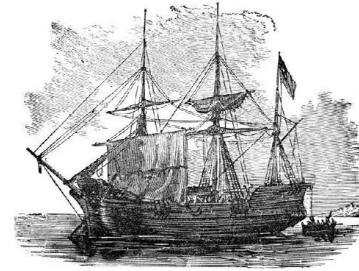
*Give me liberty, or
give me death!*

Really? Was it that bad? By 1776, the American colonists living under English rule thought so. In fact, things were so bad that they went to war to gain their independence. But why? What could have been so intolerable?

The first Englishmen came to America four hundred years ago looking for gold, silver, and a waterway to Asia. They were part of a trading company that convinced the king of England to grant them a **charter** giving them permission to set up a colony in America. But they did not find what they were looking for. Times got so hard those first settlers had to eat rats and even each other to keep from starving to death. Pretty soon, though, more people arrived and times got better. The English were here to stay.

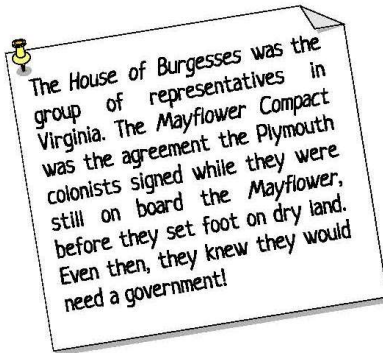
Hail to the King

Back in England, the King probably figured he had a pretty good deal. Other people got seasick sailing across the ocean to settle an untamed land while he sat in his palace ruling England. Except that being king just wasn't what it used to be. Back in the 1200s, a king could really do what he wanted! But this was the 1600s, and now the English people had representatives in **Parliament** who made laws and stood up for peoples' rights. They even gave advice to the king. Bah!



You Don't Mind If We . . . Uh . . .

Govern ourselves, do you? In America, the colonists needed some kind of government to deal with everyday problems. After all, the king was on the other side of the ocean. And because of Parliament, the colonists were used to having a say in government. In Virginia Colony, the first settlers decided each community should have two representatives and that all the representatives would meet together. Farther north, in Plymouth, the colonists signed a **compact** agreeing to form a majority-rule government where all the men would vote on whatever issues came up. (Women didn't get to vote in 1620.) Even so, the king still controlled the colonies, and the colonists had to follow England's laws.



We're Doing Just Fine, Thanks

England had a lot of other colonies besides those in America and plenty of other problems to deal with. The king and Parliament didn't have much time to pay attention to the American colonists. By the mid-1700s there were 13 colonies, and each colony had its own government. These little governments grew stronger and more used to being in control. When problems came up, the colonial governments took care of things themselves. The colonists were out on their own, making their own decisions, governing things the way they wanted to without much interference.



The Thirteen Colonies

iCIVICS

Reading p.1

1754-1776: The Road to the Declaration of Independence

Directions: For each time frame, summarize the activities of the English and the colonists in separate, complete sentences. In the third column use a word or phrase to summarize the colonists' concern(s).		
Time Frame	Summary of English and Colonial Activities in Complete Sentences	Colonial Concern(s)
1754-1763		
1764		
1765		
1766 & 1767		
1768 & 1769		
1770-1773		
1774		
1775		
1776	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Declaration of Independence is written and signed 	

The Road to the Declaration of Independence

1754 - 1763	<p>The French and Indian War began between the English and French over land in the Ohio River Valley. Colonists fought for England. The English won the war, but the war left them in debt and needing money. England looked at the colonies as a source of money and it led to a series of actions by King George and the English legislature, called Parliament that angered the colonists. In October of 1763, through the Proclamation of 1763, England banned colonists from settling west of the Appalachian mountains.</p> <p>Near the end of the war, English officials were given search warrants that allowed them to search warehouses, homes, and ships of colonists without a reason. A colonist and Boston lawyer, James Otis decided to challenge whether or not the warrants were legal in court. He argued that they violated the individual rights of the colonists.</p>
1764	<p>In April of 1764 Parliament taxed sugar that was imported, or brought into the colonies, to pay off the war debt and to help pay for the expenses of running the colonies. This act increased the duties, or taxes, on imported sugar and other items such as textiles, coffee, wines and indigo (dye). In response to this, Boston businesses start boycotting some English goods.</p> <p>In the fall of 1764, Parliament ordered colonies to stop printing their own money. Colonists opposed the order because they feared it would upset the economy.</p>
1765	<p>In March of 1765, Parliament passed the Stamp Act. Under the Stamp Act, all printed materials were taxed, including; newspapers, pamphlets, bills, legal documents, licenses, almanacs, dice and playing cards. The money collected from the tax did not go to colonial legislatures but directly to England. Later on in the same month, Parliament ordered colonial legislatures to pay for English soldiers that are located in the colonies. It also required colonists to house British troops and supply them food.</p> <p>In May, Patrick Henry, a colonist, gave a speech to the Virginia legislature saying that only the Virginia legislature, not Parliament, can tax Virginians. In July, a secret group of colonists called the Sons of Liberty formed in some towns. They were opposed to the Stamp Act and they used violence and intimidation to force all of the English stamp agents to resign. They also stopped many colonists from ordering English goods. In the fall, representatives from nine of the colonies met in New York and prepared a petition to be sent to King George III and Parliament. The petition requested that the Stamp Act and the Acts of 1764 stop being enforced. The petition stated that only colonial legislatures can tax colonists and that taxation without representation violated the colonists' basic civil rights.</p>
1766 & 1767	<p>In March of 1766, Parliament ended the Stamp Act, but it also passed the Declaratory Act. This act stated that England had total power to legislate any laws governing the colonies. In the summer of 1767, Parliament passed the Townshend Revenue Act. This act taxed many items imported into the colonies, such as: paper, tea, glass, lead and paints. In response, colonists decide to refuse to purchase, or boycott, some of these items.</p>
1768 & 1769	<p>In February of 1768, Samuel Adams from Massachusetts wrote a letter against taxation without representation, the idea that it is unfair to tax someone without giving them representation in government, and called for resistance to the Townshend Act. He encouraged other colonies to support the letter. In September, English ships sail into Boston Harbor and English troops set up permanent residence in Boston to keep order.</p> <p>In 1769, Philadelphia businesses join the boycott against British goods. Later in the year, New Jersey, Rhode Island, North Carolina also joins the boycott.</p>
1770 - 1773	<p>In March of 1770, the Boston Massacre happened. This event occurred when a large crowd of colonists crowded around and harassed English soldiers. In response, the soldiers fired their guns into the crowd killing five people and injuring six. After the incident, the troops are withdrawn out of Boston. The same day as the Boston Massacre, Parliament ended all taxes on imports except for tea.</p> <p>In May of 1773 Parliament made the British East India Company the only company allowed to import tea into the colonies. This is called the Tea Act. Months later, in response to the Tea Act, a group of colonists board English ships in Boston, and dump hundreds of chests of tea into the harbor. This becomes known as the Boston Tea Party.</p>

1774	<p>In response to the Boston Tea Party, Parliament passed a series of laws. Colonists call them the Intolerable Acts. The first of the acts closed the port of Boston until all the damage caused by the Tea Party is paid back. The English also put Massachusetts under military rule and more troops arrived in the colony. The second of the acts made it illegal for royal officials to be brought to trial in the colonies. Instead, their trials were held in England. The third act ended the colonial government in Massachusetts and instead allowed the royal governor to appoint the colonial legislature. The fourth act ordered colonists to house troops, even in colonists' homes. In the fifth and final act, Parliament gave land claimed by Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Virginia to Canada.</p> <p>In response to these acts, the First Continental Congress met in September in Philadelphia. Every colony, except Georgia, sent representatives. The Congress declared that these acts should not be obeyed and they began forming militias in the colonies. The Congress agreed to boycott English imports and to stop exporting goods to England.</p>
1775	<p>In early 1775, Massachusetts began forming militia units and Parliament declared the colony to be in a state of rebellion. A month later, King George passed an act ordering the New England (Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island) colonies to trade only with England.</p> <p>On April 18, Paul Revere rode from Boston to warn colonists that English troops were coming to take weapons away from the colonists. The following day, on April 19, both sides begin fighting at Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts. This is the first battle of the Revolutionary War and is referred to as “the shot heard ‘round the world.”</p> <p>The following month, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia. The Congress named George Washington as the commander in chief of the Continental (colonial) Army.</p> <p>On June 17th, the first major battle, the Battle of Bunker Hill, occurred between the English and colonial troops. England won the battle.</p> <p>After the battle, the Second Continental Congress sent a petition to King George asking him to reach an agreement with the colonists so that fighting does not have to continue. The King refused to read the petition. Instead King George proclaimed that the colonists were rebelling and he ordered troops to end the rebellion. In addition, Parliament ordered an end to colonial trade.</p>
1776	<p>In January of 1776 Thomas Paine published <i>Common Sense</i>. The 50-page pamphlet criticized King George and argued for colonial independence. In April, the Continental Congress declared colonial shipping ports open to all traffic except the English. Throughout the year, battles between England and the colonists continued.</p> <p>On June 7, Richard Henry Lee, from Virginia, presented a formal plan calling for the colonies to declare its independence from England. On June 11, Congress created a committee to draft a declaration of independence. Thomas Jefferson is chosen by the committee to prepare the first draft of the declaration, which he completed in one day. On June 28, Jefferson's Declaration of Independence is presented to the Congress. On July 4, the Congress formally supported Jefferson's Declaration, with copies sent to all of the colonies. The actual signing of the document occurred on August 2 with most of the 55 members of Congress placing their names on the document.</p>

Adapted from: <http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/revolution/rev-col.htm> <http://www.crfccelebrateamerica.org/index.php/story/69-timeline-for-american-independence>, Accessed April, 2013, and <http://militaryhistory.about.com/od/americanrevolution/a/amrevca>



FLORIDA JOINT CENTER FOR CITIZENSHIP

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

SS.7.C.1.4 Analyze the ideas (natural rights, roles of the government) and complaints set forth in the Declaration of Independence.

Directions: Use the Content Vocabulary and Content Background Information to complete the attached Activities.

Civics Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Part of Speech	Definition
abolish	verb	to end
assent	verb	to agree
consent of the governed	noun	an agreement made by the people to establish a government and abide by its laws
deprive	verb	to take something away
derive	verb	to take
despotism	noun	a system of government where the ruler has unlimited power
dissolve	verb	to bring to an end
endow	verb	to be given something naturally
grievance	noun	a complaint
impel	verb	to urge
impose	impose	to establish by using authority or power
institute	verb	to establish
natural rights	noun	the belief that individuals are born with basic rights that cannot be taken away by governments
oppression	noun	the use of authority or power in a cruel or unjust manner
quarter	verb	to house
rectitude	noun	the quality or state of being correct
self-evident	adjective	obvious, having no need of proof
tyranny	noun	a government that abuses its power
tyrant	noun	a single ruler that possesses and abuses absolute government power
unalienable rights	noun	basic rights of the people that may not be taken away
usurpation	noun	the act of exercising power by force

Essential Content Background Information

This section addresses the following issues:

1. Natural Rights and the Declaration of Independence
2. Colonial Complaints identified in the Declaration of Independence

1. Natural Rights and the Declaration of Independence

There are three core themes found in the Declaration of Independence. It is a common misunderstanding that the Declaration of Independence formed a government. This concept is important because the Declaration of Independence focuses instead on what the colonists found to be unacceptable governance. These unacceptable governance practices fell into three broad categories:

Power was concentrated in one place (unitary government). The concentration of power contributed to the abuse of power. The form of government that created this concentration of power was going to be avoided for this reason when the colonists formed their own government.

For example, the Preamble includes the following phrase:

“...all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — ...whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”

The Preamble focuses on “natural rights philosophy”, the notion that there are certain rights that are inalienable, or God given. Because these rights are given by God, and not given by a government, any government or person cannot take them away. Natural rights supersede legal rights, those rights granted by governments. Government abused its power by denying the colonists their natural rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Natural rights are those rights that belong to a person simply because they exist. Natural rights are also understood to be inalienable rights because they are God given. Rights given by God may not be taken away by the government.

There is a relationship between natural rights and the role of government. In the same way that government can deny the people their natural rights, so too can government protect natural rights. Governments are created by people, who can create government structures that protect natural rights. The people consent to how they are governed because they wish for a government that will protect their natural rights; if government fails to protect the peoples’ natural rights, the people have the right to change the government. In extreme cases, the people have the right to abolish the government if their natural rights are not being protected. Once that government is abolished, the people will then create a new government that protects their natural rights. The Preamble to the Declaration of Independence explains the peoples’ natural rights and the role that government plays in guaranteeing those rights.

The preamble is based largely on the ideas of John Locke, a 17th century English philosopher whose work *The Second Treatise of Civil Government* includes the notion that government is based on the principle of “consent of the governed”. Locke argued that legitimate governments function based on the people’s consent. The form of government was less important than the government’s actions; the government earned the people’s consent provided that it protected the people’s “life, liberty and property”.

The preamble states that it was the *form* of government (unitary, or centralized power) that rendered it impossible for the colonists to enjoy their “life, liberty and pursuit of happiness”, which justified their right to “alter or abolish” the government (“...that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it”). Jefferson also makes it known, later in the preamble, that King George III shares the blame for the government failing to insure core guarantees to the people (“The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States.”). Together, the preamble makes clear that both the form and the head of government have not earned the people’s

consent. In many respects, the preamble foreshadows that the first sovereign government that the colonists would form would not be a unitary government, and would exclude King George III.

2. Placeholder

The bulk of the *Declaration of Independence* is devoted to enumerating the colonists’ complaints about King George III and his abuse of power. The preamble ends with “let facts be submitted to a candid world”. The phrase indicates that the *Declaration of Independence* was not written *to* King George III, but rather *about* King George III. This explains why every complaint is written in the third person (“he”) and not the second person (“you”).

The listing of complaints may also be understood as a foreshadowing device for the way that the colonists formed their future governments and the way that they articulated fundamental individual rights.

Examples include:

Complaint	Meaning	Later Action	Document
He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.	He has refused to enforce laws	Checks and balances system insures that the chief executive enforces the laws	U.S. Constitution
He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance	He has forbidden the legislature to pass laws	Separation of powers system insures that the legislature has the right to enact laws	U.S. Constitution
He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.	He has refused to pass laws that would benefit particular states He expects that states will forfeit their right of representation	Federal system where the states are represented in the national legislature, and the states have the power to pass laws of particular importance to the people living in those states	Articles of Confederation U.S. Constitution
He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.	He “fired” legislatures if those legislatures did not do what he wanted them to do.	The people elect the national legislature either directly or indirectly, through their state legislatures.	Articles of Confederation U.S. Constitution
He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records	He made it difficult for the colonists to participate in governance	State-centered government where the primary power of government was held at the state level Federal system where the states are represented in the national legislature and retain their own sovereignty	Articles of Confederation U.S. Constitution
He has obstructed the Administration of Justice by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.	He has forbidden laws to be passed that establish judiciary powers	Separation of powers system insures that the legislature has the right to enact laws	U.S. Constitution
He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.	He has denied judges their independence to make decisions based on case facts and the law alone	Separation of powers system insures judicial independence	U.S. Constitution

Complaint	Meaning	Later Action	Document
He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.	He has forced persons to house military personnel	Guarantee that the people will not be forced to house military personnel except in wartime	U.S. Bill of Rights/Third Amendment “No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.”
For imposing taxes on us without our Consent	Taxed citizens without the citizens giving their approval	Creation of a national legislature with the power to tax the people; each state is represented in the national legislature (Congress). Members of Congress are elected by the people either directly, or through the state legislatures (Direct election of Senators created with the 17 th amendment in 1913;	U.S. Constitution/Article I, Section 7 (“all bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives”) and Article I, Section 8 (“Congress shall have the power to lay and collect taxes”)
For depriving us in many cases, of the benefit of Trial by Jury	Denying those accuse of crimes jury trials under circumstances that the colonists deemed appropriate	Guarantee of jury trials	U.S. Bill of Rights/Seventh Amendment “In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved...”
He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.	Refused to protect the colonists from foreign aggression on colonial lands	Guarantee that the federal government would protect states threatened with violence	U.S. Constitution/ Article IV, Section 4: “The United States shall protect each of them (states) against Invasion; and...against domestic violence.

IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, . . . , a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.— That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government. . . . But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. . . . The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

...He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

...He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

... He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

... He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

... For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

...For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent.

...For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States. . . . And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Declaration of Independence: Understanding Vocabulary in Context

Term	Write the Definition as it appears in context.
abolish	
assent	
consent of the governed	
deprive	
derive	
despotism	
dissolve	
endow	
impel	
institute	
oppression	
quarter	
rectitude	
self-evident	
tyranny	
tyrant	
unalienable (inalienable) rights	
usurpation	

Notes

Primary Source Document Analysis Worksheet

Adapted from the "Written Document Analysis Worksheet" from the National Archives
https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/written_document_analysis_worksheet_former.pdf

Using the *Declaration of Independence* as found on page 5 of this lesson, complete the following:

Document Title: _____

1.	<p>What type of document is this? (check one):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Newspaper</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Report</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Memo</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Letter</i></p> <p>Other (please explain): _____</p>
2.	<p>What are some unique <u>visual</u> characteristics of this document? (check all that apply)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Interesting Letterhead</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Handwritten</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Typed</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Seals/Stamps</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Notations</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Signatures</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>"Received" Stamp</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain): _____</p>
3.	<p>What is the date of this document? The Declaration of Independence</p>
4.	<p>Who is the author (or creator) of this document?</p> <p>What is their position? What words does the author use to make their position known to the reader?</p>
5.	<p>Who is intended to read this? Do you think they read it?</p>

6.

Key Information – Using the document, answer the questions that follow:

A. What is the author’s purpose for writing this document?

B. What evidence helps you understand why it was written? (Choose a specific quote from the document)

C. How is the concept of “natural rights” discussed in this document? (Choose a specific quote from the document)

D. How are “natural rights” and the government connected? (Choose a specific quote from the document)

E. What are some grievances that the colonists express in the document?

F. Which grievances listed violate the colonists “natural rights”?

G. What were the colonists willing to give up by signing this document?



FLORIDA JOINT CENTER FOR CITIZENSHIP

THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

SS.7.C.1.5 Identify how the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation led to the writing of the Constitution.

Directions: Use the Content Vocabulary and Content Background Information to complete the attached Activities.

Civics Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Part of Speech	Definition
Articles of Confederation	proper noun	the first constitution of the United States
confederation	noun	a system of government where power is located with the independent states and there is little power in the central government; a confederation is also known as a confederal system
Constitutional Convention	proper noun	a meeting in Philadelphia in 1787 where delegates decided to throw out the Articles of Confederation and draft the Constitution
debt	noun	something owed; such as money
Shays's Rebellion	proper noun	an event when 2,000 Massachusetts farmers rebelled against land foreclosures and debt from the Revolutionary War

Essential Content Background Information

This section addresses the following issues:

1. The core components of the Articles of Confederation
2. Responding to Shays's Rebellion

1. The core components of the Articles of Confederation

The first government of the United States following the Declaration of Independence was the Articles of Confederation (1781-1789). A confederation is a state-centered, decentralized government where the primary powers of government are held at the state level. The Declaration of Independence spoke of the many abuses of King George III, who, as a monarch, ruled over the executive, legislative and judiciary powers of the government. In the Declaration, Thomas Jefferson stated that both King George III and the form of government in place at the time both failed to protect the colonists' "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness." The unitary government, one that centralized the legislative, executive and judicial powers, was unacceptable to the colonists when they sought to create a government after declaring their independence from the British crown.

The colonists decided to create a government that was quite different from a unitary system where the powers of government were concentrated in a single person. This decentralized system reflected the colonists' fear of a powerful central government. Under the Articles of Confederation, states retained their freedom and independence. Each of the 13 states had a vote in the weak national Congress (appointed by the state governments), while a vote of all 9 states was required in order to pass any laws and a unanimous vote of all 13 states was required for the Articles to be amended. The national Congress was also denied the power to tax, so it could not pay for the army and navy needed to defend the nation. The national Congress also lacked the power to regulate trade. As for the other powers of government, there was no national court system nor was there a national executive.

The result of this decentralized approach was that each state functioned in many ways as an independent country. Several states negotiated their own trade agreements with those countries that the king had previously convinced not to have a relationship with the colonies, while other states established their own militaries. The lack of a national court system meant that criminals committing crimes in one state would often seek refuge in other states where they would not be prosecuted. Without a national military, states that were attacked or suffered internal rebellion could not turn to the national government for support or resources for their defense. The result of these state actions was that the states, despite being part of the same country, did not function as a nation. For instance, fears emerged that the 13 states functioning as independent countries would make the nation vulnerable to attack by Spain, France, by Native Americans.

Together the lack of powers held by the weak national Congress coupled with each state's independent and often conflicting actions, raised concerns that the Articles of Confederation were not designed in a way to protect the new nation. In February 1787, Alexander Hamilton called for a constitutional convention, a "Meeting of Commissioners to Remedy Defects of the Federal Government" to take place the following May. In May 1787, 12 of the 13 states met in Philadelphia, PA for this purpose. The outcome of that meeting was the U.S. Constitution which was completed on September 17, 1787 and sent to the states for their review and ratification.

2. Responding to Shays's Rebellion

Shays's Rebellion was a citizen rebellion that began in 1786. Two thousand western Massachusetts farmers marched on county courthouses to prevent land foreclosures. The farmers' land was threatened with foreclosure because they were assured that they did not have to pay taxes and other debts on their land during the Revolutionary War. These promises were not kept, which prompted the farmers to revolt. Congress would not respond because it was too weak and did not have its own army.

Shays's Rebellion prompted representatives from five states to meet in Annapolis, Maryland in February 1787 to call for a constitutional convention of all 13 states the following May in Philadelphia. Congress stated that the purpose of this May convention was "the sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation."

The Articles of Confederation

The Articles of Confederation was written in 1776 and finally ratified, or approved, by the original thirteen states in 1781. Maryland was the last state to ratify the document in 1781. The confederation was the first government of the newly formed United States. A confederation is a government system where power is located with the independent states and there is little power in the central government. The desire for a confederation came from the colonists' experience under King George III from England. They wanted to create a system that wouldn't allow for unfair taxing or limiting individual rights.

Under the Articles of Confederation, most power was with the states. The articles stated that each colony was to act as an independent state, and that each state had the right to pass laws within their borders. The articles also established a weak national legislature to oversee interactions between the states.

Under the Articles of Confederation, states maintained their freedom and independence. As a result, states functioned in many ways as independent countries. For example, several states negotiated their own trade agreements with other countries, while other states established their own militaries.

With the states having the majority of government power, the central government had no control over the states' actions and people began to fear that this system of government was not working because the national government was too weak. The Congress did not have the power to tax, so it could not pay for the army and navy needed to defend the nation. It also couldn't regulate the trade agreements states were making with other countries. The Congress could also not enforce any laws they passed because there was no central leadership to make sure that laws were being enforced in each state or a central judicial system to interpret laws or settle disputes between states. Finally, if any changes were to be made to the Articles of Confederation, unanimous approval from all 13 states was required. This made it difficult to make any changes to the articles. As a result, the lack of powers held by the weak national Congress combined with each state's independent actions, raised concerns that the Articles of Confederation were not designed in a way to protect the new nation.

By 1786 the economy of the United States was struggling due to debt, or money owed, from the Revolutionary War and because states were arguing over boundary lines and taxes. This economic situation impacted individual states and also individual citizens, especially farmers and merchants. These circumstances led to Shays's Rebellion, a revolt by 2,000 western Massachusetts farmers who marched on county courthouses to prevent land foreclosures. A foreclosure is when a bank or other entity takes back property when taxes or debts are not paid. The farmers' land was threatened with foreclosure because they were promised that they did not have to pay taxes and other debts on their land during the Revolutionary War. These promises were not kept and this led the farmers to revolt. Congress did not respond because it was too weak and did not have its own army. The Massachusetts militia finally ended the rebellion, but the situation made it clear that the national government did not have the ability to maintain order in this new nation. After Shays's Rebellion, Alexander Hamilton of New York organized a meeting in Philadelphia in 1787. This meeting, called the Constitutional Convention, would eventually throw out the Articles of Confederation and draft the Constitution.

The freedom that the American Revolution sought to preserve proved to create a government under the Articles of Confederation that could not keep law and order. However, the experience with the Articles of Confederation led to the writing of the Constitution in 1787.

Adapted from: Florida Joint Center for Citizenship, Elementary Civics Module for SS.5.C.1.4, #2, <http://www.ushistory.org/gov/2b.asp> and <http://www.kidspast.com/world-history/0368-articles-of-confederation.php>.

Understanding the Articles of Confederation

Directions: While you read, mark text that helps you answer the following guiding questions. After reading, cite the specific text-based evidence that helps you answer each question. Then, write your answers in complete sentences and in your own words.

What is the Articles of Confederation?

Evidence from Text	
Answer in complete sentences	

What is a confederation?

Evidence from Text	
Answer in complete sentences	

What were the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation?

Evidence from Text	
Answer in complete sentences	

What does the term debt mean? What does debt have to do with Shays's Rebellion?

Evidence from Text	
Answer in complete sentences	

How did Shays's Rebellion lead to the Constitutional Convention?

Evidence from Text	
Answer in complete sentences	

What happened at the Constitutional Convention?

Evidence from Text	
Answer in complete sentences	

Excerpts of the U.S. Constitution

Directions: Below are six excerpts from the U.S. Constitution. Summarize the excerpts in your own words. Then, compare the excerpt to the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation and determine which weakness is related to the excerpt.

Article 1, Section 8: The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts, and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the Unites States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

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Article 1, Section 8: The Congress shall have Power... To regulate Commerce foreign Nations, and among the several States

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Article II, Section 3:...he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed...

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Article III, Section 1: The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish.

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Article II, Section 1: The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America.

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Article V: The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution...

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