Ideas That Last

Read, mark, and summarize ideas from the Declaration of Independence.

SS24.4.6c "Summarize the principles of the Declaration of Independence."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence about equality and rights, circle the sentence about where government gets its power, and write 1 and 2 beside the sentences that explain when people may change a government and why the colonies chose independence.

What the Declaration Said

1. In July 1776, delegates from thirteen British colonies approved the Declaration of Independence. Imagine hearing its words read aloud in a crowded town square. The document said that all people are created equal and have rights that cannot rightly be taken away. It named life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as examples. These ideas were claims about what people deserve, not a list of what colonists already enjoyed.

2. Next, the Declaration explained why people form governments. Governments should protect people's rights, and their power should come from the consent, or agreement, of the people they govern. The document also said that if a government keeps harming those rights, the people may change or replace it. It warned that people should not change a government for small or passing problems.

3. The writers then listed ways they believed Britain's king had harmed the colonies. They said these repeated wrongs showed that the colonies had reason to become independent states. The Declaration's promise of equality did not match life for everyone in 1776. Enslaved people were denied freedom, and most women could not vote. Later generations used the Declaration's ideas to call for a wider share of rights.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In your own words, summarize what the Declaration says about equality and people's rights.

2. Summarize where a government's power should come from and what it should do.

3. According to the Declaration, when may people replace a government, and when should they not?

4. How did the writers use the Declaration's ideas to explain why the colonies should become independent?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a class council makes rules for a class library. Write three or four sentences explaining how two principles from the Declaration could guide the council, and describe one specific library rule or action that follows those principles.

ANSWER KEY

Ideas That Last

GRADE 4 · SS24.4.6c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence about equality and rights, circle the sentence about where government gets its power, and write 1 and 2 beside the sentences that explain when people may change a government and why the colonies chose independence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In your own words, summarize what the Declaration says about equality and people's rights.	**People are created equal and have rights that cannot rightly be taken away, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.**
2	Summarize where a government's power should come from and what it should do.	**Its power should come from the agreement of the people it governs, and it should protect their rights.**
3	According to the Declaration, when may people replace a government, and when should they not?	**People may replace a government that keeps harming their rights, but not for small or passing problems.**
4	How did the writers use the Declaration's ideas to explain why the colonies should become independent?	**They believed the king had repeatedly harmed the colonies. Because a government should protect people's rights, they argued that the colonies had reason to become independent.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Declaration says people are equal, so the council should let every classmate borrow books. It also says a government's power should come from the people's agreement, so the class could vote on library rules. For example, students could vote on a rule that gives everyone the same borrowing time.

Accept accurate summaries in students' own words. For the final task, look for two distinct principles and a specific library rule or action connected to them.