Rules for a Union

Trace ideas that shaped American government

SS24.6.12 "Explain how forms of governments established prior to the founding of the United States influenced the formation of the new nation's system of government. 12a Describe how the Magna Carta, Petition of Right..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three examples of limits on government power. Circle two ideas about the relationship between people and government, and number two details that connect the Haudenosaunee Confederacy to colonial plans for union.

Where Did the Founders Find Ideas?

1. When English rulers claimed too much power, people pushed back with written rules. The Magna Carta (1215) said the king had to follow the law and could not take some property without lawful judgment. The Petition of Right (1628) challenged the king's taxes without Parliament's approval and the jailing of people without a stated cause. The English Bill of Rights (1689) protected Parliament's power and barred cruel and unusual punishments. Together, these documents offered American founders examples of limited government: leaders must obey rules rather than rule however they wish.

2. Thinkers disagreed about why people need government. Thomas Hobbes believed people needed a powerful ruler to prevent violence and disorder. In his view, citizens gave up much freedom for safety. John Locke argued that people have natural rights, including life, liberty, and property. Governments exist to protect those rights and gain power from the people's consent. If a government fails, Locke said, people may change it. The founders drew on Locke's ideas in the Declaration of Independence, which says governments get their powers from the consent of the governed.

3. Long before the United States formed, the Haudenosaunee, also called the Iroquois Confederacy, joined separate nations in a council. Each nation kept its own affairs but sent leaders to discuss shared concerns. In 1754, Benjamin Franklin pointed to this union while urging British colonies to work together. His Albany Plan proposed a shared council for colonial matters, but the colonies did not adopt it. Historians debate how directly the confederacy shaped the later U.S. Constitution. Still, its example helped show that separate communities could unite for common decisions without giving up every local power.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did two of the English documents set limits on rulers in different ways? Name both documents and explain each limit.

2. How did Hobbes and Locke differ about what people should give up or keep when forming a government?

3. What evidence supports the claim that the Haudenosaunee Confederacy influenced colonial attempts to unite? What limit does the passage place on claims about its later influence?

4. Which idea connects Locke to the Declaration of Independence, and how does that idea limit government power?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are advising colonies that want to form a union. In five or six sentences, propose one rule for taxes and one rule for making shared decisions, connect each rule to a different example in the passage, and explain how your plan limits power.

ANSWER KEY

Rules for a Union

GRADE 6 · SS24.6.12

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three examples of limits on government power. Circle two ideas about the relationship between people and government, and number two details that connect the Haudenosaunee Confederacy to colonial plans for union. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did two of the English documents set limits on rulers in different ways? Name both documents and explain each limit.	**For example, the Petition of Right challenged taxes without Parliament's approval, while the English Bill of Rights barred cruel and unusual punishments.**
2	How did Hobbes and Locke differ about what people should give up or keep when forming a government?	**Hobbes thought people gave up much freedom for safety under a powerful ruler. Locke thought people kept natural rights that government must protect.**
3	What evidence supports the claim that the Haudenosaunee Confederacy influenced colonial attempts to unite? What limit does the passage place on claims about its later influence?	**Franklin pointed to the confederacy's union while urging the colonies to work together in 1754. Historians debate how directly it shaped the later U.S. Constitution.**
4	Which idea connects Locke to the Declaration of Independence, and how does that idea limit government power?	**Both say government gets its power from people's consent. A government cannot claim rightful power without that consent.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our new government should require representatives to approve every tax before anyone must pay it. This rule follows the Petition of Right, which opposed taxes raised without Parliament's approval. Each colony should also send a leader to a shared council to decide matters that affect everyone. The Haudenosaunee Confederacy showed how separate nations could discuss shared concerns while keeping local affairs. These rules stop one leader from setting taxes alone and let colonies work together without surrendering every local decision.

Accept any two accurately explained limits from the three English documents in question 1. For the open task, accept other workable rules if each is linked to a different passage example and the response explains how the plan limits power.