Rights Have Roots

Connect colonial concerns to protections in the Bill of Rights

SS24.6.17a "Trace the origins of rights contained in the Bill of Rights to issues leading to the American Revolution and the concerns of colonists about unlimited government power."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three colonial concerns, then circle a Bill of Rights protection linked to each one. Give each concern and its matching protection the same number.

Why Put Rights in Writing?

1. Imagine living in a town where officials can punish complaints and enter homes whenever they wish. Many colonists worried that British leaders had too much power over their daily lives. Before the American Revolution, colonists protested laws made by a Parliament in which they had no elected representatives. They also objected to royal officials who could act without listening to them. After independence, Americans added the Bill of Rights to the Constitution in 1791. Its limits on federal power answered fears shaped by those earlier experiences.

2. Colonists used newspapers and public meetings to challenge British policies. Some royal governors tried to silence printers who criticized them, and officials sometimes broke up gatherings. Colonists also sent petitions, or written requests, asking leaders to change unfair rules. When leaders ignored these appeals, many colonists feared that speaking out would become dangerous. The First Amendment protects freedom of speech and the press, the right to gather peacefully, and the right to petition the government. These protections make it harder for officials to silence disagreement.

3. British customs officers sometimes used broad search orders to look for smuggled goods in shops and homes. These orders did not have to name one place or item, so colonists feared searches without clear limits. The Fourth Amendment guards against unreasonable searches and requires warrants to name the place to search and things to seize. Laws also made colonists help house British troops. Colonists feared losing control of their homes. The Third Amendment says that, in peacetime, soldiers cannot stay in a home without its owner's consent.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did attempts to silence colonial printers help shape a protection in the First Amendment?

2. Colonists sent written requests to leaders. Which First Amendment right responds to their fear about speaking out?

3. What worried colonists about broad search orders, and how does the Fourth Amendment address that concern?

4. How does the Third Amendment respond to colonists' concern about housing British troops?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence letter from a person living in 1791 to a neighbor. Connect two different rights from the passage to colonial experiences, then describe a new situation in which those rights could limit federal power.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three colonial concerns, then circle a Bill of Rights protection linked to each one. Give each concern and its matching protection the same number. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did attempts to silence colonial printers help shape a protection in the First Amendment?	**Some governors tried to silence printers who criticized them. The First Amendment protects freedom of the press.**
2	Colonists sent written requests to leaders. Which First Amendment right responds to their fear about speaking out?	**The right to petition the government protects their ability to make requests without being silenced.**
3	What worried colonists about broad search orders, and how does the Fourth Amendment address that concern?	**Colonists feared searches without clear limits. The Fourth Amendment guards against unreasonable searches and requires specific warrants.**
4	How does the Third Amendment respond to colonists' concern about housing British troops?	**Colonists feared losing control of their homes. The Third Amendment bars soldiers from staying in a home during peacetime without the owner's consent.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear neighbor, the right to petition answers the colonists' fear that speaking out to leaders would become dangerous. The Fourth Amendment answers their fear of broad searches by customs officers. If federal officials disliked a complaint about a new harbor rule, they could not ban our peaceful petition or order an unreasonable search of every boat.

Accept any two accurate links between colonial concerns and rights named in the passage. The final sentence should give a new, plausible situation involving a limit on federal power.