

Ideas Into Rights

Trace how primary sources shaped U.S. ideas about government, liberty, and citizenship.

SS.8.CG.3.1 “Trace the foundational ideals and principles related to the U.S. government expressed in primary sources from the colonial period to Reconstruction.”

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each primary source named in the passage. Underline the words that express an ideal or principle, then number the circled sources from 1 to 9 in time order.

From Colonial Agreements to Reconstruction Amendments

- ① Colonial Americans began putting political ideas into written agreements long before independence. In 1620, the Mayflower Compact said the settlers would join in a “civil Body Politick” and make laws for the colony’s general good. This language showed consent of the governed, the idea that legitimate government gains authority from the people. In 1641, Massachusetts adopted the Body of Liberties, which listed protections such as fair legal procedures. These documents did not give equal power to everyone, but they helped establish self-government and rights as political goals.
- ② In 1776, the Declaration of Independence stated that people have natural rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It also said governments get “their just powers from the consent of the governed” and may be changed when they destroy rights. After the war, the Constitution created a stronger national government, but it divided power among legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The Bill of Rights, added in 1791, protected freedoms such as speech, religion, and fair trials. Together, these sources linked liberty with limits on government power.
- ③ During the Civil War and Reconstruction, national documents expanded the meaning of freedom. The Emancipation Proclamation, issued in 1863, declared freedom for enslaved people in areas rebelling against the United States. The Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery nationwide in 1865. The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified in 1868, required states to provide equal protection of the laws, and the Fifteenth Amendment barred denying the vote because of race. These amendments carried earlier ideals of rights and consent into a struggle over citizenship and political participation.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Choose one colonial source from the passage. What principle did it express?

2 According to the Declaration of Independence, when may people change a government?

3 How did the Constitution and the Bill of Rights place limits on government power in different ways?

4 How did the Reconstruction Amendments expand earlier ideas about rights and citizenship?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly three sentences tracing how ideas about rights and government continued or changed from the colonial period to Reconstruction. Name one primary source from the colonial period, one from independence or the early republic, and one from Reconstruction.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Circle each primary source named in the passage. Underline the words that express an ideal or principle, then number the circled sources from 1 to 9 in time order. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Choose one colonial source from the passage. What principle did it express?	The Mayflower Compact expressed consent of the governed and self-government. The Body of Liberties expressed legal rights, including fair legal procedures.
2	According to the Declaration of Independence, when may people change a government?	People may change a government when it destroys their rights.
3	How did the Constitution and the Bill of Rights place limits on government power in different ways?	The Constitution divided government power among three branches. The Bill of Rights protected individual freedoms and fair trials.
4	How did the Reconstruction Amendments expand earlier ideas about rights and citizenship?	They ended slavery, required equal protection under the laws, and protected voting rights from racial discrimination.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Mayflower Compact showed consent of the governed because settlers agreed to make laws for the general good. The Bill of Rights limited government by protecting speech and fair trials. The Fourteenth Amendment expanded rights by requiring equal protection, showing that liberty was applied more broadly after the Civil War.

Accept accurate source-to-principle connections using the passage's language or equivalent wording. For Part 3, check for exactly three sentences, one source from each required period, and a clear explanation of continuity or change.