Who Holds Power?

Read how colonial documents shaped laws, leaders, and rights.

5.C.2 "Identify and explain ideas about limited government, the rule of law, and individual rights in key colonial era documents."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline a phrase that limits a leader's power, circle a phrase that protects a person's right, and write 1 and 2 beside two places that show how laws guide people's actions.

Rules for New Communities

1. In 1620, passengers on the Mayflower were about to settle in a place with no government set up for them. Forty-one men signed the Mayflower Compact, promising to form a government and make "just and equal laws" for the colony's common good. They also promised to obey those laws. The compact shows the rule of law: people agreed that laws, not one person's wishes, would guide their community.

2. In 1639, towns in Connecticut adopted the Fundamental Orders. This document said eligible men would elect leaders, including a governor, each year. It also said a governor could not serve in back-to-back years. That rule limited one leader's power. The orders set rules for choosing leaders instead of letting a governor choose himself. Still, many people, including women, had no vote in these elections.

3. In 1641, Massachusetts leaders adopted the Body of Liberties. It listed protections for people in the colony. An accused person could bring witnesses to help show they were innocent. Officials could not arrest or punish someone unless a law allowed it. These rules protected people from unfair actions by officials and required officials to follow the law, too. Yet the document permitted slavery in some cases.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the Mayflower Compact show the idea of the rule of law?

2. What rule in the Fundamental Orders limited a governor's power? Explain how it worked.

3. What right did the Body of Liberties give an accused person, and how could it help that person?

4. What detail shows that the Body of Liberties did not give everyone equal freedom? Explain what that detail tells you about its protections.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write three sentences for a new colony: state a right people have, set a limit on leaders that protects it, and explain how a law applies to both leaders and other people.

ANSWER KEY

Who Holds Power?

GRADE 5 · 5.C.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline a phrase that limits a leader's power, circle a phrase that protects a person's right, and write 1 and 2 beside two places that show how laws guide people's actions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the Mayflower Compact show the idea of the rule of law?	**The signers agreed to make just and equal laws and to obey them, rather than follow one person's wishes.**
2	What rule in the Fundamental Orders limited a governor's power? Explain how it worked.	**A governor could not serve in back-to-back years, so one person could not keep the office year after year.**
3	What right did the Body of Liberties give an accused person, and how could it help that person?	**An accused person could bring witnesses who might help show they were innocent.**
4	What detail shows that the Body of Liberties did not give everyone equal freedom? Explain what that detail tells you about its protections.	**It permitted slavery in some cases, so its protections did not mean everyone in the colony was free.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Every person in our colony may speak at a town meeting without being punished for an opinion. Leaders may not stop someone from speaking just because they disagree. A written law protects this right, and both leaders and other residents must follow it.

For the marking job, accept any accurate phrases that show limits on leaders, individual rights, or the role of laws. For Your Turn, look for a specific right, a related limit on leaders, and a clear statement that the law applies to leaders and others.