

Documents Shape Democracy

Read how five landmark documents express democratic principles.

5.6b "Legal, political, and historic documents define the values, beliefs, and principles of constitutional democracy."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each phrase that tells a value, right, or limit on government power. Write 1 by the Declaration of Independence, 2 by the U.S. Constitution, 3 by the U.S. Bill of Rights, 4 by the British North America Act, and 5 by the Canadian Bill of Rights to show which document each idea comes from.

Five Documents, Shared Principles

- ① In 1776, the Declaration of Independence said that people have certain rights and that government gets its power from the people it governs. These ideas challenged rule by a king. After independence, the U.S. Constitution created a government with separate branches and limits on power. It also begins with the words We the People, showing that citizens are the source of government authority.
- ② The first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution are called the Bill of Rights. They protect freedoms such as speech, religion, and a fair trial. In Canada, the British North America Act of 1867 joined provinces to form Canada. It set up a federal system, dividing some powers between the national Parliament and provincial governments. This arrangement limits power by sharing it.
- ③ Canada's Bill of Rights, passed in 1960, recognized rights and freedoms in federal law. It included equality before the law, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion. Each document was written in a different time and place, but together they show constitutional democracy. Governments must follow laws, respect individual rights, and receive their authority from the people or their elected representatives.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 According to the Declaration of Independence, where does a government get its power?

2 Which document divided powers between Canada's national Parliament and provincial governments? How did this limit power?

3 Name one freedom protected by both the U.S. Bill of Rights and the Canadian Bill of Rights.

4 How do the U.S. Constitution and the British North America Act use government structure to limit power?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write exactly two sentences for a school council rule. Include one right students have and one limit that keeps one person or group from controlling every decision.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each phrase that tells a value, right, or limit on government power. Write 1 by the Declaration of Independence, 2 by the U.S. Constitution, 3 by the U.S. Bill of Rights, 4 by the British North America Act, and 5 by the Canadian Bill of Rights to show which document each idea comes from. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	According to the Declaration of Independence, where does a government get its power?	It gets its power from the people it governs.
2	Which document divided powers between Canada's national Parliament and provincial governments? How did this limit power?	The British North America Act. It limited power by sharing powers between national and provincial governments.
3	Name one freedom protected by both the U.S. Bill of Rights and the Canadian Bill of Rights.	Freedom of speech or freedom of religion.
4	How do the U.S. Constitution and the British North America Act use government structure to limit power?	The U.S. Constitution uses separate branches of government. The British North America Act divides powers between national and provincial governments.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Every student may share an opinion at council meetings. Decisions must receive approval from both the elected council and the principal, so neither can decide alone.

Accept accurate wording that connects a document to popular authority, individual rights, rule of law, or limits on power. For the open task, accept any two-sentence rule that clearly includes both a right and a limit on power.