Ideas That Endure

Compare how major U.S. documents develop civic responsibility.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.9 "Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (e.g., Washington's Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech, King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail")..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each document's central claim about citizenship or rights, circle the historical context linked to it, and number the documents 1–4 in the order they appear so you can compare how one shared concern changes.

Four Voices, Related Ideals

1. In his 1796 Farewell Address, George Washington warned that political factions and lasting foreign alliances could weaken the young republic. Protecting the Union would preserve shared interests and liberty. During the Civil War, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address presented the war as a test of whether a government based on human equality could survive. Both connect national unity with self-government, but Lincoln makes equality central.

2. Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1941 Four Freedoms speech moves the discussion beyond U.S. borders. As World War II threatened democratic nations, Roosevelt named freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear as rights for people everywhere. He argued that protecting these freedoms would make the United States safer. In his 1963 "Letter from Birmingham Jail," Martin Luther King Jr. also defends liberty and human dignity, but he addresses segregation inside the United States. Writing to clergymen who criticized protests, King justifies direct action by showing that waiting had repeatedly failed Black Americans. Roosevelt imagines universal rights; King demands that the nation fulfill its stated ideals.

3. Context shapes civic responsibility: Washington was retiring from a young republic; Lincoln spoke at a battlefield during civil war. Roosevelt addressed global conflict, and King wrote from jail during Birmingham protests against segregation. Together, their documents ask citizens to act beyond private interest: preserving unity, honoring equality, defending rights or confronting injustice, not simply to agree.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do Washington and Lincoln connect national survival to different central ideas?

2. How do Roosevelt and King differ in the scope and method of their arguments about liberty?

3. How does historical context help explain why Washington urges citizens to protect the Union while King justifies direct action?

4. What larger idea about citizenship emerges when all four documents are considered together?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Read these original excerpts:
A. Declaration of Independence (1776): “to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed”.
B. Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, Nicolay copy (1863): “that government of the people by the people for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”
In two sentences, compare how each excerpt makes people central to government, using a specific phrase from each. Then retain the original four-or-five-sentence comparison of two documents in the passage, with a shared concept, evidence and historical context. Use another sheet if needed.

ANSWER KEY # Ideas That Endure

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each document's central claim about citizenship or rights, circle the historical context linked to it, and number the documents 1–4 in the order they appear so you can compare how one shared concern changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do Washington and Lincoln connect national survival to different central ideas?	**Washington argues that protecting the Union preserves shared interests and liberty. Lincoln argues that the nation's survival tests whether a government based on human equality can endure.**
2	How do Roosevelt and King differ in the scope and method of their arguments about liberty?	**Roosevelt presents universal freedoms for people everywhere and links them to U.S. security. King focuses on segregation in the United States and defends direct action because waiting had failed Black Americans.**
3	How does historical context help explain why Washington urges citizens to protect the Union while King justifies direct action?	**Washington spoke as a retiring leader of a young republic, so he stresses preserving unity. King wrote from jail during a Birmingham anti-segregation campaign, so he argues that immediate action is necessary against injustice.**
4	What larger idea about citizenship emerges when all four documents are considered together?	**Citizenship requires acting for principles beyond private interest, though the action may mean preserving unity, honoring equality, defending rights, or confronting injustice.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Original-excerpt comparison: The Declaration's "consent of the governed" makes people the source of government's just power. Lincoln's repeated "of," "by" and "for" connects the people with the government's identity, operation and purpose, and asks that it endure.
Four-document scaffold extension: Lincoln and King both connect the nation's ideals to equality, yet their situations lead them to different demands. At Gettysburg, Lincoln describes the Civil War as a test of whether a government based on equality can survive. From a Birmingham jail, King argues that Black Americans cannot wait any longer for those ideals to be honored. This difference matters because Lincoln asks listeners to understand the war's purpose, while King presses readers to support immediate action against injustice.

Accept accurate paraphrases that compare claims, context, and related concepts using passage details. For the open response, accept any two documents if the student includes a shared concept, relevant evidence from each, and a clear explanation of how context shapes the comparison. Require an actual two-excerpt comparison with accurately used phrases, distinct from the original summary-based extension. Declaration source: https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript (rights/consent paragraph); Lincoln source: https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gettysburg-address/ext/trans-nicolay-copy.html (final sentence). Wording directly verified; the Nicolay copy differs in punctuation from other versions. Accept different defensible shared-concept comparisons; no full-document quota.