

Big Ideas, Three Documents

Read closely to identify why each founding document was written.

3.8.A "identify the purposes of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, including the Bill of Rights; and"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one sentence in each paragraph that tells the main purpose of the document named there. Number the underlined sentences 1, 2, and 3 from top to bottom.

Three Documents, Three Purposes

- ① In 1776, the thirteen colonies wanted to separate from Great Britain. Their leaders wrote the Declaration of Independence. This document told the world why the colonies believed they should be free. It said people have rights, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It also listed complaints about the British king. The Declaration announced that the colonies were becoming independent states.
- ② After the new country began, leaders needed a plan for running it. In 1787, they wrote the U.S. Constitution. The Constitution sets up the national government and explains its jobs and limits. It describes three branches that share power. It also explains how states work together with the national government. The Constitution helps the country have rules for making decisions and laws.
- ③ The first ten changes, called amendments, to the Constitution are the Bill of Rights. They were added in 1791. The Bill of Rights protects important freedoms and rights of people. For example, it protects freedom of speech and religion. It also protects the right to a fair trial. These protections limit what the government can do to people.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What was the main purpose of the Declaration of Independence?

2 Which document sets up the national government and explains its jobs and limits?

3 What is the main purpose of the Bill of Rights?

4 How is the purpose of the Constitution different from the purpose of the Bill of Rights?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine that a new community is starting. Write three sentences, one for each document, that tell what its Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights would do.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one sentence in each paragraph that tells the main purpose of the document named there. Number the underlined sentences 1, 2, and 3 from top to bottom. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What was the main purpose of the Declaration of Independence?	It told why the colonies believed they should be free and announced that they were becoming independent states.
2	Which document sets up the national government and explains its jobs and limits?	The U.S. Constitution.
3	What is the main purpose of the Bill of Rights?	It protects important freedoms and rights of people and limits what the government can do to people.
4	How is the purpose of the Constitution different from the purpose of the Bill of Rights?	The Constitution sets up the government and explains its rules, jobs, and limits. The Bill of Rights protects people's freedoms and rights.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our Declaration of Independence would announce that our community is free from its old ruler. Our Constitution would set up a community government and explain its jobs. Our Bill of Rights would protect people's freedom to speak and practice their religion.

Accept student sentences that correctly match the Declaration of Independence with announcing independence and reasons for freedom, the Constitution with setting up government, and the Bill of Rights with protecting rights and freedoms. Wording may vary.