

Founding Ideas

Read how three founding documents shaped the United States.

5.14 "Government. The student understands important ideas in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. The student is expected to: explain the purposes, key elements..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline ideas about the Declaration of Independence, number the six goals in the Preamble from 1 to 6, and circle why the Bill of Rights was added. These marks will help you compare each document's purpose and importance.

Three Documents, Big Ideas

- ① Before the United States became a nation, the thirteen colonies were ruled by Great Britain. In 1776, the Declaration of Independence announced that the colonies would be free and independent states. It said people have natural rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It also said governments get their power from the consent of the governed, meaning the people agree to be governed.
- ② By listing the king's actions, such as taking away colonial self-government and taxing colonists without their consent, the Declaration explained why separation was necessary. The document told other countries that the colonies were becoming a new nation. Its ideas mattered because they supported the belief that people may change or replace a government that does not protect their rights.
- ③ In 1787, the Constitution created a plan for the new national government. Its Preamble names six goals: form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty. The Constitution divides power among branches of government and can be changed by amendments. Some Americans feared that the Constitution did not clearly protect individual freedoms. To answer these worries, the first ten amendments, called the Bill of Rights, were added in 1791. They protect freedoms such as speech, religion, and a fair trial. The Bill of Rights is important because it limits government power and helps protect people from unfair actions by the government.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What did the Declaration of Independence announce? Name two ideas it states about people or government.

2 How did the Declaration of Independence explain why the colonies needed to separate from Great Britain?

3 Write three purposes of the U.S. Constitution named in the Preamble.

4 Why was the Bill of Rights added, and why is it important?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine people in a new community are writing basic rules for their government. In 4 to 6 sentences, explain two goals the government should have and one freedom it must protect. Tell why each goal or freedom matters.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline ideas about the Declaration of Independence, number the six goals in the Preamble from 1 to 6, and circle why the Bill of Rights was added. These marks will help you compare each document's purpose and importance. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What did the Declaration of Independence announce? Name two ideas it states about people or government.	It announced that the colonies would be free and independent states. It says people have natural rights and that governments get power from the consent of the governed.
2	How did the Declaration of Independence explain why the colonies needed to separate from Great Britain?	It listed the king's actions, including taking away colonial self-government and taxing colonists without their consent.
3	Write three purposes of the U.S. Constitution named in the Preamble.	Answers may include: form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty.
4	Why was the Bill of Rights added, and why is it important?	It was added because people feared the Constitution did not clearly protect individual freedoms. It limits government power and protects people from unfair government actions.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our community government should establish justice so each person is treated fairly. It should provide for the common defense so residents are kept safe. It must protect freedom of speech so people can share opinions without unfair punishment. People should choose leaders because government power comes from the consent of the governed.

Accept equivalent wording for the Declaration's rights, consent of the governed, and the six Preamble goals. For the open response, accept reasonable government goals and protected freedoms when the student explains why they matter.