

Rights That Remain

Read how the Declaration of Independence describes rights every person has.

8.19.A “define and give examples of unalienable rights;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence that defines an unalienable right. Then circle each example of an unalienable right named in the passage.

Rights and Government

- ① In 1776, the Declaration of Independence explained why the thirteen colonies were separating from Great Britain. Its authors wrote that all people are created equal and have certain unalienable rights. An unalienable right belongs to a person because that person is human. It is not a gift from a ruler or government. A government may deny or violate such a right, but it does not rightly own the power to take the right away. The Declaration says governments are formed to secure these rights.
- ② The document gives three well-known examples: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Life means that each person has a claim not to be harmed or killed without justification. Liberty includes freedom to make many personal choices, such as where to live or what work to seek, within laws that protect others. The pursuit of happiness means people may work toward goals they value. It does not promise that every goal will be reached or that every choice will be allowed.
- ③ People sometimes connect unalienable rights to freedoms protected by the Constitution, such as speaking, practicing a religion, or gathering peacefully. These protections can help secure liberty, although the Declaration itself is not a list of laws. Rights are not unlimited permissions. For example, one person's liberty does not include harming another person. When citizens discuss a law or policy, they can ask whether it protects people's life, liberty, or pursuit of happiness, and whether it treats people equally.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What makes a right unalienable, according to the passage?

2 What three unalienable rights does the Declaration of Independence name?

3 How does the passage explain the pursuit of happiness?

4 Name two freedoms protected by the Constitution that the passage connects to liberty.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write two sentences about an imagined school or community rule. Name one unalienable right the rule could protect or threaten, and explain why.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence that defines an unalienable right. Then circle each example of an unalienable right named in the passage. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What makes a right unalienable, according to the passage?	It belongs to a person because the person is human, not because a ruler or government gives it.
2	What three unalienable rights does the Declaration of Independence name?	Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
3	How does the passage explain the pursuit of happiness?	People may work toward goals they value. It does not guarantee that every goal will be reached or every choice allowed.
4	Name two freedoms protected by the Constitution that the passage connects to liberty.	Any two: speaking, practicing a religion, or gathering peacefully.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A town rule that punished residents for peacefully sharing their opinions would threaten liberty. It limits a personal freedom without protecting other people's rights.

Accept definitions that explain rights are inherent in being human and are not government gifts. For the open response, accept any plausible rule that accurately identifies life, liberty, or pursuit of happiness and gives a clear explanation.