

Roots of Rights

Trace how earlier documents shaped Virginia and United States government.

CE.1.b “describing the Magna Carta, English common law, the charters of the Virginia Company of London (April 10, 1606; May 23, 1609; and March 12, 1612), the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Independence...”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the five sentences that state how an earlier source or idea influenced the Constitution of Virginia, the United States Constitution, or the United States Bill of Rights. Write 1 through 5 beside those sentences.

Ideas That Shaped Constitutions

- ① Long before Virginia wrote a constitution, English ideas limited government power. The Magna Carta of 1215 said the king had to obey the law and could not take certain actions without lawful judgment. English common law grew from court decisions and customs and supported jury trials and due process. The Virginia Company charters of April 10, 1606, May 23, 1609, and March 12, 1612 gave colonists English rights and set colonial governing rules. Together, the Magna Carta, common law, and charters helped shape Virginia's Constitution through limited government, jury protections, and representative lawmaking.
- ② Virginia leaders later stated rights more directly. The Virginia Declaration of Rights of 1776 declared that people have inherent rights and that government serves the common good. It influenced both the Constitution of Virginia and the United States Bill of Rights, especially protections for a free press, religious liberty, and fair trials. The Declaration of Independence said governments get their just powers from the consent of the governed and may be changed when they violate rights. That principle influenced the Constitution of Virginia and the United States Constitution by grounding government authority in the people.
- ③ The Articles of Confederation created a weak national government that could not tax directly or regulate trade among states. This weakness led delegates to give Congress stronger listed powers in the United States Constitution, while the Constitution of Virginia continued to organize Virginia's state government separately. Virginia's Statute for Religious Freedom, written by Thomas Jefferson and passed in 1786, said no person could be forced to support or attend religious worship. It influenced the Virginia Constitution's protection of religious freedom and the First Amendment in the United States Bill of Rights.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the Magna Carta, English common law, and the Virginia Company charters help shape the Constitution of Virginia?

2 Name the two Virginia documents that the passage says influenced the United States Bill of Rights. What protection is connected to each one?

3 What idea from the Declaration of Independence influenced both the Constitution of Virginia and the United States Constitution?

4 What weakness of the Articles of Confederation led to a change in the United States Constitution?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, or the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. Write exactly three sentences that name its idea and explain one specific later influence on the Constitution of Virginia, the United States Constitution, or the United States Bill of Rights.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Number the five sentences that state how an earlier source or idea influenced the Constitution of Virginia, the United States Constitution, or the United States Bill of Rights. Write 1 through 5 beside those sentences. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Magna Carta, English common law, and the Virginia Company charters help shape the Constitution of Virginia?	They supported limited government, jury protections, and representative lawmaking.
2	Name the two Virginia documents that the passage says influenced the United States Bill of Rights. What protection is connected to each one?	The Virginia Declaration of Rights is connected to protections for a free press, religious liberty, and fair trials. The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom is connected to religious freedom in the First Amendment.
3	What idea from the Declaration of Independence influenced both the Constitution of Virginia and the United States Constitution?	Government gets its just powers from the consent of the governed, so government authority comes from the people.
4	What weakness of the Articles of Confederation led to a change in the United States Constitution?	The national government could not tax directly or regulate trade among states. The Constitution gave Congress stronger listed powers.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom said that no person could be forced to support or attend religious worship. It influenced the First Amendment in the United States Bill of Rights. The First Amendment protects religious freedom.

Accept equivalent wording that accurately connects each source to the later constitutional influence stated in the passage. For Part 3, accept any of the three listed sources if the response has exactly three sentences and includes an accurate idea and supported influence.