

Civics Lesson Plan – “A World of Ideas”

Name: Dave Cash

School: George Washington Carver Senior High School

Title of Lesson: “A World of Ideas”

Amount of time required to complete lesson: (2) 90-minute periods

Lesson Objective(s):

Benchmark(s):

C-1B-H1: Analyzing the central ideas and historical origins of American constitutional government and evaluating how this form of government has helped to shaped American society

Grade Level Expectation(s) (GLE):

25. Analyze the significance of the Magna Carta, English common law, and the English Bill of Rights in creating limited government in the United States (C-1B-H1)
26. Explain how European philosophers (e.g., Rousseau, Locke, Montesquieu, Voltaire) helped shape American democratic ideas (C-1B-H1)
27. Analyze central ideas in an American historical document and explain the document’s significance in shaping the U.S. Constitution (C-1B-H1)

Anticipatory Set/Essential Question(s):

1. Which European philosophers and ideas influenced the development of the American democratic government?
2. What is the historical significance of documents such as the Magna Carta, the English Bill of Rights and English common law in shaping the U.S. system of government?
3. How did colonial documents influence the creation of the U.S. Constitution?

Materials Required:

- Graphic organizer: “Ideas and Influences on Early American Government”
- Primary source documents (or excerpts thereof)

Instructional Strategies Used:

- Direct instruction
- Questioning
- Jigsaw
- Think-Pair-Share
- Luck of the Draw (summarizing)
- 3-2-1 (summarizing)

Do Now:Day 1

1. What are the benefits of being ruled by a king or queen and what are the drawbacks?
2. What are the benefits of being governed by elected officials and what are the drawbacks?
3. Which type of government do you think is best and why?

Day 2

1. What is your personal philosophy or your motto in life?
2. What person you know or book/song/movie you like influenced that philosophy and how?
3. Are there any original ideas out there? Why or why not?

Guided Practice or Mini Lesson:Day 1

1. Do Now (7 minutes)
2. Discussion of Do Now responses (13 minutes)
3. Mini-Lecture on historical context of Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution. (15 minutes)
4. Introduction of Vocabulary (5 minutes)
 - a. Individual rights
 - b. separation of powers
 - c. popular sovereignty

Day 2

1. Do Now (7 minutes)
2. Discussion of Do Now responses (13 minutes)
3. Luck of the Draw review (5 minutes)
4. Mini-Lecture on the Enlightenment (15 minutes)

Process or Activity Period:Day 1

1. Students meet in their jigsaw groups and assign tasks (5 minutes)
2. Students break into expert groups and work on completing page 1 of “Ideas and Influences on Early American Government” graphic organizer (20 minutes)
3. Students return to jigsaw groups and debrief with their group members (10 minutes)
4. Class discussion/clarification (5 minutes)
5. Think-Pair-Share: “Which of the three documents is most important: the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution or the Bill of Rights? Explain your answer.” (5 minutes)

Day 2

1. Students meet in their jigsaw groups and assign tasks (5 minutes)
2. Students break into expert groups and work on completing page 2 of “Ideas and Influences on Early American Government” graphic organizer (20 minutes)

3. Students return to jigsaw groups and debrief with their group members (10 minutes)
4. Class discussion/clarification (5 minutes)
5. Think-Pair-Share: "If you were writing a book about the founding of the United States government, what would call it and why?" (5 minutes)

Closure Activity:

Day 1

1. Luck of the Draw (5 minutes)
 - a. Teacher gives students one index card each.
 - b. Each student writes something important they learned during the lesson on their card.
 - c. Student turns card in to teacher.
 - d. The next day, teacher draws cards from the stack and as students' cards are drawn they stand and read/explain them to the class. This serves as a review exercise to begin class the next day.

Day 2

1. 3-2-1 (5 minutes)
 - a. On a piece of paper students write answers to these:
 - i. Write 3 things you learned about the origin of either the Declaration of Independence or the U.S. Constitution.
 - ii. Write 2 things you found most surprising or interesting about the origins of the Declaration of Independence or the U.S. Constitution.
 - iii. Write 1 thing you still want to know about the origins of the Declaration of Independence or the U.S. Constitution.

Assessment:

- 4 LEAP/iLEAP-Like multiple-choice questions:
 1. Which idea is **not** found in the Constitution?
 - a. separation of powers
 - b. checks and balances
 - c. all men are created equal**
 - d. taxation
 2. Why was the Bill of Rights not included in the Constitution when it was originally written?
 - a. The authors didn't think individual rights were important.
 - b. The authors could not agree on which rights to include.
 - c. Individual rights were already protected by the Declaration of Independence.
 - d. The authors believed adding individual rights would have been overstepping their authority.**

3. From which European philosopher did the Constitution's authors borrow the idea of separation of powers?
 - a. John Locke
 - b. Baron de Montesquieu**
 - c. Thomas Jefferson
 - d. Jean-Jacques Rousseau
4. Which state's constitution served as the primary model for the U.S. Constitution?
 - a. Virginia**
 - b. Maryland
 - c. Louisiana
 - d. Massachusetts
- 1 LEAP-like constructed response question
 1. Choose an Enlightenment-era philosopher from this list:
 - Montesquieu
 - Voltaire
 - Rousseau
 - Locke
 - Hobbes
 - Hume
 - a. Describe the philosopher's most important ideas.
 - b. Explain the influence of the philosopher's ideas on the formation of the United States government.
- Alternative Assessment and Rubric or checklist (if needed) – Performance assessment
 1. You are part of a team designing a new theme park. The park's theme will be the founding of the United States. The park will feature rides, performances, restaurants and games; your team will design at least one of each of these features. The park owners want every part of the theme park to teach visitors about the founding of the United States. Each feature design must include a title, a description, an advertisement for the feature, and an explanation of how the feature relates to the founding of the United States.

Attachments: Primary sources used, teacher-developed worksheets, rubrics for student assessments, student directions sheets, etc...

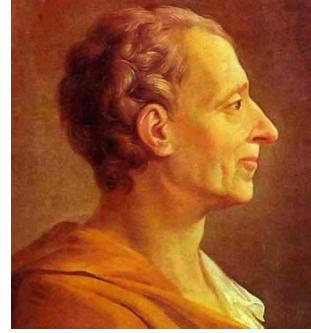
Using the sources provided, put quotations in each box from each document in the correct category.

	individual rights	separation of powers	popular sovereignty
Declaration of Independence			
Constitution of United States			
The Bill of Rights			

Using the documents provided and your knowledge of the documents on page 1 of this organizer, write quotations (with attribution) from each group into each category column.

	individual rights	separation of powers	popular sovereignty
European philosophers			
English legal documents			
colonial documents			

Montesquieu, «*MON teh SKYOO*» (1689-1755), was a French philosopher. His major work, *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748), influenced the writing of many constitutions, including the Constitution of the United States.



Montesquieu believed that laws underlie all things—human, natural, and divine. One of philosophy's major tasks was to discover these laws. It was difficult to study humanity because the laws governing human nature were complex. Yet Montesquieu believed these laws could be found by *empirical* (experimental) methods of investigation (see [Empiricism](#)). Knowledge of the laws would ease the ills of society and improve life.

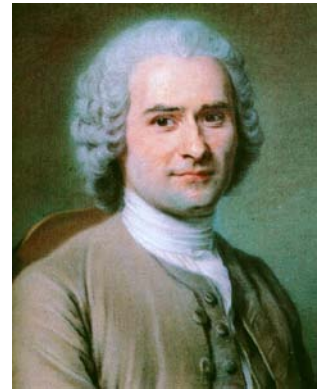
Montesquieu said there were three basic types of government—monarchal, republican, and despotic. A monarchal government had limited power placed in a king or queen. A republican government was either an aristocracy or a democracy. In an aristocracy, only a few had power. In a democracy, all had it. A despotic government was controlled by a tyrant, who had absolute authority. Montesquieu believed legal systems should vary according to the basic type of government.

Montesquieu supported human freedom and opposed tyranny. He believed that political liberty involved separating the legislative, executive, and judicial powers of government. He believed that liberty and respect for properly constituted law could exist together.

Montesquieu, whose real name was Charles de Secondat, was born near Bordeaux. He inherited the title Baron de la Brede et de Montesquieu. He gained fame with his *Persian Letters* (1721), which ridiculed Parisian life and many French institutions. He also criticized the church and national governments of France. Montesquieu was admitted to the French Academy in 1727. He lived in England from 1729 to 1731 and came to admire the British political system.

Creech, James. "Montesquieu." *World Book Advanced*. World Book, 2010. Web. 23 June 2010.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, «roo SOH, jhahn zhahk» (1712-1778), was a French philosopher. He was the most important writer of the Enlightenment, a period of European history that extended from the late 1600's to the late 1700's. Rousseau's philosophy helped shape the political events that led to the French Revolution. His works have influenced education, literature, and politics.



His ideas. Rousseau criticized society in several essays. For example, in "Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality" (1755), he attacked society and private property as causes of inequality and oppression. *The New Heloise* (1761) is both a romantic novel and a work that strongly criticizes the false codes of morality Rousseau saw in society. In *The Social Contract* (1762), a landmark in the history of political science, Rousseau gave his views concerning government and the rights of citizens. In the novel *Emile* (1762), Rousseau stated that children should be taught with patience and understanding. Rousseau recommended that the teacher appeal to the child's interests, and discouraged strict discipline and tiresome lessons. However, he also felt that children's thoughts and behavior should be controlled.

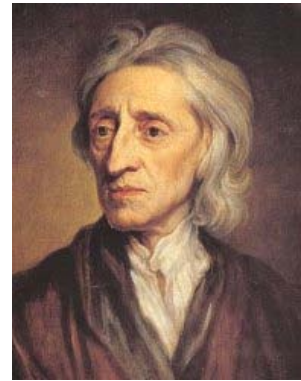
Rousseau believed that people are not social beings by nature. He stated that people, living in a natural condition, isolated and without language, are kind and without motive or impulse to hurt one another. However, once they live together in society, people become evil. Society corrupts individuals by bringing out their inclination toward aggression and selfishness.

Rousseau did not advise people to return to a natural condition. He thought that people could come closest to the advantages of that condition in a simple agricultural society in which desires could be limited, sexual and egotistical drives controlled, and energies directed toward community life. In his writings, he outlined institutions he believed were necessary to establish a democracy in which all citizens would participate.

Rousseau believed that laws should express the general will of the people. Any kind of government could be considered legitimate, provided that social organization was by common consent. According to Rousseau, all forms of government would eventually tend to decline. The degeneration could be restrained only through the control of moral standards and the elimination of special interest groups. Robespierre and other leaders of the French Revolution were influenced by Rousseau's ideas on the state. Also, many Socialists and some Communists have found inspiration in Rousseau's ideas.

Terrasse, Jean. "Rousseau, Jean-Jacques." *World Book Advanced*. World Book, 2010. Web. 23 June 2010.

Locke, John (1632-1704), was an English philosopher. His writings have influenced political science and philosophy. Locke's book *Two Treatises of Government* (1690) strongly influenced Thomas Jefferson in the writing of the Declaration of Independence.



His philosophy. Locke's major work was *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690). It describes his theory of how the mind functions in learning about the world. Locke argued against the doctrine of innate ideas, which stated that ideas were part of the mind at birth and not learned or acquired later from outside sources. Locke claimed that all ideas were placed in the mind by experience.

He declared that there were two kinds of experience, outer and inner. Outer experience was acquired through the senses of sight, taste, hearing, smell, and touch, which provide information about the external world. Inner experience was acquired by thinking about the mental processes involved in sifting these data, which furnished information about the mind.

Locke believed that the universe contained three kinds of things—minds, various types of bodies, and God. Bodies had two kinds of properties. One kind was mathematically measurable, such as length and weight, and existed in the bodies themselves. The second kind was qualitative, such as sound and color. These properties were not in the bodies themselves but were simply powers that bodies had to produce ideas of colors and sounds in the mind.

According to Locke, a good life was a life of pleasure. Pleasure and pain were simple ideas that accompanied nearly all human experiences. Ethical action involved determining which act in a given situation would produce the greatest pleasure—and then performing that act. Locke also believed that God had established divine law. This law could be discovered by reason, and to disobey it was morally wrong. Locke thought that divine law and the pleasure principle were compatible.

Locke believed that people by nature had certain rights and duties. These rights included liberty, life, and ownership of property. By liberty, Locke meant political equality. The task of any state was to protect people's rights. States inconvenience people in various ways. Therefore, the justification for a state's existence had to be found in its ability to protect human rights better than individuals could on their own. Locke declared that if a government did not adequately protect the rights of its citizens, they had the right to find other rulers.

Jesseph, Douglas M. "Locke, John." *World Book Advanced*. World Book, 2010. Web. 23 June 2010.

Voltaire (born François Marie Arouet) (1694-1778) French writer, satirist, the embodiment of the 18th-century Enlightenment. Voltaire is remembered as a crusader against tyranny and bigotry. Compared to Rousseau's (1712-1778) rebelliousness and idealism, Voltaire's world view was more skeptical, but both of their ideas influenced deeply the French Revolution. Voltaire disliked Rousseau and wrote to him in 1761: "One feels like crawling on all fours after reading your work."



Voltaire is considered to have been a central figure in the emergence of the Enlightenment movement in Europe where people were increasingly encouraged to practice toleration in religion and to look to the practical application of natural laws discovered by science for the material improvement of human life. He also tended to effectively persuade people that superstition was ridiculous.

Voltaire contributed to what proved to be perhaps the greatest intellectual project of the times, the great ongoing *Encyclopedié* edited by the philosophes Denis Diderot and Jean d'Alembert. The *Encyclopedié* was also to become the subject of controversy as it too was considered to challenge faith by encouraging people to look to the power of reason.

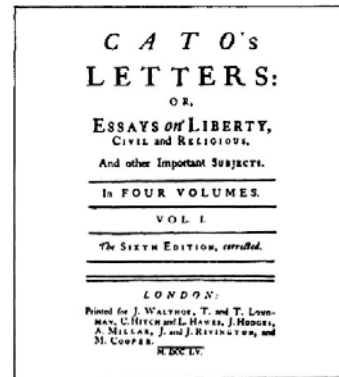
His championship of freedom of thought and of religious tolerance in several notable cases brought him into a direct conflict with the Catholic church authorities. He saw the Catholic church authorities in France as often behaving in a repressive manner and particularly so towards Huguenots. He often used the phrase "écrasons l'infâme" ("let us crush the infamous one") by which he seems to have meant intellectual, religious, and social intolerance generally.

Liukkonen, Petri. (2008.) "Voltaire." *Authors' Calendar*. Retrieved from <http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/voltaire.htm>

"Voltaire: an outline biography." *age-of-the-sage.org: Transmitting the Wisdoms of the Ages*. Retrieved from <http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/philosophy/voltaire.html>

Real Whigs, a radical faction of the Whig Party in England in the early eighteenth century. The Real Whigs believed that citizens have a right and a responsibility to speak out against the abuses of power and corruption within the government. Their aim, however, was not anarchy but rather to seek redress and reform through legal means.

Two of the most famous of the Real Whigs, John Trenchard (1662-1723) and Thomas Gordon (d. 1750), published their ideas in a series of essays called *Cato's Letters* (1720-1723). In America, the writings of Trenchard and Gordon ranked with the treatises of John Locke as the most authoritative statement of the nature of political liberty and above Locke as an exposition of the social sources of the threats it faced.



The Real Whigs refused to believe that the transfer of sovereignty from the crown to Parliament provided a perfect guarantee that the individual would be protected from the power of the state. They called for vigilance against the government. They insisted, at a time when government was felt to be less oppressive than it had been for two hundred years, that it was necessarily—by its very nature—hostile to human liberty and happiness; that, properly, it existed only on the tolerance of the people whose needs it served; and that it could be, and reasonably should be, dismissed—overthrown—if it attempted to exceed its proper jurisdiction.

At one time or another, one or another of them argued for adult manhood suffrage; elimination of the rotten borough system and the substitution of regular units of representation systematically related to the distribution of population; the binding of representatives to their constituencies by residential requirements and by instructions; alterations in the definition of seditious libel so as to permit full freedom of the press to criticize government; and the total withdrawal of government control over the practice of religion.

In America, the writings of the Real Whigs harmonized the other, discordant elements in the political and social thought of the Revolutionary generation. Within the framework of these ideas, Enlightenment abstractions and common law precedents, covenant theology and classical analogy—Locke and Abraham, Brutus and Coke—could all be brought together into a comprehensive theory of politics. It was in terms of this pattern of ideas and attitudes—originating in the English Civil War and carried forward with additions and modifications not on the surface of English political life but in its undercurrents stirred by doctrinaire libertarians, disaffected politicians, and religious dissenters—that the colonists responded to the new regulations imposed by England on her American colonies after 1763.

Bailyn, Bernard. (1992.) *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (enlarged edition). Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press. 35-54.

Canellis, Gregory. (2005.) "Compelling Thesis With Some Minor Flaws." Amazon.com Customer Review. Retrieved from <http://www.amazon.com/review/R3BLMVCV80IYKGV>

Magna Carta, «*MAG nuh KAHR tuh*», is a document that marked a decisive step forward in the development of constitutional government and legal ideas in England. In later centuries, much of the rest of the world also benefited from it because many countries followed English models in creating their own governments. These countries include the United States and Canada. The Latin words *Magna Carta* mean *Great Charter*.



English barons forced King John to approve the charter in June 1215 at Runnymede, southwest of London. In the charter, the king granted many rights to the English aristocracy. The ordinary English people gained little. But many years later, Magna Carta became a model for those who demanded democratic government and individual rights for all. In its own time, the greatest value of Magna Carta was that it limited royal power and made it clear that even the king had to obey the law.

Promises in the charter. Magna Carta contained 63 articles, most of which pledged the king to uphold feudal customs. These articles chiefly benefited the barons and other landholders. One article granted the church freedom from royal interference. A few articles guaranteed rights to residents of towns. Ordinary free people and peasants were hardly mentioned in the charter, even though they made up by far the largest part of England's population.

Some articles that in 1215 applied only to feudal landholders later became important to all the people. For example, the charter stated that the king could make no special demands for money without the consent of the barons. Later, this provision was used to support the argument that no tax should be raised without the consent of Parliament.

Still other articles became foundations for modern justice. One article says that the king will not sell, deny, or delay justice. Another says that no freeman shall be imprisoned, deprived of property, exiled, or destroyed, except by the lawful judgment of his *peers* (equals) or by the law of the land. The idea of due process of law, including trial by jury, developed from these articles. In John's time, however, there was no such thing as trial by jury in criminal cases.

The charter tried to make the king keep his promises by establishing a council of barons. If the king violated the charter and ignored warnings of the council, it could raise an army to force the king to live by the charter's provisions. But these measures were unsuccessful.

Tabuteau, Emily Zack. "Magna Carta." *World Book Advanced*. World Book, 2010. Web. 23 June 2010.

The **English Bill of Rights** was enacted by the English Parliament and signed into law by King William III in 1689. It is one of the fundamental documents of English constitutional law, and marks a fundamental milestone in the progression of English society from a nation of subjects under the plenary authority of a monarch to a nation of free citizens with inalienable rights. This process was a gradual evolution beginning with the Magna Carta in 1215 and advancing intermittently as subsequent monarchs were compelled to recognize limitations on their power.



The establishment of the English Bill of Rights was precipitated by repeated abuses of power by King James II during his reign from 1685 to 1689. Among these abuses, he suspended acts of Parliament, collected taxes not authorized by law, and undermined the independence of the judiciary and the universities. He interfered in the outcome of elections and trials and refused to be bound by duly enacted laws. Furthermore, he attempted to impose Catholicism on a staunchly Protestant nation through the persecution of Protestant dissenters and the replacement of Anglican officials who refused to acquiesce in his illegal acts.

In November of 1688 William of Orange and his wife Mary, daughter of James II, invaded England with the popular support of the English people and much of the English nobility. He brought with him a large army comprised primarily of Dutch mercenaries, but James ultimately fled for France without significant bloodshed taking place. In January of 1689 a Convention assembled in London to determine the succession of the English Crown. The Convention was composed of former members of Parliament and functioned much like a parliament, but as Parliament had been legally disbanded and the Great Seal had been thrown in the River Thames, their acts did not formally carry the force of law. After much debate the Convention drafted a Declaration of Rights and offered the throne of England jointly to William and Mary. After the accession of William and Mary and the formation of a legal Parliament, this Declaration was adapted to create a Bill of Rights which was signed into law, forever altering the balance of power between the sovereign and his subjects.

Muchmore, Andrew. "The English Bill of Rights and Its Influence on the United States Constitution." Retrieved from <http://www.thegloriousrevolution.org/docs/english%20bill%20of%20rights.htm>

Common law is a body of rulings made by judges on the basis of community customs and previous court decisions. It forms an essential part of the legal system of many English-speaking countries, including the United States and Canada. Common law covers such matters as contracts, ownership of property, and the payment of claims for personal injury.



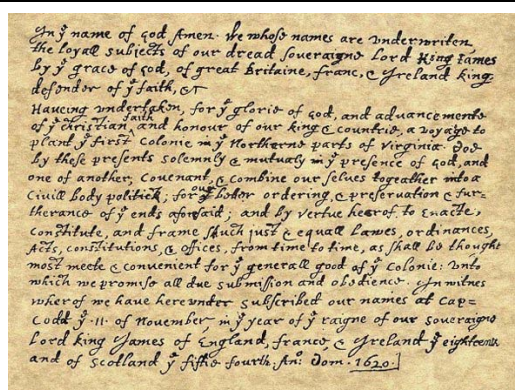
Early in England's history, judges decided cases according to the way they interpreted the beliefs and unwritten laws of the community. If another judge had ruled in an earlier, similar case, that judge's decision was often used as a *precedent* (guide). After many judges decided the same question in a similar way, the ruling became law.

Common law is often contrasted with *civil law*, a body of rules passed by a legislature. Under civil law, a judge decides a case by following written rules, rather than previous court decisions. Common law also differs from *equity*, a set of standards developed to allow greater flexibility in court decisions. During the late Middle Ages, England created courts of equity to decide cases that courts of common law might treat too strictly. These courts decided cases by broad principles of justice and fairness, rather than by the rigid standards of common law. The monarch's chancellor presided over a court of equity called the *court of chancery*.

The legal system of the United States has developed from English common law and equity. Only one U.S. state, Louisiana, modeled its legal system on civil law. Louisiana used the civil law of France, called the *Code Napoleon*. During the late 1800's, many states combined their courts of common law and courts of equity. One group of judges administers the combined courts. In Canada, similarly, only the province of Quebec based its legal system on French law.

O'Brien, David M. "Common law." *World Book Advanced*. World Book, 2010. Web. 23 June 2010.

Mayflower Compact was a written agreement for self-government signed by 41 adult male members of the Plymouth Colony. On Nov. 21 (then Nov. 11), 1620, the ship *Mayflower* anchored off Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Cape Cod was well north of the ship's intended destination and outside of the authority of the Virginia Company, from which the settlers had obtained their grant. William Bradford, the colony's second governor, later wrote that the compact was partly inspired by the "mutinous speeches" of some passengers who claimed "none had the power to command them, the patent they had being for Virginia and not for New England." The original compact has disappeared. The version below follows the spelling and punctuation in *Of Plimoth Plantation*, written between 1630 and 1651 by Bradford and published in 1856 as *History of Plymouth Plantation*.



"In ye name of God Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyall subjects of our dread soveraigne Lord King James, by ye grace of God, of Great Britaine, Franc, & Ireland king, defender of ye faith, &c. Haveing undertaken, for ye glorie of God, and advancemente of ye Christian faith and honour of our king & countrie, a voyage to plant ye first colonie in ye Northerne parts of Virginia, doe by these presents solemnly & mutuallly in ye presence of God, and one of another, covenant, & combine ourselves together into a Civill body politick; for our better ordering, & preservation & furtherance of ye ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof to enacte, constitute, and frame such just & equall Lawes, ordinances, Acts, constitutions, & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete & convenient for ye generall good of ye Colonie: unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witnes whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cap-Codd ye -11- of November, in ye year of ye raigne of our soveraigne Lord king James of England, France, & Ireland ye eighteenth, and of Scotland ye fiftie fourth. Ano Dom. 1620."

Morris, Michelle. "Mayflower Compact." *World Book Advanced*. World Book, 2010. Web. 23 June 2010.

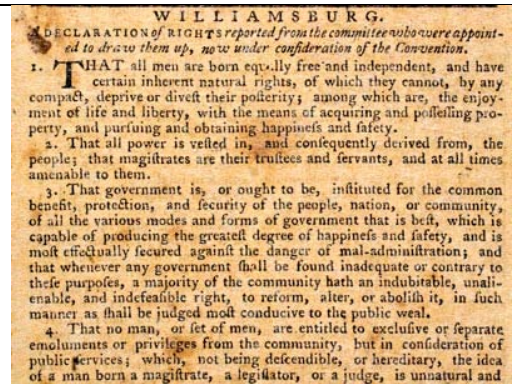
Virginia Declaration of Rights, an influential document drafted in 1776 to proclaim the inherent natural rights of men, including the right to rebel against "inadequate" government.

The Declaration was adopted unanimously by the Virginia Convention of Delegates on June 12, 1776, as a separate document from the Constitution of Virginia adopted on June 29, 1776. It was later incorporated within the Virginia State Constitution as Article I, and a slightly updated version may still be seen in Virginia's Constitution, making it legally in effect to this day.

It influenced a number of later documents, including the United States *Declaration of Independence* (1776), the United States *Bill of Rights* (1789), and the French Revolution's *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789). It was initially drafted by George Mason ca. May 20-26, 1776, and later amended by Thomas Ludwell Lee and the Convention to add Section 14 on the Right to uniform government.

Mason based his document on the rights of citizens described in earlier works such as the *English Bill of Rights* (1689), and the Declaration can be considered the first modern Constitutional protection of individual rights for citizens of North America. It rejected the notion of privileged political classes or hereditary offices such as the members of Parliament and House of Lords described in the *English Bill of Rights*.

The Declaration consists of sixteen articles on the subject of which rights "pertain to [the people of Virginia]...as the basis and foundation of Government." [1] In addition to affirming the inherent nature of natural rights to life, liberty, and property, the Declaration both describes a view of Government as the servant of the people, and enumerates various restrictions on governmental power.

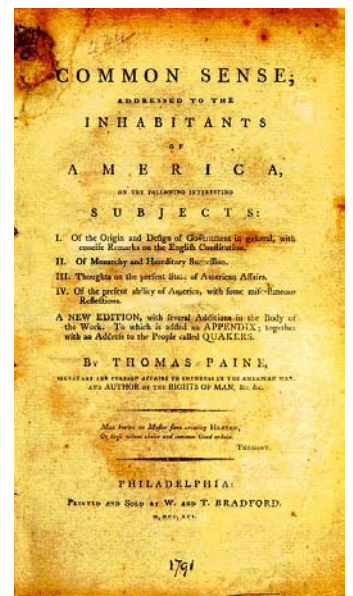


"Virginia Declaration of Rights Summary." *BookRags*. Retrieved from http://www.bookrags.com/wiki/Virginia_Declaration_of_Rights

Common Sense, a book published anonymously by Thomas Paine in January of 1776. *Common Sense* was an instant best-seller, both in the colonies and in Europe. It went through several editions in Philadelphia, and was republished in all parts of United America. Because of it, Paine became internationally famous.

Paine's political pamphlet brought the rising revolutionary sentiment into sharp focus by placing blame for the suffering of the colonies directly on the reigning British monarch, George III.

First and foremost, *Common Sense* advocated an immediate declaration of independence, postulating a special moral obligation of America to the rest of the world. Not long after publication, the spirit of Paine's argument found resonance in the American Declaration of Independence.



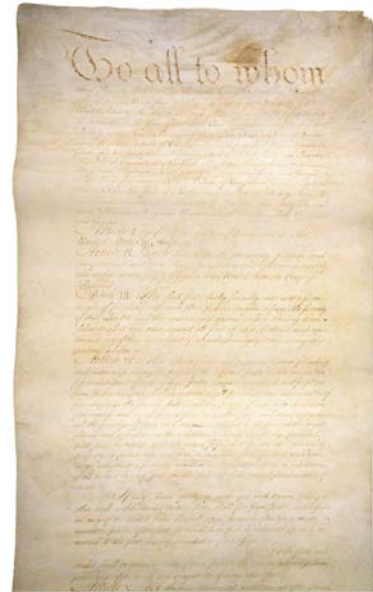
“Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*.” *Archiving Early America*. Retrieved from <http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/milestones/commonsense/>

Articles of Confederation was the agreement under which the 13 original states established a federal government in 1781. The states called their confederation the United States of America, continuing the name used in the Declaration of Independence. The Articles of Confederation served as the new nation's basic charter of government until the first government under the Constitution of the United States was formed in 1789. The *Congress of the Confederation* operated the government under the Articles of Confederation.

The Articles attempted to balance the need for an effective national government with the traditional independence of each state. The document guaranteed each state sovereignty and granted each state one vote in Congress. Under the Articles, Congress could not levy taxes, regulate trade, or force states to fulfill their obligations. However, the Articles did allow Congress to declare war and peace, manage foreign relations, establish and command an army and navy, and issue and borrow money.

Even at the time the Articles went into effect, many national leaders thought that the agreement did not give Congress enough power to operate effectively. But amendments were difficult to pass because all 13 states had to approve them. By 1786, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and others were convinced that a general convention was needed to make changes in the Articles. In September 1786, delegates from five states met at Annapolis, Maryland, and proposed that such a convention meet in Philadelphia in May 1787. Eventually, every state approved the proposal except Rhode Island.

The Constitutional Convention quickly agreed that the Articles had to be abandoned. The convention delegates wrote an entirely new document to replace the Articles—the Constitution of the United States. The Constitution greatly increased the power of Congress. It was ratified in June 1788.



Rakove, Jack N. "Articles of Confederation." *World Book Advanced*. World Book, 2010. Web. 25 June 2010.