

## Philosophical Foundations of the American Revolution

### Theme: American and National Identity

Learning Objective 3.D: Explain how and why colonial attitudes about government and the individual changed in the years leading up to the American Revolution.

### Contributions of the Enlightenment and Religion

KC-3.2.1.A: Enlightenment ideas and philosophy inspired many American political thinkers to emphasize individual talent over hereditary privilege, while religion strengthened Americans' view of themselves as a people blessed with liberty.

- Enlightenment philosophy
  - Locke's ideas of \_\_\_\_\_ and the social contract
    - Contrary to concept of \_\_\_\_\_ of kings
    - Popular sovereignty dictated that power of the government came from those it governed
  - Spread through correspondences between colonial leaders and European thinkers ex. \_\_\_\_\_
    - Colonies lacked infrastructure to foster the Enlightenment on their own.
- Religion's impact
  - Some settlements had been established as a form of utopia e.g. Winthrop's "\_\_\_\_\_"
  - Their religious experiment thus had divine blessing

### Impact of Common Sense and the Declaration of Independence

KC-3.2.1.B: The colonists' belief in the superiority of republican forms of government based on the natural rights of the people found expression in Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* and the Declaration of Independence. The ideas in these documents resonated throughout American history, shaping Americans' understanding of the ideals on which the nation was based.

- \_\_\_\_\_ published in January 1776
  - Called into question current status quo
  - Criticized imperial policies, Parliament and King George III
  - Steeped in Enlightenment Ideals
- Paine claimed pamphlet sold \_\_\_\_\_, though numbers are unreliable
- Declaration of Independence
  - Written after peace efforts with \_\_\_\_\_ failed
  - Blamed the king for the troubles in the colonies
  - Heavily relies on the \_\_\_\_\_ to defend independence

### Recap

- Enlightenment Ideals of natural rights heavily influenced march to revolution

- Common Sense and the Declaration of Independence important documents exhibiting Enlightenment

**Part II**

Short Answer Questions

Answer each prompt using at least THREE sentences.

1. Explain how colonial attitudes about government and the individual changed in the years leading up to the American Revolution.

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2. Explain why colonial attitudes about government and the individual changed in the years leading up to the American Revolution.

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### Declaration of Independence, 1776

Retrieved from: <http://ap.gilderlehrman.org/resource/declaration-independence-1776?period=3>



Declaration of Independence, Charleston, South Carolina, August 2, 1776. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness – That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers From the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing

the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great Britain, is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over the States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

1. Identify at least three Enlightenment ideals in the excerpt and quotes that point to each ideal.
2. Which other institution in the British Empire could be to blame for the woes of the colonists as Jefferson saw them?
3. While the Declaration is widely seen as a revolutionary document, in what way could it be seen as maintaining the status quo?
4. Provide an Attribution to this document.
5. Provide 2 sentences of analysis from one category of HAPP for this document.