

**TOPIC: HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS**

<p><b>Magna Carta (1215):</b></p>	<p><b>-What was it:</b> One of most important documents in history; <b>-What does it mean:</b>“The Great Charter” in Latin <b>-Who issued it:</b> King John of England <b>-Why:</b> Served as a peace treaty to end a civil war between the King and nobles who rebelled against the tyrant-like rule of the king (high taxes, oppression of the people, lack of trials, loss of land to France) <b>-What it did:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. It guaranteed the people certain individual rights, the right to justice, and right to a fair trial</li><li>2. Established the principle that everybody, including the King, was subject to the Law</li></ol> <p><b>Why it’s important today:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. First step in England toward establishing a parliamentary democracy</li><li>2. Strongly influences the American Bill of Rights</li><li>3. It’s principals clearly seen in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights written after end of WWII(1948)</li></ol> <p><b>Reading:</b> <b>Magna Carta: What is it is and why it’s still important today</b> <a href="http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/magna-carta-what-is-it-and-why-is-it-still-important-today-10017258.html">http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/magna-carta-what-is-it-and-why-is-it-still-important-today-10017258.html</a></p>
<p><b>Mayflower Compact (Nov. 11, 1620)</b></p>	<p><b>-Was first governing document of Plymouth Colony</b> <b>-Written by Separatists known as “Saints”</b></p>

<p><b>Two Treatises of Government (1689)</b></p>	<p>[who were later referred to as the Pilgrims] on board the Mayflower          -Was a social contract between the Pilgrims to follow the compacts directions to ensure order and the survival of the colony</p> <p>-political philosophy written by John Locke          -Locke's ideas formed basis for U.S. government          -Declaration of Independence &amp; U.S. Constitution were based on Locke's ideas          -IDEAS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ability of people to pursue life, liberty, health &amp; property</li> <li>2. people give up certain amount of power to maintain the well-being of all</li> <li>3. Government must preserve the right of people to freedom of thought, speech, and worship; it is the trustee of the people's power</li> <li>4. If government abuses it's power the people have the right to revoke its power and take it into their own hands or place it into the control of new representatives</li> </ol>
<p><b>English Bill of Rights (Dec. 16, 1689)</b></p>	<p>-was an act of the English Parliament          -Reduced power of the English monarch          -Parliament gained power to represent the people giving a stronger voice to the people          -kept monarch from passing new taxes or changing laws without Parliament's approval          -served as the basis for the U.S. Constitution &amp; U.S. Bill of Rights</p>

<p><b>Mecklenburg Resolves (May 20, 1775)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-list of statements adopted in Charlotte, NC (Mecklenburg County) the month following battle at Lexington &amp; Concord</li> <li>-Declared Mecklenburg County to be free and independent of the laws of England</li> </ul>
<p><b>Halifax Resolves (April 12, 1776)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-resolution adopted by NC &amp; first official action in the American colonies calling for independence from Great Britain</li> <li>-paved way for Declaration of Independence 3 months later</li> <li>-adopted by Fourth Provincial Congress of NC in town of Halifax, NC</li> </ul>
<p><b>Thomas Paine &amp; “Common Sense” (1775-1776)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Pamphlet that inspired colonists to fight for independence from England</li> <li>-Written in clear and simple language to appeal to a wider audience</li> <li>-Published anonymously on January 10, 1776 and was widely read in public</li> <li>-Stated why independence was needed</li> <li>-Many colonists were “on the fence” about declaring independence; this writing was aimed to get more people on board with the idea of national independence</li> </ul>
<p><b>Articles of Confederation (1777-1781)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-written document that established the function of the national government after it declared independence from England</li> <li>-first written constitution of the United States</li> <li>-ratified March 1, 1781</li> <li>-Confederation Congress became new central government. but had limited powers</li> </ul>

**Declaration of Independence ( 1776 )**

- each state had one vote in Congress
- no President or court system
- states remained sovereign and independent
- Congress served as last resort on appeal of disputes, make treaties & alliances, maintain armed forces, and coin money
- Congress LACKED ability to levy taxes and regulate business (commerce) - both issues that led to the Constitutional Convention of 1787
- failed to bring unity to the states because it wasn't powerful enough to resolve conflicts that arose between the states

**VIDEO:**

<http://www.history.com/topics/articles-of-confederation>

- Ratified July 4, 1776 by Continental Congress, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- states the Thirteen Colonies were free & independent from England
- formal declaration drafted by committee of five: John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, & Robert Livingston (Committee of Five)
- written by Thomas Jefferson
- purpose was to explain why American colonies wanted to be independent from British rule
- stated that the people have the right to change governments if their government becomes unfair & controlling
- also stated that governments fail when they no longer have the support of the people it governs

**U.S. Constitution (1788)**

- the Supreme Law of the Land
- outlines the three branches of government & separation of powers
- establishes idea of federalism
- describes rights & responsibilities of state governments and states relationship to the Federal government
- amended 27 times
- first ten amendments known as the Bill of Rights which outline civil rights of citizens

**The Federalist Papers (Oct. 1787 - May 1788)**

Collection of 85 essays about core values of American democracy

-Written by Alexander Hamilton (50 essays), James Madison (30 essays), and John Jay (5 essays) under the name "Publius"

-Essays appeared in "The Independent Journal" and New York newspapers

-told Americans the Federal government would not overpower the states

-Main Ideas:

1. **Republicanism:** political power is given to a few citizens who are voted on by the population to represent them in governing
2. **Federalism:** Power is divided between national (Federal); & state governments
3. **Separation of Powers:** The power of government is divided between three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial
4. **Free Government:** republicanism, federalism, and separation of powers are the characteristics of free government; citizens have right to a political voice by being able to vote, government is to protect the security, liberty, and property of the people

-Debate between the Federalists & Anti-Federalists over the Constitution

**Bill of Rights (1789)**

**-Federalists: those who supported the Constitution & a stronger central government**  
**-Anti-Federalists: opposed the Constitution because they were afraid the national government would have too much control & it would take away the rights of the people**

**-first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution**  
**-developed to address concerns of Anti-Federalists (feared personal freedoms would not be protected)**  
**-added safeguards to democracy by guaranteeing certain individual freedoms, set limits on powers of the courts, and stated that all powers not specifically given to the legislature (Congress) by the Constitution is given to the states (the people)**  
**-based on the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the English Bill of Rights, and the Magna Carta**