

## Colonial Influences

**Time Needed:** One to two class periods

**Materials Needed:** Student worksheets, overhead or computer projector, scissors, art materials for cartoon strip

**Copy Instructions:**

Brainstorming Worksheet (*1 page*)

Reading and Review packet (*4 pages*)

Double-sided cut-and-fold activity (*2 pages*)

**Learning Objectives.** Students will be able to:

- Trace the impact of the following documents on the colonists' views of government:
  - Magna Carta
  - English Bill of Rights
  - Mayflower Compact
  - Cato's Letters
  - Thomas Paine's Common Sense

## STEP BY STEP

**OPTIONAL:** A PowerPoint presentation is available to walk students through the activities in this lesson.

- ❑ **ANTICIPATE** by distributing the brainstorming sheet to the students and giving five minutes to brainstorm the meaning of the 'big idea' terms in the first column of the table.
- ❑ **ASK** students to share their personal definitions and discuss. Have students copy the class definition onto their sheets. Remind them that these ideas will come up again and again during this lesson.
- ❑ **DISTRIBUTE** the cut-and-fold activity and show the transparency with instructions. Walk through each step and monitor the students to make sure they are cutting and folding in the right areas. Explain that this will be what they take notes on as they read through the lesson.
- ❑ **DISTRIBUTE** the reading pages to the students. Ask if anyone is familiar with the documents listed in the 'Collection of Good Ideas' on the bookshelf image.
- ❑ **READ** the first paragraph one as a class. Have students offer other types of information sources available at this time. (newspapers, flyers, word-of-mouth, letters)
- ❑ **READ** through the remainder of page one and two, noting the context of the document (who wrote it and why) and the take-away ideas that each document provides. Call on the class to share when they think a big idea is being introduced.
- ❑ **ALLOW** for time to fill in the foldable between each paragraph. (If you need to provide greater scaffolding with this activity, have the students collaborate in partners or small groups, or complete each set as a class.)
- ❑ **REVIEW** the items on the cut-and-fold activity through a student pair and share or in small groups. Then discuss as a class.
- ❑ **DISTRIBUTE** the activity pages and have students complete. The second page asks the students to create a three frame cartoon describing the facts about one document. They need to draw something in the box and describe the actions in each frame.

# Colonial Influences

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



The U.S. Constitution is based on a handful of “big ideas”. Brainstorm the meaning behind each big idea in the areas provided, then see what they mean in the American system of government.

The Big Idea	I think it means...	The Class Definition
Rule of Law		
Self-Government		
Due Process		
Limited Government		
Rights		

# Colonial Influences

**\*\*TEACHER GUIDE\*\***



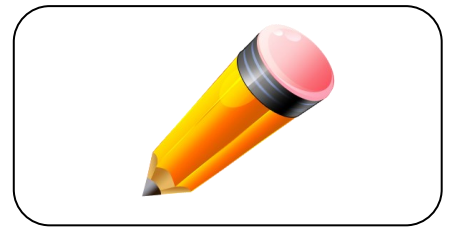
The U.S. Constitution is based on a handful of “big ideas”. Brainstorm the meaning behind each big idea in the areas provided, then see what they mean in the American system of government.

The Big Idea	I think it means...	The Class Definition
Rule of Law		The idea that all people must follow the laws, and that the laws are enforced fairly.
Self-Government		People can make decisions on how their government should work.
Due Process		People have the right to fair and reasonable laws. Officials have to follow rules when enforcing laws and to treat all people in the same way.
Limited Government		A government that has been limited in power by a constitution, or written agreement.
Rights		A set of things that people believe they should be free to do without restrictions.

# Colonial Influences

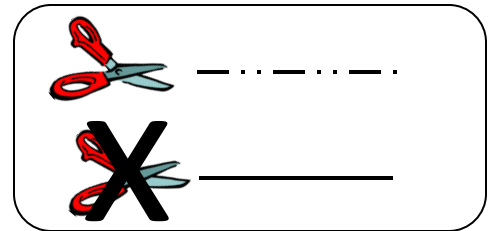
# Cut-and-Fold Activity

Step One: Put your name on the paper.

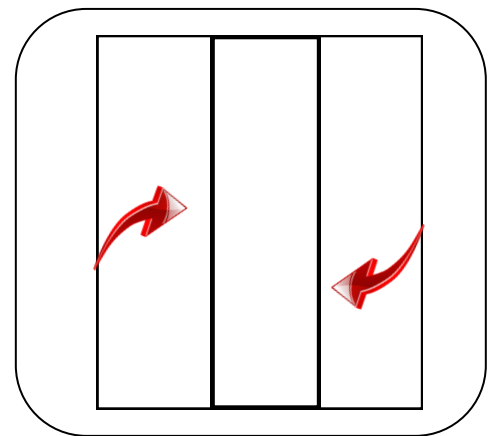


Step Two: Flip the page over to see the side with the check list.

Step Three: Carefully cut along the dashed lines ONLY.

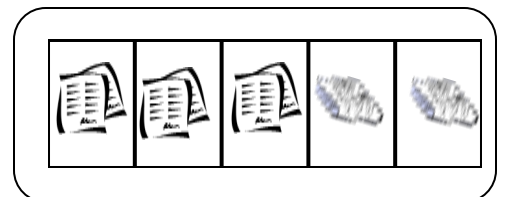


Step Four: Fold the tabs on the left side towards the middle on the solid line.

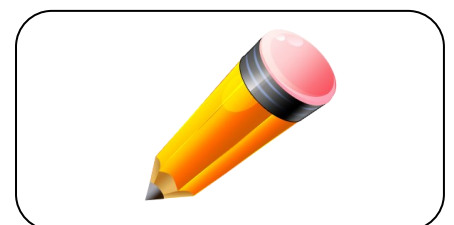


Step Five: Fold the tabs on the right side towards the middle on the solid line.

Step Six: Turn the page so you see a row of images.



Step Seven: Use the reading and class discussion to complete all of the fields in this activity.



When was it written?

Who wrote it?

When was it written?

Who wrote it?

When was it written?

Who wrote it?

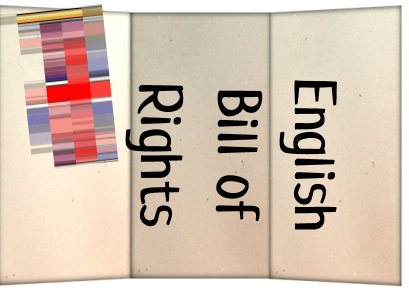
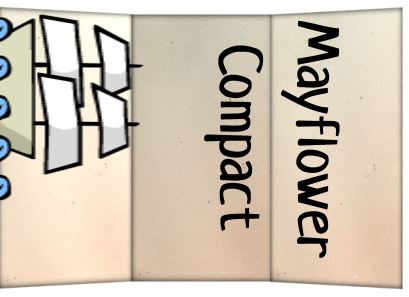
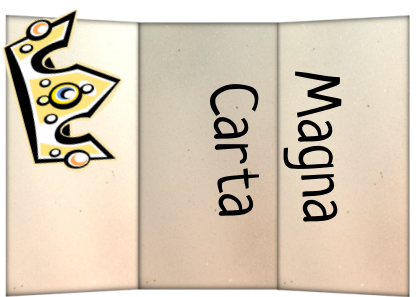
When was it written?

Who wrote it?

When was it written?

Who wrote it?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



This is a:

- Government Document
- Agreement between individuals
- Collection of newspaper articles
- Pamphlet

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What was the purpose of this document?

What was the purpose of this document?

What was the purpose of this document?

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What was the purpose of this document?

Big Ideas:



Big Ideas:



Big Ideas:



Big Ideas:



Big Ideas:





## Hey! Anyone Have Any Good Ideas?

Our Founding Fathers did not invent the American system of government out of thin air. They, like the other colonists, were influenced by many different ideas and traditions. The biggest influence came from their British heritage. (Remember the colonists WERE British until the American Revolution!) Events in British history and things that were happening during their own time affected the way the Founders thought government should work.

The Founders didn't have the Internet, so they got their ideas from books and other printed materials. What would have been on the minds of American colonists on the verge of a revolution? Let's take a peek at what might have been on the shelf of a private colonial library ...

## King v. Nobles: Round One

Way back in the Middle Ages, England was ruled by a king who shared some of his powers with the wealthy nobility. The nobility would carry out the king's wishes, and the king would allow the nobles to make some local decisions. But in the early 1200s, King John tried to take all the power for himself! The angry nobles fought back. In 1215, they created a document called the **Magna Carta** that limited the power of the king and protected certain rights for the nobles. The nobility was powerful enough to force King John to sign the Magna Carta. This was a big deal because it introduced the concepts of *limited government*, *rule of law*, and *due process*. It also helped create the nation's Parliament (kind of like Congress in the U.S.).

### The Magna Carta

We, the nobles, demand:

- A limit on the king's powers
- Laws and punishments to be fair and equal
- Due process of the law and fair trials
- Property rights

Before                      After



## The Mayflower Compact

When we land, we will:

- create our own government
- agree that the laws will be followed by everyone
- make sure that the new government will serve the common good

## I Think We Took a Wrong Turn!

Fast forward over 400 years. The next document in the colonial library is the **Mayflower Compact**. It was written to solve a basic problem: Who is in charge? The Pilgrims left England in a ship called the Mayflower headed for the Virginia colony in 1620. A strong storm blew the ship off course, and they ended up in what is now Massachusetts. This area was not under the control of the company that sent them, so the Pilgrims were in independent territory. They needed a government—fast! The men agreed to create a new government and to follow its rules. In exchange, they would all protect each other. This is called *self-government*.

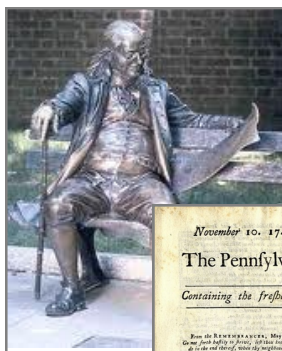

## King v. Nobles: Round Two

Meanwhile, back in England, the Parliament had been battling it out with the king in a series of civil wars. Parliament eventually came out on top and passed the **English Bill of Rights** in 1689. Like the Magna Carta, this document expanded the rights of the Parliament and the people, while limiting the powers of the king even more. This document was well-known because it affected people living in Britain and the new British colonies in America.

### The English Bill of Rights

As Englishmen, we demand:

- Free elections to Parliament
- The rights to bear arms, to petition the government, and to a fair trial
- No excessive bail or fines or cruel and unusual punishment



Ben Franklin and his newspaper

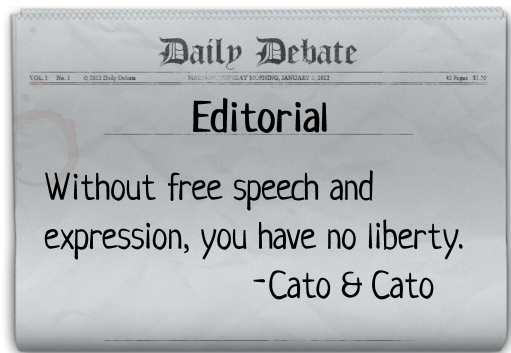


## Breaking News... Colonist Style!

In addition to older documents, the colonists kept track of what was happening in Britain and around the colonies. They couldn't phone, blog, tweet, or watch tv-- so how did they keep up with the news of the day?

## Hot Off the Press

In the 1720s, authors using the fake names Cato the Elder and Cato the Younger published a series of newspaper editorials in Britain. The authors argued against the king's heavy-handed rule. These articles were titled **Cato's Letters**, and they were also published in colonial American newspapers. Cato's Letters became so popular that they were collected into a book. Half of the private libraries in colonial America owned a copy! Cato's Letters discussed many different ideas, such as *freedom of expression*, which became very influential in the colonies.



## Calling for Independence

By the 1700s, King George III and Parliament were making more and more demands on the colonies. Many were getting fed up and began to meet and discuss breaking away from Britain. In the mid-1770s, representatives from most of the 13 colonies met in Philadelphia. Here, the Founders discussed the options for the future. While these meetings were happening, a journalist named Thomas Paine published a pamphlet called *Common Sense* in 1776. In *Common Sense*, Paine did not introduce any new ideas. Instead, he explained the arguments for independence in a way that was easy for everyday colonists to understand. He encouraged them to support the fight for independence from Britain. Just six months later, the Declaration of Independence was signed.



# Colonial Influences

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



**From Big Ideas to the Constitution.** Now that you have taken a look at some of the big ideas in colonial America, let's see where they show up in our founding documents. Read each big idea on the top half of the page and match it with where it shows up in the U.S. Constitution below.

**Self– Government:** popular or representative system where the people create and run their own government  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Rule of Law:** the idea that all people must follow the laws, and that the laws are enforced fairly  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Due Process:** People have the right to fair and reasonable laws. Officials have to follow rules when enforcing the laws and treat all people in the same way.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Rights:** A set of things that people believe they should be free to do without restrictions  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Limited Government:** the power of government is limited by the Constitution, and each branch is limited in what it can do  
\_\_\_\_\_



**A** "This Constitution and the laws of the United States ... shall be the supreme law of the land." All government officials "shall be bound by an oath to support this constitution."  
U.S. Constitution, Article VI

**C** The U.S. Constitution created three branches of government. Each branch is given the power to check, or limit the power of the other two. The system of checks and balances keeps any one branch from getting too powerful.

**B** The first ten amendments in the Bill of Rights guarantee certain rights and freedoms that include:

- Freedom of speech, the press, and religion
- Right to petition the government and to bear arms
- Prohibition of excessive bail or fines, or cruel and unusual punishments for crimes

**D** "No person shall...be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law"  
U.S. Constitution, 5th Amendment

**E** "WE THE PEOPLE of the United States...do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."  
Preamble to the Constitution, 1787

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**Colonial Comics.** Comics are a great way to tell a story! Select one of the five documents that you have learned about in this lesson, and review the facts about it. Then use the comic strip below to tell that document's story. Each box has a job, so read the directions carefully.

<p><b>Frame One</b></p> <p>Who wrote the document?</p> <p>When did they write it?</p>	<p>Title: _____</p>	<p>Describe the <i>action</i> in your frame:</p>
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<p><b>Frame Two</b></p> <p>Why did they write this?</p> <p>What were they trying to accomplish?</p>		<p>Describe the <i>action</i> in your frame:</p>
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<p><b>Frame Three</b></p> <p>What did the document do?</p> <p>How did things change?</p>		<p>Describe the <i>action</i> in your frame:</p>
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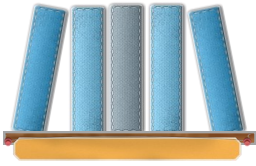
\*\*TEACHER GUIDE\*\*

## Foldable Activity Answers.

	This is a:	What is the purpose of	Big Ideas:	Who wrote it? When?
Magna Carta	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government Document <input type="checkbox"/> Agreement between individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Collection of newspaper articles <input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlet	Limit the power of the king of England and protect the rights of the nobility	Limited Government Rights Rule of Law Due Process	English nobility wrote the <i>Magna Carta</i> in 1215.
Mayflower Compact	<input type="checkbox"/> Government Document <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agreement between individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Collection of newspaper articles <input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlet	Create a government that would provide order and protect the colonists	Self Government Rule of Law	English Pilgrims traveling to Massachusetts to settle wrote the <i>Mayflower Compact</i> in 1620.
English Bill of Rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government Document <input type="checkbox"/> Agreement between individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Collection of newspaper articles <input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlet	Expand the power of the English Parliament and expand the rights of the people, as well as further limit the power of the king	Limited Government Rights Due Process Rule of Law	The <i>English Bill of Rights</i> was written by the English Parliament in 1689.
Cato's Letters	<input type="checkbox"/> Government Document <input type="checkbox"/> Agreement between individuals <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collection of newspaper articles <input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlet	Convince people to support the freedom of expression and fight against the king's heavy-handed rule	Rights Rule of Law	Two anonymous journalists in England wrote <i>Cato's Letters</i> in the 1720's.
Common Sense	<input type="checkbox"/> Government Document <input type="checkbox"/> Agreement between individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Collection of newspaper articles <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pamphlet	Convince the American colonists to support becoming independent from Great Britain	Rights Self Government	Thomas Paine, a colonial journalist, wrote <i>Common Sense</i> in 1776.

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**C**



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