



American Foundational Principles

Foundational principle 1: _____

Paraphrase the definition:

Foundational principle 2: _____

Paraphrase the definition:

Foundational principle 3: _____

Paraphrase the definition:

Foundational principle 4: _____

Paraphrase the definition:

Foundational principle 5: _____

Paraphrase the definition:

Foundational Principles of the United States Government- Answer Key

Foundational principle 1: Representative Democracy

Paraphrase the definition: **A group of people select someone to communicate their views and make decisions in the government for them.**

Foundational principle 2: Rule of Law

Paraphrase the definition: **The rule of law is the idea that everyone in a community agrees to a set of written rules and then everyone has to follow those rules.**

Foundational principle 3: Social Contract

Paraphrase the definition: **A social contract is an agreement between people or between people and their government. People agree to give up some of their rights in exchange for security.**

Foundational principle 4: Common Good

Paraphrase the definition: **The common good is what is best for a community, instead of what helps just a few people.**

Foundational principle 5: Limited Government

Paraphrase the definition: **A limited government controls the people who govern a community so that no person or group can get too much power.**



Foundational Principles in the Declaration of Independence

Foundational Principle: The Common Good

Foundational Principle: Social Contract

Foundational Principle: Limited Government



Foundational Principle: Representative Democracy

Foundational Principle: Rule of Law

Transcription of the “List of Grievances” from the Declaration of Independence

“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 these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.



Foundational Principles in the Declaration of Independence – Answer Key

Note: It is not expected that students will find all of these examples. They are listed here to accommodate for the range of possible responses.

Foundational Principle: The Common Good

“[...] 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.” (Paragraph 2)

"He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good." (Paragraph 3)

Foundational Principle: Social Contract

“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 [...].” (Paragraph 2)

“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 [...]” (Paragraph 2)

“He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.”
(Paragraph 13)

“For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent [..]” (Paragraph 19)

Foundational Principle: Limited 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 these States.” (Paragraph 2)

“For abolishing the free System of English laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies [...]”
(Paragraph 22)

“For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments [...]” (Paragraph 23)

“He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.” (Paragraph 25)



Foundational Principle: Representative Democracy

"He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only." (Paragraph 5)

“He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with many firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.” (Paragraph 7)

“He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions to cause others to be elected [...]”
(Paragraph 8)

Foundational Principle: Rule of Law

“He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.” (Paragraph 10)

“He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their acts of pretended Legislation [...]” (Paragraph 15)

“He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.” (Paragraph 4)