



FLORIDA JOINT CENTER FOR CITIZENSHIP

INFLUENCES ON COLONISTS' VIEWS OF GOVERNMENT

SS.7.C.1.2 Trace the impact that the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, Mayflower Compact, and Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* had on the colonists' views of government.

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Lesson Summary

Essential Question

What were some of the key influences on the colonists' views of government?

NGSSS Benchmark

SS.7.C.1.2 Trace the impact that the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, Mayflower Compact, and Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* had on colonists' views of government.

Florida Standards

LAFS.68.RH.1.1	LAFS.68.RH.1.2	LAFS.68.RH.2.4	LAFS.68.RH.3.7
LAFS.68.WHST.1.2	LAFS.68.WHST.4.10	LAFS.7.SL.1.1	LAFS.7.SL.1.2

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about the ideas that influenced the colonists' views of government.

Learning Goals/Benchmark Clarifications

- Students will identify the important ideas contained in the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, Mayflower Compact, and *Common Sense*.
- Students will evaluate the impact that the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, Mayflower Compact, and *Common Sense* had on the purposes of government.

Benchmark Content Limits

- Items will not require students to address the origin of ideas in the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, Mayflower Compact, and *Common Sense*.

Civics EOC Reporting Category

Reporting Category 1 – Origins and Purposes of Law and Government

Suggested Time Frame

- Two 45-50 minute class periods

Civics Content Vocabulary

- *Common Sense*, compact, English Bill of Rights, due process, limited government, limited monarchy, Magna Carta, Mayflower Compact, Preamble, rights, rule of law, self-government, Thomas Paine

Instructional Strategies

Guided reading Collaborative learning Inquiry with primary sources

Materials

Computer with internet access to project lesson activity sheets

Student activity sheets and reading materials:

- Colonial Influences: Anticipation Activity, Reading pgs. 1 and 2, and Activity from iCivics:
<http://www.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/colonial-influences>
- Understanding the Influence student activity sheet
- Evaluating the Impact on Government student activity sheet

Lesson Activities and Daily Schedule

Please use the chart below to track activity completion.

Day	Task #	Steps in Lesson	Description	Completed? Yes/No
Day One	Task 1	1-4	Hook Activity	
	Task 2	5-17	Colonial Influences Reading	
Day Two	Task 3	18-27	Evaluating the Impact on Government Activities	
	Task 4	28	Checking for Understanding	

Suggested Student Activity Sequence

1. To begin this lesson, place students into pairs and pass out the “Colonial Influences, Anticipation Activity” student activity sheet from iCivics: <http://www.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/colonial-influences>.
2. Explain to students that the U.S. Constitution is based on the “big ideas” listed on the activity sheet. Instruct students to work with their partner to brainstorm what they know about each “big idea” and to write their understanding for each term on the activity sheet.
3. Have students share out.
4. Lead students to the definitions for each “big idea” from the Civics Content Vocabulary section. Instruct students to write each definition in “The Class Definition” row of their activity sheet.
5. Pass out the “Colonial Influences, Reading pgs. 1 and 2” from iCivics: <http://www.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/colonial-influences> and the “Understanding Influences” student activity sheet.
6. Read the first two paragraphs aloud as a whole class.
7. Pose the following questions for discussion: “What is the main idea from the first two paragraphs? What does this tell you about who influenced the colonists’ ideas about government?”
8. Explain to students that they will read about five different historical documents that have influenced the colonists’ ideas about government. Their task is to read about each document, explain its main purpose, identify the “big idea” that emerged from the document and explain the relationship between the big idea and the document in their own words.
9. Instruct students to work with their partner to read the Magna Carta section and complete the corresponding row on their activity sheet.
10. Pose the following questions for discussion: “What is the big idea that emerged from the Magna Carta? What evidence in the text led you to your answer?”
11. Explain to students that the Magna Carta provided the idea of limited government, but more specifically a limited monarchy. A limited monarchy is a system of government in which the king or queen shares authority with an elected legislature and agrees to be bound by a constitution or a set of laws. Instruct students to add this term to the back of their activity sheet.
12. Direct student attention to the Mayflower Compact section of the reading. Ask the students to define the term “compact”. Lead students to the understanding that a compact is an official agreement made by two or more parties. Instruct students to add this definition to the back of their student activity sheet.
13. Provide time for students to complete the reading and activity sheet for the Mayflower Compact, English Bill of Rights, and Cato’s Letters.
14. Read together the section for *Common Sense*. Instruct students to write down the main purpose of the pamphlet on their activity sheet.
15. Share with students that Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* supported the colonists seeking independence from England. The pamphlet supported the idea of self-government for the colonists and spoke out against the king restricting the colonists’ rights. Instruct students to take notes on their activity sheet.
16. Pose the following question for discussion: “How would you summarize the important ideas contained in the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, Mayflower Compact, Cato’s Letters and *Common Sense*?”
17. Instruct students to write a summary statement on their activity sheet.
18. Explain to students that now that they know the big ideas of each document, they will look at how these ideas impacted the colonists’ views of government by looking at how these ideas are incorporated into the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.
19. Pass out the “Evaluating the Impact on Government” student activity sheet and explain to students that their task is to read each passage from the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, summarize the passage in their own words, determine the big idea that influenced the passage and write down the evidence that led them to their answer.

20. Provide time for students to work with their partner to complete the activity sheet.
21. Monitor student work.
22. Point out to students that the last passage of the “Evaluating the Impact on Government” student activity sheet is from the Preamble of the U.S. Constitution.
23. Project the text for the Preamble: *We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.*
24. Explain to students that the Preamble outlines the purposes of our government:
 - form a more perfect union by creating a government that works for all (self-government and rule of law),
 - establish justice to ensure there is a fair system of laws (rule of law, due process),
 - insure domestic tranquility which means to promote peace in the country (rights),
 - protect the country from other countries or people that might try to harm us by providing for the common defense (rights),
 - promote the general welfare by creating a better life for all (self-government and rule of law), and
 - to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity which means to secure liberty and freedom to this and future generations (rights).
25. Pose the following questions for discussion: “Do the big ideas we have learned about in this lesson relate to the purposes of government that are outlined in the Preamble? What does this tell you about the impact of these big ideas?”
26. Instruct students to work with their partner to brainstorm and write answers on their own notebook paper.
27. Have students share out and discuss as a whole class.
28. Checking for Understanding (Formative Assessment):
Instruct students to write a well-crafted informative response using one of the following prompts:
Prompt 1
Explain how the big ideas that emerged from the historical documents you read about in this lesson have been incorporated into the U.S. Constitution.
Prompt 2
Explain how the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, Mayflower Compact, and Common Sense have impacted the purposes of government.

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

Name: _____



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 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

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

I Think We Took a Wrong Turn!

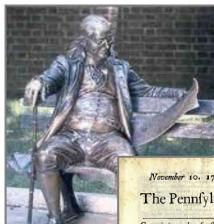
Fast forward over 400 years. The next document in the colonial library is the **Mayflower Compact**. It was written to solve a basic problem: Who is in charge? The Pilgrims left England in a ship called the Mayflower headed for the Virginia colony in 1620. A strong storm blew the ship off course, and 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*.

Colonial Influences

Name: _____

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.



Ben Franklin and his newspaper



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

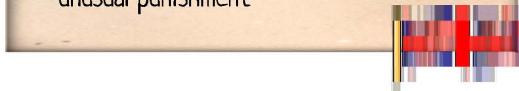
By the 1700s, King George III and Parliament were making more and more demands on the colonies. Many were getting fed up and began to meet and discuss breaking away from Britain. In the mid-1770s, representatives from most of the 13 colonies met in Philadelphia. Here, the Founders discussed the options 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.

Reading, p2

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



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?

Daily Debate
Editorial
Without free speech and expression, you have no liberty.
-Cato & Cato

A digital representation of a newspaper clipping from the Daily Debate. The clipping features an editorial by Cato & Cato. The text reads: "Without free speech and expression, you have no liberty." followed by "-Cato & Cato".

Understanding the Influence

Directions: Using your reading, explain the main purpose of each document, identify the “big idea” that emerged from the document and explain the big idea and its relationship to the document in your own words.

Document	Main purpose of the document	Big idea from the document	Explanation of big idea
Magna Carta			
Mayflower Compact			
English Bill of Rights			
Cato's Letters			
Common Sense			
Summary Statement			

Evaluating the Impact on Government

Directions: Using what you have learned about the big ideas from each document, determine how these influences appear in the U.S. Constitution. Read each passage below, mark text that helps you identify the main idea, and write the main idea in your own words. Then, determine which of the following concepts influenced the passage and the evidence from the text that supports your answer.

Passage	What does this mean in your own words	Big Idea	Evidence from text
“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.” – Article VI			
The first ten amendments in the Bill of Rights guarantees certain rights and freedoms that include: Freedom of speech, the press, and religion, right to petition the government and to bear arms			
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.			
“No person shall...be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law” U.S. Constitution, 5th Amendment			
“We the People of the United States...do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”			

Adapted from iCivics Colonial Influences: <http://www.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/colonial-influences>

Source

Colonial Influences Lesson Plan from iCivics: <http://www.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/colonial-influences>

Understanding the Influence – Sample Answers

Directions: Using your reading, explain the main purpose of each document, identify the “big idea” that emerged from the document and explain the big idea and its relationship to the document in your own words.

Document	Main purpose of the document	Big idea from the document	Explanation of big idea
Magna Carta	The Magna Carta’s main purpose was to limit the power of the king and protect certain rights for the nobles.	limited government	The Magna Carta limited the king’s power and provided the people with rights and due process.
Mayflower Compact	The Mayflower Compact was created to give the Puritans a government. A compact is an official agreement made by two or more parties.	self-government	Through the Mayflower Compact, the Puritans agreed to laws that will be followed by everyone and make sure that the new government will serve the common good.
English Bill of Rights	The English Bill of Rights expanded the rights of the Parliament and the people and limited the rights of the king.	rights	The English Bill of Rights created free elections, the right to bear arms, petition the government and a fair trial. It also ended excessive bail and cruel and unusual punishment.
Cato’s Letters	Cato’s Letters were newspaper editorials that focused on freedom of expression.	rights	Cato’s Letters supported the right to freedom of expression and speech.
Common Sense	<i>Common Sense</i> communicated the ideas for independence and made it easy to understand for everyday colonists.	self-government, rights	<i>Common Sense</i> supported the idea of the colonies being independent from England in order to self govern and protect their rights.

Evaluating the Impact on Government – Sample Answers

Directions, Using what you have learned about the big ideas from each document, determine how these influences appear in the U.S. Constitution. Read each passage below, mark text that helps you identify the main idea, and write the main idea in your own words. Then, determine which of the following concepts influenced the passage and the evidence from the text that supports your answer.

Passage	What does this mean in your own words	Big Idea	Evidence from text
“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.” – Article VI	The Constitution is the supreme law of the land and all government officials are required to follow the Constitution.	Rule of Law	supreme law of the land, all government officials shall be bound
The first ten amendments in the Bill of Rights guarantees certain rights and freedoms that include: Freedom of speech, the press, and religion, right to petition the government and to bear arms	The Bill of Rights guarantees certain rights and freedoms.	Rights	Bill of Rights guarantees certain rights and freedoms
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.	The U.S. Constitution has three branches of government that are limited and can check each other.	Limited government	Each branch is given the power to check, or limit the power of the other two.
“No person shall...be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law” U.S. Constitution, 5th Amendment	No person shall be deprived due process.	Due process	due process of law
“We the People of the United States...do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”	We the people establish the Constitution.	Self-government	We the People

Civics Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Part of Speech	Definition
Common Sense	proper noun	a pamphlet published by Thomas Paine in 1776 to convince the American colonists to support becoming independent from England
compact	noun	an official agreement made by two or more parties
due process	noun	the right of people accused of crimes to have laws that treat them fairly, so that they cannot lose their life or freedom without having their legal rights protected
English Bill of Rights	proper noun	a government document that expanded the powers of the English Parliament and expanded the rights of the people, as well as further limited the rights of the king; written by the members of the English Parliament in 1689
limited government	proper noun	a government that has been limited in power by a constitution, or written agreement
limited monarchy	noun	a system of government in which the king or queen shares authority with an elected legislature and agrees to be bound by a constitution or a set of laws, also known as a constitutional monarchy
Magna Carta	proper noun	a government document that limited the power of the king of England and protected the rights of the nobility; written by the English nobles in 1215
Mayflower Compact	proper noun	an agreement between individuals that created a government that would provide order and protect the rights of the colonists; written by a group of English Puritans in Massachusetts in 1620
Preamble	proper noun	the introduction to the U.S. Constitution
rights	noun	a set of things that people believe they should be free to do
rule of law	noun	the idea that those who govern must follow the laws; no one is above the law
self-government	noun	popular or representative system where the people create and run their own government
Thomas Paine	proper noun	the colonial journalist who wrote <i>Common Sense</i> in 1776

Essential Teacher Content Background Information

This section addresses the following issues:

1. Core documents that impacted the colonists' view of government
2. Document analysis of the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, Mayflower Compact, and *Common Sense*
3. Mayflower Compact text (spelling and capitalization in original)

1. Core documents that impacted the colonists' view of government

Several core documents impacting the colonists' views of government reflect Enlightenment values. These documents include the English Magna Carta, the English Bill of Rights, the Mayflower Compact and Common Sense by Thomas Paine.

2. Document analysis of the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, Mayflower Compact, and *Common Sense*

Document Name	Date	Document Country of Origin	Purpose of Document	Core Themes and Influences
Magna Carta (The Great Charter of Freedoms)	1215	England	Required King John of England to protect certain rights Limited King's powers Protected subjects' privileges (Note: While these goals were not achieved, the document became an important symbol for those who wished to show that the king was bound by law)	Writ of <i>habeas corpus</i> Rule of constitutional law Development of common law
Bill of Rights (An Act Declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject and Settling the Succession of the Crown)	1689	England	Restate in statutory form the Declaration of Rights presented by the Convention Parliament to William and Mary inviting them to become joint sovereigns of England	Lists rights for citizens and permanent residents of a constitutional monarchy Included the right to petition the monarch Included the right to bear arms in defense Emphasizes the importance of the consent of the people Influenced the U.S. Bill of

				Rights (1791)
Mayflower Compact	1620	American colonies	Set up a government and write first written laws for the new settlers arriving at Plymouth Rock (now Provincetown Harbor, Cape Cod, Massachusetts)	Fair and equal laws for the general good of the settlement Will of the majority Social contract where the settlers consented to follow the Compact's rules for the sake of the survival of the new colony John Adams and others have referred to it as the foundation of the U.S. Constitution
<i>Common Sense</i> by Thomas Paine (published anonymously)	1776	American colonies	Placed the blame for the British colonists on King George III Challenged the authority of the British government and the royal monarchy Published anonymously, the document advocated that the colonists declare their independence from the British crown	Advocated a movement for sovereignty of the people, a written constitution, and effective governmental checks and balances

3. Mayflower Compact text (spelling and capitalization in original)

In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James, by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, etc.

Having undertaken, for the Glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith and Honour of our King and Country, a Voyage to plant the First Colony in the Northern Parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, Covenant and Combine ourselves together into a Civil Body Politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod, the 11th of November, in the year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King James, of England, France and Ireland the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domini 1620.