

FOUNDATIONAL IDEALS AND PRINCIPLES

SS.8.CG.3.1 Trace the foundational ideals and principles related to the U.S. government expressed in primary sources from the colonial period to Reconstruction.

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2023 BENCHMARK UPDATES

- Updated from SS.8.C.2.1
 - Changed from “~~Evaluate and compare the essential ideals and principles of American constitutional government~~ expressed in primary sources from the colonial period to Reconstruction.” to “Trace the foundational ideals and principles related to the U.S. government expressed in primary sources from the colonial period to Reconstruction.”
- Depth of Knowledge Changes within Benchmark
 - Changed from “Evaluate and compare” to “Trace”
- Benchmark Clarification Change
 - Benchmark clarifications are an addition to the 2023-2024 middle school civics and government benchmarks. Benchmark clarifications are listed in the lesson summary below.
- Vocabulary Changes
 - No changes

Essential Teacher Content Background Information

[Teacher Content Notes Not Appropriate For Student Use]

This section addresses the following topics:

1. Foundational Ideals and Principles
2. Mayflower Compact (1620)
3. *Common Sense* (1776)
4. Declaration of Independence (1776)
5. U.S. Constitution (1789)
6. Declaration of Rights and Sentiments (1848)
7. Gettysburg Address (1863)
8. Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address (1865)

1. Foundational Ideals and Principles

Societies have been built on ideals and principles throughout the course of human history. These principles set the expectations for how people conduct themselves and interact with each other. In the United States, foundational ideals and principles such as all people being created equal, limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances, government authority deriving from consent of the governed, and power being shared among multiple levels of government (federalism) form the backbone of political and civic life. These ideals and principles were established by the Founders and further developed by others to protect the unalienable natural rights of all individuals to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”. By comprehending these principles clearly, we are better equipped to safeguard liberty and opportunity for ourselves and our posterity.

2. The Mayflower Compact (1620)

From the earliest attempts at colonization, English settlers knew that life without laws could be disastrous. The Pilgrims and other English settlers arriving on the *Mayflower* (1620) created a compact to ensure their social structure would succeed. The Mayflower Compact was a written agreement between the various settlers to institute government authority and establish a precedent for how to approve laws. The foundational ideals mentioned in this document were: government of the people, the idea of social contract, and natural law.

3. *Common Sense* (1776)

Common Sense is a pamphlet written and published anonymously by Thomas Paine encouraging the British colonists to stand up for their rights and break away from Great Britain. *Common Sense* was written in the form of a sermon and was a key milestone inciting support for both the American Revolution and Independence. *Common Sense* argued for representational self-government with no king.

4. Declaration of Independence (1776)

The Declaration of Independence declared a complete break with Britain and its king, and a creation of an new, independent nation from thirteen of Britain's North American colonies. It provided an explanation of the colonists' view of the role of government, a list of grievances against the king and Parliament of Great

Britain, and a new social contract for the new United States. The Declaration of Independence is built upon the principle that the authority of government is based on consent of the governed.

5. U.S. Constitution (1789)

A constitution is a set of rules that guides a country's political organization. In the United States, the Constitution is the supreme law of the land. It includes the purposes of our government (the Preamble) and seven Articles outlining the structure and functions of government. The principles contained in it include consent of the governed, separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, and limited government.

6. Declaration of Rights and Sentiments (1848)

The Declaration of Rights and Sentiments was drafted by Elizabeth Cady Statton. This document was intended to be an agenda or outline for the upcoming Seneca Falls Convention. It outlines what rights women should have and mirrored closely the language of the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration of Sentiments (as the title is commonly shortened) was adopted and signed by 68 women and 32 men at the convention in 1848. The central principle of the document is the equality of women to men.

7. Gettysburg Address (1863)

President Lincoln gave a brief speech on November 19, 1863 at the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery (now Gettysburg National Cemetery), on the battlefield at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, four and a half months after the battle. This speech, known to history as the Gettysburg Address, was only 272 words long, but reframed the purpose of the Civil War as testing whether a nation "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" could "long endure". Lincoln called upon those present to ensure that those that had thus far died in the Civil War did not die in vain, but rather that the ordeal of the bloody war prove to be a "new birth of freedom" for the United States that would ensure that "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" continues.

8. Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address (1865)

On March 4, 1865, just 41 days before his death, Lincoln delivered his Second Inaugural Address. Like the Gettysburg Address, it was brief. After four long years of war, and with the end of the war at hand (Robert E. Lee would surrender his Confederate Army of Northern Virginia to Ulysses S. Grant just a few weeks later on April 9 at Appomattox Courthouse, VA) Lincoln looked forward to a second term and helping to heal the nation (Reconstruction) he had struggled so hard to preserve. Lincoln's speech recognized that slavery was the central cause of "this terrible war" but invoked religious imagery to speak in a language of healing and forgiveness, promising "malice toward none" and "charity for all" as he set about laying the basis for the nation's "new birth of freedom" promised in the Gettysburg Address a year and a half earlier.

Lesson Summary

ESSENTIAL QUESTION		
What are the foundational ideals and principles related to the U.S. government?		
BENCHMARK		
SS.8.CG.3.1 Trace the foundational ideals and principles related to the U.S. government expressed in primary sources from the colonial period to Reconstruction.		
CIVICS EOC REPORTING CATEGORY		
N/A		
OVERVIEW		
In this lesson, using primary source documents, students will identify the foundational ideals and principles related to the United States government and trace their expression over time.		
BENCHMARK CLARIFICATIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will identify foundational ideals and principles related to the U.S. government expressed in primary sources (e.g., the Mayflower Compact (1620); Common Sense (1776); the Declaration of Independence (1776); the U.S. Constitution (1789); the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments (1848); the Gettysburg Address (1863); Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address (1865)). 		
BENCHMARK CONTENT LIMITS		
N/A		
CIVICS CONTENT VOCABULARY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> checks and balances, consent of the governed, federalism, ideals, limited government, principles, Reconstruction, rights, rule of law, self-government, separation of powers, 		
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES		
Close reading of complex text	Analyzing primary sources	Historical thinking strategies
MATERIALS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighters Student digital device (optional) Colonists: What Were They Thinking? tutorial (external link; optional) Definitions of Ideal and Principle slide Ideals and Principles of American Government information sheet Tracing the Foundational Ideals and Principles Graphic Organizer The Mayflower Compact reading 		

- Thomas Paine: Writer and Revolutionary video (external link)
- Excerpts from *Common Sense* reading
- *Common Sense* image (external link)
- The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America image (external link)
- The Declaration of Independence reading
- The Declaration of Independence: What Does it Say? (external link; optional)
- Constitution of the United States image (external link)
- Foundations of the Constitution video (external link)
- Excerpts from the Constitution of the United States reading
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Stronghold of the Fortress video (external link)
- Declaration of Sentiments (external link)
- Declaration of Independence: A Transcription (external link; optional)
- Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address (external link)
- Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address (external link)

B.E.S.T. STANDARDS

- ELA.8.R.2.1- Analyze how individual text sections and/or features convey a purpose and/or meaning in texts.
- ELA.8.R.2.4- Track the development of an argument, analyzing the types of reasoning used and their effectiveness, identifying ways in which the argument could be improved.
- ELA.8.R.3.2- Paraphrase content from grade-level texts.
- ELA.8.C.4.1- Conduct research to answer a question, drawing on multiple reliable and valid sources, and generating additional questions for further research.
- ELA.K12.EE.1.1- Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.

Suggested Student Activity Sequence & Pace

DAY	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE
DAY 1	<p>Planning Note: Prior to this lesson, students should have already learned about some or all of the documents covered, the historical time periods from colonial era through Reconstruction, as well as have an understanding of the structure and functions of the various branches of government (e.g. checks and balances, federalism, etc). If you feel your students need more of a review prior to completing this lesson, have them complete the CPALMS interactive tutorial “Colonists: What Were They Thinking?” (about 30 minutes.) You could choose to do this whole group or the students can do it independently. (There is a certificate at the end the students can download or print for evidence that they completed it and they must view and listen to each slide in order to move on to the next slide.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To begin the lesson, project the “Definitions of Ideal and Principle” slide and have students copy the terms into their notebooks or on loose leaf paper. 2. Ask students if anyone can attempt to explain the difference between these two words. 3. Lead students to the understanding that an <i>ideal</i> is a standard of conduct or virtue to which a person or nation aspires, while a <i>principle</i> is a rule that guides our behavior in pursuit of an ideal. 4. Ask students the following question: What are some of the ideals and/or principles that the United States was founded on? Provide them the example of ‘limited government’ to get the brainstorm started. Teacher Note: Creating a list together on the board may be helpful. 5. Lead students to the understanding that some of our foundational ideals and principles include: all people are created equal; consent of the governed; separation of powers; checks and balances; federalism; due process; rule of law; natural rights; limited government; self-government; etc. 6. Explain that in this lesson, students will investigate relevant primary sources from colonial times through Reconstruction, in an attempt to find evidence of some of these foundational ideals and principles. 7. Pass out the “Ideals and Principles of American Government” information sheet. 8. Alone or with a partner, instruct the students to spend the next few minutes reviewing the principles. Have them highlight or circle important words and/or phrases. 9. Ask the students the following questions: Why do you think these principles were important to the Founders? 10. Have students share responses. Teacher Note: Responses may vary, but you are reminding them/helping them understand that the Founders, having won independence from a distant tyrant, were distrustful of powerful government. Their experiences, combined with Enlightenment ideas and other philosophical thinkers shaped the Founders' views. 11. Pass out the “Tracing the Foundational Ideals and Principles Graphic Organizer” to each student. 12. Explain to students that as they investigate each primary source listed in the left column, they will document the evidence for expressed principles and/or ideals on their organizer. 13. Pass out “Document 1: The Mayflower Compact” reading. 14. Place students in pairs. 15. Have students work in their pairs to read the background information and the Mayflower Compact itself. For this reading, they do not need to record in their graphic organizer just yet. Remind them to mark the text as they read.

	<p>16. While students work, circulate the room to monitor for engagement and understanding.</p> <p>17. Once most pairs have finished a first reading, pause to have a whole-class discussion regarding the main points of the Mayflower Compact reading. Ensure students have a firm summary of the text.</p> <p>18. Instruct the student pairs to return to the text and scan through it a second time. During this reading, students should record in their graphic organizers what they believe were the author's motives (column 1) and what foundational ideals/principles they can locate in the source. (column 2). Column 3 should be left blank for now.</p> <p>Teacher Note: Ensure students support their answers with evidence from the text. For determining which ideals/principles are expressed in the text, ensure students are using their “Ideals and Principles of American Government” information sheet from step 7.</p> <p>19. While students work, circulate the room to monitor for engagement and understanding.</p> <p>20. Once students have finished, have each pair join another pair and take turns sharing their answers, revising their own responses as appropriate.</p> <p>21. While groups work, continue to circulate the room to monitor for engagement and understanding.</p> <p>22. Review student responses through whole-class discussion</p> <p>Teacher Note: Use the answer key below to guide conversation.</p> <p>23. Before the end of class, either collect handouts and student work or have them keep it.</p>
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DAY 2	<p>1. Begin class by asking students the following question: When investigating history, why is it important to examine primary sources?</p> <p>2. Allow students to share out responses.</p> <p>3. Have students take out their “Tracing the Foundational Ideals and Principles Graphic Organizer” from the previous day.</p> <p>4. Explain to students that now they will move on to the next document, Thomas Paine’s pamphlet <i>Common Sense</i>.</p> <p>5. As an introduction, play the “Thomas Paine: Writer and Revolutionary” video from PBS (3:41).</p> <p>6. During the video, have students complete column 1 (motives of author) for <i>Common Sense</i>.</p> <p>7. Share what an original image of “Common Sense” looked like with this full online version from the Library of Congress. Engage students in a brief dialogue regarding their observations.</p> <p>Teacher Note: This online version is very user friendly and can be zoomed in.</p> <p>8. Pass out copies of “Document 2: Excerpts from <i>Common Sense</i>” reading.</p> <p>9. Have students form into groups of 4. Assign each student in the group a letter A-D. Each student will read their portion of the excerpt, mark the text, and fill in column 2 (foundational ideals/principles) for <i>Common Sense</i>.</p> <p>Teacher Note: Remind students they need to support with text evidence.</p> <p>10. While groups work, circulate the room to monitor for engagement and understanding.</p> <p>Teacher Note: You may want to give students a time limit for working on each source today to ensure you stay on pace.</p> <p>11. Once students have added information to column 2 from their excerpt, have each student share with the other members of their group, and add to column 2.</p> <p>12. Review student responses through whole-class discussion</p> <p>Teacher Note: Use the answer key below to guide conversation.</p>
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Explain that now you will move on to the third primary source: the Declaration of Independence. 14. Project the image of “The unanimous declaration of the thirteen United States of America” from the Library of Congress. 15. Ask students to share out one thing they notice or wonder as they look at the document, taking a few responses. Teacher Note: You may wish to share with them that in the 18th century, the people often used what looked like an <i>f</i> in place of an <i>s</i> should have been. This was known as the ‘long s’ and replaced either a single s, or one or both s’s in a double-s sequence. For instance, at the bottom of the document, what looks like ‘John Hancock, Prefident’. 16. Pass out copies of “Document 3: The Declaration of Independence” reading. 17. Continuing in small groups, have students read and mark the text, and continue filling out columns 1 and 2 of their graphic organizers for the Declaration of Independence. Teacher Note: For students who may need additional literacy support or scaffolding, the National Archives offers that here: “The Declaration of Independence: What Does it Say?” 18. While students work, circulate the room to monitor for engagement and understanding. 19. Explain that students will investigate one more document today: the U.S. Constitution. 20. Share this image of the “Constitution of the United States” from the Library of Congress. Explain to the students that this is the first of four pages. Ask students: Why is ‘<i>We the People</i>’ larger than the rest of the words? and have them share out 1-2 responses. 21. Watch this iCivics video “Foundations of the Constitution” (2:10) to ensure students have necessary background knowledge. 22. Pass out “Document 4: Excerpts from the Constitution of the United States” 23. Continuing in small groups, have students read and mark the text, and continue filling out columns 1 and 2 of their graphic organizers for the U.S. Constitution. 24. While students work, circulate the room to monitor for engagement and understanding. 25. Once all students have completed columns 1 and 2 for the first four sources, have them assign a number to each member of their group (1-4). In a designated corner of the room, have all of the 1’s gather, 2’s gather and so on. Once the class is in these four larger groups, have them pick a partner. 26. With their partner, have students review and share responses for documents 3 & 4, adding to their graphic organizers as appropriate. 27. Bring students back together as a whole class and pose the following question: In your investigation so far, what has been the most cited foundational ideal/principle? 28. Before the end of class, either collect handouts and student work or have them keep it.
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DAY 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin class by having students take out their “Tracing the Foundational Ideals and Principles Graphic Organizer” from the previous days. 2. Provide them 2 minutes to review their responses from the previous days (Mayflower Compact, <i>Common Sense</i>, the Declaration of Independence, and the U.S. Constitution). 3. Ask students the following discussion question: So far, which document do you think <u>best</u> embodies the foundational ideals and principles of the U.S. government? (opinion question but ensure students support their responses with evidence) 4. Explain to students that today they will look at the three remaining primary sources in this lesson: the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments (1848), Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address (1863) and Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address (1865).
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5. To start, watch this video clip "[Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Stronghold of the Fortress](#)" from the Bill of Rights Institute to build student background information (2:37).
6. Project the transcribed version of "[Document 5: Declaration of Sentiments](#)" from the Women's Rights National Historical Park (U.S. National Park Service) website on the board.
7. While briefly scrolling and examining the document, ask students to identify what other primary source it looks like/reminds them of. (Declaration of Independence)
Teacher Note: To demonstrate the comparison, you can project this website of the "[Declaration of Independence: A Transcription](#)" from the National Archives, switching back and forth so that students can examine the similarity in structure and language.
8. Read the opening three paragraphs aloud to the class. Call on a few students to summarize the top portion of the document.
9. While projected, have students read through the list of grievances. Ask students to share which one resonates with them the most.
10. Read the final text of the document aloud to the class. Ask students: What action(s) are these individuals wanting to see taken as a result of this document?
11. Provide students time to individually fill out columns 1 and 2 of their organizers.
12. Review student responses through whole-class discussion
Teacher Note: Use the answer key below to guide conversation.
13. Project "[Document 6: Lincoln's Gettysburg Address](#)" from the Cornell University website on the board.
14. Have a student volunteer to read it aloud.
Teacher Note: If you have a student in class that enjoys public speaking and/or theater, you could provide them this document ahead of time so they may practice.
15. Once the read aloud has concluded, have students turn to a shoulder partner and fill out columns 1 and 2 of their graphic organizer.
16. Review student responses through whole-class discussion
Teacher Note: Use the answer key below to guide conversation.
17. Project "[Document 7: Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address](#)" from the Lincoln Memorial (U.S. National Park Service) website on the board.
18. Use the audio recording provided to hear the address, keeping the text up for students to follow along.
19. Once the read aloud has concluded, have students turn to a different shoulder partner and fill out columns 1 and 2 of their graphic organizer. Students should now have columns 1 and 2 completed for all documents.
20. Review student responses through whole-class discussion
Teacher Note: Use the answer key below to guide conversation.
21. Now that all primary sources have been examined, place students into small groups (numbers may vary but you will need 7 groups total).
22. Assign each group a number (1-7) which corresponds to the primary source document on their graphic organizer.
23. In their groups, have students review their assigned document notes and discuss how the ideals/principles expressed are reflected in our U.S. government. They should record their conclusions, with evidence, in column 3 of the graphic organizer.
24. While groups work, circulate the room to monitor for engagement and understanding.
25. Beginning with "Document 1: Mayflower Compact", go around the room and have each group share their response for column 3.
26. Have the other groups that did not complete that document add notes to their individual graphic organizers during the sharing.

27. Checking for Understanding (Formative Assessment):

Instruct students to write a 2-3 paragraph response using the following prompt:

Prompt

How do the ideals and principles expressed in the primary source documents examined, shape the foundations of the U.S. government? Cite specific evidence from at least 4 of the documents used in this lesson.

Civics Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Definition
checks and balances	a principle of the federal government, according to the U.S. Constitution, that allows each branch of government to limit the power of the other branches
consent of the governed	the idea that a government's legitimacy and exercise of power is just and lawful only when agreed to by the people over which that political power is exercised
federalism	a system of government in which the authority is shared is by two levels of government
ideals	a principal to be aimed at; goals; standards
limited government	a government that has been limited in power by a constitution, or written agreement
principles	a fundamental truth that serves as the foundation for a system; a basic guiding rule or idea
Reconstruction	the era in history that followed the Civil War, 1865-1877, during which attempts were made to redress the inequalities of slavery and to resolve the problems arising from the readmission to the Union of the 11 states that had seceded (withdrew) at or before the war
rights	a set of things that people believe they should be free to do
rule of law	the idea that those who govern must follow the laws; no one is above the law
self-government	popular or representative system where the people create and run their own government
separation of powers	the structure of the federal government, according to the U.S. Constitution, that sets up three branches with their own distinct powers and responsibilities

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Civics 360 Resources](#)

Florida Department of Education's Civic Literacy Reading List

- *A Kids' Guide to the Bill of Rights: Curfews, Censorship and the 100- Pound Giant*, by Kathleen Krull
- *Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution*, by Linda Monk

ANSWER KEYS

Sample Answers: Tracing the Foundational Ideals and Principles Graphic Organizer

Written Response: Sample Scoring Rubric

SOURCES

Colonists: What Were They Thinking? Student tutorial from CPALMs:

<https://www.cpalms.org/PreviewResourceStudentTutorial/Preview/102484>

The 400th Anniversary of the Mayflower Compact from Library of Congress:

<https://blogs.loc.gov/law/2020/11/the-400th-anniversary-of-the-mayflower-compact/>

Mayflower Compact (1620): https://www.pilgrimhall.org/ap_mayflower_compact.htm

Thomas Paine | Writer and Revolutionary:

<https://florida.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/americon-vid-thomas-paine/video/>

Common Sense (1776): <https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.commonsense00ande/?st=gallery>

Common Sense (1776) text from Project Gutenberg: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/147/147-h/147-h.htm>

Declaration of Independence (1776): <https://www.loc.gov/resource/bdsdcc.02101/> In Congress, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous declaration of the thirteen United States Declaration of Independence transcription:

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

Declaration of Independence: What Does It Say? From the National Archives:

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration/what-does-it-say>

Foundations of the Constitution from iCivics: <https://youtu.be/UFt15fmmqi8>

U.S. Constitution (1789): <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Stronghold of the Fortress from Bill of Rights Institute:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFdoHJnmR_U

Declaration of Rights and Sentiments (1848):

<https://www.nps.gov/wori/learn/historyculture/declaration-of-sentiments.htm> (transcribed)

Gettysburg Address (1863): https://rmc.library.cornell.edu/gettysburg/good_cause/transcript.htm (transcribed)

Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address (1865):

<https://www.nps.gov/linc/learn/historyculture/lincoln-second-inaugural.htm>