

Evolution of Democratic Ideals

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REVOLUTIONS

Glorious Revolution of 1688



The Glorious Revolution, the American Revolution, and the French Revolution had far-reaching consequences as they challenged the institutions that shaped the political structure of the world. Each attempted to establish democratic principles of government, including limiting the power of the government and extending rights to the governed. Although each revolution occurred in a different time and place, all three were based on the ideas that government derives its power from the people it governs, and government exists to protect its citizens who have certain rights that cannot be denied. The Glorious Revolution, American Revolution, and French Revolution had enduring effects worldwide on political expectations for self-

American Revolution of 1775

The French Revolution of 1789



government and individual liberty. Several essential political documents were created at critical times in history that paralleled the ideas that drove these revolutions. There were five documents written between 1215 to 1791 with the intent to guarantee numerous rights for their citizens.

THE GREAT CHARTER

The English Magna Carta (1215) established the principle that no one, including the king, was above the law. The abuses by King John caused a revolt by nobles who forced the king to recognize the rights of noblemen. The Magna Carta, otherwise known as the Great Charter, eventually came to protect the interests of other social classes as well. As a result, the document was regarded as a guarantee of certain rights. The Magna Carta established the law, limited process of law. It also guaranteed individual rights to the nobility.

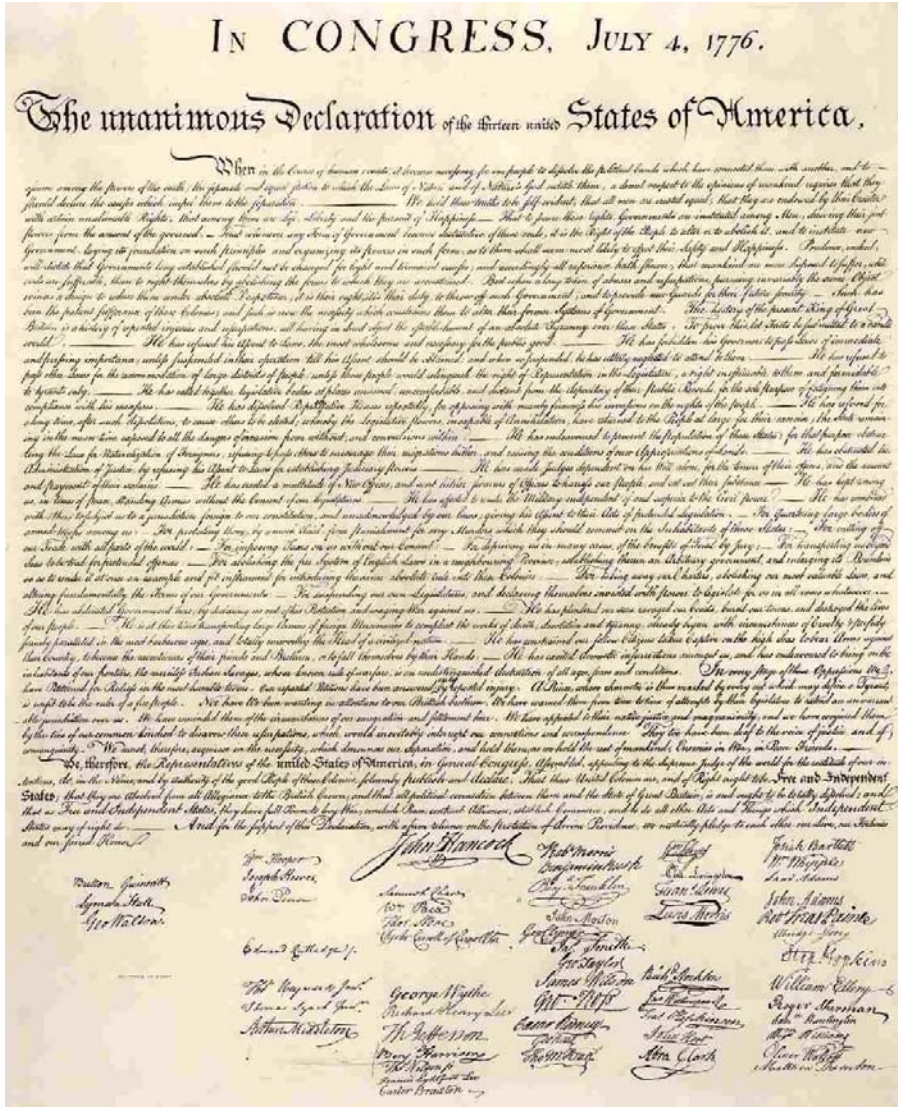


THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION AND ENGLISH BILL OF RIGHTS

The Glorious Revolution (1688) brought the first bill of rights to the English people by the new monarchs, William and Mary of Orange. The document begins with a list of grievances against the exiled King James II. It justifies both the right to depose the king and details the rights that must be protected by the new sovereigns. This document ensured the superiority of Parliament over the monarchy while spelling out basic rights and freedoms. The English Bill of Rights (1689) extended individual liberties and due process of law to the nobility. The English Bill of Rights would be a model for future documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Bill of Rights.

Religion Lawes and Liberties might not again
be in danger of being subverted Upon which
Letters Elections having been accordingly
made and thereupon the said Lords Spiritual
and Temporall and Commones pursuant to their
respective Letters and Elections being now
assembled in a full and free Representative of
the Nation taking into their most serious
consideration the best means for attaining
the ends aforesaid doe in the first place (as
their Ancestors in like case have usually done)
for the maintaining and asserting their ancient
Rights and Liberties declare that the pretended
power of suspending of Lawes or the Execution of
Lawes by Regall Authority without Consent of
Parliament is illegal That the pretended power
of dispensing with Lawes or the Execution of
Lawes by Regall Authority as it hath been
assumed and exercised of late is illegal That
the Commission for erecting the late Court of
Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes and all
other Commissions and Courts of like nature
are illegal and pernicious That stopping money
for or to the use of the Crown by pretence of
Prerogative without Consent of Parliament for
any time or in other manner than the same
is or shall be granted is illegal That it is
the right of the Subjects to petition the King
and all Commissions and prosecutions for such
petitions are illegal That the raising or
keeping a standing Army within the Kingdom
in time of Peace unless it be with Consent of
Parliament is against Law That the Subjects
which are Protestants may have Armes for their
defence suitable to their Conditions and as
allowed by Law That Election of Members of
Parliament ought to be free That the Freedome

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



The American Revolution (1775-1783) showed the world that rebellion against a powerful monarchy was possible. The ideas of the Enlightenment inspired the American colonists to demand the rights granted to the English citizens. Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence of 1776 claimed that unalienable rights were the foundation of all government, and he justified American resistance to English rule in these terms. The Declaration of Independence is also important because it advocated the principle of the consent of the governed. Jefferson's Declaration of Independence had an immediate influence on the French people at this time.

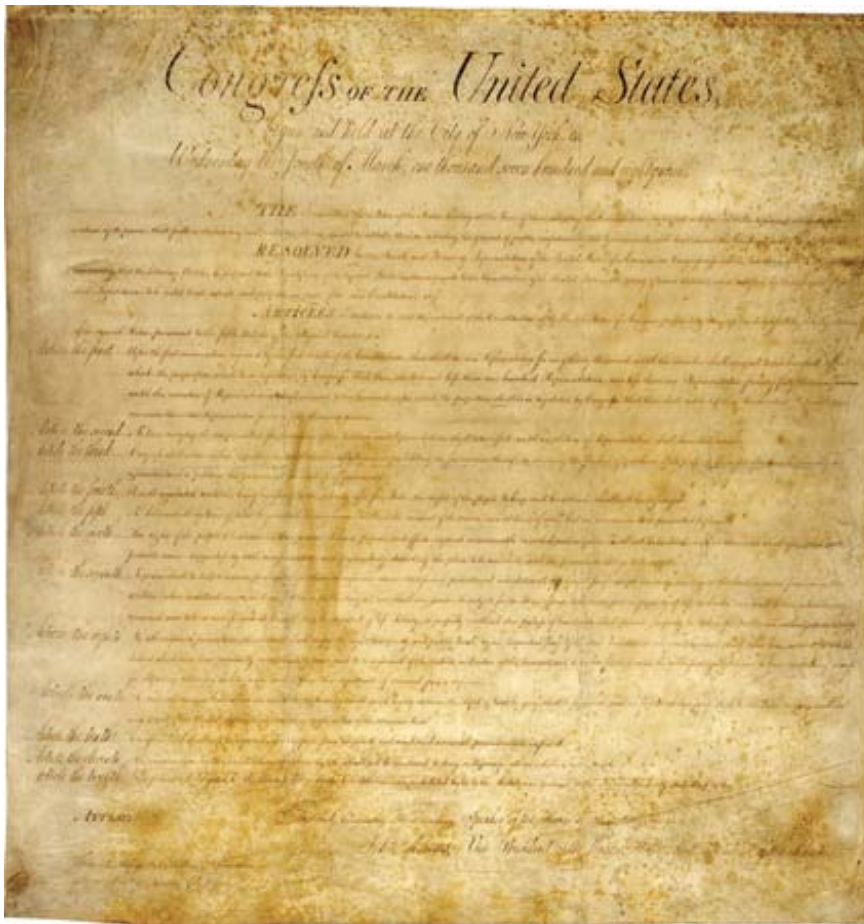
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF MAN AND THE CITIZEN

The French Revolution against King Louis XVI began when the king clashed with the Estates-General, an assembly similar to Parliament. The Estates-General wrote its Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789) based heavily on the American Declaration. The Assembly adopted this charter of basic liberties. The French declaration extended individual liberties, consent of the governed, and protected the principle of due process of the law.



U.S. BILL OF RIGHTS

Finally, the U.S. Bill of Rights (1791) responded to earlier ideas about the relationship between individuals and their governments. The framers of the U.S.



Constitution added the first ten amendments to the Constitution, known as the U.S. Bill of Rights, to limit the powers of the federal government. The ideas outlined in the English Bill of Rights were written into the U.S. Bill of Rights guaranteeing them to the citizens in the United States. The U.S. Bill of Rights extended and protected the principles of individual liberties and due process of law.

The Evolution of Democratic Ideals Handout

A. List the three revolutions discussed in the reading.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

B. List the five documents that laid the foundation for the development of modern day democracy and they year each document was written.

1. _____ 4. _____

2. _____ 5. _____

3. _____

C. Place the five documents on the timeline in chronological order and explain the significance in the space below the document.



D. Which document or documents influenced the following, select the corresponding letters?

Magna Carta

A

English Bill of Rights

B

Declaration of
Independence

C

French Declaration
of Rights of Man and
the Citizen

D

U.S. Bill of Rights

E

1. English Bill of Rights: _____

3. French Declaration of Rights of Man and the Citizen: _____

2. Declaration of Independence: _____

4. U.S. Bill of Rights: _____