The Founding Documents: A Three-Act Drama

Teacher’s Guide for Use with
The Bill of Rights Institute Publication

The Founding Documents: A Three-Act Drama
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Established in 1999, the Bill of Rights Institute is a 501(c)(3) not for profit charity focused on providing educational resources on America’s Founding documents and principles for teachers and students of American History and Civics. The mission of the Bill of Rights Institute is to educate young people about the words and ideas of America’s Founders, the liberties guaranteed in our Founding documents, and how our Founding principles continue to affect and shape a free society. It is the goal of the Institute to help the next generation understand the freedom and opportunity the Constitution offers.

Established in 1952, the Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation focuses its resources on not-for-profit organizations in Kansas that significantly enhance the state’s quality of life through arts and arts education, environmental stewardship, human services, enablement of at-risk youth, and education. The foundation is named for Fred C. Koch (1900-1967), who co-founded what is now Koch Industries, Inc., and his wife Mary R. Koch (1907-1990). More information can be found at www.fmkfoundation.org.

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Table of Contents

Act One: The Declaration of Independence

- Vocabulary
- Reading Comprehension Questions
- Chapter Activities

Act Two: The Constitution

- Vocabulary
- Reading Comprehension Questions
- Chapter Activities

Act Three: The Bill of Rights

- Vocabulary
- Reading Comprehension Questions
- Chapter Activities

Final Assessments

Answer Key
Act I: The Declaration of Independence

Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension Questions

Directions: Read the definitions for the following terms. Rewrite the definitions in your own words, and then write a new sentence using the word correctly.

1. Rights: actions people have the ability to take
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________

2. Representation: a voice or say in laws that are passed
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________

3. Petitioned: wrote official letters asking for help
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________

4. Repealed: removed so they were no longer a law
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________

5. Boston Tea Party: A protest by the Colonists against Parliament’s passage of the Tea Act, a tax on British tea. A group of colonists led by Samuel Adams dumped more than 300 chests of tea into Boston harbor.
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________
6. Press: People who write the news of the day, such as newspaper writers and pamphlet authors

7. Delegates: people who are chosen to represent others at a meeting or event

8. Crown: The British King

9. Boycott: Refuse to buy

10. Liberty: Being free from unfair rulers and laws

11. Property: things you own

Comprehension Questions

1. In which city did the Continental Congress meet?
2. Who did the Continental Congress appoint to lead the American Army?
3. What were at least two actions the Colonists took to try to change the way British government was treating them?
4. What did the delegates officially decide to do on July 2, 1776?
5. What happened on July 4, 1776?
6. Extending: Why do you think the Continental Congress thought it was important to write an official declaration of independence?
Act I: Activities

WORD FIND

ephialphkiakirgmt
nieitensndlenainhs
elbanelanisosgedsh
declarationosreffej
auocirtbeseinolorcs
dtnccggiigcommitteegc
aosirorgemamkniqu
tne
meestobnhmkncoluoaa
rsneeesrtteiuoaucv
hctgnndnnsssvdiglcfo

inalienable jefferson adams consent
philadelphia george rights equal
dickinson united colonies crown vote
declaration committee Britain Congress

The Founding Documents: A Three-Act Drama
Match the descriptions on the left with the terms on the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduced the resolution that the colonies should be independent states</td>
<td>Thomas Jefferson</td>
<td>July 2, 1776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief author of the Declaration of Independence</td>
<td>John Dickinson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home state of Thomas Jefferson</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The date Congress voted to break from England</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The date Congress approved the Declaration of Independence</td>
<td>Richard Henry Lee</td>
<td>July 4, 1776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City where the Continental Congress met</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What are some ways you act with honor in your own life? How can you act honorably in school? Playing a sport? As part of a club?
... We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...

THINK

▷ We hold these truths to be self-evident

▷ that all men are created equal

▷ that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights

▷ that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness

▷ That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men,

▷ deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed

defined: given unalienable: unable to be taken away liberty: the right to be free pursuits: effort to get something secure: keep safe instituted: put in place deriving: getting just: fair consent: agreement to

DISCUSS

In 1776, every country in Europe was led by a King or Queen. How do Kings and Queens get their power? How do you think a King would respond to the idea that all people are born equal?
**Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension Questions**

**Directions:** Read the definitions for the following terms. Rewrite the definitions in your own words, and then write a new sentence using the word correctly.

1. **Tyranny:** Government that is too strong and does not respect the rights of the people
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

2. **Commerce:** Buying and selling goods and services
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

3. **Interstate:** Between more than one state
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

**Comprehension Questions**

1. What was the Confederation Congress?
2. What were at least two reasons the Articles of Confederation needed to be revised?
3. What meeting took place over the summer of 1787?
4. What two powers were given to the federal government to make commerce between states easier?
5. What would have to happen for the Constitution to go into effect?
6. **Extending:** Why do you think it was hard for the delegates to agree on the right powers to give the national government?
Act II: Activities

FILL IN THE BLANKS.
Then unscramble the circled letters to form a word:

1. Opening lines of the Constitution:
   [__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __]

2. Means “between two or more states”:
   [__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ _
Separation of Powers:

- The national government was divided into three parts: the branch to write laws (Congress); the executive branch to carry out laws (led by the President) and the judicial branch to settle arguments under the laws (headed by the Supreme Court).

Limited Government:

- The national government was given only certain powers.

Republican Government:

- The people elect representatives to write and carry out laws.

Checks and Balances:

- If one branch tried to grow too strong, the others had ways to stop or "check" it.

Federalism:

- State governments are another "check" on the national government. One Founder called this a "double security" for the people.
The Constitution is a set of rules about making rules. What types of rules can your parents set for you? Your teachers? A sitter?

Are there any types of rules that different authority figures can NOT make for you?

How, if at all, will some of these answers change when you are an adult?
Act III: The Bill of Rights

Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension Questions

Directions: Read the definitions for the following terms. Rewrite the definitions in your own words, and then write a new sentence using the word correctly.

1. Ratification: Legal approval

2. Federalists: People who argued in favor of ratification (approval) of the Constitution

3. Anti-Federalists: People who argued against ratification (approval) of the Constitution

4. Security: protection
Comprehension Questions

1. What were the meetings to decide whether to approve the Constitution that took place in each state called?
2. What were the Federalist Papers?
3. What was one argument FOR a bill of rights?
4. What was one argument AGAINST a bill of rights?
5. Which Founding Father switched from arguing against a bill of rights to supporting one?
6. **Extending:** Why do you think he changed his mind?
Act III: Activities

What were 2 reasons the Anti-Federalists wanted a bill of rights added to the Constitution? What were 2 reasons the Federalists did not think one—should be added? Draw a star next to the reasons that you think are strongest.

Anti-Federalists argued that a bill of rights **should** be added because:

1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________

Federalists argued that a bill of rights **should not** be added because:

1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________

Rights Scavenger Hunt – Pages 17-18

Four of the rights in the Bill of Rights are mentioned on this page. Can you find them all?

1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMENDMENT</th>
<th>What it protects</th>
<th>How could you exercise this right?</th>
<th>Was this right violated by England in the colonies?</th>
<th>“Stamp” to symbolize this amendment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Amendment</td>
<td>The rights to freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Amendment</td>
<td>The right to keep and bear arms.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Amendment</td>
<td>No quartering troops in peacetime.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Amendment</td>
<td>No unreasonable searches.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Amendment</td>
<td>If the government charges you with a crime, it has to follow the law. You cannot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be put on trial more than once for the same crime, or forced to give evidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>against yourself. Finally, if the government takes your property for a public use,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>it has to pay you for it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMENDMENT</td>
<td>What it protects</td>
<td>How could you exercise this right?</td>
<td>Was this right violated by England in the colonies?</td>
<td>“Stamp” to symbolize this amendment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>If you are accused of a crime, you have the right to be told what that crime is, to have a speedy, public jury trial where it happened, to call witnesses, to ask questions of witnesses against you, and to have the help of a lawyer.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>Jury trials will be held for civil (non-criminal) trials where more than $20 is involved.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>No “cruel and unusual” punishments or bail/fines that are too high.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth</td>
<td>This list of limits on government power might not be complete.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth</td>
<td>If a power isn’t given to the national government, the states and the people keep it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Final Assessment: The Founding Documents**

**Directions:** Cut out the statements and glue each one under the correct column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declaration of Independence</th>
<th>Constitution</th>
<th>Bill of Rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

“The consent of the governed…”  
Drafted by a Committee of Five, led by Thomas Jefferson  
Added to the end of a previous document  
“We the people…”  
Crafted by delegates at a Convention  
“Congress shall make no law…”  
“Freedom of speech, or of the press”  
Officially separated the U.S. from England  
Adopted in 1776  
Adopted in 1789  
Adopted in 1791  
“Our sacred honor”  
“A more perfect union”  
Established a national government  
Written by Congress
**Final Assessment: The Founding Fathers**

Write the letter of each statement next the correct Founding Father. Some Founding Fathers may have more than one statement.

**Founding Fathers:**

1. Thomas Jefferson __________
2. James Madison __________
3. George Washington __________
4. Alexander Hamilton __________
5. George Mason __________

**Statements:**

A. “Father of the Constitution”
B. Drafted the Declaration of Independence
C. Refused to sign the Constitution
D. Author of The Federalist Papers
E. Leader of the Constitutional Convention
F. Federalist (argued in favor of the Constitution)
G. Anti-Federalist (argued against the Constitution)

**For Further Reading**

“Introduction to the Constitutional Convention” by Gordon Lloyd

Answer Key

Act I: Comprehension Questions
1. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
2. George Washington
3. Boycotts of British goods, protests such as the Boston Tea Party, repeated petitions.
4. The delegates voted to separate from England.
5. The Continental Congress approved the Declaration of Independence.
6. Accept reasoned answers.

Act II: Comprehension Questions
1. The lawmaking body for the United States under the Articles of Confederation
2. Representation of the states was not done well; the states were not unified; interstate commerce was very difficult.
3. A meeting to revise the Articles of Confederation: the Constitutional Convention
4. The power to coin money and to make rules for commerce between states.
5. Nine of the thirteen states would have to ratify it for it to go into effect in those states.
6. Accept reasoned answers.

Act III: Comprehension Questions
1. Ratifying Conventions
3. History had shown governments tend to grow too strong; the national government would take on powers it had not been given; a bill of rights would give the people more protection against government.
4. A list of rights was not needed because bills of rights were only needed when people were subjects of a King. It would be impossible to list every single right, and people might think that the rights not listed were less important.
5. James Madison
6. Accept reasoned answers.
**Final Assessment: The Founding Documents**

**Declaration of Independence:** Drafted by a Committee of Five, led by Thomas Jefferson; “the consent of the governed…”; Adopted in 1776; “our sacred honor”; Officially separated the U.S. from England

**Constitution:** “We the people…”; Crafted by delegates at a Convention; Adopted in 1789; “a more perfect union”; Established a national government

**Bill of Rights:** “Congress shall make no law…”; Written by Congress; Adopted in 1791; “freedom of speech, or of the press”; added to the end of a previous document

**Final Assessment: The Founding Fathers**

1. Thomas Jefferson: B
2. James Madison: A, D, F
4. Alexander Hamilton: D, F
5. George Mason: C, G