

# AP U. S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Pre-Reading for Fall 2022/Spring 2023

## Topic 1.1: Ideals of Democracy

Explain how democratic ideals are reflected in the Declaration of Independence

### Readings

*The Declaration of Independence*

Excerpt from John Locke's *Second Treatise of Civil Government*

### Assignment

Students will read these closely-related documents and take a short-answer quiz on the first day of class, either in August or January. Students will also prepare a 1-page analysis of a current news article on any of the themes seen in the Declaration of Independence. Students will also need to bring a marked up copy of both documents to class for a discussion of the documents.



## Overview

AP Government and Politics has 11 required foundational documents for us to read and discuss, the first chronologically being the *Declaration of Independence*. As we know from APUSH, the Declaration was heavily influenced by the Enlightenment writings of John Locke and his *Second Treatise of Civil Government*. However, we will look at these documents differently than in APUSH. Political scientists analyze founding documents for ways they relate to our government today. They focus less on the historical situation and more on how the principles established in the document were used to create our government structure. Thus, as you read these documents, think about how terms and ideas like *natural rights* and *social contract* theory were understood by Jefferson and others of his time period but also how we understand them today.

## Applied Civics Project (Due on first day of class)

Students will find a news article of their choosing (dated after May 17th) that they feel applies to the themes seen in the Declaration of Independence.

Students will then handwrite a 1-page analysis in which they:

- Summarize the news event
- Describe why they think this event ties into the main themes of the Declaration of Independence. Some ideas to potentially consider:
  - What individual rights should a government protect for its people?
  - What should a government provide for its people?
  - How can people hold their government accountable?

## Reading Quiz (First day of class)

Students will have a short-answer quiz on the first day of class. The quiz will ask students to consider both the Declaration of Independence and excerpts from John Locke's *Second Treatise of Civil Government*. As you read, consider the following questions:

### Second Treatise of Civil Government (1690)

- \* How does John Locke develop an argument about people's rights and government?
- \* What evidence does Locke use to support his argument?
- \* According to Locke, what is the *natural state of man*?
- \* According to Locke, what could set one man above another?
- \* What is Locke's claim regarding the 'state of Nature'?
- \* According to Locke, what do men give up in leaving a state of nature and consenting to be governed?

### Declaration of Independence (1776)

- \* How does Thomas Jefferson develop an argument for independence that reflects his perspective on the nature and purpose of government?
- \* What evidence does Jefferson use to support his argument?
- \* How does Jefferson define 'rights'?
- \* How does government relate to those rights, according to Jefferson?

### Comparison

- \* How does Locke's argument about tyranny compare to Jefferson's argument?
- \* What do both men argue is the consequence when government threatens the rights of the people?

# Declaration of Independence

IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

## **The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,**

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

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,— That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, 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. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. 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, and to provide new Guards for their future security.— Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of 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. 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 of 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.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection

between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

*[The 56 signatures on the Declaration were arranged in six columns:]*

[Column 1]

**Georgia:**

Button Gwinnett  
Lyman Hall  
George Walton

[Column 2]

**North Carolina:**

William Hooper  
Joseph Hewes  
John Penn

**South Carolina:**

Edward Rutledge  
Thomas Heyward, Jr.  
Thomas Lynch, Jr.  
Arthur Middleton

[Column 3]

**Massachusetts:**

John Hancock

**Maryland:**

Samuel Chase  
William Paca  
Thomas Stone  
Charles Carroll of Carrollton

**Virginia:**

George Wythe  
Richard Henry Lee  
Thomas Jefferson  
Benjamin Harrison  
Thomas Nelson, Jr.  
Francis Lightfoot Lee  
Carter Braxton

[Column 4]

**Pennsylvania:**

Robert Morris  
Benjamin Rush  
Benjamin Franklin  
John Morton

George Clymer  
James Smith  
George Taylor  
James Wilson  
George Ross

**Delaware:**

Caesar Rodney  
George Read  
Thomas McKean

[Column 5]

**New York:**

William Floyd  
Philip Livingston  
Francis Lewis  
Lewis Morris

**New Jersey:**

Richard Stockton  
John Witherspoon  
Francis Hopkinson  
John Hart  
Abraham Clark

[Column 6]

**New Hampshire:**

Josiah Bartlett  
William Whipple

**Massachusetts:**

Samuel Adams  
John Adams  
Robert Treat Paine  
Elbridge Gerry

**Rhode Island:**

Stephen Hopkins  
William Ellery

**Connecticut:**

Roger Sherman  
Samuel Huntington  
William Williams  
Oliver Wolcott

**New Hampshire:**

Matthew Thornton

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# Excerpts from *Second Treatise of Civil Government*,

John Locke (1690)

## Chapter 2: Of the State of Nature

**Sec. 4.** To understand political power right, and derive it from its original, we must consider what state all men are naturally in, and that is, a state of perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the laws of Nature, without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man.

A state also of equality, wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another, there being nothing more evident than that creatures of the same species and rank, promiscuously born to all the same advantages of Nature, and the use of the same faculties, should also be equal one amongst another, without subordination or subjection, unless the lord and master of them all should, by any manifest declaration of his will, set one above another, and confer on him, by an evident and clear appointment, an undoubted right to dominion and sovereignty....

**Sec. 6.** But though this be a state of liberty, yet it is not a state of license; though man in that state have an uncontrollable liberty to dispose of his person or possessions, yet he had not liberty to destroy himself, or so much as any creature in his possession, but where some nobler use than its bare preservation calls for it.

The state of Nature has a law of Nature to govern it, which obliges every one, and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions. This is because

- We are all the work of one omnipotent and infinitely wise maker;
- We are all the servants of one sovereign master, sent into the world by his order to do his business;
- We are all the property of him who made us, and he made us to last as long as *he* chooses, not as long as *we* choose.
- We have been furnished with like faculties, sharing all in one community of Nature, there cannot be supposed any such subordination



among us that may authorize us to destroy one another, as if we were made for one another's uses, as the inferior ranks of creatures are for ours.

Every one as he is bound to preserve himself, and not to quit his station willfully, so by the like reason, when his own preservation comes not in competition, ought be as much as he can to preserve the rest of mankind, and not unless it be to do justice on an offender, take away or impair the life, or what tends to the preservation of life, the liberty, health, limb, or goods of another.

**Sec. 7.** And that all men may be restrained from invading others' rights, and from doing hurt to one another, and the law of Nature be observed, which willed the peace and preservation of all mankind, the execution of the law of Nature is in that state put into every man's hands, whereby everyone has a right to punish the transgressors of that law to such a degree as may hinder its violation. For the law of Nature would, as all other laws that concern men in this world, be in vain if there were nobody that in the state of Nature had a power to execute that law, and thereby preserve the innocent and restrain offenders; and if anyone in the state of Nature may punish another for any evil he has done, every one may do so.

**Sec. 8.** For in that state of perfect equality, where naturally there is no superiority or jurisdiction of one over another, what any may do in prosecution of that law, everyone must needs have a right to do. And thus, in the state of Nature, one man comes by a power over another, but yet no absolute or arbitrary power to use a criminal, when he has got him in his hands, according to the passionate heats or boundless extravagancy of his own will, but only to reattribute him so far as calm reason and conscience dictate, what is proportionate to his transgression, which is so much as may serve for reparation and restraint.

Every offence that can be committed in the state of Nature may, in the state of Nature, be also punished equally, and as far forth, as it may, in a commonwealth.

## **Chapter 5: Property**

**Sec. 27.** Though men as a whole own the earth and all inferior creatures, every individual man has a property in his own person; this is something that nobody else has any right to. The labor of his body and the work of his hands, we may say, are strictly his. So when he takes something from the state that nature has provided and left it in, he mixes his labor with it, thus joining to it something that is his own; and in that way he makes it his property. He has removed the item from the common state that nature has placed it in, and through this labor the item has had annexed to it something that excludes the common right of other men: for this labor is unquestionably the property of the laborer, so no other man can have a right to anything the labor is joined to—at least where there is enough, and as good, left in common for others.

**Sec. 28.** Someone who eats the acorns he picked up under an oak, or the apples he gathered from the trees in the forest, has certainly appropriated them to himself! Nobody can deny that the nourishment is his. Well, then, when did they begin to be his? when he digested them? when he cooked them? when he brought them home? when he picked them up under the tree? It is obvious that if his first gathering didn't make them his, nothing else could do so. That labor marked those things off from the rest of the world's contents; it added something to them beyond what they had been given by nature, the common mother of all; and so they became his private right.

## **Chapter 8: Of the Beginning of Political Societies/Chapter 9: The Purposes of Political Society and Government**

**Sec. 95.** If man in the state of Nature be so free as has been said, if he be absolute lord of his own person and possessions, equal to the greatest and subject to nobody, why will he part with his freedom, this empire, and subject himself to the dominion and control of any other power?

To which it is obvious to answer, that though in the state of Nature he hath such a right, yet the enjoyment of it is very uncertain and constantly exposed to the invasion of others; for all being kings as much as he, every man his equal, and the greater part no strict observers of equity and justice, the enjoyment of the property he has in this state is very unsafe, very insecure. This makes him willing to quit this condition which, however free, is full of fears and continual dangers; and it is not without reason that he seeks out and is willing to join in society with others who are already united, or have a mind to unite for the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties, and estates, which I call by the general name— property.

**Sec. 124.** The great and chief end, therefore, of men uniting into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property; to which in the state of Nature there are many things wanting.

Firstly, there wants an established, settled, known law, received and allowed by common consent to be the standard of right and wrong, and the common measure to decide all controversies between them. For though the law of Nature be plain and intelligible to all rational creatures, yet men, being biased by their interest, as well as ignorant for want of study of it, are not apt to allow of it as a law binding to them in the application of it to their particular cases.

**Sec. 125.** Secondly, in the state of Nature there wants a known and indifferent judge, with authority to determine all differences according to the established law. For every one in that state being both judge and executioner of the law of Nature, men being partial to themselves, passion and revenge is very apt to carry them too far, and with too much heat in their own cases, as well as negligence and unconcerned-ness, make them too remiss in other men.

**Sec. 126.** Thirdly, in the state of Nature there often wants power to back and support the sentence when right, and to give it due execution. They who by any injustice offended will seldom fail where they are able by force to make good

their injustice. Such resistance many times makes the punishment dangerous, and frequently destructive to those who attempt it.

**Sec. 127.** Thus mankind, notwithstanding all the privileges of the state of Nature, being but in an ill condition while they remain in it is quickly driven into society. Hence it comes to pass, that we seldom find any number of men live any time together in this state. The inconveniences that they are therein exposed to by the irregular and uncertain exercise of the power every man has of punishing the transgressions of others make them take sanctuary under the established laws of government, and therein seek the preservation of their property...

**Sec. 131.** But though men when they enter into society give up the equality, liberty, and executive power they had in the state of Nature into the hands of the society, to be so far disposed of by the legislative as the good of the society shall require, yet it being only with an intention in every one the better to preserve himself, his liberty and property (for no rational creature can be supposed to change his condition with an intention to be worse), the power of the society or legislative constituted by them can never be supposed to extend farther than the common good against those three defects above mentioned that made the state of Nature so unsafe and uneasy.

And so, whoever has the legislative or supreme power of any commonwealth, is bound to govern by established standing laws, promulgated and known to the people, and not by extemporary decrees, by indifferent and upright judges, who are to decide controversies by those laws; and to employ the force of the community at home only in the execution of such laws, or abroad to prevent or redress foreign injuries and secure the community from inroads and invasion. And all this to be directed to no other end but the peace, safety, and public good of the people, and to nothing else.

## **Chapter 18: Of Tyranny**

**Sec. 199.** Whereas usurpation is the exercise of power to which someone else has a right, tyranny is the exercise of power to which nobody can have a right. That is what happens when someone employs the power he has in his hands, not for the good of those who are under it but for his own private individual advantage. It is what happens when a governor, however entitled he is to govern, is guided not by the law but by his own wants, and his commands and actions are directed not to preserving his subjects' properties but to satisfying his own ambition, revenge, covetousness, or any other irregular passion.

## **Chapter 19: Of the Dissolution of Government**

**Sec. 222.** The reason why men enter into society, is the preservation of their property...It can never be supposed to be the will of the society that the legislature should have a power to destroy what everyone aimed to keep safe by entering into society and submitting themselves to legislators of their own making. So when the legislators try to take away and destroy the property of the people or to reduce them to slavery, they put themselves into a state of war with the people, who are thereby absolved from any further obedience and are left to the common escape that God has provided for all men against force and violence. So whenever the legislature breaks this fundamental rule of society and—whether through ambition, fear, folly or corruption—try to grasp for themselves or for anyone else an absolute power over the lives, liberties, and estates of the people, by this breach of trust they forfeit the power the people had put into their hands for quite different purposes. And then the people have a right to resume their original natural liberty, and to set up a new legislature. . . to provide for their own safety and security. . .

