

# MAJOR AMERICAN DOCUMENTS

Mr. Ray's Civics & Economics  
Montevideo Middle School

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## Charters of the Virginia Company of London

- ✦ Guaranteed the rights of Englishmen to the colonists

**Definitions:**

**guarantee** – something that promises a particular outcome

**rights** – something that a person or community has a claim to by law, tradition, or nature

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## Virginia Declaration of Rights

- ✦ Served as a model for the Bill of Rights to the Constitution of the United States of America

**Definitions:**

**model** – a person or thing that serves as a good example of something

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### **Declaration of Independence**

- ✦ Stated grievances against king of Great Britain
- ✦ Declared colonists' independence from Great Britain
- ✦ Affirmed "certain unalienable rights" (life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness)
- ✦ Established the idea that all people are equal under the law

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### **Declaration of Independence**

**Definitions:**

- grievance** – a real or imagined wrong regarded as a just cause for complaint
- independence** – not controlled or guided by others
- affirmed** – to declare positively or firmly
- unalienable** – incapable of being surrendered
- establish** – to settle securely in a position or condition

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### **Articles of Confederation**

- ✦ Established the first form of national government for the independent states
- ✦ Maintained that major powers resided with the individual states
- ✦ Weakness of the central government (e.g. no power to tax or enforce laws); led to the writing of the Constitution of the United States of America

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## Articles of Confederation

**Definitions:**

**national** – belonging to a group of people organized under a single government

**maintain** – to keep up; carry on; continue

**tax** – a contribution for the support of the government required of persons, groups, or businesses

**enforce** – to make someone observe or obey

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## Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom

✦ Stated freedom of religious beliefs and opinions

**Definitions:**

**opinion** – a conclusion held with confidence, but not supported by positive knowledge or proof

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## Virginia Constitution

- ✦ Highest state law
- ✦ Must agree with the U.S. Constitution
- ✦ Has been rewritten several times

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### Constitution of the United States of America and Bill of Rights

- ✦ Established the structure of the United States government
- ✦ Guaranteed equality under the law with majority rule and the rights of the minority protected
- ✦ Affirmed individual worth and dignity of all people
- ✦ Protected the fundamental freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, petition

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### Constitution of the United States of America and Bill of Rights

**Definitions:**

**structure** – something made up of a number of parts that are put together in a particular way

**majority** – the greater number or part of something; a number more than half the total

**minority** – the smaller number or part of something; a number less than half the total

**worth** – the value or usefulness of something

**dignity** – being worthy of respect

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### Directions:

- ✦ In the slides that follow read each question and select the document that best fits the description.

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**Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are the unalienable rights established in**

- A. Articles of Confederation
- B. Virginia Declaration of Rights
- C. **Declaration of Independence**
- D. Statute of Religious Freedom

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**The first form of national government for the independent states; it was weak**

- A. **Articles of Confederation**
- B. Declaration of Independence
- C. Charters of the Virginia Company of London
- D. Statute for Religious Freedom

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**Declared the colonies' independence from Great Britain**

- A. Articles of Confederation
- B. **Declaration of Independence**
- C. Virginia Declaration of Rights
- D. Charters of the Virginia Company of London

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**Established the idea that all people are equal under the law**

- A. Articles of Confederation
- B. **Declaration of Independence**
- C. Charters of the Virginia Company of London
- D. Statute for Religious Freedom

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**Established the structure of the United States government**

- A. Articles of Confederation
- B. **Constitution of the United States**
- C. Charters of the Virginia Company of London
- D. Statute for Religious Freedom

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**Declared freedom of religion**

- A. Articles of Confederation
- B. Declaration of Independence
- C. Virginia Declaration of Rights
- D. **Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom**

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**Guaranteed the colonists the same rights as Englishmen**

- A. Charters of the Virginia Company of London
- B. Virginia Declaration of Rights
- C. Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom
- D. Articles of Confederation

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**Equality under the law with majority rule and rights of minority protected**

- A. Constitution of the United States
- B. Virginia Declaration of Rights
- C. Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom
- D. Articles of Confederation

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**Model for the Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution**

- A. Declaration of Independence
- B. Charters of the Virginia Company of London
- C. **Virginia Declaration of Rights**
- D. Articles of Confederation

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