**Measurement Topic 1: The Development of Modern Political Thought**

**LT# 3-** Explain the Connection between the Important Documents and Leaders to the American Revolution and the **New American government**

**Directions:**

1st- Number the paragraphs

2nd -Read the passage, and circle words you don’t know. Find the meaning of the words.

3rd- Read the passage a second time, highlight information and write side notes.

The ideas of the Enlightenment spread quickly through the American colonies in the 1700s. As a result, the Enlightenment ideas had a strong influence on the American colonists and helped to shape the government that they created after the Revolutionary War. Thomas Jefferson borrowed heavily from the ideas of John Locke when he created the Declaration of Independence, stating everyone has rights, specifically natural rights and an abusive government should be overthrown. Once the colonist had declared their independence from England and won the war, a new government was needed to govern the new nation of America. James Madison the representative for Virginia is known as the father of the Constitution since he was the primary author of the Constitution of the United States of America. James Madison also borrowed heavily from the enlightenment thinkers ideas, especially Montesquieu’s and Rousseau’s ideas.

One of the most influential Enlightenment thinkers in the American colonies was the Englishman **John Locke**. One of Locke’s main beliefs was that people set up governments to protect their natural rights, which include life, liberty, and property. Locke claimed these rights were “unalienable,” meaning that they cannot be taken away. Locke also stated that the purpose of government was to protect these rights, and when it failed, the people must change the government or create a new one. His ideas **encouraged** people to question why their government did certain things. These ideas became the basis for the Declaration of Independence, which formally separated the American colonies from Great Britain. In writing the Declaration, Thomas Jefferson used the ideas of Locke to help **justify** why the colonists were revolting. He **incorporated** the idea of natural rights when he wrote, “*unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”.* He also used John Locke’s idea that the government’s power comes from the people when he wrote, “*That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed”* in the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson went on to argue that the British king had abused his power and denied the colonists their basic rights, and therefore the colonists had no other choice but to rebel. The rights found in the Magna Carta and English bill of rights along with the colonist’s natural rights were being violated by the English government, therefore the colonist argued they had the right to overthrow the English government and create a new government, the United States of America.

Locke also argued that the power of the government comes from the people. Locke stated the authority of the government is created and sustained by the consent of its people, through their elected representatives. This was a radical new idea, since for centuries rulers had argued that their power comes from God, known as divine right. This idea was directly incorporated into the United States Constitution, which begins with the phrase “We the people” to symbolize that it is the citizens who are creating the government.

Another important Enlightenment figure who had a major influence on American government was **Montesquieu**, a French political thinker. Montesquieu had two key ideas that were incorporated into the United States Constitution. The first was “separation of powers,” which meant that the powers of government should be divided between different groups so that no one person or group has complete control. Montesquieu believed that when one person or group had too much power, the result would be corruption and abuse of that power. The American colonists applied this idea when they created the US government. The Constitution divided the national government into three different branches: the executive, legislative, and judicial. Each branch has a separate function: the legislative makes laws, the executive enforces them, and the judicial applies and interprets the laws. All three branches have to work together to make the government function.

Montesquieu’s second important idea was “checks and balances,” meaning that each branch of the government has the power to limit the actions of the others. The United States Constitution set up a system of checks and balances in the national government to insure that no branch of the government could become too powerful and take over the government. For example, the president (the executive branch) may veto, or deny a law created by Congress (the legislative branch), but the Congress can override/overturn that veto by a two-thirds vote of its members. There are many other checks and balances built into the Constitution, and collectively they help to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful.

Rousseau, another Enlightenment thinker also influenced the American colonists, and his ideas were incorporated into American Constitution. **Rousseau** thought that a republic, a form of government in which people choose representatives to rule for them, was the ideal political system. Influenced by Rousseau, the Constitution created a republican form of government in which the president and members of Congress were elected by popular vote. This gives the people the control over who is representing their ideas and beliefs in the government. Since the people elect their representatives, the people also have the power to fire/overthrow their representatives if they are not doing a good job of protecting the people’s rights. The constitution went into effect on March 4, 1789.

Many new American’s wanted a specific document to guarantee the rights of the people that the government could not abuse. The constitution set up the new government, but failed to provide a way for the people rights to be protected. James Madison studied the rights protected under the Magna Carta, and the English Bill of Rights to create a foundation for the bill of rights. He included rights from the Magna Carta such as, the right to due process when charged with a crime, and many more. He also utilized the English Bill of Rights to include the rights of freedom of speech, as well as many others.

The Enlightenment ideas of John Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau in addition to the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights, **sparked** the American Revolution, **influenced** Thomas Jefferson when he wrote the Declaration of Independence and provided a **guide** for James Madison as he wrote the Constitution as well as the US Bill of rights.

**Answer the following questions in complete sentences from the reading**.

1. What is James Madison famously known for?
2. Which enlightenment thinker’s ideas influence James Madison when he created the Constitution?
3. What ideas encouraged/influenced the colonist to revolt and overthrow their government?
4. Which ideas from Locke did Thomas Jefferson use in the Declaration of Independence?
5. According to the text, what influenced the creation of the US bill of rights?
6. The bill of rights was added after the constitution had been approved. According to the text why was the bill of rights added?
7. Why did the colonist feel they should or could overthrow the English government and create their own government?
8. Which philosopher’s idea inspired the words “We the people” found at the beginning of the Constitution?
9. Why do you think Thomas Jefferson changed Locke’s natural rights from life, liberty and property to unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness?

**Directions:**

1. Read the section from the Declaration of Independence to someone.
2. Highlight any words you don’t know. Look at the word bank for the definition cross out the word and replace it with the one you know.
3. Reread with new words.

**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.**

**Answer the following questions**:

Word bank:

Self-evident: obvious, clear, everyone knows

Endowed: given

Creator: God

Unalienable Rights: Natural Rights

Secure: protect

Instituted: created

Deriving: getting

Consent: to give permission, say its ok

Governed: people

Destructive: abusive, violent, bad

Alter: Change

Abolish: totally destroy

Institute: create

1. Thomas Jefferson the author of the declaration of independence was greatly influence by which enlightenment philosopher?

2.Why is the declaration of independence an important historical document?

3. Which of the following part of the declaration of independence to you feel is the most powerful/meaningful/important and why?

**US Constitution: The constitution was divided/separated up into parts.**

**Article 1 – Creates the two parts of Congress, known as the Legislative Branch.  They are responsible for making laws.**

Separation of power & Checks and balance

**Article 2 – Creates the job of President, called the Executive.  Responsible for enforcing the laws.**

**Article 3 – Establishes Judges, called the Judiciary.  They decide if a law is allowable, or if it goes against the Constitution.**

**Article 4 – States Rights**

**Article 5 – How to change the Constitution.**

**Article 6 – Concerns the United States.**

**Article 7 – Explained how the Constitution was agreed to.**

**The Bill of Rights (found at the end of the constitution)**:   
  
**The First Amendment**- states that Congress shall make no law preventing the establishment of religion or prohibiting its free exercise. Also protected are freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the right to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.   
  
**The Second Amendment** - protects citizen's right to bear arms.   
  
**The Third Amendment**- prevents the government from placing troops in private homes. This was a real problem during the American Revolutionary War.   
  
**The Fourth Amendment** - this amendment prevents the government from unreasonable search and seizure of the property of US citizens. It requires the government to have a warrant that was issued by a judge and based on probable cause.   
  
**The Fifth Amendment** - The Fifth Amendment is famous for people saying "I'll take the Fifth". This gives people the right to choose not to testify in court if they feel their own testimony will incriminate themselves.   
  
In addition this amendment protects citizens from being subject to criminal prosecution and punishment without due process. It also prevents people from being tried for the same crime twice. The amendment also establishes the power of eminent domain, which means that private property cannot be seized for public use without just compensation.   
  
**The Sixth Amendment** - guarantees a speedy trial by a jury of one's peers. Also, people accused are to be informed of the crimes with which they are charged and have the right to confront the witnesses brought by the government. The amendment also provides the accused the right to compel testimony from witnesses, and to legal representation (meaning the government has to provide a lawyer).   
  
**The Seventh Amendment**- provides that civil cases also be tried by jury.   
  
**The Eighth Amendment**- prohibits excessive bail, excessive fines, and cruel and unusual punishments.   
  
**The Ninth Amendment**- states that the list of rights described in the Constitution is not exhaustive, and that the people still have all the rights that are not listed.   
  
**The Tenth Amendment** - gives all powers not specifically given to the United States government in the Constitution, to either the states or to the people.

Directions: Answer the following questions using the information from the US constitution and bill of rights.

1. Which enlightenment thinker’s ideas are found in the Constitution of the United States?
2. Which articles of the US constitution deal with separation of the government’s power?
3. How did Montesquieu influence/effect the US government?
4. Which rights found in the bill of rights can also be found in the Magna Carta and the English bill of rights?
5. Which right to you feel is the most important and why?

Write a summary explaining the Connection between the Important Documents and ideas of the leaders of the enlightenment to the American Revolution and the new United States government.

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