

Mayflower Compact

11 Nov 1620

Pass laws that were good for the entire group. "Majority Rule" was first used in this document.
"General good of the colony"

Patrick Henry's Call to Arms Speech

23 March 1773

Speech to the Virginia Legislature.

Encouraged conflict with Great Britain to settle the issues between the two parties

"I know not what course others may take, but as for me give me liberty or give me death"

Declaration of Independence

4 July 1776

Written by Thomas Jefferson

Five parts

- 1) Introduction describes why the colonies must break with England.
- 2) Basic principles of British government under which they live and that it is a duty to revolt when the principles are not followed.
- 3) identifies the abuses by England to the colonies.
- 4) Efforts that colonies have followed to resolve the differences.
- 5) Conclusion declares colonies to be free & independent and dissolves all political connection with England.

Articles of Confederation

1781

Weak central government

13 states to conduct themselves independently from each other.

United States Constitution

17 September 1787 (Signed)

7 December 1787 (Ratified by state of Delaware)

21 June 1788 (New Hampshire signs and thereby ratifies the constitution as the ninth state to sign)

Set up three branches of government; Legislative, Executive & Judicial

System of checks and balances

Some powers belonged exclusively to the states as a separation of powers

Preamble defines the purpose of the constitution

Divided into seven parts called "Articles" and smaller parts called "sections"

1. The Legislature 2. The Executive Branch 3. The Judicial Branch

4. The States 5. Amendment 6. The United States 7. Ratification Documents

The Bill of Rights

15 December 1791

The promise of an addition of the Bill of Rights led to the ratification of the Constitution in 1788

First ten amendments provide the fundamental individual rights guaranteed to citizens