

Declaration of the Rights of Man Source Analysis



Analysis Questions and Teacher's Key

By: Brodie Millar

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Directions: Read the following sections of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and complete the related questions.



Preamble of the Declaration of the Rights of Man

Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen

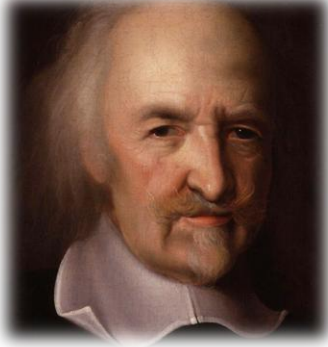
Approved by the National Assembly of France, August 26, 1789

The representatives of the French people, organized as a National Assembly, believing that the ignorance, neglect, or contempt of the rights of man are the sole cause of public calamities and of the corruption of governments, have determined to set forth in a solemn declaration the natural, unalienable, and sacred rights of man, in order that this declaration, being constantly before all the members of the Social body, shall remind them continually of their rights and duties; in order that the acts of the legislative power, as well as those of the executive power, may be compared at any moment with the objects and purposes of all political institutions and may thus be more respected, and, lastly, in order that the grievances of the citizens, based hereafter upon simple and incontestable principles, shall tend to the maintenance of the constitution and redound to the happiness of all.

Articles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man

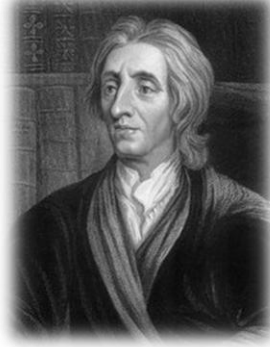
1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good.
2. The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.
3. The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. No body nor individual may exercise any authority which does not proceed directly from the nation.
4. Liberty consists in the freedom to do everything which injures no one else; hence the exercise of the natural rights of each man has no limits except those which assure to the other members of the society the enjoyment of the same rights. These limits can only be determined by law.
5. Law can only prohibit such actions as are hurtful to society. Nothing may be prevented which is not forbidden by law, and no one may be forced to do anything not provided for by law.
6. Law is the expression of the general will. Every citizen has a right to participate personally, or through his representative, in its foundation. It must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, are equally eligible to all dignities and to all public positions and occupations, according to their abilities, and without distinction except that of their virtues and talents.
7. No person shall be accused, arrested, or imprisoned except in the cases and according to the forms prescribed by law. Any one soliciting, transmitting, executing, or causing to be executed, any arbitrary order, shall be punished. But any citizen summoned or arrested in virtue of the law shall submit without delay, as resistance constitutes an offense.
8. The law shall provide for such punishments only as are strictly and obviously necessary, and no one shall suffer punishment except it be legally inflicted in virtue of a law passed and promulgated before the commission of the offense.
9. As all persons are held innocent until they shall have been declared guilty, if arrest shall be deemed indispensable, all harshness not essential to the securing of the prisoner's person shall be severely repressed by law.
10. No one shall be disquieted on account of his opinions, including his religious views, provided their manifestation does not disturb the public order established by law.
11. The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Every citizen may, accordingly, speak, write, and print with freedom, but shall be responsible for such abuses of this freedom as shall be defined by law.
12. The security of the rights of man and of the citizen requires public military forces. These forces are, therefore, established for the good of all and not for the personal advantage of those to whom they shall be intrusted.
13. A common contribution is essential for the maintenance of the public forces and for the cost of administration. This should be equitably distributed among all the citizens in proportion to their means.
14. All the citizens have a right to decide, either personally or by their representatives, as to the necessity of the public contribution; to grant this freely; to know to what uses it is put; and to fix the proportion, the mode of assessment and of collection and the duration of the taxes.
15. Society has the right to require of every public agent an account of his administration.
16. A society in which the observance of the law is not assured, nor the separation of powers defined, has no constitution at all.
17. Since property is an inviolable and sacred right, no one shall be deprived thereof except where public necessity, legally determined, shall clearly demand it, and then only on condition that the owner shall have been previously and equitably indemnified.

8. Enlightenment ideas had a significant impact on the French Revolution. Which of the following Enlightenment philosophers' ideas are best reflected in the Declaration of the Rights of Man? Explain why. You may need to complete more research to answer this question.



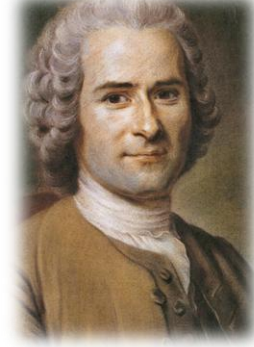
Thomas Hobbes

- Believed the role of the government was to ensure the security of the state.
- Advocated in favor of an Absolute Monarch as a means of maintaining order in society.
- Believed in a natural state in which people were self-interested and violent.



John Locke

- Believed the role of the government was to protect the rights of the people.
- Advocated in favor of a Monarch but one that had the consent of the people to rule.
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Jean-Jacques Rousseau

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Teachers Key

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Articles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man

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If this reading is too difficult for students, the teacher may consider reading and guiding them through it, or limiting them to a smaller selection of the articles, such as 1-10 only.

Declaration of the Rights of Man Source Analysis - Questions

Directions: Answer the following based on the previous sections of the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

1. Based upon your knowledge of the French Revolution and the overall Declaration, what was the purpose of the document?

The Declaration was created as a means of putting into actions the ideals of the revolutionaries. (To show the change that was occurring in French Society in terms of a change from the rule of Louis XVI and Absolute Monarch's to one that valued the freedom and equality of individuals.)

2. According to the "Preamble of the Declaration of the Rights of Man", what was the reason for the previous problems in French society and government?

"The representatives of the French people, organized as a National Assembly, believing that the ignorance, neglect, or contempt of the rights of man are the sole cause of public calamities and of the corruption of governments"

Therefore the reason was the previous ignorance, neglect or contempt of the rights of man. Presumably referring to the role of Louis XVI.

3. Considering the "Articles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man", in what ways was the Declaration a dramatic change from the rule of Louis XVI?

The Declaration is focused on the liberty of the individual in all respects of French society which is a complete reversal of the rule of Louis XVI which was based on the Divine Right of Kings and Feudalism. Students will need this previous knowledge to be able to answer this question.

4. What are the “natural rights” that the Declaration is referring to?

The Declaration sets down rights based on liberty of the individual in expression, association, property, etc.

For example, the first 5 articles are good examples of this.

5. What does the term “equality” mean in the Declaration?

The idea that all people have equal rights and are free from oppression. Social distinctions are to be limited except where necessary as determined by the general will.

Article 1 refers to this question.

6. What does the Declaration say about property?

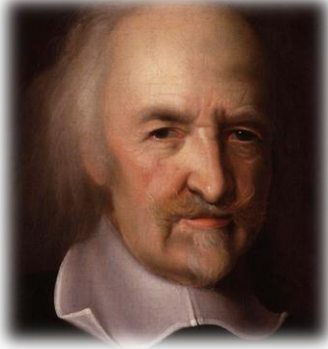
“Since property is an inviolable and sacred right, no one shall be deprived thereof except where public necessity, legally determined, shall clearly demand it, and then only on condition that the owner shall have been previously and equitably indemnified.”

The idea that property is a right. This is a dramatic shift from the rule of Louis XVI.

7. Consider the “Articles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man”, which one do you think is the most important to the type of society that the revolutionaries are trying to create? Why?

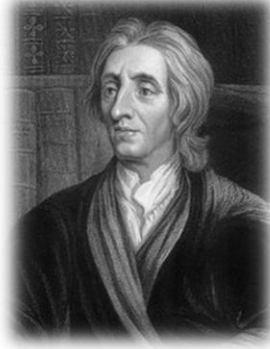
This is an argument based question. Teacher should assess for a clear argument and the ability of the student to clearly explain and expand on their ideas.

8. Enlightenment ideas had a significant impact on the French Revolution. Which of the following Enlightenment philosophers' ideas are best reflected in the Declaration of the Rights of Man? Explain why. You may need to complete more research to answer this question.



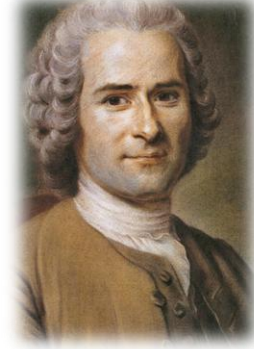
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- Believed people were born naturally good but that the ranking of people in society corrupted them.

Students may need to complete more research to answer this question. The length and complexity of the students answers to be determined by teacher. (Simple few sentence response or to be done as a paragraph response). Locke's ideas had a profound effect on the Declaration in that he advocated for freedom of the individual and that the government should respect the rights of the individuals. Rousseau's ideas could also be seen in the Declaration in that he advocated for equality of people and for the removal (or limiting) of social classes and ranking in society.