

Defining and Debating America's Founding Ideals

What are America's founding ideals, and why are they important?

Key Content Terms

As you complete the Reading Notes, use these Key Content Terms in your answers:

equality	opportunity
rights	democracy
liberty	

PREVIEW

Survey on American Ideals

Write the following five statements in your notebook, and record the answer that best represents your views on each.

- All Americans are equal.
 - strongly disagree
 - mildly disagree
 - mildly agree
 - strongly agree
- Some Americans have more rights than others.
 - strongly disagree
 - mildly disagree
 - mildly agree
 - strongly agree
- Americans have all the freedoms they deserve.
 - strongly disagree
 - mildly disagree
 - mildly agree
 - strongly agree

- All Americans have the same opportunities to succeed in life.
 - strongly disagree
 - mildly disagree
 - mildly agree
 - strongly agree
- Wealthy people have a more powerful voice in American democracy than do others.
 - strongly disagree
 - mildly disagree
 - mildly agree
 - strongly agree

READING NOTES

Section 1

Answer the following questions in your notebook.

- Where in the Declaration of Independence can you find references to equality, rights, liberty, opportunity, and democracy?
- Why is the Declaration of Independence an important document?
- Where did founders like Thomas Jefferson get inspiration for the ideals in the Declaration of Independence?

Sections 2 to 6

Copy the table onto a full page of your notebook. Then read Sections 2 to 6 and complete the table.

Ideal and Excerpt from the Declaration of Independence	Definition	Influence of the Ideal in 1776 and Today
Equality “All men are created equal.”		
Rights “They are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights.”		
Liberty “That among these [rights] are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”		
Opportunity “That among these [rights] are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”		
Democracy “That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”		