



DBQ: Foundations of US Government

Using Evidence

Theme:
Self-Governance

Historical Context: Colonial political developments were influenced by traditions from their mother country, England, as well as ideas from the Age of Enlightenment, and colonial experiences. Self-governing structures were common and yet varied in procedure and nature across the thirteen colonies.

NAME _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

This question is based on the accompanying documents. The question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. Some of these documents have been edited for the purposes of this question. As you analyze the documents, take into account the source of each document and any point of view that may be presented in the document. Keep in mind that the language used in a document may reflect the historical context of the time in which it was written.

Task: Using the information from the documents in part A and your knowledge of US history, write an essay in which you

Discuss the development of self-governing structures in the colonies.

- Specifically, discuss some examples of self-governing structures that evolved in the colonies.

Describe the impact of political precedent on the evolution of self governing structures in the colonies.

- Specifically, describe the impact of documents such as the Magna Carta and Enlightenment thinkers on the evolution of self-governing structures in the colonies.

Guidelines:

In your essay, be sure to:

- Develop all aspects of the task
- Incorporate information from at least three documents
- Incorporate relevant outside information
- Support the theme with relevant facts, examples, and details
- Use a logical and clear plan of organization, including an introduction and a conclusion that are beyond a restatement of the theme

Part A | Short-Answer Questions

Directions: Analyze the documents and answer the short-answer questions that follow each document in the space provided.

Document 1

1	Clause 14: “To obtain the general consent for a tax in Great Britain [England] we will cause the great
2	council, made up of men who represent the people of England to be summoned individually by
3	letter....they will come together on a fixed day and at a fixed place. ...the decision about creating or
4	collecting taxes on that day will be made by a decision reached by vote of majority rule of the
5	representatives of the people...The King shall follow the will of the great council, the King shall not
6	raise or levy taxes on his own accord”

Source: Magna Carta (1215)

1a) What does the phrase “general consent” in line 1 mean?

1b) How will decisions about creating or collecting taxes be made?

1c) Do the people of England have a say in whether or not their taxes are changed? Cite evidence to support your claim.

1d) How does the Magna Carta limit or restrict the power of the King according to this excerpt?

Document 2

1	“We have reason to conclude that all peaceful beginnings of government have been laid in the consent of the people...The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on Earth, and not be under the will or legislative (law making) authority of man... but freedom of men under government is to have a standing rule to live by, common to every one of that society... A liberty to follow my own will in all things where that rule prescribes not, not to be subject to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, arbitrary will of another man, as freedom of nature is to be under no other restraint but for his rule...Despotical power is an absolute, arbitrary power one man has over another, to take away his life, whenever he pleases. This is a power, which nature does not give...”
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Source: John Locke - Two Treatises of Government (1690)

2a) What is the beginning or foundation of government, according to John Locke?

2b) Using evidence from document 2, disprove the following statement: John Locke would agree with Great Britain's rule under a king.

Document 3

1	In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are written below, the loyal subjects of our Lord King
2	James, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain....Having undertaken...a voyage to plant the first
3	colony in the Northern parts of Virginia, do by these words promise and combine ourselves into a
4	civil political body, for our better ordering and preservation of our society in the New World ...to
5	enact.. just and equal laws, ordinances, acts...for the general good of the colony, which we
6	promise... to be chosen by majority rule.

Source: Mayflower Compact, November 11th 1620

3a) What form of government was in place in Great Britain in 1620, when the Pilgrims left to establish a colony in the new world?

3b) How did the signers of the Mayflower compact plan to make decisions for their colony? Cite evidence to support your claim.

3c) How was the new government [civil political body] similar or different from the monarchy in Great Britain?

3d) Do you think the signers of the Mayflower compact were impacted by the Magna Carta or John Locke? Cite evidence from documents 1, 2, and 3 to support your claims.

Document 4

1	...It is ordered...that the election of the law makers shall be in this manner: every person present and
2	qualified for choice shall bring in one single paper with the name of him written in it whom he desires
3	to have Governor, and he that hath the greatest number of papers shall be Governor for that year. And
4	the rest of the law makers or public officers to be chosen in this manner as well...

Source: Fundamental Orders of CT (January 1639)

4a) How are leaders chosen in the colony of Connecticut? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

4b) What, if any, influences of the Mayflower Compact or John Locke's ideas are evident in the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut? Cite evidence from documents 2 & 3 to support your claims.

Document 5a

1	The colonists also enjoyed a high degree of self-government. As British subjects, they owed their allegiance to the king, who granted colonies charters and appointed colonial governors. England regulated the colonies' overseas trade and provided for their defense. Beyond that, the colonists ran their own affairs. They had their own legislatures, or assemblies, where their elected representatives passed laws and levied taxes...
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From: Freedman, Russell *Give Me Liberty! The Story of the Declaration of Independence*, NY: Holiday House 2000

Document 5b

1	The meetinghouse was at the center of town life. The meetinghouse was where the town government met. All the colonists in town could attend the town meeting, but only male church members were allowed to vote. As church membership dropped and many new settlers arrived, more colonists were permitted to participate in the town government. By the end of the 1600s, any man who owned property could vote. However, women, children, indentured servants, and slaves were not allowed to vote.
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7	Every year, towns throughout the colonies held special meetings in which voters would elect town representatives to serve in the colonial assemblies, which discussed issues concerning the entire colony, levied taxes, and passed laws. Town meetings were also held to address the needs of the individual towns. There were town elections for public offices, or jobs for the community such as town constable, who maintained peace, law, and order in the town.
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Reflections – The United States: Making a New Nation. Excerpted from pages 217, 219

5a) According to document 5a, how did the colonies apply the ideas of John Locke?

5b) According to document 5b, what was the function and purpose of the New England Town Hall meeting?

5c) How are the ideas of John Locke & the Magna Carta evidenced in the concept and practice of town hall meetings?

Part B | Essay

Directions: Write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, several paragraphs, and a conclusion. Use evidence from at least **three documents** in your essay. Support your response with relevant facts, examples, and details. Include additional outside information.

Historical Context: Colonial political developments were influenced by traditions from their mother country - England, as well as ideas from the Age of Enlightenment, and colonial experiences. Self-governing structures were common and yet varied in procedure and nature across the 13 colonies.

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