

A stylized, high-contrast illustration of the Statue of Liberty, shown from the waist up. She holds a torch in her right hand and a tablet in her left. The illustration is positioned on the left side of the page, with several five-pointed stars scattered around it.

# AMERICA'S HERITAGE

an adventure in liberty

**High School Edition**

***National Edition***

Developed and provided by  
The Houston Independent School District  
in cooperation with  
The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation  
and  
The American Heritage  
Education Foundation, Inc.

*“If a nation expects  
to be ignorant and free,  
in a state of civilization,  
it expects what never was  
and never will be.”*

Thomas Jefferson



# **America's Heritage: An Adventure in Liberty**

Curriculum Materials for High School Teachers

Teachers are provided these resources as a supplement to school resources as they deliver instruction focused on developing an understanding and teaching of our nation's factual and philosophical heritage to promote Freedom, Unity, Progress, and Responsibility among our students and citizens.

Developed and provided by:

The Houston Independent School District

in cooperation with

The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation

and

The American Heritage Education Foundation, Inc.  
3501 W. Alabama, Suite 200  
Houston, TX 77027-6035

Phone: 713-627-2698

Fax: 713-572-3657

email: [ahef@americanheritage.org](mailto:ahef@americanheritage.org)

[www.americanheritage.org](http://www.americanheritage.org)

Teachers are free to copy any of these materials for educational purposes.  
Distribution for sale is not allowed.

© 2008

**Copyright © 2008 The American Heritage Education Foundation, Inc.**  
*May be duplicated for educational purposes. Distribution for sale is not allowed.*

# Table of Contents - High School (National)

Purpose	6
Letter from Superintendent	7
Forward: The Miracle of America	8
Preface: From Oppression to Freedom	9

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Page</b>
American Heritage Themes		21
Character Education Focus - September		
1622 - The Mayflower Compact	Responsibility	29
Character Education Focus - September		
1776 - The Declaration of Independence	Freedom	39
Character Education Focus - October		
1787 - Federalist 47	Responsibility	59
Character Education Focus - October		
1787 - U. S. Constitution	Freedom	81
Character Education Focus - November		
1787 - Bill of Rights: Rights and Responsibilities	Responsibility	107
Character Education Focus - November		
1791 - The First Amendment	Unity	115
Character Education Focus - December		
1776-1791 - Our National Documents	Progress	125
Character Education Focus - November		
1794 - Entrepreneurs in History	Progress	135
Character Education Focus - January		
Cornelius Vanderbilt		
Andrew Carnegie		
James Hill		
John D. Rockefeller		
1916 - American's Creed	Responsibility	155
Character Education Focus - February		
1976 - U. S. Flag / Federal Flag Code	Freedom	157
Character Education Focus - March		
1998 - Religious Expression in Public Schools	Unity	167
Character Education Focus - December, April		
2000 - What is an American?	Responsibility	185
Character Education Focus - May		

# Purpose

---

The American Heritage Education Foundation, Inc. (AHEF) is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the understanding and teaching of our nation's factual and philosophical heritage to promote freedom, unity, progress, and responsibility among our students and citizens. AHEF has provided these materials to help students become thoughtful, active, and productive citizens.

For more information, contact:

The American Heritage Education Foundation, Inc.  
3501 West Alabama, Suite 200  
Houston, Texas 77027-6035  
(713) 627-2698  
(713) 572-3657 facsimile  
[www.americanheritage.org](http://www.americanheritage.org)

# Note to Educators

---

Before engaging in the lessons and activities of *America's Heritage: An Adventure in Liberty* High School Edition (grades 9-12), educators are encouraged to assess and/or review the skills and content students have been exposed to and have learned in grades 6-8.

MEMORANDUM

November 7, 2000

TO: All HISD Teachers and Administrators

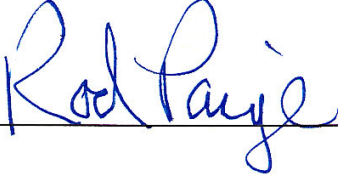
FROM: Rod Paige  
Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **AMERICA'S HERITAGE: AN ADVENTURE IN LIBERTY**  
**FIRST EDITION HISD SUPPLEMENTAL CURRICULUM**

Texas Education Code 28.002 (h) *Required Curriculum* provides that "a primary purpose of the public school curriculum is to prepare thoughtful, active citizens who understand the importance of patriotism and can function productively in a free enterprise society with appreciation for the basic democratic values of our state and national heritage." In keeping with this mandate, I want to share with you a supplemental curriculum entitled, *America's Heritage: An Adventure in Liberty*. I believe this concept is vitally important to the future of our nation. With your leadership, this curriculum can positively and creatively influence our students to become productive, committed United States citizens. In so doing, the personal growth of our students will profoundly impact our entire socio-economic system of freedom and free enterprise.

I have a personal commitment to this effort. It is my hope that all of us in the Houston Independent School District share the strong, common goal and desire that our citizens and leaders of tomorrow will embrace the four key themes of this curriculum: freedom, unity, progress, and responsibility. Although this supplemental curriculum is a continuing, year-round program, it could also be intensified during November, HISD's American Heritage Month. Additional American Heritage Month materials and activities are included.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact your district superintendent. Thank you for your interest and support.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
RP

RP:nb

cc: Board Members

## **FOREWORD**

### **The Miracle of America: A Revolutionary Idea**

In only a little more than 200 years, our ancestors transformed this country from a wilderness into a great nation. This nation demonstrates what can be accomplished by free people who create a government limited to serving the people rather than being their master.

The moral and ethical basis of good conduct was derived from the faith that built America. That faith grew from the common belief that each individual is endowed with basic rights and responsibilities by our Creator. That is the foundation of our democratic republic expressed in the Declaration of Independence.

Today, we live in a highly interdependent society that cannot work well unless there is a general agreement on the rules of good conduct and the penalties for the violation of these rules. Our Founding Fathers also emphasized that a democratic republic cannot survive without a high degree of literacy and knowledge.

More importantly, the survival of our democratic republic depends on trustworthy citizens who support a common set of moral and spiritual values for individual conduct, values rooted in the beliefs and knowledge of the Founders of America who were responsible for writing the Declaration of Independence.

The character of society is determined by how well it transmits true and time-honored values from generation to generation. These values are not an add-on or supplement to national values but rather determine the character and essence of the country itself.

I commend the educators who will use this material in teaching their students the roots of our heritage and the responsibilities of American citizenship as well as the need for all of us to express our patriotism and love of country to those we touch.

Dr. Richard J. Gonzalez  
Co-founder,  
American Heritage Education Foundation

## PREFACE

# 1776

## From Oppression to Freedom

### **Modern History's First Experiment in Self-Government: *Do Americans Today Understand What Freedom Really Means?***

The concepts of freedom, equality of all men, unalienable rights, and self-government of, by, and for the people are, historically, very new ideas. Modern man's recorded history is approximately 5,000 years old, yet the American experiment in self-rule is only 225 years old.

What types of governments or societies existed on our earth prior to 1776? Except for the city-states of classical Greece and, to a lesser degree, parliamentary England after the 1642-48 English civil war, all nations were organized in one form or another under "Ruler's Law" in which all power and decision-making rests in one central, authoritarian unit. Ruler's Law has existed in many forms:

- Monarchy:** a royal government headed by a monarch, a hereditary sovereign or king, who rules by 'divine right,'
- Autocracy:** government by an absolute dictator or monarch who rules by inherent right, subject to no restrictions,
- Plutocracy:** government by an exclusive, wealthy class,
- Aristocracy:** government by those with inherited titles or those who belong to a privileged class,
- Oligarchy:** government by an exclusive few,
- Empire:** an aggregate of kingdoms ruled by a monarch called an emperor,  
and
- Military Dictatorship:** government by one or a few top military leaders.

(Skousen, *The Making of America* 44)

Ruler's Law possesses definite, key characteristics that its related forms of government tend to hold in common:

1. Government power is exercised by compulsion, force, conquest, or legislative usurpation.
2. Therefore, all power is concentrated in the ruler.
3. The people are treated as subjects of the ruler.
4. The land is treated as the realm of the ruler.
5. The people have no unalienable rights.
6. Government is by the rule of men rather than by the rule of law.
7. The people are structured into social and economic classes.
8. The thrust of government is from the ruler down, not from the people upward.
9. Problems are solved by issuing new edicts, creating more bureaus, appointing more administrators, and charging the people more taxes to pay for these services.
10. Freedom is not considered a solution to anything.
11. The transfer of power from one ruler to another is often by violence.
12. Countries under Ruler's Law have a history of blood and terror, in both ancient and modern times. The lot of the common people being ruled is one of perpetual poverty, excessive taxation, stringent regulations, and continuous, oppressive subjugation to the rulers.

(Skousen 44-45)

In 1776, Charles Pinckney, the first president of South Carolina's first congress and a delegate to the Federal Constitutional Convention, in considering the governments of the world, observed:

“Is there at this moment, a nation upon earth that enjoys this right [freedom and democracy], where the true principles of representation are understood and practiced, and where all authority flows from and returns at stated periods to the people? I answer, there is not. All existing governments we know have owed their births to fraud, force, or accident” (Elliot cited in Skousen 3).

This stifling social oppression under Ruler's Law resulted in very little human or economic progress throughout history, meaning that little opportunity existed for commoners to improve their lives beyond a bare subsistence level. In Europe, including England, for a commoner or slave to even

consider the possibility of freeing himself from his life of social and economic servitude was simply unthinkable and would have been a treasonous offense of religious heresy. While the American colonists were left mostly to themselves from 1607 to 1763 and generally governed themselves along various themes emphasizing freedom of land ownership, market, trade, and religion for over 150 years, the English monarch and British parliament very strongly regarded the American colonies as English colonies and the colonists themselves as British subjects—not Englishmen.

In England, the monarchy (made up of hereditary rulers) dominated life. This dominance by the monarchy was justified and supported by the Church of England which solidified its own powerful standing in English life by affirming the monarchy's Divine Rights in exchange for ecclesiastical power. This system of state-church power imposed a social ladder on society with the monarch at the top of the ladder followed by a limited number of positions at each lower socio-political rung. The Church of England justified this hierarchical class order on the basis that this was God's will and was a part of the natural order of life—part of the great chain of existence from king to servant/slave that provided order for the entire universe. Further, England's schools and churches affirmed that no one could advance or prosper on this societal ladder above his or her predestined position. The English people were expected to know their place within this pre-established social class order and to duly perform the duties of their station in life.

When English parliamentary sovereignty became established in 1688 as a result of the English civil war, the monarch remained sovereign in name only. However, this change at the top of the socio-economic ladder did very little to affect the largest portion of the English population who still considered themselves ruled by the powerful upper-class of English life. The American colonists still considered themselves Englishmen ruled by the King of England.

Interestingly, several generations of American colonists from 1607 to the mid 1750's suffered few English impositions due to the colonies' slow economic development, distance from England, and general unimportance to England. The colonies, therefore, developed a rather natural free market and free trade system of capitalism based on private land ownership, individual initiative, competition, and supply and demand. Freedom of religion was also a key component of colonial life. However, the colonists' relative freedom from English imposition did not last. Because of the French and Indian Wars (1754-1763), the British national debt doubled, and by the 1760's, the English treasury lay in shambles. As the colonial economic system grew, England began a stringent effort to enforce the Navigation Acts of a hundred years earlier in the 1650's and 1660's. The Proclamation Line of 1763, the Sugar Act (1764), the Currency Act (1764), the Stamp Act (1765), the Townsend Acts (1767), the Quartering Acts (1766 and 1774), and the Quebec Act (1774) were all attempts by the British to replenish its treasury and to gain absolute control of the colonists and their growing colonial economy.

As the American colonists gradually realized that the king and Parliament would never voluntarily release their control over their subjects and that the socio-political structure of society was unlikely to change with respect to how England viewed the colonists, they began to recognize their ultimate need to permanently break away from their homeland. They were not, however, brash or ignorant in making their decision. Many of these Americans, who would later become the "Founding Fathers" of a new country, carefully studied their philosophical position with England. They knew the classics and Biblical, Greek, Roman, European, and American history. Their minds, Skousen notes, were arguably more far-ranging and profound than those of any collection of advanced scholars in the field of political studies up to and including the present: "The Founders often read the classics in their original language. They were familiar with Plato's Republic and his Laws; with Aristotle's Essay on

Politics; with the political philosophy of the Greek historian, Polybius; with the great defender of republican principles, Cicero; with the legal commentaries of Sir Edward Coke; with the essays and philosophy of Francis Bacon; with the essays of Richard Hooker; with the dark foreboding of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*; with the more optimistic and challenging *Essays on Civil Government*, by John Locke; with the animated *Spirit of The Laws*, by Baron Charles de Montesquieu of France; with the three-volume work of Algenon Sidney who was beheaded by Charles II in 1683; with the writings of David Hume; with the legal commentaries of Sir William Blackstone; and with the economic defense of a free market economy by Adam Smith called *The Wealth of Nations*" (61).

In June of 1776, Thomas Jefferson, a well-educated Virginian lawyer, was asked to formally prepare and write America's Declaration of Independence. None of the Founders "could have brought to this assignment a more profound and comprehensive training in history and political philosophy than Jefferson. Even by modern standards, the depth and breadth of his education are astonishing. . . . He had begun the study of Latin, Greek, and French at the age of nine. At the age of sixteen he had entered the College of William and Mary at Williamsburg as an advanced student. At the age of nineteen he had graduated and immediately commenced five years of intensive study with George Wythe, the first professor of law in America. During this period he often studied twelve to fourteen hours per day. When he was examined for the bar he seemed to know more than the men who were giving him the examination. By the time Jefferson had reached early adulthood, he had gained proficiency in five languages. He had studied the Greek and Roman classics as well as European and English history and the Old and New Testaments" (Skousen 27).

While studying the history of ancient Israel and before writing the Declaration, Jefferson made a significant discovery. He saw that at one time the Israelites, after having come out of Egypt between 1490 and 1290 B. C., practiced the earliest and most efficient form of representative government in an otherwise tyrannical world. The Israelites were led by Moses, a man of great notoriety among the Jews in that day because he had spent forty years in the palace of the Pharaoh and was being groomed in Ruler's Law to succeed the Pharaoh on the throne of Egypt. (Skousen 48) Governing 600,000 Israelites by Ruler's Law, as it were, proved an impossible task for Moses. He therefore organized the people into groups of a thousand families with one leader per group. He further divided these groups into smaller sub-groups each with its representative leader—hence history's first experiment in representative self-government among family groups. (50) "As long as the Israelites followed these fixed patterns of constitutional principles they flourished. When they drifted from these principles, disaster overtook them" ( 27).

Jefferson also learned that the Anglo-Saxons, who came from around the Black Sea in the fifth century A. D. and spread all across Northern Europe, somehow got hold of and practiced these same principles following a pattern almost identical to that of the Israelites until around the eighth century A. D. . (Skousen 32) As a result, the Anglo-Saxons were an extremely well-organized and efficiently-governed people in their day. (54-55) Jefferson became proficient in the language of the Anglo-Saxons in order to study their laws in their original tongue. He noticed the striking resemblance between Anglo-Saxon laws and the system of representative law established by Moses. Jefferson greatly admired these laws of representative government—"Ancient Principles" he called them—and constantly emphasized the need to return to them. ( 27-28) "It is interesting," notes Skousen, "that when Jefferson was writing his drafts for the Virginia Constitution prior to his writing of the Declaration of Independence, he was already emphasizing the need to return to the 'Ancient Principles'" (28).

“For seventeen days Jefferson composed and revised his rough draft of the Declaration of Independence. The major portion of the Declaration is taken up with a long series of charges against King George III [of England]. However, these were nearly all copied from Jefferson’s draft of the Virginia Constitution and his summarized view of the Rights of British America. To copy these charges into the Declaration would not have taken him more than a single day. What was he doing the other sixteen days? It appears that he spent most of the remaining time trying to structure into the first two paragraphs of the Declaration at least eight of the Ancient Principles in which he had come to believe. His views on each of these principles are rounded out in other writings, and from these various sources we are able to identify the following fundamental principles in the first two paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence:

1. Sound government should be based on self-evident truths. These truths should be so obvious, so rational, and so morally sound that their authenticity is beyond reasonable dispute.
2. The equal station of mankind here on earth is a cosmic reality, an obvious and inherent aspect of the law of nature and of nature’s God.
3. This presupposes (as a self-evident truth) that the Creator made human beings equal in their rights, equal before the bar of justice, and equal in His sight (with individual attributes and personal circumstances in life varying widely).
4. These rights which have been bestowed by the Creator on each individual are unalienable; that is, they cannot be taken away or violated without the offender coming under the judgment and wrath of the Creator. A person may have other rights, such as those which have been created as a ‘vested’ right by statute, but vested rights are not unalienable. They can be altered or eliminated at any time by a government or ruler.
5. Among the most important of the unalienable rights are the right to life, the right to liberty, and the right to pursue whatever course of life a person may desire in search of happiness, so long as it does not invade the inherent rights of others.
6. The most basic reason for a community or a nation to set up a system of government is to assure its inhabitants that the rights of the people shall be protected and preserved.
7. And because this is so, it follows that no office or agency of government has any right to exist except with the consent of the people or their representatives.
8. It also follows that if a government, either by malfeasance or neglect, fails to protect those rights—or, even worse, if the government itself begins to violate those rights—then it is the right and duty of the people to regain control of their affairs and set up a form of government which will serve the people better”

(Skousen 28).

From their studies of the classics and these ancient principles, the Founders sorted out what they considered to be the best and most enduring ideas for the prosperity and peace of a free people under a republican system of self-government. Their resulting Declaration of Independence established a New Order of the Ages based on the belief that man's freedom was a gift from God, not given or taken away by a mortal king as was the case under the Old Order.

The principles of the Declaration were clearly very strongly influenced by the Bible. The Founders interpreted the Bible differently than the Church of England. They believed that the Bible revealed that all individuals regardless of race, creed, or color were free and equal in the eyes of God and should not be subservient to mortal men or man-made, vested rights but only to God Himself and His laws. The Founders' independent study of the Bible without the coercion of the state Church of England helped them reach these general beliefs—that all men, whether they believed in God or not, whether or not they were of different religious, social, economic, or educational backgrounds; of different mental or physical characteristics and ability; or of any other difference of any kind; were equal before the Creator with respect to their God-given rights. This Declaration, our nation's birth certificate, is still considered next to the Bible history's greatest written philosophy about the unalienable rights of every man, woman, and child and the people's free will to govern themselves in any way they choose. The first two paragraphs of the Declaration express these convictions:

*When in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.*

*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. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Government long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.*

It is clear that the Founder's believed that this new nation was "A Nation Under God" even if all of its citizens did not necessarily believe in a Supreme Being or attend a church. Indeed, a non-believer's right of thought opposing the idea of a God was just as important and just as protected as the right of others to

believe in a Supreme Being as the source of the nation's freedom. Accordingly, the Founders felt that a national government should not create a national church to support the government and to coerce its citizens as the English government had done with the Church in England—that in this sense the government and the church should be separate in order to maintain equality among all religions. They believed that private citizens should have the freedom to choose their own religion and church without government influence as well as the freedom not to believe in God or to attend any church. At the same time, the Founders themselves strongly believed that the underpinnings and foundation of the new country and the rights of its people were inspired by a Supreme Being whose law was delineated in the Bible—a book which they felt should be openly and freely discussed and studied in their schools, businesses, and governmental institutions. The conclusion of the Declaration evinces their belief both in a Supreme Being and in the right to freedom from British rule:

*We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these United Colonies are and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.*

To declare independence from Britain meant to proclaim the religious, social, political, and economic freedom of all men. The implications of this Declaration of Independence were historically monumental by philosophically undermining the entire socio-economic, political, and religious foundations of any country under Ruler's Law. Since every nation in the world in 1776 governed its people under Ruler's Law, the Declaration of Independence tore out by its roots the centuries-old practice of government under such law.

It is therefore easy to understand that “the delegates who subscribed to this document signed their names in blood. Had the Americans lost the Revolutionary War and been captured, they would have been summarily convicted of treason. The penalty for high treason against the British Crown was:

To be hanged by the head until unconscious.

Then cut down and revived.

Then disemboweled and beheaded.

Then cut into quarters.

Each quarter was to be boiled in oil and the remnants scattered abroad so that the last resting place of the offender would remain forever unnamed, unhonored, and unknown”

(Skousen 31).

In light of such severe, appalling penalty, what kind of men were they that declared themselves to be independent from Great Britain? Were they thoughtless, impulsive, violent men? Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists, eleven were merchants, and nine were farmers and large plantation owners. They were men of means, well-educated. They signed the Declaration of Independence knowing full well that the penalty would be death if they were captured. Their fates are told in “The Price They Paid”:

In light of such severe, appalling penalty, what kind of men were they that declared themselves to be independent from Great Britain? Were they thoughtless, impulsive, violent men? Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists, eleven were merchants, and nine were farmers and large plantation owners. They were men of means, well-educated. They signed the Declaration of Independence knowing full well that the penalty would be death if they were captured.

“Five signers were captured by the British as traitors and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons in the Revolutionary Army. Another had two sons captured. Nine of the 56 fought and died from wounds and the hardships of the Revolutionary War.

Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships swept from the seas by the British navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts and died in rags.

Thomas McKean was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay, and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and poverty was his reward.

Vandals or soldiers or both looted the properties of Ellery, Clymer, Hall, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge, and Middleton.

At the Battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson, Jr. found that the British General Cornwallis had taken over the Nelson home for his headquarters. Nelson quietly urged General George Washington to open fire, which was done. The home was destroyed, and Nelson died bankrupt.

Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife, and she died within a few months.

John Hart was driven from his wife’s bedside as she was dying. Their 13 children fled for their lives. His field and his grist mill were laid waste. For more than a year he lived in forests and caves, returning home after the war to find his wife dead, his children vanished. A few weeks later he died from exhaustion and a broken heart.

Norris and Livingston suffered similar fates.

Such were the stories and sacrifices of the American Revolution. These were not wild-eyed, rabble-rousing ruffians. They were soft-spoken men of purpose and education. They had security, but they valued freedom more.” (Hildreth)

And so it has been with thousands of Americans for over two centuries who have sacrificed their lives and bodies to defend freedom from oppression not only in America but in countries all around the world. Americans have long helped natives in war-torn lands rebuild their once-oppressed countries in order to stimulate the common people to lift themselves out of destruction and depression. The spirit of freedom and brotherhood among Americans and toward other nations has many times inspired a responsibility to help our neighbors as well as old war enemies. This spirit is based on the strong American belief that every person’s right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness should be respected. Helping rebuild Germany and Japan after World War II are perhaps our country’s most dramatic examples of forgiving our enemies and helping them recover from war’s devastation once their tyrannical and aggressive governments were deposed.

When considering why so many average Americans have dedicated their lives to preserve freedom, we consider the same reasons why millions of people from all over the world have migrated to America from foreign countries—for the political, social, religious, and economic rights preserved in our nation and defended by its Constitution for all of its citizens. Some of these rights, many of which are found in the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the Constitution, include:

- The Right to freedom of religion, to believe and worship as one chooses, abiding by the law,
- The Right to free speech and a free press, abiding by the law,
- The Right to assemble peaceably,
- The Right to keep and bear arms,
- The Right to privacy in and protection of citizens' homes and possessions, per the law,
- The Right to life, liberty, and property, per the law,
- The Right to petition for redress of grievances,
- The Right to Habeas Corpus, protection from unlawful or unauthorized imprisonment, and to no excessive bail,
- The Right to fair trial, trial by jury, legal counsel, and to be innocent until proven guilty,
- The Right to humane treatment and punishment,
- The Right to states any powers not delegated to or prohibited by the United States,
- The Right to free elections and personal secret ballot,
- The Right to freedom from slavery or servitude for law-abiding citizens,
- The Right to equal protection of the laws, and
- The Right to vote.

Related rights Americans enjoy as part of our inherent rights and based on Constitutional rights include:

- The Right to freedom from arbitrary government regulation and control,
- The Right to the service of government as a protector and referee,
- The Right to move about freely at home and abroad,
- The Right to work in callings and localities of our choice,
- The Right to bargain with our employers and employees,
- The Right to go into business and compete for a profit,
- The Right to bargain for goods and services in a free market, and
- The Right to contract our affairs.

These are the rights in our country for which Americans are willing to die. Such devotion has reaped a nation with unprecedented freedoms and prosperity.

Jefferson was one such American of devotion. During the American Revolution, Jefferson, who had become a delegate to Virginia's state assembly, was convinced that the Americans were going to win their battle for freedom. He feared, however, that they would not know what to do with their freedom. It therefore was Jefferson's hope that if he could guide Virginia to be a model for other states, that the newly liberated people would be psychologically and constitutionally prepared to govern themselves. In October, 1776, Jefferson literally smothered the Virginia House with new bills in an effort to establish "a system by which every fiber would be eradicated of ancient or future aristocracy and a foundation laid for a government truly republican" (Bergh cited in Skousen 34).

Although it took many years to achieve the adoption of all of his reforms, Jefferson, due to his unusual intensity and aggressiveness, was largely responsible for clearing out traces in Virginian law of feudalism, aristocracy, slavery, and the worst parts of British statutory law which Virginia had inherited from England.

By the end of the nineteenth century, this political and economic formula for freedom that Americans continually fought for was beginning to give Americans the highest standard of living in the world. With less than 6 percent of the earth’s population, our spirit of freedom, creativity, ingenuity, and private economic opportunity enabled Americans to produce more than half of the entire world’s goods and services. The free-market, capitalist system envisioned by the Founders was based on those prevalent and firm ideas of freedom and individual rights combined with the following common-sense ideas of economic advancement:

1. Nothing in our material world comes from nowhere—everything in our economic life has a source, a destination, and a cost that must be paid.
2. All production of goods and services come from the people, not government. Everything that government gives to the people must first be taken from the people.
3. In a free country, all employment ultimately comes from customer purchases. If there are no customers, there can be no jobs. Worthwhile job security is derived from these customer purchases and customer satisfaction.
4. Job security is a partnership between workers and management to win and hold customers.
5. Workers’ wages are the principal cost of goods and services. Wage increases must result in greater production to avoid increases in the cost of living.
6. All productivity is based on natural resources whose form and placement are changed by human energy with the aid of tools.
7. In a free country, tools come from temporary self-denial by people in order to use part of their earnings as capital for the production of new tools.
8. The productive and efficient use of tools has always been highest in a free and competitive country where decisions and action are made by free, progress-seeking individuals, rather than in a central government-planned society under Ruler’s Law where the Ruler’s primary goal is to preserve their position of authority over the people.

A comparison between United States and Soviet Union economies in 1991 demonstrates the eighth item:

	U. S. A (Free country)	U. S. S. R. (Centrally-Planned country with Ruler’s Law)
Population	250,410,000	290,938,000
Area	3,618,769 sq. mi.	8,649,496 sq. mi.
Gross National Product (GNP)	\$5,234 billion	\$2,526 billion
GNP Per Capita	\$21,040	\$8,819
Food Expenditure as a % of Total Private Consumption	12.2%	38.0%
Telephones/100 people.	76.0	11.3
Televisions/1,000 people	812	319
Radio Receivers/1,000 people	2,120	686
No. of deaths/1,000 people	8.7	10.4
Life Expectancy	75.6	69.5
Infant Mortality Rate/1,000 live births	10.4	23.7

*(Statistical Abstract of the U. S., 1991)*

It is clear that as a free-market economy based on free private opportunity, the U. S. has achieved a larger and more mature economy than the Soviet Union under a Ruler's Law system even though the Soviet Union has more resources including coal, natural gas, crude oil, cement production, nitrous ammonia production, marketable potash, iron ore, manganese ore, zinc, nickel, lead, and chromite. The United States' economic system, a product of a free society and free economic opportunity, encourages individuals and companies to make a profit in order for business to expand, thereby providing more jobs, more production, and increasing profits that, ultimately, help the entire nation to prosper.

Hard work, frugality, and thrift then make possible compassion for those citizens who need assistance. Alexis de Toqueville wrote in 1835 in his *Democracy in America* that Americans were on their way to becoming the most prosperous and best educated people in the world who also happened to be the freest people in the world. The world would also learn that America contained the most generous people on earth. Private citizens in the U. S. donate billions of dollars to charities, schools, universities, libraries, foundations, hospitals, churches, synagogues, and a multitude of other important benevolent causes. In 1993, for example, individual charitable deductions amounted to a staggering \$126.2 billion from over 35,700 non-governmental, non-profit organizations whose goals were to assist and aid in social, educational, religious, and other activities deemed to serve the common good. Over 68,400 grants exceeding \$10,000 and totaling \$5.6 billion were made by private and corporate foundations across the country. An astonishing forty-eight percent (48%) of the adult population contributed an average of 4.2 volunteer hours per week across the country in the fields of education, health, human services, youth development, religion, foreign aid, etc. This level of voluntary gifts, donations, and time far exceeds that of any other country in the history of mankind.

Though free-market economics based on free political institutions and personal freedom and responsibility was not widespread throughout the world even in the 1990's, the free-market economy based on freedom has proven itself enormously successful. The Founding Fathers should receive the highest scores possible for designing a remarkable system of social, political, and economic freedom that, while having imperfections, is the admiration of people everywhere who believe that freedom, as envisioned by the Declaration of Independence and the U. S. Constitution, is the key to progress for the betterment of all of a nation's citizens.

It is vitally important that our students and our citizens become increasingly proficient and well-informed in the inspired, virtuous, and noble ideas that are our nation's foundation for a free society. By learning and understanding the basic philosophical concepts of freedom, education, private investment, job growth, and profit incentive, our students will be better equipped to approach the responsibilities and tasks to act and serve in society. In knowing our nation's historical and political foundation, our citizens and students will perpetuate this ongoing miracle of a viable and energized constitutional republic so that freedom, unity, progress, and responsibility through this system of self-government will not perish from our earth.

© The American Heritage Education Foundation, Inc.

## Works Cited

Bergh, Albert E., ed. *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Washington, D. C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907.

Boyd, Julian P., ed. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. 20 vols. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950-.

*Constitution of the United States*. Washington, DC: U. S. National Archives and Records Administration. <[www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)>.

*Declaration of Independence, 1776*. Washington, DC: U. S. National Archives and Records Administration. <[www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)>.

Elliot, Jonathan, ed. *The Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution*. 5 vols. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1901.

Hildreth, Gary. *The Price They Paid*. San Mateo, CA: National Federation of Independent Business.

Skousen, W. Cleon. *The Making of America: The Substance and Meaning of the Constitution*. Washington, D. C.: National Center for Constitutional Studies, 1985.  
Library of Congress call number KF4541.S55 1985.

*Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1991.

Toqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. 1835, 1840. 12th ed. 2 vols. New York: Vintage Books, 1945.