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|  | Common Core Social Studies Learning Plan Template  **Lesson Title:** Common Sense vs the Declaration of Independence: Were colonists justified in demanding independence?  **Author Name:** Adrienne Barry  **Contact Information:** [abarry@washoeschools.ne](mailto:abarry@washoeschools.net)t  **Appropriate for Grade Level(s):** 9-12  **History Standard(s)/Applicable CCSS(s) (RI, W, S&L, L):** [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1d,](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/1/d/) [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/1/e/)11-  [12.1e,](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/11-12/1/e/) [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RI/11-12/1/)2.1  **Type of Lesson:** Analysis and comparison of Primary Sources documents in order to develop an argument.  **Student Readings (list):** Common Sense (Abridged) and The Declaration of Independence (Abridged)  **Total Time Needed:** 1-2 block periods  **Lesson Outline:**  **Time Frame What is the teacher doing? What are students doing?**  **(e.g. 15 minutes)**  30-40 Reading the readings aloud or monitoring student Reading along with teacher or reading  minutes reading. independently. Answering text questions and completing cause/effect chart.  30 minutes Asking text dependent questions/ reviewing Students are discussing their claims/ evidence reading questions. from the reading.  15 minutes Monitoring students Students complete the paragraph writing assignment.  **Description of Lesson Assessment:** Students will write a paragraph asserting whether or not colonists were justified in demanding independence.  **How will students reflect on the process and their learning?** Students will reflect on their learning when completing associated assignments, when we have the Socratic seminar, then again when writing their paragraph response.  *The pages that follow the Learning Plan Template includes student readings and reading strategy/questions, source(s), handouts, assignment sheet, self-assessment/reflection and a rubric related to this lesson.* |  |
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1 **An Abridged Interpretation of Common Sense**

2 by

3 **Thomas Paine**

4 **On the Origin and Design of Government in General, with Concise Remarks on the**

5 **English Constitution**

6

7 Society and government are two separate things. People in society do what they want in

8 search of happiness. Government exists because of what people do wrong—it sets limits on

9 society. At best, government is a necessary evil. At worst, government is intolerable.

10 Without government, society has absolute freedom. People can do anything they wish. If

11 people were angels, we would have no need of government. However, people can and do

12 commit evil. Without government to restrain immorality, society will have no protection.

13 Therefore, we give up some of our freedom to create a government to protect our natural

14 rights.

15 We elect representatives to our government to make sure that government protects the

16 natural rights of the citizens. Elections should be held often so that representatives can be

17 reminded of what the citizens want. Frequent elections will also keep representatives from

18 serving themselves. This will make for a happy relationship between society and

19 government.

20 Simple things are easily run and easily fixed. The English government is too complex. When

21 something breaks, it is difficult to know what is wrong. The English constitution promises

22 much but delivers little.

23

24 Since the King and members of the House of Lords are not elected, they are absurd and

25 useless. They do not care about the people. Members of the House of Commons are

26 elected and are the only voice of the people. Yet, the King tells Parliament what to do and

27 Parliament does it.

28

29 **Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession**

30 People were originally all equal. Therefore, it is ridiculous that one capable man who

31 becomes king should have all the future generations of his family also rule. His son might be

32 a dictator or a fool. England has had a few good monarchs but many bad ones. How did

33 kings start? There are three answers: by status, by election, or by force. Another evil of

34 kings is that someone else rules in his place when a king is too young or too old. Kings do

35 not make stable governments. Under kings, there have been at least eight civil wars and

36 nineteen rebellions. In England, all a king does is start wars and give away property. One

37 honest man is worth all of the kings who ever lived.

38

39 **Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs**

40 On the following, I offer nothing more than common sense. War will decide who will rule

41 America. Some say that America needs Britain to be successful, but they are wrong.

42 America would have been great without Europe. People escaped from Europe to come to

43 America for civil and religious freedom. And to call Americans Englishmen is wrong since

44 many people in America come from other countries.

45 America has no advantage by being connected with Great Britain. Our relationship with

46 Britain has brought this continent into war with other nations. Whenever Britain goes to

47 war, it disrupts American trade with other European countries. It is better that America stay

48 out of European affairs.

49 There are those who cannot see the abuses of Britain. If you believe that reconciliation can

50 be made, you are deceiving yourself. If you can shake hands with murderers, then you have

51 the heart of a coward.

52 **Of the Present Ability of America: with some Miscellaneous Reflections**

53 I have never met with a man, either in England or America, who has not said the colonies

54 and Great Britain would separate at one time or other. The time is now. It is cheaper to

55 fight than to spend millions to repeal acts of Parliament. We are united and the continent

56 has the largest number of armed men of any power in the world. It would be easy for

57 America to build a navy; we have the resources of tar, timber, iron, and cordage. America

58 builds some of the best ships in the world. While Britain has some powerful ships, most of

59 them are not fit to use. Our arms are equal to any country, and we can produce our own

60 gunpowder and cannon.

61 Business destroys the spirit of a country. The city of London submits to continued insults

62 with the patience of a coward. The more men have to lose, the less they are willing to risk.

63 The rich are in general slaves to fear.

64

65 To conclude, many reasons may be given for independence. Some of which are

66

67 First—other nations cannot mediate our conflict as long as we are considered a part of Great

68 Britain. Hence, the conflict will go on forever.

69

70 Second—France and Spain will not help us if we do not break with Britain.

71

72 Third—we must not be seen as Englishmen and rebels fighting Britain but as a different

73 people seeking independence.

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75 Fourth—if we sent a document to foreign governments stating British abuses and our failed

76 attempts to peaceably fix them, and showed that we were pushed towards separating from

77 Britain, it would do us great good.

78

79 Until independence is declared, the continent will like a man who continues putting off some

80 unpleasant business from day to day, yet knows it must be done, hates to set about it,

81 wishes it over, and is continually haunted with the thoughts of its necessity.

1 **The Declaration of Independence: A Transcription**

2 **IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.**

3 **The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,**

4 When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people

5 to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and

6 to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to

7 which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect

8 to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes

9 which  **impel** them to the separation.

10 We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that

11 they are endowed by their Creator with certain  **unalienable** Rights, that

12 among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure

13 these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just

14 powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of

15 Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People

16 to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation

17 on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall

18 seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.  **Prudence**, indeed,

19 will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for

20 light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that

21 mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right

22 themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when

23 a long train of abuses and  **usurpations**, pursuing invariably the same Object

24 evinces a design to reduce them under absolute  **Despotism**, it is their right,

25 it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for

26 their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these

27 Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their

28 former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great

29 Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct

30 object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove

31 this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

32 He has refused his  **Assent** to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for

33 the public good.

34 He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing

35 importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be

36 obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to

37 them…

38 He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be

39 elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have

40 returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the

41 mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and

42 convulsions within.

43 He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that

44 purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to

45 pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions

46 of new Appropriations of Lands.

47 He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to

48 Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

49 He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their

50 offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

51 He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of

52 Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

53 He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the

54 Consent of our legislatures.

55 He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the

**Impel:** to force somebody to do something

**Unalienable:** not able to be transferred or taken away

**Prudence:** the ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason

**Usurpations:** A wrongful seizure or exercise of authority

**Despotism:** a single entity rules with absolute power

**Assent:** to agree to something

56 Civil power.

57 He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our

58 constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their

59 Acts of pretended Legislation:

60 For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

61 For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders

62 which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

63 For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

64 For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

65 For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

66 For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences

67 For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province,

68 establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries

69 so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the

70 same absolute rule into these Colonies:

71 For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and

72 altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

73 For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested

74 with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

75 He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection

76 and waging War against us.

77 He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and

78 destroyed the lives of our people.

79 He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to

80 compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with

81 circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous

82 ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

83 He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to

84 bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends

85 and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands…

86 In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the

87 most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by

88 repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which

89 may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people…

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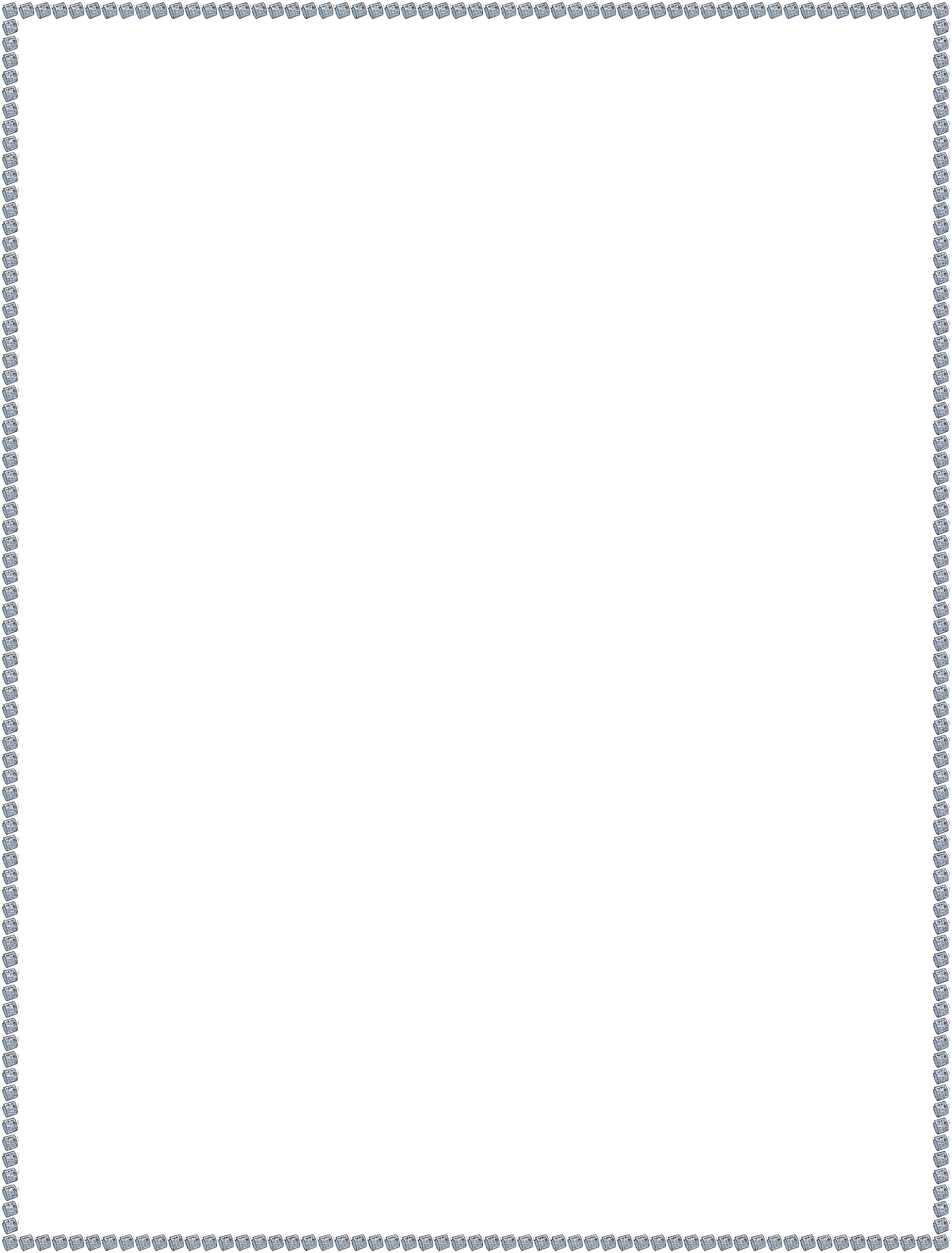
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We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, 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 to 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.

**Common Sense and the Declaration of Independence**



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| ***Common Sense*** | ***The Declaration of Independence*** |
| When was the document written? | When was the document written? |
| Who was the intended audience? (provide evidence to back up your claim) | Who was the intended audience? (provide evidence to back up your claim) |
| What was the goal of the author? (provide evidence to back up your claim) | What was the goal of the author? (provide evidence to back up your claim) |
| What is the emotional appeal the author is making? (provide evidence to back up your claim) | What is the emotional appeal the author is making? (provide evidence to back up your claim) |
| According to the document, what is the purpose of government? (provide evidence to back up your claim) | According to the document, what is the purpose of government? (provide evidence to back up your claim) |
| According to the document, what is a problem with monarchy? (provide evidence to back up your claim) | According to the document, what is a problem with monarchy? (provide evidence to back up your claim) |
| According to the document, why did people leave Europe? (provide evidence to back up your claim) | According to the document, why did people leave Europe? (provide evidence to back up your claim) |

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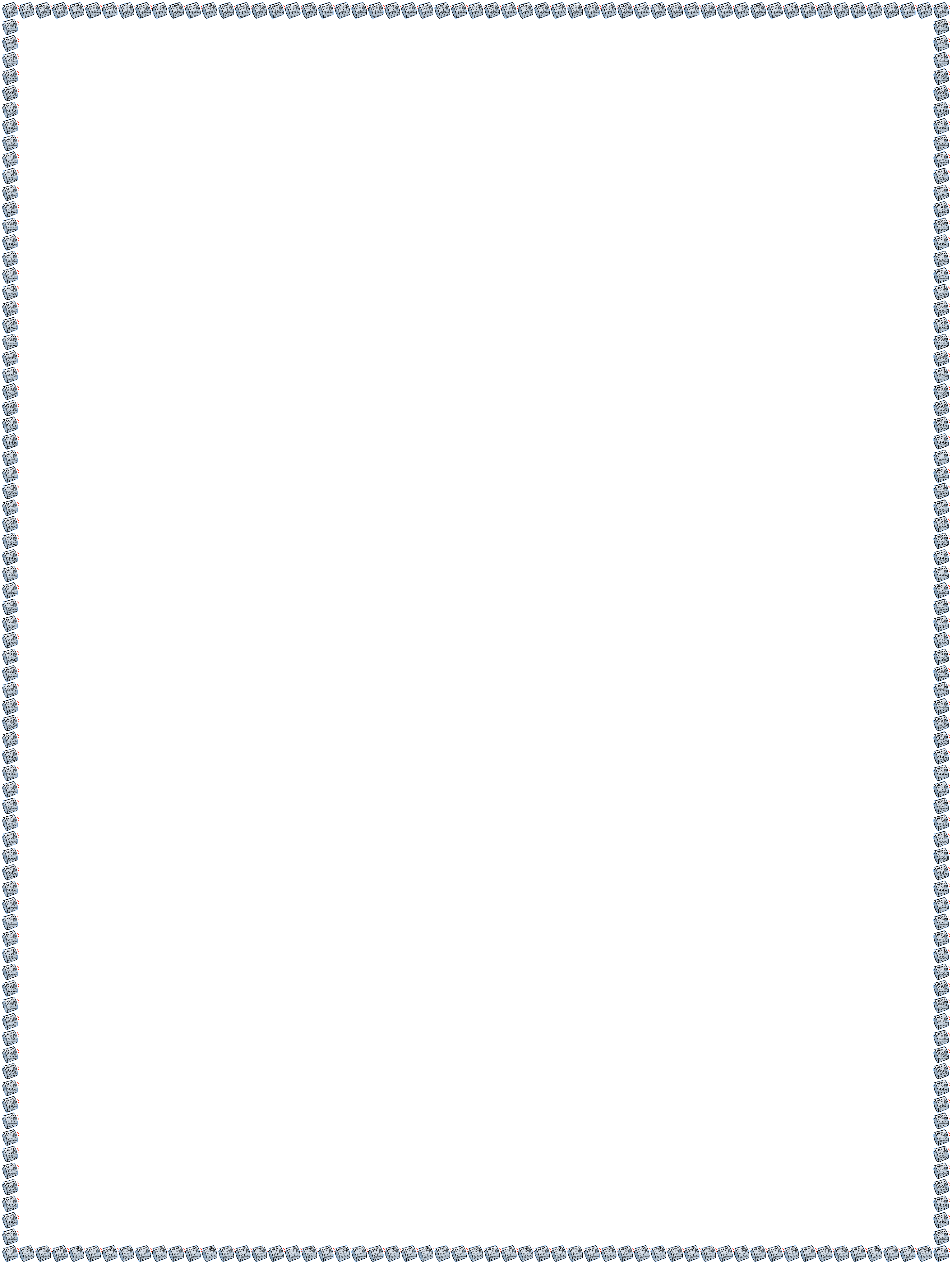
Period:\_

Date:\_

Complete the chart below based on events or ideas described in the texts, be sure to cite the reading where you found the information.

Grievances against Government

Suggestions for better government



1. 1.

2. 2.

3. 3.

4. 4.

5. 5.

6. 6.

Writing prompt: Based on arguments presented in the readings, are the colonies justified in demanding independence? Use at least one piece of evidence from each reading to justify your answer. (Cite line numbers for each piece of evidence)