

The Enlightenment

- [* intellectual movement that began in Europe in the 1700s
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- [* influenced people’s thinking in the 13 colonies
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- [* Enlightenment philosophers valued reasoning
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- [* human beings are born with natural rights that governments must respect
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- [* colonist began to question British monarchy

Declaration of Independence

- [* document sent to England declaring colonists freedom
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- [* adopted on July 4, 1776 by Continental Congress
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- [* written by Thomas Jefferson with support from Ben Franklin and John Adams
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- [* “unalienable rights” – life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness (John Locke’s idea of natural rights)

Northwest Ordinance

- [* established steps for creating states out of the Northwest Territory in 1787
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- [* a territory with a population of 60,000 adults can write their own state constitution
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- [* this ordinance banned slavery, encourage public education and guaranteed individual rights

Articles of Confederation

- [* our nation’s first plan of government
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- [* alliance among the 13 states
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- [* established Congress in which each state would have one vote regardless of population
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- [* weak plan of government that had no president/courts