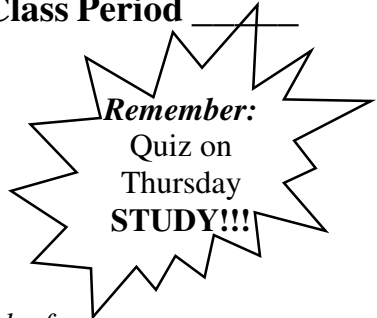
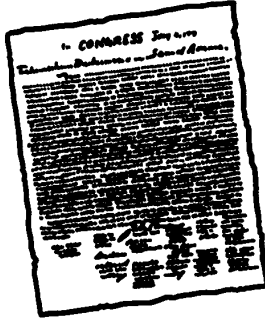


**U.S. HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS
DUE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2008**



I. The Declaration of Independence

Read the following and answer the questions on a separate sheet of loose-leaf paper.



By July 1776 the delegates to the Second Continental Congress knew they had to make a decision. King George had refused to even look at the Olive Branch Petition, the list of complaints they had sent to him. He had also arranged for thousands of Hessian soldiers to be sent to America to fight against the colonists. The delegates slowly came to realize that only by declaring their independence could they get the rights they thought they deserved.

Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Robert Sherman, and Roger Livingston were asked to write a declaration of independence. Jefferson wrote most of the document. He divided it into three parts. The preamble, or introduction, explains why the document was created. In it, Jefferson wrote that if a government does not recognize and protect people's rights, then the people are justified in replacing it. This was indeed a revolutionary idea for those days.

The second part of the Declaration of Independence listed ways in which King George had violated colonists' rights. The third and final part was the actual declaring of independence.

Fifty-six delegates eventually signed the document. The first to do so was John Hancock, the president of the Congress. He wrote his name in very large letters so that King George could easily read it without his glasses. That is why today we sometimes refer to a person's signature as his or her "John Hancock."

On July 4, 1776, the United States of America was formed. Since that day, people in the United States have observed the Fourth of July as the nation's birthday.

Circle the letter of each correct answer.

1. Most of the Declaration of Independence was written by

a. Benjamin Franklin	b. Thomas Jefferson	c. John Hancock
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2. How many delegates signed the Declaration of Independence?

a. 56	b. 65	c. 13
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3. King George sent these soldiers to America to help the British fight the colonists.

a. French	b. Hessians	c. Scots
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4. The first part of the Declaration of Independence is called the

a. list of grievances	b. main body	c. preamble
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5. He signed his name to the Declaration of Independence in very large letters.

a. John Hancock	b. John Adams	c. Thomas Jefferson
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6. Imagine you and a friend from another country are viewing the original parchment copy of the Declaration of Independence in Washington, D.C. Your friend wants to know why the document is so important. What is your answer?

II. The Articles of Confederation

*Read the following and answer the questions on loose-leaf paper.
DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE IN.*

The Second Continental Congress took on the duties of a government in 1775, but it did not actually have the authority to do so. A plan of government was needed to spell out what Congress could and could not do.

In 1776 a committee made up of one member from each state was selected by Congress to write a constitution. The committee came up with a plan for a confederation. (A confederation is a form of government in which the national government has certain powers, but each of the states acts almost independently.)

The Second Continental Congress debated the Articles of Confederation, as the plan of government was called, for almost a year. In 1777 they sent it to the states for ratification, or approval. All the states except Maryland ratified the document by 1779. Maryland refused to approve the Articles until other states gave up their claim to lands northwest of the Ohio River. Finally, Maryland gave its approval, and the Articles went into effect on February 27, 1781.

The Articles of Confederation was a poor plan of government. Because America's Founding Fathers feared a strong national government, they refused to give the national government much power. Therefore, the Articles did not provide for an executive branch to enforce the laws, or a system of national courts to interpret or explain them. It also did not give Congress the power to tax, so it could only ask the states for money. To further complicate matters, states argued over trade and placed tariffs (taxes) on one another's goods. Each state also printed its own money.

The Articles remained in effect until 1787. By then, people had come to realize that changes had to be made if the United States was going to survive as a nation. In May 1787 the Constitutional Convention assembled in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At first, its members only intended to make changes in the Articles. In the end, however, they threw out the entire document and wrote a new plan. That new plan became the Constitution of the United States.

Circle the letter of each correct answer.

1. From 1775 until the Articles of Confederation were approved, government duties were carried out by
 - a. a president
 - b. the Second Continental Congress
 - c. each state separately
2. A constitution is a
 - a. plan of government
 - b. form of government
 - c. law code
3. A confederation is a form of government in which national government
 - a. is strong
 - b. is weak
 - c. does not exist
4. A constitutional convention to change the Articles of Confederation met in Philadelphia in
 - a. 1781
 - b. 1775
 - c. 1787
5. Why do you think the Founding Fathers feared a strong national government?

6. List any two weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation.
