



# COMMON CORE: Literacy

## Lessons for Social Studies Educators

### Reading Standard 4. VOCABULARY

Reading Standards: Gr. 6-8	Reading Standard: Gr. 9-10	Reading Standard: Gr. 11-12
<b>4. VOCABULARY</b>		
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary <i>describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social studies.</i>	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, <i>including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text.</i>

**Overview:** Good vocabulary instruction focuses on important words necessary to fully understand the content of social studies and usually involves teaching conceptually related words rather than individual words unrelated to one another. The maxim to “relate the new to the known” is highly applicable in vocabulary instruction – students must make connections between words they already know and words they are learning. There is no single best way to teach terms and phrases. However, the research and theory on vocabulary development does point to a few generalizations that provide strong guidance.

#### *Understanding Different Types of Vocabulary in the Content Areas:*

**Tier One Words-** Consists of basic words commonly used in a social studies classroom, but which rarely require instructional attention in school because they are frequently used outside of the classroom in normal life. (examples: budget, progress, settle, independent, debate, leader, unite, religion, etc.)

**Tier Two Words -** Frequency used by mature language users and found across a variety of knowledge domains, but struggling readers or students with limited vocabulary may require support or direct instruction: (examples: legacy, prosperous, industrious, financial, society, political, commercial, diversity, ethnic, etc.)

**Tier Three Words – (“academic vocabulary”)** Low frequency use and very specific to a particular social studies subject or discipline; may take the form of a single term or phrase (examples: capitalism, dictatorship, monarchy, civilization, imperialism, market economy, “Iron Curtain”, etc.)

#### *What Research Says About Learning Vocabulary in the Content Areas:*

- Word knowledge is essential for comprehension.
- Use direct instruction to teach “Tier 2” words.
- Use predicting and verifying strategies, plus direct instruction and note-taking techniques, to learn “Tier 3” words and phrases.
- Learning new terminology requires active involvement rather than passive definition memorization.
- Multiple exposures to a word are necessary to learn it well – conceptual, as well as contextual.

- Writing definitions from dictionaries is not a recommended practice.
- Relate new words to students' prior knowledge and to other related words when possible.
- Students need to develop the ability to learn new words from multiple contexts of reading.

*TIP for Teachers:*

When introducing a new term or phrase it is useful to avoid a formal definition---at least at the start. This is because formal definitions are typically not very "learner friendly." They make sense after we have a general understanding of a term or phrase, but not in the initial stages of learning. Instead of beginning with a definition, it is advisable to provide students with a description, explanation, or example much like what one would provide a friend who asked what a term or phrase meant.

Once a description, explanation, or example has been provided to students they should be asked to restate that information in their own words. It is important that students do not copy exactly what the teacher has offered. Student descriptions, explanations, and examples should be their own constructions using their own background knowledge and experiences to forge linkages between the new term or phrase and what they already know.

To facilitate this cumulative effect it is highly advisable for students to keep an "academic vocabulary" notebook that contains the terms and phrases that have been taught. Enough space should be provided for students to record their initial descriptions, explanations, and examples of the terms and phrases as well as their graphic representations, pictures, and pictographs.

Prior to reading, it is effective to expose students to academic vocabulary which will be revealed in the reading. Allow students to predict what they believe the terms means, discussing their previous knowledge of the term or related terms. As students read, they will confirm or clarify their predictions in an active manner of learning.

**Lesson Ideas:**

1. Use the "Pre-Learning Concept Check" strategy to encourage active investigations of new vocabulary within a given text following a brief measurement of knowledge students already have. (A sample "concept check" is provided, using two and three-tiered terms from the Declaration of Independence.)
2. For a hands-on approach to learning vocabulary, ask students to actively engage in a classification (also known as "word sort" or "history unfolding") activity prior to reading a textual passage. Working in pairs or groups of three, students are encouraged to interact with one another, sharing their prior knowledge of terminology, discussing similarities and differences between vocabulary terms as they develop classifications for the given terms, then verifying their predictions with actual textual evidence.
3. For home study and review of academic vocabulary, students may find the creation of "Triangle Clue" cards helpful. This strategy can also be a challenging, yet engaging classroom experience, as students share their "triangle clues", discovering different levels of perspectives and understandings of academic terms or phrases among their peers. (Another variation of "triangle clues" is the "Word Map" which is an effective review strategy, especially when modeled by the instructor and when most challenging concepts are to be mastered by students.)

4. Use the provided template for student academic vocabulary journals, which can be maintained through one unit of study or throughout the school year. Begin by asking students to identify a minimum of 8-10 key words or phrases in passages from the Declaration of Independence they need to add to their journals.
5. Use for a preview or review of academic terms the “Word Splash” (also known as “Concept Connections”) strategy which requires students to identify relationships between given sets of academic vocabulary, then develop written statements explaining the relationship. This type of graphic organizer is an effective measurement of student understanding and one in which peers learn much from one another’s “connection” statements.
6. High school students should be able to trace the development of a vocabulary term (idea/academic concept) through an author’s multiple use of the term in one document. Using the Declaration of Independence, model the thought process necessary to describe how Jefferson develops the term/concept of “unalienable rights” through several identified passages. Ask students to write a brief “ticket out the door” explaining why many historians consider Jefferson to be an exceptional and effective writer.

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America

**(Paragraph 1.)** 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.

**(Paragraph 2.)** 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.

**(Paragraph 3.)** Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments 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.

**(Paragraph 4.)** 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.

**Line 4.1** He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

**Line 4.2** He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance...

**Line 4.3** He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people...

**Line 4.4** He has sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people and eat out their substance...

**Line 4.5** He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures...

**Line 4.6** For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us...

**Line 4.7** For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world...

**Line 4.8** For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent...

**Line 4.9** For depriving us in many cases, of the benefit of Trial by Jury...

**Line 4.10** He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people...

**Line 4.11** He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages...

**Line 4.12** In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury...

**(Paragraph 5.)** 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.

New Hampshire: Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple, Matthew Thornton

Massachusetts: John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, Elbridge Gerry

Rhode Island: Stephen Hopkins, William Ellery

Connecticut: Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, William Williams, Oliver Wolcott

New York: William Floyd, Philip Livingston, Francis Lewis, Lewis Morris

New Jersey: Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon, Francis Hopkinson, John Hart, Abraham Clark

Pennsylvania: Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, John Morton, George Clymer, James Smith, George Taylor, James Wilson, George Ross

Delaware: Caesar Rodney, George Read, Thomas McKean

Maryland: Samuel Chase, William Paca, Thomas Stone, Charles Carroll of Carrollton

Virginia: George Wythe, Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Nelson, Jr., Francis Lightfoot Lee, Carter Braxton

North Carolina: William Hooper, Joseph Hewes, John Penn

South Carolina: Edward Rutledge, Thomas Heyward, Jr., Thomas Lynch, Jr., Arthur Middleton

Georgia: Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, George Walton

## Pre-Learning Concept Check:

### *Declaration of Independence*

**Instructions:** Before reading, rate your knowledge about each term or phrase with:

**a plus ( + ) if you think you are an expert,**

**a check ( ✓ ) if you know a little about it,**

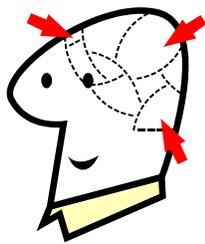
**a zero ( 0 ) if the statement is new to you.**

*After reading, you can evaluate yourself again on these statements by using the spaces on the right side.*

### Before Reading:

### After Reading:

_____	self-evident	_____
_____	redress	_____
_____	pursuit of happiness	_____
_____	oppression	_____
_____	liberty	_____
_____	consent of the governed	_____
_____	alliance	_____
_____	grievance	_____
_____	usurpation	_____
_____	divine providence	_____



## PRE-LEARNING CONCEPT CHECK

An effective way to engage students prior to reading or studying a particular subject is to use a pre-learning concept check. Students are asked to questions themselves silently, asking themselves how much they think they already know about the statement, word, or phrase. This strategy helps student measure what they already know, focuses their reading by giving them key ideas to look for, and allows them to measure the growth in their understanding following a reading or period of study.

### **Procedure:**

1. The teacher creates a series of statements, or a series of key concepts (vocabulary words, or key events or personalities) from the reading or from the next lessons (or unit of study).
2. The list is then presented to students in the format of handouts or an overhead transparency, or written on the blackboard.
3. Students individually are asked to measure what they already understand about each statement or concept. Students will make one of three types of marks to the left of each statement, word, or phrase. If they believe themselves to be highly informed, they will place a plus sign (+) in a space next to the statement, word, or phrase. If they know something about the concept, but don't consider themselves to be "experts", they will place a check (✓) in the space. If they know very little or nothing about the statement, word, or phrase, they will place a zero (0) next to it.
4. Students will then engage themselves in acquisition of information or skill through any other strategy the teacher desires.
5. Following acquisition of the information or skill, the student is asked to measure his growth in learning by returning to the pre-learning concept checklist and responding with the same symbols, ( as above in step 3.) to the righthand of the statement, word, or phrase, basing his decision on the amount of learning or understanding he believes he has achieved.
6. Tips for the teacher:
  - A. In creating the statements or key phrases for the checklist, try to include some items which students might have accumulated some prior knowledge through previous studies in the education or through exposure in the home, through the news, television, etc.
  - B. Try to include some items that might emphasize common mistakes in understanding, or even stereotypes student might have acquired over the years, which will most likely be dispelled after engaging on the reading or study of the subject.
  - C. You may wish to hold a class de-briefing using the checklist as a guide for discussion. Ask students to explain their previous understandings and how they have changed.

## WORD SORT:

### *Making PREDICTIONS from classifications of key terms and concepts*

In groups or partners, categorize the concepts provided to you by your instructor into two or more classifications of your choosing. Label each category with a sticky note. (Tip: You may not be familiar with all terms or concepts, but discuss with your peers what the terms might mean within the context of other terms you DO know.)

Observe the classifications and categories developed by other groups or partners.  
What do you see in common?

Return to your group's classifications. Individually, make a prediction regarding how history will "unfold" itself, based on the key concepts your group has classified....

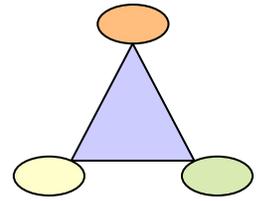
Write your prediction in a one-sentence statement.

Share your prediction with your peers. Justify how you arrived at your prediction.

*Example: Key concepts from the Declaration of Independence*

Self-evident	redress	pursuit of happiness	political connection
alliance	declaration	dissolve	oppression
Independent states	unalienable rights	divine providence	consent of the governed
liberty	usurpations	grievances	governments

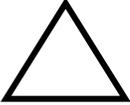
## TRIANGLE CLUES



Triangle clues, developed by students after modeling by the instructor, are excellent ways to summarize important content and make connections between concepts. Triangle clues are sets of three brief phrases or statements which provide detailed information about a given topic or concept. Students may exchange their sets of “clues” with one another, trying to guess the concept from just the clues given.

This simple, yet effective strategy can be used for many different types of content, including key historic personalities or historic events (such as “Alexander Hamilton” or “Battle of Vicksburg”), geographic terminology (such as “population density” and “isolines”), geographic concepts (such as “desertification” and “push factors of migration”), economic concepts (such as “consumerism” or “buying on margin”).

Students may also be encouraged to combine traditional note-taking, creating very simple graphic organizers from “triangle clues” (see examples below.) Teachers can use student-created clues to develop quality assessment items, as well (see example below). Such a strategy requires both reading comprehension skills, such as summarizing, with deductive reasoning.

Text or Class Notes	Triangle Clues
<p><i>I. Silk Road= Trade Route</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a. Goods left China and went to Central and Southern Asia and Europe</i></li> <li><i>b. Private merchants and Chinese officials traveled on the Silk Route</i></li> <li><i>c. Took many months to travel</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">           Asia to Europe      Exchange of goods              Named after valuable Chinese product         </p>
<p><i>II. Buddhist Religion Spread with Trade</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a. Roots in Hinduism</i></li> <li><i>b. Belief in Reincarnation</i></li> <li><i>c. People worship at many temples offering food, flowers, and prayers along the route</i></li> <li><i>d. Founder modeled way of living and treating others; ideas spread through trade</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">           Founded in Asia      Shared Beliefs with Hinduism              Ideas influenced distant cultures         </p>

*III. Risky Conditions*

- a. Difficult to travel desert regions due to lack of water, intense heat, or rugged mountains*
- b. Camels were used for transporting goods*
- c. Centers of trade established in western Asia and eastern Europe became wealthy cities*

Difficult desert and mountainous conditions

Trade hazardous, but profitable



Centers of wealth grew along trade route

**Student-Created Triangle Clues:**

**SILK ROAD**

Asia to Europe

Exchange of goods



Named after valuable Chinese product

**Teacher-created assessment item:**

I. \_\_\_\_\_

- A. Asia to Europe connection
- B. Exchange of goods
- C. Chinese product gave name to route

*Which of the following best completes the outline above?*

- a. Silk Road*
- b. Trans-Siberian Railroad*
- c. Danube River*
- d. Great Leap Forward*

What is it? (definition)

*unrestrained exercise of power; abuse of authority; government of an absolute ruler*

EXTRA: (root word?)

*Greek "tyrannia"  
meaning "master"*

The Word (phrase):

*tyranny*

Another similar term:

*dictator*

Another similar term:

*despot*

*King George III,  
British monarch,  
18<sup>th</sup> century*

*Fidel Castro, Cuba,  
20<sup>th</sup> century*

*What are examples?*

What is it? (definition)

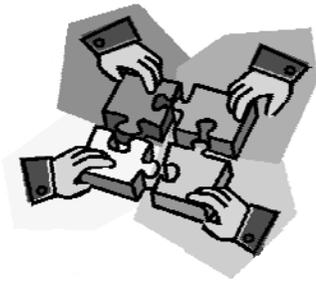
The Word:

Another similar term:

Another similar term:

*What are three examples?*





## WORD SPLASH

Use the word splash to:

- Identify background knowledge at the beginning of a unit of study.
- Create an interest and curiosity about the upcoming unit of study.
- Connect a group of facts into a large framework of understanding.
- Assess student learning at the end of the unit.

To make a word splash, the teacher selects 20–25 words that represent important people, places, or ideas from an article or social studies text (see box below for example). The teacher “splashes” these words on a page.

Hand out a word splash to each student. The students’ job is to draw connecting lines between the words to show how they are related. On the connecting line the student writes a statement telling how the two items are related. In the beginning students can be encouraged to guess even if they are not sure. Allow 10 minutes for this part.

Next, students can pair up in groups of two or three to share their splashes. Students are encouraged to revise their own splashes based on their group discussion. After the pairing up, have students come up to the overhead and draw in their connections. Ask if anyone can make another connection to another word. Have the student come up, and so on.

The students read and make a note when they encounter an item from their word splash.

As a closure activity, students can revise their word splashes based on what they have learned from their reading, either on their own list or again at the overhead.

### Follow-up Activity

An alternate activity is to have students create their own word splashes for a chapter of the text. They can be asked to justify the items they include in their own splash. Students can exchange papers with a partner who will attempt to connect the items.

Word Splash	
Choson	Confucianism
China	Buddhism
South Korea	Achievements
Japan	Hangul
Hermit Kingdom	World War II
Self-sufficient	Truce
State owned	North Korea
Divide	38th Parallel
Farming	Natural resources
Technology	Factories

*Sample:*  
*Declaration of Independence*

usurpations

grievances

Consent of the  
Governed

unalienable rights

tyranny

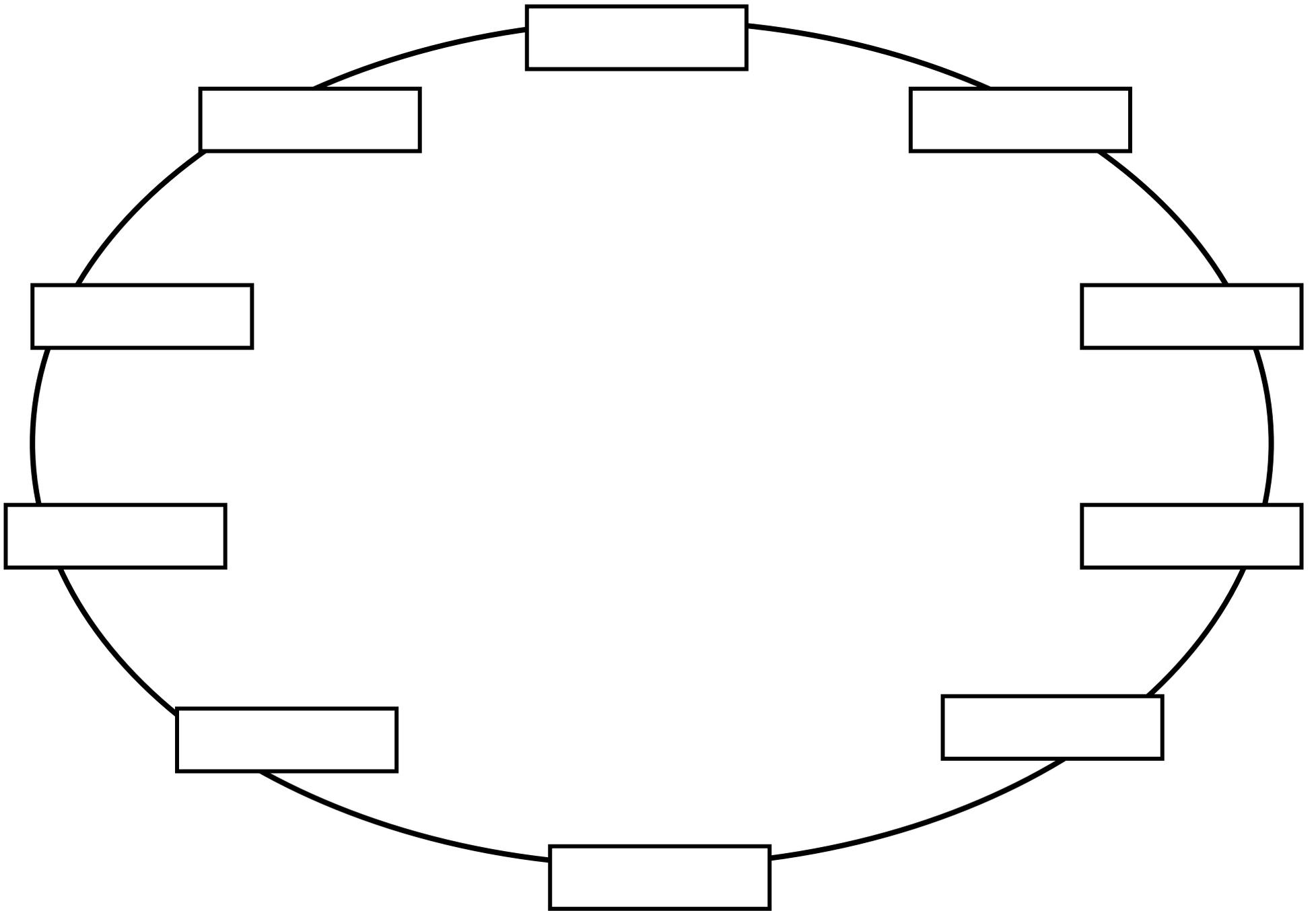
oppression

political  
connection

independent  
states

despotism

government



## Developing an Idea: “Unalienable Rights”

### *Declaration of Independence*

Through the document, Thomas Jefferson develops the concept (idea) of “unalienable rights” through several passages and methods. Investigate how he achieves a full explanation of the term “unalienable rights” by searching the document and interpreting its messages.

<b>Where ?</b>	<b>Cite Passage:</b>	<b>Summarize</b> <i>(in your own words)</i>	<b>How Does Jefferson</b> <b>Develop the Idea?</b> <i>(circle)</i>
Paragraph 2 Line 2			* Defines or Redefines Term * Offers Examples
Paragraph 2 Line 4			* Defines or Redefines Term * Offers Examples
Para. 3 Lines 4 & 5			* Defines or Redefines Term * Offers Examples
Para. 3 Lines 6 & 7			* Defines or Redefines Term * Offers Examples
Paragraph 4 Line 3			* Defines or Redefines Term * Offers Examples
Paragraph 4 Line 8			* Defines or Redefines Term * Offers Examples
Paragraph 4 Line 12			* Defines or Redefines Term * Offers Examples
Para. 5 Line 6 & 7			* Defines or Redefines Term * Offers Examples

