**Declaration of Independence**

***Doc. Analysis #2 – Ideas & Themes***

**80pts**

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|  | ***Directions:*** *In this activity we will be looking at the major political/philosophical themes and ideas of the Declaration. As you read the Declaration circle key words, ideas and concepts and begin thinking about them as you try and answer the questions that follow.* |

***Major Ideals In the Declaration of Independence***

***Unalieanble/Natural Rights***

*Rights which all persons possess by nature, not being created by man-made laws or institutions. Natural rights are therefore attributable to individuals without distinction of time or place.*

***Equality***

*Every individual is equal to every other person in regards to natural rights and treatment before the law.*

***Social Contract***

*An agreement among the members of an organized society or between the governed and the government defining and limiting the rights and duties of each.*

***Right to Revolt***

*A political condition in which the people are sovereign, that is, the people exercise the final decision-making power.*

***Liberty***

*Except where authorized by citizens through the Constitution, the government does not have the authority to limit freedom – i.e. constraining the free will exercise of individual persons*

***Consent of the Governed***

*The government's power is only justified when its power comes from the will or approval of the people*

1. WHERE in the Declaration of Independence do you see the following major ideals/principles? (give the exact phrase/wording):
   1. Social Contract –
   2. Unalienable/Natural Rights –
   3. Right to Revolt –
   4. Consent of the Governed –
   5. Equality –
   6. Liberty –
2. According to the Declaration what is the purpose of government? Agree or disagree, why or why not?
3. From where does government get its power?
4. Why is the idea of “consent of the governed” so important in the Declaration of Independence? What does the idea of “consent of the governed” tell us about American beliefs?
5. Are the powers given to the government by the people limited or unlimited?
6. When, according to the Declaration, should government be changed? Explain why you agree or disagree?
7. According to the Declaration of Independence where do “inalienable rights” come from? Why do you agree or disagree?
8. Are the principles of inalienable rights and government by consent in the Declaration outdated, or are they still true today? Do these principles matter to you? If so, how and why?
9. What does the phrase “all men are created equal” mean? Equal in what way? Is this true or not?
10. How could the Continental Congress approve this document when many of its members owned slaves? Does the fact that many of these men owned slaves mean these ideas are wrong or less important?
11. How are the three unalienable rights listed in the Declaration to be understood/defined (life, liberty & pursuit of happiness)? First, how would you define them? Second, do some research to see how those terms were understood during the Founding generation.
12. What are the most important ideals, principles, or virtues expressed in the Declaration of Independence and to what extent does America today meet the promise of those ideals?