

Lesson 2: Unalienable Rights

Life • Liberty • Pursuit of Happiness

Teacher Version

Essential Question

*How did the King's denial of the colonists' rights lead to the establishment of "**Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness**" as the foundation of the new American government?*

Review, Hook Question, and Predictive Writing

- **Recall**—Review the previous lesson's essential question and final vote: "Which category of grievance (Taxes, Military, Representation, or Justice) was most responsible for independence?"
- **Connect**—Pose the hook question: "Why did the colonists focus so much on what the King was doing **wrong**? What were they trying to protect?"
- **Predict**—"In Lesson 1, we learned that King George III taxed colonists without their consent, kept soldiers in their towns, shut down their assemblies, and denied them fair trials. If the colonists were declaring independence from these problems, what rights do you think they would want to guarantee for themselves in their new country?"

Key Vocabulary

Paragraph	Word	How it Will be Taught	Student-Friendly Definition
1	Self-evident	<p>Word parts: self (by oneself) - videre (easy to see)</p> <p>Context: "These rights—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—are so clear and true that they are self-evident, meaning everyone should see they belong to all people."</p>	Something that is obviously true; it doesn't need proof
3	Unalienable	<p>Word parts: un- (not) + alien (foreign/other) + -able (can be)</p> <p>Context: "can't be taken away or given up—they're part of who you are"</p>	Rights that cannot be taken away or given up; they belong to you permanently
5	Liberty	<p>Word parts: libertas (free) + -y (state of being)</p> <p>Context from Lesson 1: colonists wanted freedom from "Britain's harsh rules"</p>	Freedom to make your own choices without unfair control
7	Popular sovereignty	<p>Word parts: popular (people) + sovereignty (supreme power)</p> <p>Context: "power comes from the people, not a king"</p>	The idea that government's power comes from the people, not from kings or rulers

Linear Array Activity

Linear Array Activity (10 minutes)

Setup: Students work in groups of 3-4. Each group gets word cards.

Linear Array: *TEMPORARY* ↔ *UNALIENABLE*

"Place these words on a line between TEMPORARY (can be taken away easily) and UNALIENABLE (can never be taken away):"

Word cards: short-term | given up | forever | permanent | disposable

Text Coding Guide

L = Life

B = Liberty

H = Pursuit of Happiness

I = Information

Directed Note-Taking Graphic Organizer:

Connecting Grievances to Unalienable Rights

Students identify:

- Definition of each right
- Evidence of King denying it
- Modern-day protections

TEACHER EXAMPLE – LIFE ROW (completed)

Unalienable Right	Student-Friendly Definition	Evidence: How King Denied This Right	Grievance Category from Lesson 1	Evidence: How This Right Protects Citizens Today
LIFE	The right to live safely, free from harm or unfair punishment	Soldiers barged into homes, arrested people without reason - paragraph 4	Military	Citizens can expect laws to keep them safe, rules against crime, systems to help during emergencies - paragraph 4

Video and Group Discussion

National Constitution Center clip with teacher supports and a student viewing guide.

Prompt: *"Which unalienable right (Life, Liberty, or Pursuit of Happiness) was the **most revolutionary** idea for the time, and why?"*

Students must prepare their position, two reasons with evidence, and anticipated counterarguments.

Final Writing Prompt

Prompt: *How did the ***grievances*** against King George III prove that the King was denying the colonists their ***unalienable rights*** of Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness?*

Students must:

- State a claim linking one specific grievance to one specific unalienable right
- Explain how the King's action denied that right
- Include at least TWO pieces of textual evidence

Closure

- **Connection to Today**—Turn-and-talk: "The Declaration was not perfect; not all people were fully included at first. What evidence in the text suggests this is a goal we're still working toward?"
- **Exit Ticket** —"Write down one example of how a U.S. citizen uses their right to **Liberty** today."