

## **American Government Lesson 16**

### **Sample Blog/Essay**

#### **Sample Answer to the Blog/Essay Assignment Lesson 16**

#### **The Lee Resolution, Declaration of Independence, and Articles of Confederation: A Singular Purpose and Focus**

The Lee Resolution (June 7, 1776), the Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776), and the Articles of Confederation (ratified in 1781) each represent different but interconnected stages in the American quest for political independence and self-governance. While they are distinct documents, their overarching singular purpose was the establishment of the American colonies as a sovereign and independent nation, free from British rule, and capable of self-governance for the purpose of protecting liberty.

#### **Causes Prompting These Legal Steps**

The series of events leading up to these legal measures can be traced to the growing discontent of the American colonists with British government progressively violating the God-given rights of the British citizens (American colonists), particularly the following causes:

1. Taxation without representation: Parliament imposed taxes on the colonies without giving them representation in the legislative body.
2. Intolerable Acts: Harsh British policies, such as the Stamp Act (1765) and Townshend Acts (1767), led to a breakdown in relations between the colonies and Britain.
3. Military occupation: The increased presence of British troops in colonial cities escalated tensions, leading to confrontations such as the Boston Massacre (1770).
4. Natural rights philosophy: Influenced by Biblical foundations and lessons from history, the colonists came to the understanding that their inherent natural rights—life, liberty, and property—were being continually violated by the British government despite the colonists' many years of protest and demand for redress.

#### **Chief Desire and Purpose of the Drafters**

The chief desire of the drafters of these documents was to assert the right of self-determination in order to protect their God-given liberties. They aimed to create a political system where governance was based on the consent of the governed, in contrast to the monarchical and aristocratic manner in which Britain was attempting to govern the colonies.

1. Lee Resolution: The immediate aim was to declare independence and to dissolve the political connection between the colonies and Britain. It was a formal call for severance from the British Crown and a formation of a mutually-supporting coalition of states.
2. Declaration of Independence: The purpose was not only to formally announce the colonies' separation from Britain but also to justify this act to the international community

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by listing the grievances against King George III and affirming the colonies' natural right to independence in accordance with the legal requirements of the British Liberty Charters..

3. Articles of Confederation: These were intended to establish a cooperative system of governance for the newly independent states. The drafters sought to form a loose confederation in which states retained sovereignty but cooperated on matters of mutual concern, like defense and foreign relations.

#### **Necessary Steps to Accomplish Their Purpose**

The founders outlined specific steps they deemed necessary to accomplish their purposes:

1. Justification of Independence: In the Declaration of Independence, the founders justified the need for separation from Britain by listing the natural rights of individuals and cataloging the tyrannical acts of the British Crown that violated those rights.

2. Formal Political Independence: The Lee Resolution and the Declaration of Independence together provided the legal and moral basis for the colonies' independence.

3. Union and Cooperation: The Articles of Confederation represented a step toward creating a functioning government that could act on behalf of all the colonies as a united body while recognizing the sovereignty of each state.

4. Defense and Diplomacy: Through the Articles, the colonies set up mechanisms for mutual defense and conducting foreign relations, which were necessary for their survival as an independent nation.

#### **Similarities Among the Documents**

- Legal and philosophical justification for independence: Both the Lee Resolution and the Declaration of Independence assert the necessity of separation from Britain and justify it on natural rights grounds.

- Sovereignty of the people: All three documents reflect the belief that legitimate government is derived from the consent of the governed and that political power rests with the people.

- State autonomy and federal structure: The Articles of Confederation, while creating a central government, also echo the desire for self-governance and autonomy seen in the Declaration. Both emphasized the importance of state sovereignty.

- Focus on liberty: The protection of liberty and the rejection of tyranny are central themes in all three documents.

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### How These Documents Work Together

1. The Lee Resolution acted as the spark for official action, a simple but bold proposal for independence that led directly to the Declaration of Independence.
  
2. The Declaration of Independence built on the Lee Resolution by laying out the moral, legal, and philosophical foundation for independence. It provided an ideological framework that justified the colonies' break from Britain and articulated the vision of a new, free political order based on natural rights.
  
3. The Articles of Confederation attempted to translate the ideological commitments of the Declaration into a functional government for the new states. It provided a means for collective decision-making, particularly in areas of diplomacy, war, and trade, while maintaining the autonomy of the individual states, thus ensuring that the principles of self-governance and liberty were respected.

### Conclusion

The Lee Resolution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Articles of Confederation all served the singular purpose of establishing the American colonies as a free and sovereign nation, independent of British rule for the purpose of securing “the Blessings of Liberty.” They were motivated by grievances against British tyranny, particularly concerning taxation, representation, and military occupation. The founders' chief desire was to establish a government based on natural rights and the consent of the governed. Together, these documents represent the progressive steps taken toward independence: declaring it, justifying it, and organizing a government to uphold it.