

## Module 3: Building a Government - The 1780s

### Topic 3 Content: Virginia Documents Notes

#### Introduction

**Virginia Documents**

**Virginia Declaration of Rights**

**Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom**

**Start**

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The Virginia Declaration of Rights and the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom helped to lay the foundation of American government. In this interactivity, investigate how these Virginia documents helped to limit the power of government and protect individual freedoms. Click **Start** to begin.

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### Topic 3 Content: Virginia Documents Notes

#### Virginia Declaration of Rights

**Virginia Declaration of Rights**

- The Virginia Declaration of Rights passed on June 12, 1776.
- The document was written by George Mason and explained that individuals should be entitled to rights such as the right to be free and own property.

**June**  
**1776**

Click the arrow to analyze Section One of the Virginia Declaration of Rights.

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The Virginia General Assembly passed the Virginia Declaration of Rights on June 12, 1776. This document, written by Virginia delegate George Mason, explained that individuals should be entitled to certain rights, such as the right to live, to be free, and to own property. This document helped pave the way for the Bill of Rights, the Constitutional amendments that protect many individual freedoms. Click the arrow to analyze Section One of the Virginia Declaration of Rights.

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### Topic 3 Content: Virginia Documents Notes

#### Virginia Declaration of Rights – Section One

**Virginia Declaration of Rights – Section One**

**“That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.”**

**Click the arrow to review Section One of the Virginia Declaration of Rights in more detail.**

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“That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.” Click the arrow to review Section One of the Virginia Declarations of Rights in more detail.

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#### Virginia Declaration of Rights – Section One Excerpts

**Virginia Declaration of Rights – Section One Excerpts**

**Excerpt One**

“That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights,”

**Excerpt Two**

“of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty,”

**Excerpt Three**

“with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.”

Select either of the excerpts to learn more about the Virginia Declaration of Rights.

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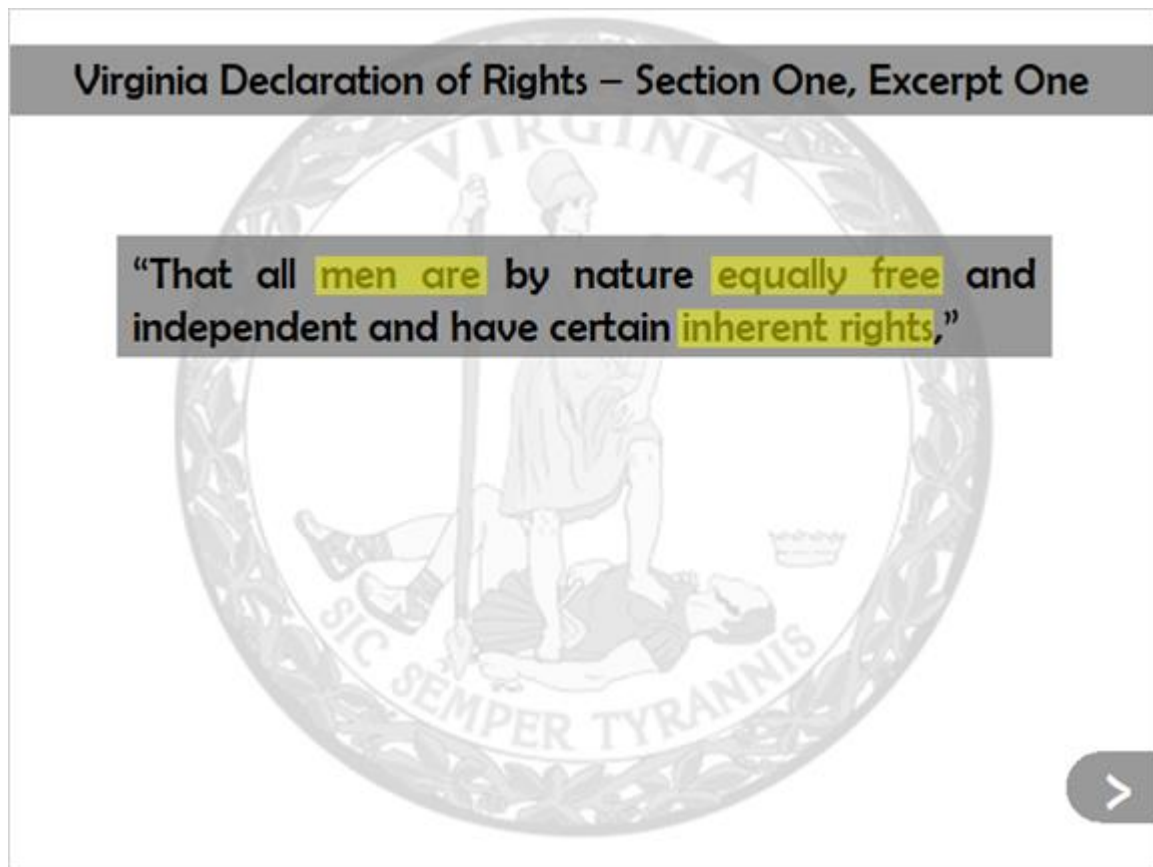
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While there are sixteen sections to the Virginia Declaration of Rights, you are only going to investigate three excerpts from Section One of this document. To fully understand the message conveyed in this section, it is helpful to examine each portion separately. Select either of the excerpts to learn more about the Virginia Declaration of Rights.

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#### Virginia Declaration of Rights – Section One, Excerpt One



Virginia Declaration of Rights – Section One, Excerpt One

“That all **men are** by nature **equally free** and independent and have certain **inherent rights,**”

Take a moment to read and reflect upon the excerpt shown. What does it mean?

When examining this section, take notice of the highlighted words “men are,” “equally free,” and “have certain inherent rights.” Here, George Mason is explaining that all men are free and have certain natural rights that cannot be impeded upon. Click the arrow to continue to investigate Section One of the Virginia Declaration of Rights.

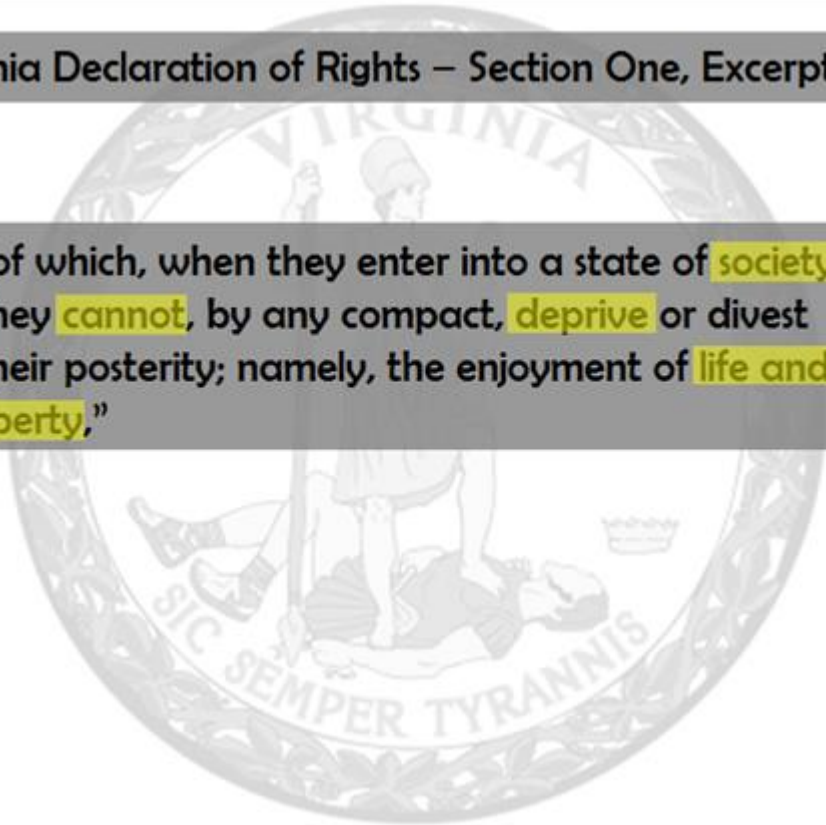
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### Topic 3 Content: Virginia Documents Notes

#### Virginia Declaration of Rights – Section One, Excerpt Two

Virginia Declaration of Rights – Section One, Excerpt Two

“of which, when they enter into a state of **society**, they **cannot**, by any compact, **deprive** or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of **life and liberty**,”



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George Mason further explains an individual's natural rights in the excerpt shown. What main points is Mason trying to convey in this excerpt?

When examining this section, take notice of the highlighted words “society,” “cannot,” “deprive,” and “life and liberty.” Here, Mason is explaining that when individuals establish a society and enter into a social contract with the government, they cannot be denied their natural rights. Click the arrow to continue to investigate Section One of the Virginia Declaration of Rights.

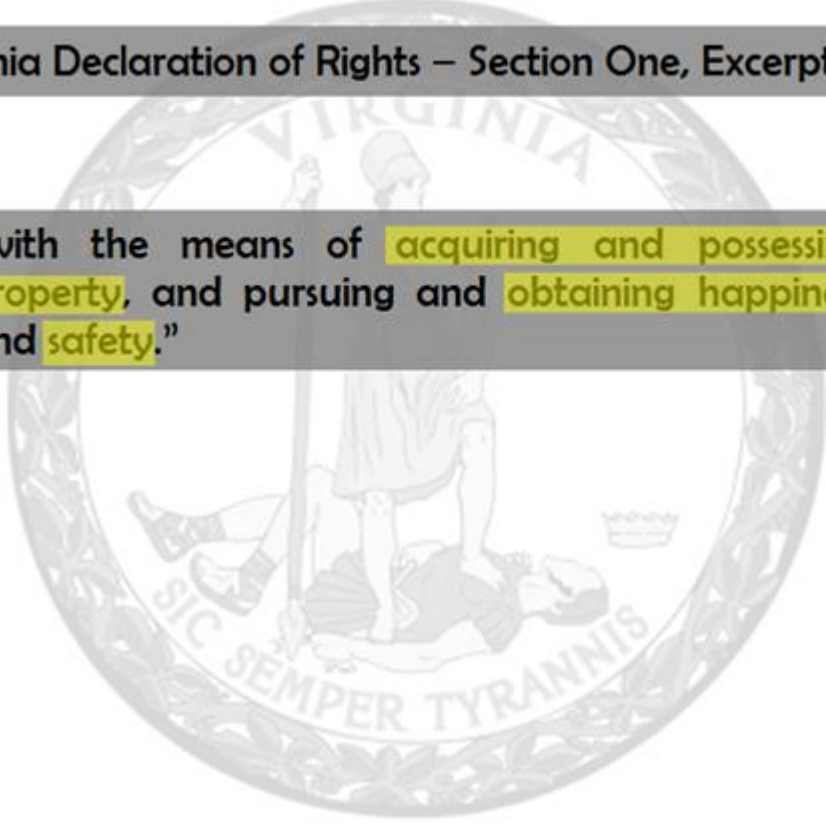
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### Topic 3 Content: Virginia Documents Notes

#### Virginia Declaration of Rights – Section One, Excerpt Three

Virginia Declaration of Rights – Section One, Excerpt Three

“with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.”



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In this excerpt, George Mason addresses specific rights to which individuals should be entitled. Take a moment to think about this excerpt. What does it mean?

When examining this section, take notice of the highlighted text “acquiring and possessing property,” “obtaining happiness,” and “safety.” In this excerpt, Mason explains that individuals should have the right to own property, to live comfortably, and to have safety. Click the arrow to continue to investigating Section One of the Virginia Declaration of Rights.

## Module 3: Building a Government - The 1780s

### Topic 3 Content: Virginia Documents Notes

#### Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom

**Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom**

- The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom passed on January 16, 1786.
- The document was written by Thomas Jefferson and secured the freedom of religion for all Virginia citizens.

**January**  
**1786**

Click the arrow to practice your analysis skills with the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom.

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On Jan 16, 1786, the Virginia General Assembly passed Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. This document, written by Thomas Jefferson, secured the freedom of religion for all Virginia citizens. It paved the way for the Bill of Rights which guarantees this freedom for all Americans. Click the arrow to practice your analysis skills with the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom.