**Unit 4: Foundations of American Government Study Guide**

**Natural Rights/Law:**

* Proposed by John Locke in *Two Treatises of Government*
* His writings argued that all people are born with natural rights to life, liberty and property.
* He believed these rights were independent of any government or social laws.
* Natural law beliefs influenced Enlightenment thinkers because they questioned any practices that seemed to go against reason and natural law.

**Montesquieu:**

* Wrote about separation of powers.
  + The three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial
* Idea was appealing to the founding fathers because it could help prevent the central government from becoming tyrannical and oppressive.

**Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense:***

* Written to convince the colonists to seek independence from Great Britain

**Events leading up to Declaration of Independence:**

* British increase taxes on tea 🡪 Boston Tea Party 🡪 British pass Intolerable Acts 🡪 Declaration of Independence
* British policies limit colonial rights 🡪 colonial demand for political change increases 🡪 British ignore colonial grievances 🡪 Declaration of Independence is approved
* Parliament repealed the Stamp act after colonists began boycotting British goods.

**Declaration of Independence:**

* Included the following complaints 🡪 called “grievances”
  + Taxation without representation
  + Limiting judicial powers
  + Dissolving local lawmaking bodies
  + “He kept among us in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislatures”
  + Suspending trial by jury in many cases
  + Housing soldiers on the property of colonists (quartering troops)
* Ideas of the DOI evident today: equal employment opportunities
* Addressed colonial concerns about English policies
* “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…” 🡪 People have rights that cannot be denied by any government.

***Magna Carta:***

* Written in 1215. Forced on King John Of England by his barons (nobles)
* King John promised not to impose new taxes or loans without the consent of a committee of barons.
* King John also promised that no freeman would be imprisoned or lose his property or be otherwise punished except after a trial by jury in accordance with the law of the land.
* Basis for trial by jury/ fair and speedy trial.

**Mayflower Compact/English Bill of Rights:**

* The Mayflower Compact is to self government as the English Bill of Rights is to the guarantee of certain individual rights

**Consent of the Governed:**

* Governments get their power from the public
* “…That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed… right of the people to alter or to abolish it…”

**Vocabulary:**

* **Assent:** Approval; agreement.
* **Consent of the governed:** People are the source of any and all government power.
* **Grievance:** An official statement of complaint.
* **Tyranny:** A cruel and oppressive government; a power exercised without legal right.
* **Unalienable rights:** Rights that cannot be taken away- life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.