

Patrick Henry

“The Voice of the American Revolution”



“Every great movement must have a variety of leaders to make it successful, and so it was with the American Revolution. Thomas Jefferson was the philosopher of the revolution, Samuel Adams, the political organizer, George Washington, the military genius, and Patrick Henry, the orator.”
~Philip G. Davidson, Former President, University of Louisville



Biography of Patrick Henry

Patrick Henry (1736-1799) was an eloquent orator and motivational leader at the time of the Revolutionary War. He was a great American patriot, a strong believer in citizens' rights, and a prominent spokesman for independence from England. Protesting against British tyranny, Patrick Henry is immortalized as the man who said, "I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

Patrick Henry was born near Richmond, Virginia on May 29, 1736. He was the second of ten brothers and sisters. Visitors to Richmond can see the church where Patrick Henry worshiped and places where he made some of his famous speeches. Henry's fiery and passionate speaking style was a departure from traditional oratory with its classical allusions; it was more like the dramatic preaching of evangelical ministers during the Great Awakening of the 1730's-40's.

At the age of ten, Patrick was making slow progress in the study of reading, writing and arithmetic at a small country school. So for the next five years, young Patrick was tutored by his father who was a surveyor and his uncle who was a minister. Patrick learned mathematics, Latin and Greek, but his favorite subject was history. He would read and re-read books about Greece, Rome, England, and the American colonies.

Patrick Henry was not interested in formal education and went to work at the age of fifteen. When he was eighteen, Patrick married sixteen-year-old Sarah Shelton. They had six children but sadly she died in an insane asylum at the young age of 21. Patrick Henry and his second wife, Dorothea Dandridge, had 11 children.

Patrick Henry tried farming and managing a general store but failed at both of these occupations. At the age of 24 he decided to study law, teaching himself by reading law books. After just six weeks of applying himself to this endeavor, Patrick took the oral bar examination and passed it. Soon he achieved great acclaim as a lawyer. Within the first three years he had already handled more than 1,000 cases and won most of them.

In 1765, Patrick Henry was elected to the House of Burgesses, which was the lawmaking body of Virginia. While there, Henry was one of the first to speak in public on the rights of the colonies to rule themselves. Henry's moving speeches brought unity to the

colonists and stirred them to action against the British. Henry said that they could never be free under an English government, and he persuaded Virginia to get ready for war.

The colonies did eventually go to war against England, and they became independent states. Henry was elected as the first Governor of Virginia and served for five terms. A constitution was written to establish a government for the United States. Henry opposed the adoption of the Constitution because he thought it gave too much power to the central government while taking away too many freedoms and rights from the states. This position would be taken later by his home state of Virginia at the start of the Civil War.

Patrick Henry was adamant in demanding the protection of basic individual liberties. After the U.S. Constitution was approved, he fought tirelessly to see that the Bill of Rights – the first ten amendments – were added. These were based on the Virginia Declaration of Rights. Historians say that the freedoms in the Bill of Rights would never have come about without Henry’s work.

Patrick Henry served many terms in the Virginia legislature but always refused to work for the national government. He turned down many important posts, including U.S. Secretary of State and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. In his later years, poor health forced Henry to retire from public service but he resumed his private legal practice. On March 4, 1799, Henry made his last public speech at the Charlotte County Courthouse. Patrick Henry died on June 6, 1799, at his home on Red Hill Plantation.

Patrick Henry came of age at the same time our great nation was emerging from British rule. He overcame his own failures to become a great statesman and an active participant in every phase of America’s founding. We will always remember Patrick Henry for his gift of colorful speaking, and his passion for liberty and self-government. Patrick Henry’s immortal words have been described as “the most famous cry for freedom in the world.”

A college in Purcellville, Virginia is named in honor of Patrick Henry. The college was established in 2000 by Michael Farris, founder of the Home School Legal Defense Association. The mission of Patrick Henry College is to train Christian men and women who will lead our nation and shape our culture with timeless biblical values and fidelity to the spirit of the American founding. Patrick Henry himself would be honored to know that their speech and debate program is one of the best in the nation.

Patrick Henry Shocked!

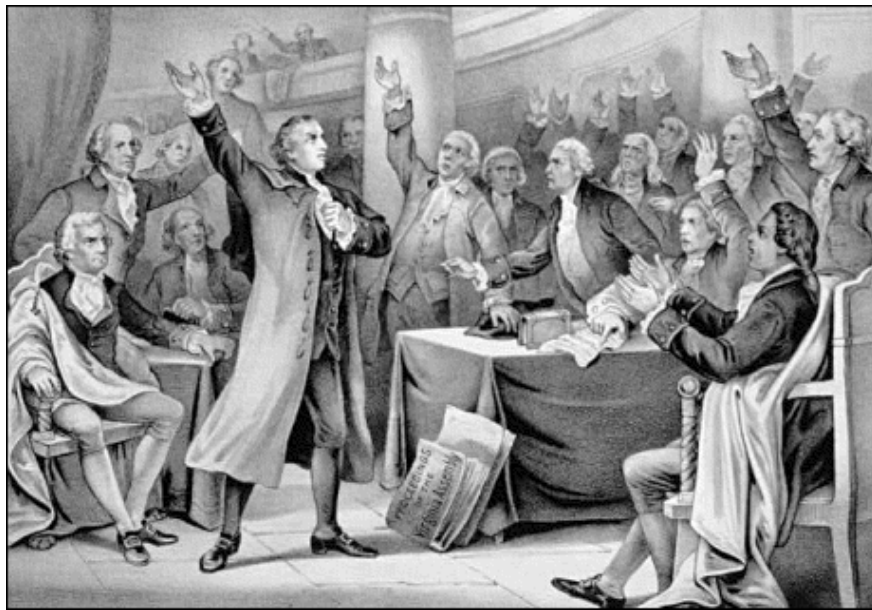
It was March 1775 when Patrick Henry, a young Christian lawyer, rode into the small town of Culpepper, Virginia. He was shocked by what he saw! There, in the middle of the town square, was a man tied to a whipping post, his back laid bare and bloody. He had been scourged mercilessly by whips laced with metal.

Patrick Henry turned to someone and asked what the man had done to deserve such a punishment. The reply given him was that the man being scourged was a minister who

refused to take a license to preach the gospel. The governor was under orders from King George to compel all preachers to take the license.

The minister believed he had a right from God to freely preach the gospel without having to submit to taking a license from the King of England. He had said, "I am controlled by the Holy Spirit, and authorized by God Almighty, and will not allow you to control me by a license, no matter what you may do to me." For this he was thrown in jail, tried without the benefit of a jury, and scourged so badly that he died.

This was the incident that sparked Patrick Henry to write the famous words which later became the rallying cry of the American Revolution. Modern patriots will find that Patrick Henry's sentiments apply just as well today. His words are immortal and timeless, making the speech as relevant now as it was then.



The LIBERTY OR DEATH speech, a.k.a. THE WAR INEVITABLE speech—

On March 23, 1775, Patrick Henry addressed the Second Virginia Convention at St. John's Church in Richmond. He was 39 years old and had already served in the Virginia colonial legislature for nearly ten years. Peyton Randolph was President of the Virginia Convention. The Convention was attended by 120 delegates including such notable colonial leaders as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Richard Henry Lee. The meeting turned into a series of debates over whether or not to arm the colony of Virginia as a defense against possible incursions by the British army. Many at the meeting did not want to oppose the mother country, instead favoring conciliatory measures. In Patrick Henry's stirring and persuasive speech, he forcefully urged them that they needed to arm themselves and be prepared to oppose King George III. He spoke without any notes in a voice that became louder and louder, climaxing with the now famous ending. Supposedly the crowd then jumped up and shouted "To Arms! To Arms!" As a result, Virginia became the first colony to call for separation from England.

**THE WAR INEVITABLE:
“Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death”**

By Patrick Henry ~ March 23, 1775

No man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the House. But different men often see the same subject in different lights; and, therefore, I hope that it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen, if, entertaining as I do opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I shall speak forth my sentiments freely and without reserve.

This is no time for ceremony. The question before the House is one of awful moment to this country. For my own part I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery; and in proportion to the magnitude of the subject ought to be the freedom of the debate. It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at truth, and fulfill the great responsibility which we hold to God and our country. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offense, I should consider myself as guilty of treason towards my country, and of an act of disloyalty towards the majesty of heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings.

Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that siren, till she transforms us into beasts. Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Are we disposed to be of the number of those who, having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation?

For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth -- to know the worst and to provide for it. I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided; and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past. And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British ministry for the last ten years, to justify those hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves and the House?

Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, sir; it will prove a snare to your feet. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss. Ask yourselves how this gracious reception of our petition comports with these warlike preparations which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled that force must be called in to win back our love? Let us not deceive ourselves, sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation -- the last arguments to which kings resort. I ask gentlemen, sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motives for it? Has Great Britain any enemy, in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies?

No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us; they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British ministry have been so long forging. And what have we to oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer on the subject? Nothing.

We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication? What terms shall we find which have not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, sir, deceive ourselves longer.

Sir, we have done everything that could be done to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and Parliament.

Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne. In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. There is no longer any room for hope.

If we wish to be free -- if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending -- if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained, we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us!

They tell us, sir, that we are weak -- unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance, by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot?

Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of the means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us.

The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable -- and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come!

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, "Peace! Peace!" -- but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!

Vocabulary

Find and underline the following words in “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death,” while studying their definitions in the context of the speech.

inevitable - unavoidable
patriotism - love of one’s country, the characteristic of a good citizen
gentlemen - men of refinement or high class
reserve - restraint; holding back words
ceremony - an outward form of civility established by order or custom
treason - betraying (going against) one’s own country
revere - to regard with fear mingled with respect and affection
indulge - to gratify, favor, or withhold restraint from
illusions - deception by which a person is fooled, or his expectations disappointed
arduous - difficult; attended with great labor
temporal - pertaining to the world, as opposed to spiritual
anguish - extreme pain or grief
solace - to take comfort or console
insidious - lying in wait, intended to trap
petition - request
betrayed - delivered into the hands of an enemy in violation of trust
comports - agrees
reconciliation - renewal of friendship after disagreement or enmity
deceive - mislead
implements - tools, vessels, implements
subjugation - the act of subduing and bringing under the power or control of another
resort - to apply or fall back on
martial - warlike; suited to battle
accumulation - an amassing; a collecting together
rivet - to fasten firmly with a metal pin
vain - worthless; fruitless; not effective
entreaty - earnest petition
supplication - earnest prayer
beseech - implore; ask with urgency
avert - to turn from or keep away
remonstrated - to present strong reasons against an act or in opposition to a measure
prostrated - laid at length, laid flat, thrown down
implored - earnestly sought
interposition - intervention; mediation
tyrannical - suiting a tyrant who wields unjust exercise of power
disregarded - neglected; slighted; unnoticed
spurned - rejected
contempt - the state of being despised and hated
inviolate - unhurt, uninjured, unbroken
inestimable - too valuable to be estimated or counted

contending - striving, struggling, debating
arms - weapons of offense and armor for defense
formidable - exciting fear, dread, or apprehension
adversary - an enemy or foe; opponent or antagonist
supinely - carelessly; in a heedless, thoughtless state
delusive - apt to deceive; tending to mislead; deceptive
vigilant - watchful; attentive to discover and avoid danger, or to provide for safety
extenuate - to lessen or diminish, as a crime or guilt
gale - a storm or tempest with strong winds
liberty - freedom from the control of others

Discussion Questions

1. Who was Patrick Henry? Why was his speech so memorable?
2. Patrick Henry was known as a fiery and passionate orator. What do you think made Patrick Henry such a powerful speechmaker? In what ways do people with a talent for “colorful speaking” benefit our society?
3. What was the purpose of Patrick Henry’s speech?
4. Who was Patrick Henry’s audience? Were his words appropriate for this audience? Why or why not? Considering his audience, why does he begin his speech the way he does?
5. On what date did Patrick Henry give this speech? Was it before or after the Declaration of Independence was written?
6. Remember that Patrick Henry was not addressing fellow rebels at a secret meeting; he was making a bold public statement in front of the Virginia assembly. At that time, treason found much quicker justice. In fact, there were several calls for Patrick Henry's head during the speech, but he kept going. What does this say about his character? Have you ever courageously stood up for your convictions?
7. To whom is Patrick Henry referring when he says “Mr. President”?
8. What is meant by the phrase “awful moment”? Has America had to face any other “awful moments”? Have you personally ever faced an “awful moment”?
9. Patrick Henry states that, should he keep silent through fear of giving offense, he would be guilty of two major offenses. What are they?
10. How many references to slavery can you find in Patrick Henry’s speech? Why do you think he refers to slavery so often?

11. Explain: “We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that siren till she transforms us into beasts.” What does this mean?
12. What are “the last arguments to which kings resort”?
13. What did Britain do that got Patrick Henry so riled up?
14. What efforts have the colonies made to fix the situation with the king? How effective does Patrick Henry feel these efforts have been?
15. Consider the phrase: “They tell us, sir, that we are weak -- unable to cope with so formidable an adversary.” Does this remind you of any Bible heroes? Who?
16. What point does Patrick Henry make against waiting any longer?
17. What advantages/strengths do the colonies have, according to Patrick Henry?
18. If you had been a delegate at the Virginia Convention, would you have agreed or disagreed with what Patrick Henry was saying? Do you think you might have been swayed by his arguments? Why or why not?
19. Would you describe Patrick Henry as a statesman or a politician? Why? What is the difference?
20. Can you think of any modern day scenario(s) to which the sentiments in this speech might apply?

Writing Questions

1. What did you think of Patrick Henry’s speech? Did anything surprise you about it? Write down your impressions of the speech. Note any particular words and phrases that caught your attention or impressed you the most.
2. Paraphrasing a text – rewriting it with different wording – is often used as an educational exercise to reinforce reading comprehension skills. Show that you understand the meaning of Patrick Henry’s speech by paraphrasing it in your own words.
3. Patrick Henry’s speech ended with this famous quote: “Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!” Restate this quotation in your own words, trying to use similarly bold language.
4. Patrick Henry was a great American patriot with a passion for liberty. Write an essay about what it means to be a patriot, and/or what liberty means to you.

Research Questions

1. Patrick Henry was a lawyer, orator, statesman, and the first governor of Virginia. Research these job titles and find out what a person does in each of these jobs.
2. Read about Patrick Henry online or in a book. Write down ten of the most interesting things you learn about him.
3. In the Boston Tea Party, American Colonists protested against taxation without representation by dumping hundreds of tea containers into Boston Harbor. In retaliation, the British Parliament passed a series of Acts aimed at bringing the colonies back into submission to the King. The colonists called these acts “intolerable” and “coercive.” Look up the Intolerable Acts. What was “intolerable” about these acts?
4. Do an internet search for Richmond, Virginia, and St. John’s Church. What interesting facts can you find out about these historically significant places?

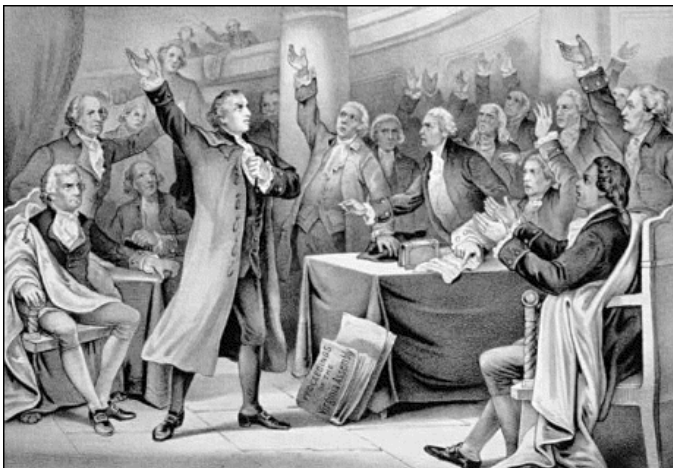
Special Gifts & Talents

The American Revolution depended upon many men with a variety of different talents to make it a success. Match these patriots with the special gifts that allowed them to best contribute to the fight for American independence (hint: see quote on cover page).

1. philosopher and writer
2. military genius; commander
3. political organizer
4. voice of the revolution; orator

Samuel Adams
Patrick Henry
Thomas Jefferson
George Washington

What special gifts do you have? How might your unique talents be put to good use?



Activity

In oral rhetoric, **delivery** refers to the ways in which an orator uses gestures and changes his or her voice (i.e. tone and volume) to accompany the spoken words. Practice reciting the “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death” speech while concentrating on your delivery, considering how Patrick Henry may have done it.

Rhetorical Techniques & Literary Devices

The study of rhetoric can be traced back to classical Greece. Rhetoric is the art or science of persuasion by means of stylistic and structural techniques. Rhetoric involves making strategic choices about what words to use and how to arrange them in order to deliver the most memorable, enjoyable, and persuasive presentation. In addition, many common literary devices are used in speeches as well as in written works.

Alliteration – Repetition of the same letter or sound for emphasis or effect (e.g., “sing a song of sixpence”).

Allusion – A brief reference to a historical or literary figure or event that the target audience would understand and respect. (i.e. the Bible, or Shakespeare).

Analogy – A comparison between two things. A *simile* is a stated comparison of two things using the words “like” or “as” (cheeks like roses), while a *metaphor* is an implied comparison without using the words “like” or “as” (rosy cheeks).

Appeal – An attempt to earn audience approval or agreement by means of persuasive techniques. Three common methods include appeals through *logos* (logic of the argument), *pathos* (appeal to the emotion of the argument), and *ethos* (character or authority of the writer or speaker).

Bandwagon – Appealing to one’s sense of belonging, i.e. “Everyone is doing it and you should too.”

Common Ground – A point at which those in general disagreement can agree, a good point at which to start if the audience is likely to oppose a claim or reject an arguments.

Cause and Effect – An argument that makes claims about real or potential consequences of an action or proposal, saying what will happen if a certain action is taken. A writer or speaker may also argue that the effect of a certain action has a specific cause.

Emotion – Using emotive language and tear-jerking examples to play on the audience’s emotions or try to make them feel guilty.

Example – Using a specific instance or anecdote to illustrate, clarify, or bolster an argument.

Facts and Figures – Quantifiable evidence that is quoted to support a claim. Although statistics can be manipulated to misrepresent the facts, they are usually quite convincing.

Figurative Language – The use of words that say one thing and mean another.

Hyperbole – Exaggeration used to emphasize a point, appeal to emotion, or get attention.

Imperative – A sentence that expresses a request or command that makes the audience feel like they should do what you are suggesting.

Irony – Stating the opposite of what is really meant, in a funny or shocking way.

Machine-Gunning – Machine-gunning is the opposite of the Rule of Three. In this case, you quickly run off a long list of points to emphasize how many reasons there are for or against an issue. You don’t care how many the audience remembers; you just want to impress them with the number of items on your list.

Onomatopoeia – Words that imitate a natural sound (BANG, WHAM, POW) are all great for emphasizing key points and waking up the audience.

Paradox – A seeming contradiction that contains some truth (“so close and yet so far”).

Parallelism – Repetition of a word or grammatical structure for emphasis and effect. Done well, parallelism imparts grace and power to a message: “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.”

Personification – Giving human qualities to non-human things (e.g., referring to a ship as “she”).

Report – Using words like “we,” “us,” or “all of us” (instead of “you”) builds a bridge between you and your audience, as in “We all know what problems that can cause, don’t we?” In other words, “We’re all in the same boat.”

Rebuttal – An argument that refutes an opponent’s argument.

Repetition – The conscious and purposeful replication of words or phrases in order to make a point. “Duty does not trump honesty. Duty does not trump common sense. And duty, my friends, does not trump morality.”

Rhetorical Question – A question that is not meant to be answered but to be pondered (i.e., “Do you think this is fair?”).

Rule of Three – Experienced public speakers all know the power of the Rule of Three. Lists of three are more memorable than lists of four or more. (Example: “A good presentation should be concise, informative, and memorable.”)

Slanted Language – The use of words packed with emotion to invoke a strong reaction from the audience and make people feel a certain way. *Positive* slanted language includes words like smooth, fresh, and crystal clear. *Negative* slanted words include overdue, crowded, and noisy.

Symbolism – Use of an image or object to represent an idea or something else. A motif is a symbol carried throughout an entire work, such as the One Ring in *Lord of the Rings*.

Testimony – Using the words or ideas of an expert or someone who has authority, to give an argument greater credibility.

Assignments

1. See if you can identify some examples of rhetorical techniques and literary devices that are used in Patrick Henry’s speech. Write the selected words or phrases on a separate piece of paper, along with the name of the technique or device that you think it exemplifies.
2. Patrick Henry had a marvelous command of the English language. Make a list of words, phrases, and action verbs from the speech that struck you as especially strong or colorful.
3. Which of Patrick Henry’s phrases remind you of Scripture verses? (Hint: Hebrews 1:3, Mark 8:18, Psalm 119:105, Psalm 140:5, Luke 22:48, Ezekiel 7:25)

The Bill of Rights

It was Patrick Henry who demanded that a “Bill of Rights” be part of the Constitution to guarantee the protection of basic individual liberties. After the U.S. Constitution – the supreme law of the land – was approved, he fought tirelessly to see that the first ten amendments – the Bill of Rights – were added. Historians say that the freedoms in the Bill of Rights would never have come about without Patrick Henry.

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

[Prohibits the establishment of a state religion and guarantees the freedom to practice one's religion; protects freedom of speech and the press, as well as the right to assemble peaceably and petition for changes in the government.]

Amendment II

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

[Protects the right of people to have weapons and own guns. A militia is a military force of ordinary citizens who are not part of a regular army.]

Amendment III

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

[The government may not house soldiers in citizen's homes during peacetime without their consent or as set down in law during wartime.]

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

[The government may not search or take a person's property without a warrant; probable cause is required to get a warrant to conduct a search, and the warrant must describe the place to be searched and what is to be seized.]

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

[Provides for indictment by a grand jury for capital or serious crimes; protects against *double jeopardy* (a person cannot be tried twice for the same crime) and *self-incrimination* (a person cannot be forced to testify against himself); guarantees due process and *eminent domain* (compensation must be paid for private property taken for public use).]

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

[A person charged with a crime still has rights, such as the right to a speedy trial by an impartial jury, to be informed about charges, to confront witnesses and present witnesses in defense, and to have representation by an attorney.]

Amendment VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

[Provides the right for a trial by jury in most civil cases.]

Amendment VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

[Protects the people against excessive bail and fines, as well as the infliction of cruel and unusual punishment.]

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

[This amendment recognizes that the people may be entitled to other rights not covered in the first eight amendments, and that the people are not to be denied any rights not specifically mentioned in the Constitution.]

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

[Any power not granted to the federal government nor denied to the states in the Constitution, belong to the states or to the people. These powers are known as *reserved powers*.]

Word Match

A **license** can be used as an arbitrary control by government to turn a **right** into a **privilege**. The **freedom** to do an act thus becomes illegal without permission, making a crime out of what ordinarily would not be a crime. Match each word with its meaning:

freedom
license
privilege
right

a special favor granted to certain people given by law, as in a bill, to all people
liberty; the absence of control by others
official permission from an authority

Bill of Rights: Study Questions

1. What is the supreme law of the United States?
2. What is the Bill of Rights?
3. What is an amendment?
4. What are the first ten amendments of the Constitution called?
5. Can you name five rights guaranteed by the First Amendment?
6. Can you name some other rights protected by the Bill of Rights?
7. What is freedom of religion? How is the freedom of religion different than freedom from religion?
8. Many people believe that the First Amendment of the Constitution means “separation of church and state,” mandating the avoidance of all religious displays on public property and banning references to God in any publicly sponsored forum. However, the words “separation of church and state” do not in fact appear anywhere in the Constitution. Explain why or why not you think the First Amendment can be interpreted in this way.
9. Patrick Henry believed that each individual is born with certain inalienable (incapable of being surrendered) rights. The idea of natural God-given rights that no government should be allowed to take away is central to the Declaration of Independence (see excerpt below). Explain the difference between a right and a privilege. Give some examples of each.

“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, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness...That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.” ~*Preamble to the Declaration of Independence*

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