**A Man with Many Hats**

John Locke was born in England in 1632. Locke considered becoming a minister, started his career as a doctor, but ended up as a philosopher and political scientist. He had many interests and produced a number of writings that influenced future leaders. One of those leaders was Thomas Jefferson, who helped America gain independence from Britain nearly 150 years after Locke was born. Jefferson studied Locke’s writings, and Locke’s ideas show up in our own Constitution.

**The Blank Slate**

One of Locke’s books, called An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, took over 18 years to write! In it, he says that people are born with a mind like a tabula rasa, which means a blank slate or page. During life, that blank slate gets filled up with the things a person experiences with the five senses. He said people learn and develop differently because they are exposed to different things. The one thing people have in common is that they are human and share a human nature that is the same for all people everywhere.

**Natural Rights**

Locke imagined a set of natural rights that human beings share. These are the right to life, liberty, and property. Life refers to the fact that people want to live and will fight to survive. Liberty means that people want to be as free as possible to make their own decisions. Property represents the fact that people want to own things that help them survive, such as land, food, and tools. Locke believed these rights aren’t given to people—people are born with them.

**Why do we need a government?**

Locke also wondered what life would be like if people didn’t have a government. In this state of nature there would be no rules, no one in charge, and no way for people to protect their natural rights. He believed the purpose of government is to end the state of nature and give people certain protections. Most importantly, Locke believed governments should protect people’s natural rights.

**Social Contract**

Locke believed a government can only be legitimate, or valid, if it is based on a social contract with citizens. A contract is an agreement between people in which both sides agree to something in order to reach a shared goal. A social contract happens between a government and its people. The people agree to give up some freedoms if the government agrees to protect everyone’s rights. If the government fails to deliver, the people revolt—like the colonists did during the American Revolution.

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| **Concept** | **Evidence from Text** | **Definition in your own words** | **Visual Representation** |
| **Natural Rights** |  |  |  |
| **Social Contract** |  |  |  |

**According to John Locke, how are the concept of social contract and the purpose of government related? What evidence in the text led you to your answer?**

**Vocabulary Graphic Organizer** *Directions: while you read identify and write down the evidence from the text that defines the term. Define the term in your own words and create a picture, symbol or visual representation of the term.*

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| **Evidence from Text** | **Answer** |
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**Additional Vocabulary Terms in Reading**

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| Natural Law (State of Nature) |  |
| Consent of the Governed (Social Contract) |  |