SS.7.C.1.4
Analyze the ideas (natural rights, role of the government) and complaints set forth in the Declaration of Independence.

SS.7.C.1.4 Benchmark Clarification 1: Students will explain the concept of natural rights as expressed in the Declaration of Independence.

The writers of the Declaration of Independence included Enlightenment ideas in the document. Natural rights represented much of their focus and stood as a primary reason for declaring independence. The Declaration of Independence stated that natural rights were not given by government; natural rights were given by "Nature and Nature's God."

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**Declaration of Independence** - a document written in 1776 that listed the basis for democratic government and the grievances of the colonists

**Enlightenment** - a period in European history when many educated people stressed the importance of learning and reasoning; education was considered the key to understanding and solving society's problems

**natural rights** - the belief that individuals are born with basic rights that cannot be taken away by governments