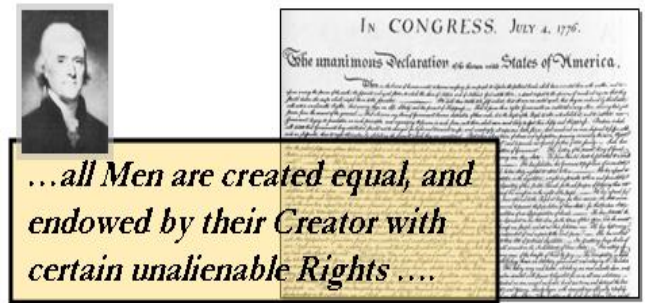


#### 4-4.3 How does the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights protect the rights of people living in America?

##### Inequality in a New Nation

Think back to the time period of the Declaration of Independence, was *everyone* treated equal? Did *everyone* have unalienable rights? While the **United States Constitution** and the **Bill of Rights** emphasized the importance for **citizens** to be actively **involved** in their **government**, these documents only **protected** the rights of **white, male property owners**, and not those of **slaves, women, and Native Americans**. Ideals of **equality** were described in the Declaration of Independence,

including 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.” Despite the fact that the “men” referred to in the Declaration of Independence actually meant all mankind, **white, male property owners** were the only group of people whose rights were actually protected. In fact, neither the words “**slave**” nor “**woman**” were used in the writing of the Constitution. However, the Constitution specifically referred to Native Americans by giving “Congress the power to regulate commerce with the Indian tribes.” **Native Americans** were treated like a separate country at that time. They were not considered American citizens and their rights were not protected. On the other hand, historians are unsure why **women** were missing from the Constitution. They believe that women were either a **forgotten** part of society, or because they were presumed to be a part of society that the government protects. Regardless, **women’s rights as equal citizens** were not enforced until **19th amendment** was passed in 1920, which gave women the right to vote.



##### Slavery in a New Nation

The existence of **slavery** was **present** and implied in the Constitution. In the Constitution, slaves were mentioned as “**other persons**” in one context and “**fugitive laborers**” in another. **Slavery** was a major source of **debate** between the supporters of the United States who were trying to create a government that would satisfy all regions of the new nation. The people in the **north** wanted to **abolish slavery**, while the people in the **south** wanted to **continue** the practice of **slavery**. **Slavery** would be a major issue in the new nation for several years. The Constitution stated that the **international slave trade** would not stop for at least **two decades**. It also said that the **federal government** was directed to help in the **return of runaway slaves** throughout the country. While **Northern** states slowly began **emancipating** their **slaves** because they were **not economically dependent** on slave labor, African Americans were still **discriminated** against in the Northern states. Often they were the **last hired** and the **first fired** from a job. They were **denied access** to some **schools** and lived in **segregated** African American communities. In the South, although some slave owners freed their slaves by choice, many southern states **did not allow emancipation** and slavery became even more established.

##### The Three-Fifths Compromise

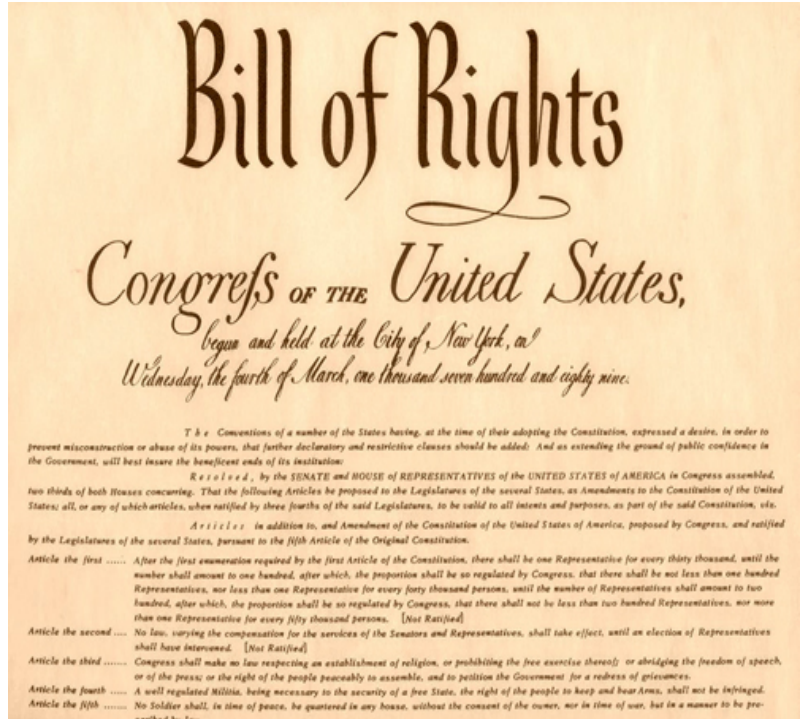
A new question arose when the **Constitution** determined that **representation** in the House of Representatives would be based on population. Would **slaves** be counted as part of the **population** for the purposes of **representation** (as **people**) and taxation (as **property**)? The people in the **south** wanted **all slaves** to be counted as **people** because they had **many slaves** and knew it would **increase** their **population** and therefore they would have **more representation** in the House of Representatives. The **north** did **not** want **all slaves** to be counted as **people** because they had **less slaves** and knew it would give the southern slave states more representation in the House of Representatives. To resolve this issue and in attempt to satisfy northerners and southerners, the **Three-Fifths Compromise** was created. The **Three-Fifths Compromise** stated that **slaves** were to be counted as **3/5 of a person** for the purposes of **representation** and **taxation**. For example, if a state’s population had 5,000 slaves, 3,000 of them counted as people in the state’s population for the purposes of representation and taxation.



#### 4-4.3 How does the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights protect the rights of people living in America?

##### The Bill of Rights

The **Bill of Rights** is the name given for the **first ten amendments** of the Constitution. An **amendment** is a change or **improvement** added to the Constitution. The Bill of Rights was added to **protect** individual **rights** and freedoms that were **not addressed** in the original Constitution. When the Constitution was in the process of being **ratified** (signed and becoming officially valid) some Americans were concerned that the Constitution gave the **national government too much power**. These people became known as the **Anti-Federalists**. Anti-Federalists would not approve the Constitution until the **amendments** protecting the rights of individuals against a powerful national government were promised and **added** to the **Constitution**. Amendments were proposed during the first Congress and sent to the states for **ratification**, or approval. **Ten** of these **amendments** were **ratified** and added to the Constitution, known as the **Bill of Rights**. These amendments continue to guarantee the **rights** of **individuals** and **limit** the **power** of the **national government**. The **Bill of Rights** amendments guaranteed several rights of individuals, including: (These are not the 10 amendments, just some of what they did.)



These amendments continue to guarantee the **rights** of **individuals** and **limit** the **power** of the **national government**. The **Bill of Rights** amendments guaranteed several rights of individuals, including: (These are not the 10 amendments, just some of what they did.)

- **Freedom of religion, speech, press and assembly**
- The **right** for citizens to **bear arms**
- **Protection** against troops being **quartered** in private **homes**
- **Safeguards** against **unreasonable searches**
- **Requirement** for **indictment** by a **grand jury** for **major crimes**
- Guarantees a **speedy public trial** and a **trial by jury**
- **Prohibits excessive bail** (the punishment must fit the crime)
- Recognizes that **people have more rights** other than those mentioned in the Bill of Rights
- **Powers** not delegated to the federal government **belong** to the **states** or the **people**

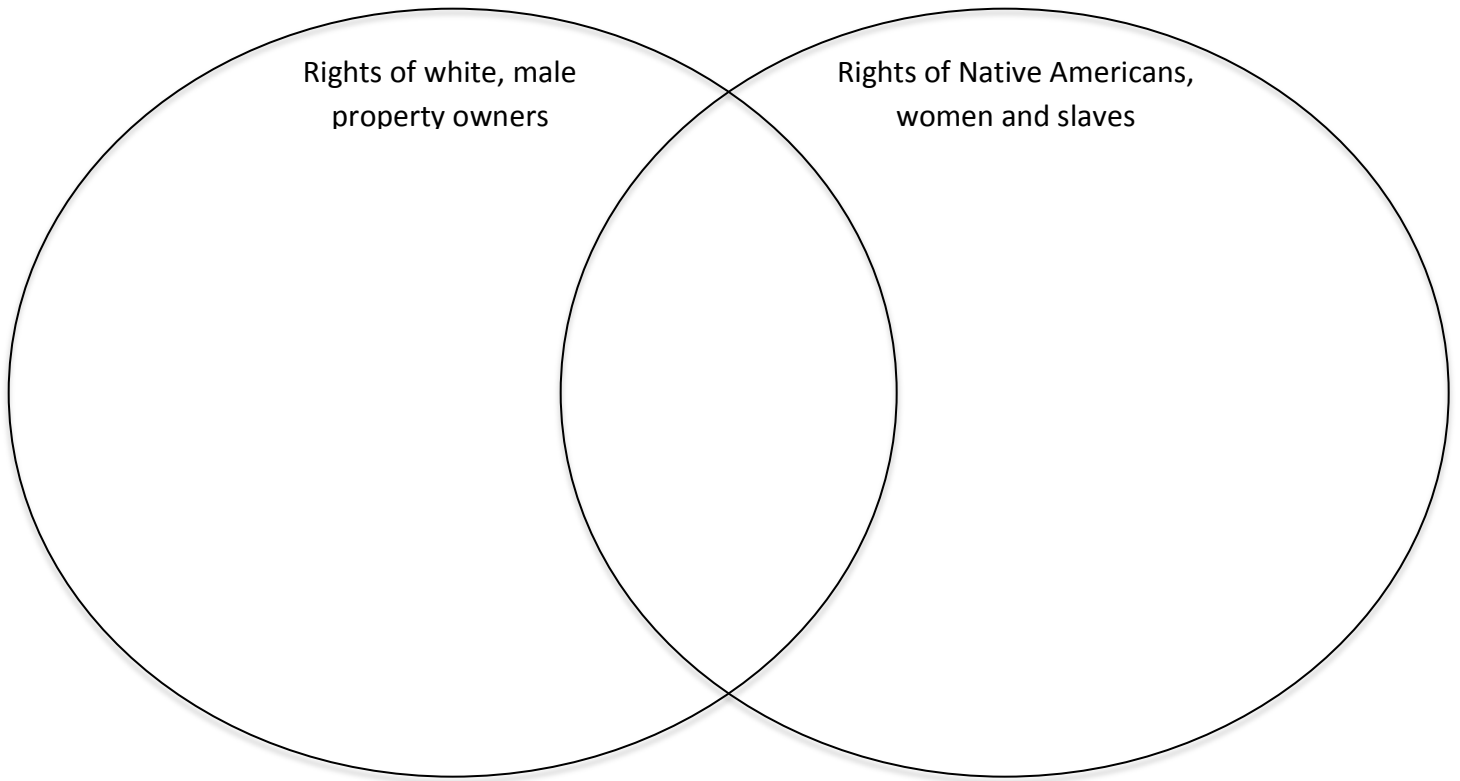
##### Citizen Responsibilities

Besides the rights stated in the first 10 amendments, the American government places important **responsibilities** on its citizens. Some of these responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- **Following rules** and **laws** established by local, state, and federal governments
- **Voting** in elections
- **Paying income taxes** to support local, state, and federal projects
- **Serving** on a **jury** to ensure the right of a fair trial to all individuals



**4-4.3 How does the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights protect the rights of people living in America?**



RIGHTS of American Citizens	RESPONSIBILITIES of American Citizens