**Magna Carta (1215)**

Signed by the King of England, the Magna Carta was the first document to limit the power of England’s monarchy. It established the principle that *rulers are not above the law*, a major step toward **limited government** where people determine the power of government.

1. What was the Magna Carta?
2. Why was it so important?
3. What is an example of how it influences our government today?
4. What problems could arise from the creation of the Magna Carta?
5. Do you think the Magna Carta is a good or a bad thing? Why?
6. How would you have handled the Magna Carta if you were the King of England?
7. What would have been your reaction to the Magna Carta if you were a citizen at the time?
8. What would the world have been like if this had never been created?

**The Virginia House of Burgesses** (1619)

The first example of representative government in America where leaders were elected to make laws. The House of Burgesses was the first **bicameral** legislature, which meant there were two parts.

**Mayflower Compact (1620)**

First agreement for self-government signed by the Pilgrims who arrived in Massachusetts. The compact stated that the Pilgrims would make “just and equal laws” for their new society. The Mayflower Compact was an example of a social contract, which is an agreement between people and the government

**Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (1639)**

The first written constitution in America that established a pattern of securing guaranteed rights. To colonists, this felt like a guarantee that their rights were secure.

**Maryland Toleration Act (1649)**

This act was the first law that guaranteed religious freedom in the colonies. It was originally meant to grant religious tolerance to Christians since Christians at this time were not welcome in the New England colonies so they moved to the Middle colonies, which were known for religious acceptance.

**Zenger Case (1734)**

Peter Zenger was jailed for publishing bad things about the NY governor, but when it was found to be factual, he was released. The Zenger case set a precedent that led to the establishment of freedom of the press and freedom of speech.