DISCUSSION TIPS

While discussing the founding documents DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE and PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION, students might come up with these responses.

**DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**

* all men are created equal
* they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights,(students could be asked to consider if Americans believe that God gives rights, then how can a human based authority over ride that gift)
* among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness(Is it possible to pursue happiness while enslaved?)
* That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men (the reason for government is to protect liberty. If so, should the slave state governments have abolished slavery?)
* deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed (a system of laws is just only if those who are required to obey the laws have consented to the system. Slaves, by definitions, cannot consent.).
* whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it (“ends” refers to the reason for government, which according to the Declaration, is the preservation of liberty. Therefore, a system that denies liberty should be changed or abolished).
* when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government. (a people being abused has the DUTY to throw off the abusive system)

**PREAMBLE**

* establish Justice(Students could be challenged to define “justice”. Slave

holders considered the system to be just because they believed that

slavery was biblically ordained and based on natural differences

between people.)

* secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity