B.
1. The Declaration of Independence states, “All men are created equal.”
2. All people have the inalienable rights.
3. Slavery abridges those rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

**Gouverneur Morris**

Handout A—Gouverneur Morris (1752–1816)

1. As a teenager, Morris's right arm was badly burned when a pot of scalding water overturned on him. The arm was badly crippled for the rest of his life. Morris lost his left leg after a carriage accident in Philadelphia. His left ankle was caught in the spokes of a moving carriage's wheel. Doctors amputated the leg just below the knee.

2. Aggravated by Congress' failure to support the troops, Morris began to hint to some that the Continental Army itself might employ force if Congress did not act. In March 1783, the officers of the Continental Army assembled at a barn in Newburgh, New York. Talk of treason was in the air, as many officers whispered about marching on Philadelphia. Fortunately for the republic, Washington himself quelled the conspiracy by appearing at the gathering.

3. At the Convention, Morris became a leader of the nationalist bloc. He was the only delegate to make a lengthy speech against the institution of slavery. Morris was appointed to the Committee of Style as the debates ended. Morris worked on the document for four days to fashion a finished product that was more concise and clear than the draft given to him. He also glossed the wording of the Constitution so as to enhance the power of the new federal government. Most significantly, Morris began the Preamble with the phrase, “We the people,” to signal that the new government was not the creature of the states, but the handiwork of the entire nation.

4. Some students may list the following as Morris's shortcomings: his propensity to engage in affairs; his encouraging the Continental Army to consider using force against Congress; his dismissive attitude toward the lower classes, demonstrated by his calling the people “reptiles.” Students might list the following as Morris's strengths: his charm and intelligence; his moral vision, shown in his denunciation of slavery at the Philadelphia convention; his political skill, evidenced by the use of his position as writer of the Constitution to get what he wanted; his bravery during the Reign of Terror in Paris; his patriotism, demonstrated by his service to his state and country.

5. Some students will say yes, Morris had fought to make the federal government supreme over the states at the Constitutional Convention, yet secession contradicts this principle. Other students will say no, that states always retain the right of secession; this right is not related to the strength of the central government.

**James Otis**

Handout A—James Otis (1725–1783)

1. Writs of assistance were search warrants that gave customs officials broad authority to inspect ships, warehouses, and even private homes. Officials did not have to present evidence to a judge before a search was conducted. They also did not have to specify what they were looking for. Writs of assistance soon became one of the chief complaints of the colonists against the British government.

2. In defending the liberty of his fellow colonists, Otis appealed to both natural and English rights. He asserted that every man possessed inalienable rights of