Directions: Using Handout A, context clues and/or a dictionary, write a short definition for each of the following words. Then answer the questions that follow.

Vocabulary:
1. liberal: ______________________________________________________________
2. liberty of conscience: ____________________________________________________
3. immunities: ____________________________________________________________
4. indulgence: ____________________________________________________________
5. inherent: _____________________________________________________________
6. natural rights: _________________________________________________________
7. bigotry: ______________________________________________________________
8. sanction: _____________________________________________________________
9. persecution: __________________________________________________________
10. demean: _____________________________________________________________
11. effectual: _____________________________________________________________
12. merit: _______________________________________________________________

Context Questions:
1. Who wrote this document? ______________________________________________
2. When was this document written? _________________________________________
3. What was the purpose of this document? ____________________________________

Comprehension Questions:
1. What does Washington believe will maintain Americans as a “great and happy people”? ____________________________________________________________
2. What does Washington declare that all in America possess? _______________________
3. Put the following excerpt of Washington’s letter into your own words: “It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights.” ____________________________________________________________
4. Put the following excerpt of Washington’s letter into your own words: “… the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance … ”

___________________________________________________________________

5. What, according to Washington, are the only requirements of citizenship?

___________________________________________________________________

Critical Thinking Questions:

1. Keeping in mind that “toleration” refers to a government policy, was Washington correct that we have moved from religious toleration to religious liberty?

___________________________________________________________________

2. Is there any significance in the fact that Washington closed his letter with a prayer?

___________________________________________________________________

3. One historian has described Washington’s letter as articulating the “conscience of a nation” with respect to religious liberty. How would you assess that claim? Explain.

___________________________________________________________________

4. Religious conflict has been prevalent and bloody throughout world history. Why do you think that, with a few exceptions, Americans of various faiths have been able to live side by side in peace? Explain.

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