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| **Document** | **Declaration of Independence** | **Articles of**  **Confederation** | **Constitution** | **Bill of Rights** |
| ***When was it written?***  ***date/context*** | July 4, 1776 during the American Revolution | Adopted in 1777 during American Revolution | Sept. 1787- May 1790, After the Articles of Confed. failed | 1791, When NC and RI refused to ratify the Constitution. |
| ***Why was it written?*** | To declare freedom for all the colonies. To tell the king their grievances. | To develop a new form of government where the federal power was limited. | To take the place of the Articles. To strengthen the federal gov’t and make powers more equal. | To specify/protect the rights of the citizens. |
| ***Other***  ***important information:*** | The 13 colonies were not free until end of Revolution | Central (Federal) Gov’t was too weak. States had most of the power. | There are 7 articles (sections).  “The supreme law of the land”- It has more power than state constitutions | There are 17 other amendments after these 10 for a total of 27. |

**Key Documents of American Government**