**Assessment Grade 7 – 11: Question # 1: What does the text say?**

Students read the following passage, *Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution,* and write a summary that includes:

The central idea and evidence, including key ideas, to support conclusions drawn from the passage

**Monk, Linda R. *Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution.* New York: Hyperion, 2003. (2003) From “We the People … ”**

The first three word of the Constitution are the most important. They clearly state that the people—not the king, not the legislature, not the courts—are the true rulers in American government. This principle is known as popular sovereignty. But who are “We the People”? This question troubled the nation for centuries. As Lucy Stone, one of America’s first advocates for women’s rights, asked in 1853, “We the People”? Which ‘We the People’? The women were not included.” Neither were white males who did not own property, American Indians, or African Americans—slave or free.

Justice Thurgood Marshall, the first African American on the Supreme Court, described the limitation: For a sense of the evolving nature of the Constitution, we need look no further than the first three words of the document’s preamble: ‘We the People.’ When the Founding Fathers used this phrase in 1787, they did not have in mind the majority of America’s citizens . . . The men who gathered in Philadelphia in 1787 could not . . . have imagined, nor would they have accepted, that the document they were drafting would one day be construed by a Supreme court to which had been appointed a woman and the descendant of an African slave.

Through the Amendment process, more and more Americans were eventually included in the Constitution’s definition of “We the People.” After the Civil War, the Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment gave African Americans citizenship, and the Fifteenth Amendment gave black men the vote. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote nationwide, and in 1971, the Twenty-sixth Amendment extended suffrage to eighteen-year-olds.

**Summary Rubric**

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| **CC Reading Anchor Standards** | **3 Complete** | **2 Partial** | **1 Minimal** | **Score** |
| ***1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific***  ***textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.*** | **Reading Anchor # 1**  Response:   * states what the text says explicitly.   (3 points)   * makes logical inferences and cites specific textual evidence to support conclusions drawn from the text. (3 points) | **Reading Anchor #1**  Response:   * includes much of what the text says explicitly.   (2 points)   * makes some logical inferences and cites general textual evidence to support some of the conclusions drawn from the text. (2 points) | **Reading Anchor #1**  Response:   * includes little of what the text says explicitly.   (1 point)   * makes few logical inferences and gives little support drawn from the text.   (1 point) | **\_\_/6 pts.** |
| ***2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting***  ***details and ideas.*** | **Reading Anchor #2**  Response summarizes using:   * clearly identified central or main ideas.   (3 points )   * supports central ideas well with key details ideas from the text.   (3 points) | **Reading Anchor #2**  Response summarizes using:   * partially or ineffectively identified central or main ideas.   (2 points)   * supports central ideas with some details and ideas from the text.   (2 points) | **Reading Anchor #2**  Response summarizes using:   * inaccurately identified central or main ideas.   (1 point)   * supports central ideas with few details and ideas from the text.   (1 point) | **\_\_/6 pts.**  **Total**  \_\_/12pts. |

Summary

The most important three words of the Constitution are “We the People.” These words established popular sovereignty. Over the decades these words have increasingly included more of the citizens of the United States. This has happened through the process of Amendments to the Constitution. Through this process the right to vote has been extended in the following order to African American males Woman, and Eighteen year-olds. This was probably not what the “founding fathers” imagined when they wrote the three words.