John Locke (1632-1704) was an English philosopher regarded as one of the most influential political thinkers. His writings influenced American revolutionaries and his ideas are reflected in the United States Declaration of Independence. This is why we are reading his ideas; they directly affected the beginnings of the United States.

As I have shown, man was born with a right to perfect freedom, and with an uncontrolled enjoyment of all the rights and privileges of the law of nature, equally with any other man or men in the world. So he has by nature a power not only
- to preserve his property, that is,
- his life,
- liberty and
- possessions, against harm from other men, but
- to judge and punish breaches of the law of nature by others—punishing in the manner he thinks the offence deserves, even punishing with death crimes that he thinks are so dreadful as to deserve it.

But no political society can exist or survive without having in itself the power to preserve the property—and therefore to punish the offences—of all the members of that society; and so there can’t be a political society except where every one of the members has given up this natural power, passing it into the hands of the community in all cases.... With all private judgments of every particular member of the society being excluded, the community comes to be the umpire. It acts in this role
- according to settled standing rules, impartially, the same to all parties; acting
- through men who have authority from the community to apply those rules. This ‘umpire’ settles all the disputes that may arise between members of the society concerning any matter of right, and punishes offences that any member has committed against the society, with penalties that the law has established.

This makes it easy to tell who are and who aren’t members of a political society.

Those who
- are united into one body with a common established law and judiciary to appeal to, with authority to decide controversies and punish offenders,
- are in civil society with one another; whereas those who have no such common appeal (I mean: no such appeal here on earth)
- are still in the state of nature, each having to judge and to carry out the sentence, because there isn’t anyone else to do those things for him.
That’s how it comes about that the commonwealth has
- the power of making laws: that is,
- the power to set down what punishments are appropriate for what crimes that members of the society commit; and
- the power of war and peace: that is, the power to punish any harm done to any of its members by anyone who isn’t a member; all this being done for the preservation of the property of all the members of the society, as far as is possible. Every man who has entered into civil society has thereby relinquished his power to punish offences against the law of nature on the basis of his own private judgment,
- giving it to the legislature in all cases; and along with that he has also
given to the commonwealth a right to call on him to employ his force for the carrying out of its judgments (which are really his own judgments, for they are made by himself or by his representative).

So we have the distinction between the

- legislative and
- executive powers of civil society. The former are used to judge, by
- standing laws, how far offences committed within the commonwealth are to be punished; the latter are used to determine, by
- occasional judgments based on particular circumstances, how far harms from outside the commonwealth are to be vindicated.

Each branch of a commonwealth’s power can employ all the force of all its members, when there is a need for it.

1. **RI2: Summary and Central Idea: Summarize Locke’s beliefs about freedom.**
2. **RI2: Summary and Central Idea: PART A: According to paragraph 1, what does Locke believe a man is entitled to?**
   a. Enjoyment of his own life under the law of nature.
   b. Enough property to live upon with guarantee no one will judge them.
   c. Possessions to survive by throughout a lifetime.
   d. The right to protect their freedom and possessions.
3. **RI3: PART B: Which of the following quotations from the document best offers Locke’s FURTHER opinion on the above?**
   a. “even punishing with death crimes that he thinks are so dreadful as to deserve it”
   b. “But no political society can exist or survive without having in itself—the power to preserve the property—and therefore to punish the offences—of all the members of that society.”
   c. “As I have shown, man was born with a right to perfect freedom, and with an uncontrolled enjoyment of all the rights and privileges of the law of nature, equally with any other man or men in the world.”
   d. “This makes it easy to tell who are and who aren’t members of a political society.”
4. **RI4: PART A: Throughout the passage the use of the word ‘umpire’ is best defined as:**
   a. Mediator
   b. Dictator
   c. Community
   d. Prisoner
5. **RI1: PART B: Which TWO of the following quotes best support the answer to Part A?**
   a. “With all private judgments of every particular member of the society being excluded, the community comes to be the umpire” (Paragraph 2)
   b. “This ‘umpire’ settles all the disputes that may arise between members of the society concerning any matter of right” (Paragraph 2)
   c. “This makes it easy to tell who are and who aren’t members of a political society.” (Paragraph 3)
   d. “So we have the distinction between the legislative and executive powers of civil society.” (Paragraph 5)
6. According to John Locke, how should we structure a nation? Who should have the power?
7. What rights do you feel all people should have? What is the government’s role in terms of protecting those rights?
8. How has this text influenced modern U.S. government?
9. According to this passage, which is more important—freedom or security? Do you agree? Explain your answer.