



The Preamble of the **Declaration of Independence** describes the **natural rights** of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These rights are **unalienable** (cannot be taken away by government).

The natural right to life means that individuals, and not the government, have control over their lives. Limits on this right exist when an individual tries to deny another person their rights.

Liberty means individuals have the right to be free. Being free would later be more fully explained in the **Bill of Rights** with ideas that included freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of religious exercise, and freedom to petition the government. Limits to liberty exist when one person’s liberty prevents another person from having liberty.

Finally, “the pursuit of happiness” is whatever individuals define as making them happy. Individuals have the right to try to achieve goals that will lead to their personal happiness. Again, limits to the pursuit of happiness exist when they interfere with another person’s natural rights.

