Name: James J. Warrington

1.) What does Henry say about the citizenship rights of the colonists?

Henry claims that the British Colonists in America were still British citizen. This citizenship was granted to the colonists on what is called "jus sanguinis" (right of blood). Therefore, though they did not live in Great Britain, nor where were their ancestors necessarily born in Great Britain. The colonists and their decedents were still entitled to the same rights granted to those born, "jus soli" (right of soil), in Great Britain.

2.) How does Henry justify his argument that the taxes are illegal and unjust?

Here Henry uses “stare decisis” (legal precedent) to support his argument. Henry points to what he describes as the characteristic of British freedom which is the foundation of the “ancient Constitution”.

The characteristic here is the ability to levy and collect taxes on people comes from those same people. The exception to this is the case when the taxation comes from people chosen as representatives.

Henry supports this argument with a plea to reason. He asserts that only the people paying the taxes know what they can afford to pay. Also, with the people creating their taxes and paying them. The ability to protest is much easier.

3.) According to Henry, what body or bodies are allowed to tax colonists?

Henry states that the General Assembly (an elected body) is the only body that can levy taxes.

4.) How do Henry's writings connect with the later causes of the Revolutionary War?

First, I believe it is a misnomer to call the American colonists war against the British Empire in the late 1700s as the “American Revolutionary War”. Rather, it is more accurate to describe the war as the “American War for Independence”. A revolution seeks to replace one form of government with a different form of government.

Henry’s reliance on English law shows this was not the case in the American colonies. Henry was requesting that the colonist's rights as English citizens be preserved. Later, a separation notion of what it means to be an American evolves. However, then as is today, it is based on English law and tradition.