

Declaration of Independence for Kids

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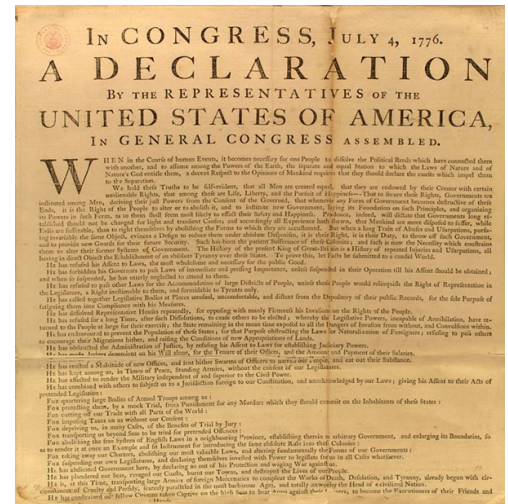
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American Revolution

The Declaration of Independence

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[Printable Reading Comprehension](#) – Print out Declaration of Independence passage with ten multiple choice questions (two total pages). You can find answers [here](#).

[The Secret Rough Draft of the Declaration of Independence](#) – Most people don't know that Committee of Five had a very bad "first day" when trying to author the Declaration of Independence. Help them edit this terrible rough draft and put your stamp on the most important document in the nation's history!

[Writing Prompt – Is Recess an Unalienable Right?](#) This writing prompt requires students to understand the concept of unalienable rights and then to form a persuasive essay on whether recess is a right or privilege that teachers should be able to take away.

[Declaration of Independence Video](#) – 2:37

Who is Your Founding Father?

Revolutionary Flags

Make Your Own Map!

Causes

Proclamation of 1763

Stamp Act

Townshend Act

Boston Massacre

Boston Tea Party/Intolerable Acts

First Continental Congress

Second Continental Congress

Common Sense

Effects

Declaration of Independence

Treaty of Paris

Articles of Confederation

Constitutional Convention

Declaration of Independence

The main purpose of America's Declaration of Independence was to explain to foreign nations why the colonies had chosen to separate themselves from Great Britain. The [Revolutionary War](#) had already begun, and several major battles had already taken place. The American colonies had already cut most major ties to England, and had established their own congress, currency, army, and post office. On June 7, 1776, at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Richard Henry Lee voiced a resolution that the United States ought to be completely free of England's influence, and that all political ties between the two countries should be dissolved. Congress agreed and began plans to publish a formal declaration of independence and appointed a committee of five members to draft the declaration.

Thomas Jefferson was chosen to draft the letter – which he did in a single day. Four other members, Roger Sherman, Robert Livingston, [Benjamin Franklin](#) and [John Adams](#) were part of the committee to help Jefferson. In the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson explained that a body of people have a right to change governments if that government becomes oppressive (unfair and controlling). He further explained that governments fail when they no longer have the consent of the governed. Since Parliament clearly lacked the consent of the American colonists to govern them, it was no longer legitimate.

The Declaration was presented to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was approved with a few minor changes. Of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence, John Hancock, of Massachusetts was the first.

The Declaration of Independence – July 4, 1776

WHEN in the Course of human Events,

Federalist Papers

Bill of Rights

Federalists vs Republicans

Assumption

French Revolution

Jay Treaty

Citizen Genet

Newspaper Wars

John Adams' Presidency and the XYZ Affair

Major American Wars

French and Indian War

Revolutionary War

War of 1812

Mexican-American War

Civil War

it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

WE hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness — That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great- Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

HE has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good.

HE has forbidden his Governors to pass

Laws of immediate and pressing Importance, unless suspended in their Operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

HE has refused to pass other Laws for the Accommodation of large Districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature, a Right inestimable to them, and formidable to Tyrants only.

HE has called together Legislative Bodies at Places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the Depository of their public Records, for the sole Purpose of fatiguing them into Compliance with his Measures.

HE has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly Firmness his Invasions on the Rights of the People.

HE has refused for a long Time, after such Dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of the Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the Dangers of Invasion from without, and the Convulsions within.

HE has endeavoured to prevent the Population of these States; for that Purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their Migrations hither, and raising the Conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

HE has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

HE has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the Tenure of their Offices, and the Amount and Payment of their Salaries.

HE has erected a Multitude of new Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harrass our People, and eat out their Substance.

HE has kept among us, in Times of Peace, Standing Armies, without the

consent of our Legislatures.

HE has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

HE has combined with others to subject us to a Jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

FOR quartering large Bodies of Armed Troops among us;

FOR protecting them, by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

FOR cutting off our Trade with all Parts of the World:

FOR imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

FOR depriving us, in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury:

FOR transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended Offences:

FOR abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an arbitrary Government, and enlarging its Boundaries, so as to render it at once an Example and fit Instrument for introducing the same absolute Rules into these Colonies:

FOR taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

FOR suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever.

HE has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

HE has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People.

HE is, at this Time, transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to

complete the Works of Death, Desolation, and Tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation.

HE has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the Executioners of their Friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

HE has excited domestic Insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the Inhabitants of our Frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction, of all Ages, Sexes and Conditions.

IN every stage of these Oppressions we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble Terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated Injury. A Prince, whose Character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the Ruler of a free People.

NOR have we been wanting in Attentions to our British Brethren. We have warned them from Time to Time of Attempts by their Legislature to extend an unwarrantable Jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the Circumstances of our Emigration and Settlement here. We have appealed to their native Justice and Magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the Ties of our common Kindred to disavow these Usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our Connections and Correspondence. They too have been deaf to the Voice of Justice and of Consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the Necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of Mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace, Friends.

WE, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly Publish and Declare, That these United

Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, **FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES**; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political Connection between them and the State of Great-Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as **FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES**, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which **INDEPENDENT STATES** may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

**Declaration of Independence
Video**
