

Annotated Declaration of Independence

- I can analyze a primary source using evidence.
- I can explain the various sections and purposes of the *Declaration of Independence*.
- I can interpret primary sources related to Founding principles.

Directions: Use the graphic organizer to aid your close reading of the *Declaration of Independence*. In the “In my own words” column, rewrite the primary source text in your own words to demonstrate your understanding of it. Additionally, highlight or underline any Founding principles you recognize in the document’s text. You can find a list of the founding principles here: <https://bit.ly/3OKklbd>

Declaration of Independence (1776)

The Second Continental Congress appointed John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston to a committee to draft the *Declaration of Independence* while it considered a resolution for independence offered by Virginia’s Richard Henry Lee. The committee asked Thomas Jefferson to draft a formal *Declaration of Independence* and then edited his work before it was debated and voted upon by Congress. Source: <https://bit.ly/43Qyblw>

Part 1: The Introduction

In this section of the Declaration, the authors explain the causes for separating from Great Britain and becoming an independent nation.

Text	Vocabulary	In my own words
<p>IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.</p> <p>The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America,</p> <p>When in the Course of human events, 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.</p>	<p>unanimous: when two or more people are fully in agreement</p> <p>dissolve: to close down, break up, or disperse an assembly or official body</p> <p>impel: to drive, force, or urge someone to do something</p>	<p>All of the 13 colonies agree to leave Great Britain and no longer be colonies because of their natural rights to govern themselves.</p>

Part 2: The Preamble

The preamble sets the stage for the *Declaration of Independence*. It clearly communicates the natural rights principles, purposes of government, and right of rebellion by the people.

Text	Vocabulary	In my own words
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.	self-evident : not needing to be demonstrated or explained; obvious endowed : to be provided with or given a quality, ability, or asset unalienable : unable to be taken away from or given away liberty : the power to think and act as one sees fit without restraint except by the laws of nature and interfering with someone else's rights	
–That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,	instituted : set in motion or established deriving : to obtain something from consent : permission for something to happen or agreement to do something	
– 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.	institute : set in motion or establish shall : expressing a strong assertion or intention	

Part 3: The Argument

In this section of the Declaration, the Second Continental Congress justifies their separation from Great Britain to protect their rights and liberties.

Text	Vocabulary	In my own words
<p>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.</p>	<p>prudence: practical wisdom that applies reason and other virtues to discern the right course of action in specific situations</p> <p>transient: lasting only for a short time; impermanent</p> <p>hath shewn: another way to say, has shown</p> <p>abolishing: to formally put an end to something</p> <p>accustomed: often used or practiced, customary</p>	
<p>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.</p>	<p>usurpations: seizure and holding (as office, place, or powers) in possession by force or without right</p> <p>invariably: in every case or on every occasion; always</p> <p>evinces: reveals the presence of (a quality or feeling)</p> <p>despotism: the exercise of absolute power, especially in a cruel and oppressive way</p>	

Part 4: List of Grievances

In this section of the Declaration, the authors list grievances or complaints against King George III of Great Britain and his government.

Text	Vocabulary	In my own words
To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.	candid : truthful and straightforward	
He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.	assent : the expression of approval or agreement	
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.	relinquish : voluntarily cease to keep or claim; give up inestimable : too great to calculate formidable : inspiring fear or respect through being impressively large, powerful, intense, or capable	
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.	depository : a place for storing important documents or items that is available to selected persons	

Text	Vocabulary	In my own words
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 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 convulsions within.	dissolutions : the closing down or dismissal of an assembly, partnership, or official body convulsions : violent social or political upheavals	
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.	hither : to or toward this place appropriation : the action of taking something for one's own use, typically without the owner's permission	
He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary		
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.		

Text	Vocabulary	In my own words
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:	quartering: the provision of accommodations or lodgings, especially for troops	
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:		

Text	Vocabulary	In my own words
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 rule into these Colonies:	arbitrary : based on random choice or personal whim, rather than any reason or system	
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.	abdicated : failed to fulfill or undertake, such as a responsibility or duty	
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 compleat [complete] the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.	mercenaries : professional soldiers hired to serve in a foreign army perfidy : deceitfulness; untrustworthiness	

Text	Vocabulary	In my own words
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.		
Part 6: Conclusion		
In these final sections, the Congress explains the necessity of separating and claims the powers of a sovereign and independent nation. The members of Congress also make a sacred pledge to each other. .		
Text	Vocabulary	In my own words
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	<p>redress: to remedy or set right an undesirable or unfair situation</p> <p>humble: showing a recognition that one's ignorance is far greater than one's knowledge, a willingness to give others credit and to admit when one is wrong</p> <p>tyrant: a cruel and oppressive ruler</p>	

Text	Vocabulary	In my own words
<p>Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish 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.</p>	<p>attentions: the action of dealing with or taking special care of someone or something</p> <p>unwarrantable jurisdiction: not able to be authorized or sanctioned as the official power to make legal decisions and judgments</p> <p>emigration: the act of leaving a resident country or place of residence with the intent to settle elsewhere</p> <p>appealed: to make a serious or urgent request, typically to the public</p> <p>magnanimity: being generous</p> <p>conjure: to implore someone to do something</p> <p>disavow: to deny any responsibility or support for</p> <p>usurpation: seizing something by force or without right</p> <p>consanguinity: being descended from the same ancestor</p> <p>acquiesce: accepting something reluctantly but without protest</p>	

Text	Vocabulary	In my own words
<p>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.</p>	<p>rectitude: a morally correct behavior or thinking; righteousness</p> <p>solemnly: in a formal and dignified manner</p> <p>absolve: declaring someone free from blame, guilt, or responsibility</p> <p>allegiance: the loyalty or commitment of a subordinate to a superior or of an individual to a group or cause</p> <p>reliance: dependence on or trust in someone or something</p>	

Part 7: Signatures

The names listed are the signatures of the members of the Continental Congress approving the *Declaration of Independence*.

Text	Vocabulary	In my own words
The 56 signatures on the Declaration appear in the positions indicated:		
Georgia Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, George Walton North Carolina William Hooper, Joseph Hewes, John Penn South Carolina Edward Rutledge, Thomas Heyward, Jr., Thomas Lynch, Jr., Arthur Middleton Massachusetts John Hancock Maryland Samuel Chase, William Paca, Thomas Stone, Charles Carroll of Carrollton Virginia George Wythe, Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Nelson, Jr., Francis Lightfoot Lee, Carter Braxton Pennsylvania Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, John Morton, George Clymer, James Smith, George Taylor, James Wilson, George Ross		

<p>Delaware Caesar Rodney, George Read, Thomas McKean</p> <p>New York William Floyd, Philip Livingston, Francis Lewis, Lewis Morris</p> <p>New Jersey Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon, Francis Hopkinson, John Hart, Abraham Clark</p> <p>New Hampshire Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple</p> <p>Massachusetts Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, Elbridge Gerry</p> <p>Rhode Island Stephen Hopkins, William Ellery</p> <p>Connecticut Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, William Williams, Oliver Wolcott</p> <p>New Hampshire Matthew Thornton</p>		
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