

Name _____ Date _____ Pd. _____

Declaration of Independence Worksheet

Directions: As you read the Declaration of Independence, answer the questions below.

SECTION 1 – Why the Declaration was written.

1. What was the purpose of the Declaration?

2. What is the intro (sent. 1) stating?

SECTION 2 – Statement of Basic Human Rights?

3. Who do the colonists believe to be created equal?

4. What rights did the Creator give to everyone?

SECTION 3 – Purpose of Government: Safeguard Human Rights

5. Who gives government power to govern/rule?

6. When can a government be changed?

7. Who has the power to change the government?

8. The purpose of a good government is to do what for the people?

9. What type of government system is being described?

SECTION 4. Abuses of Human Rights by the King

10. Who do the colonists believe have abused their human rights?
11. How many abuses did they list?
12. What # on the list talks about the Stamp Act and the Tea Tax?
13. What is their objection to taxation?

SECTION 5 – Colonial Effort to Avoid Separation

14. Before it came to this declaration, the colonists tried to do what to settle their problems?
15. What was the response to the above?
16. Besides the King, who did the colonists plea for help from?
17. Because of the negative response to settle the problems, the colonists said it was necessary for them to?

SECTION 6 – Colonies Declare Independence

18. What three things do the colonists declare?
19. What do the signatures on the document mean?

The Declaration of Independence

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.

2 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.

3 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 shown 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.

4 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 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 many 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.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these states, for that purpose obstructing the laws of 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 harass 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 transporting us beyond seas, to be tried for pre-
tended offenses;

For abolishing the free system of English laws in
a neighboring province, establishing therein an ar-
bitrary 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;

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,
burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our
people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of for-
eign mercenaries to complete the works of death,
desolation, and tyranny already begun with
circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paral-
leled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unwor-
thy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow-citizens, taken cap-
tive on the high seas, to bear arms against their coun-
try, to become the executioners of their friends and
brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections among us,
and has endeavored 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.

(5) In every stage of these oppressions we have peti-
tioned for redress in the most humble terms; our
repeated petitions have been answered only by re-
peated injury.

John Hancock,
PRESIDENT

NEW HAMPSHIRE
Josiah Bartlett
William Whipple
Matthew Thornton

MASSACHUSETTS
Samuel Adams
John Adams
Robert Treat Paine
Elbridge Gerry

RHODE ISLAND
Stephen Hopkins

CONNECTICUT
Roger Sherman
Samuel Huntington
William Williams
Oliver Wolcott

NEW YORK
William Floyd
Philip Livingston
Francis Lewis
Lewis Morris

NEW JERSEY

PENNSYLVANIA
Robert Morris
Benjamin Rush
Benjamin Franklin
John Morton
George Clymer
James Smith
George Taylor
James Wilson
George Ross

DELAWARE
Caesar Rodney

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 our 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 re-
minded them of the circumstances of our emigration
and settlement here. We have appealed to their
native justice and magnanimity, and we have con-
jured 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 con-
sanguinity. 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.

(6) 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
the authority of the good people of these colonies,
solemnly publish and declare, that these united col-
onies are, and of right ought to be, free and independ-
ent states; that they are absolved from all alle-
giance 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 alli-
ances, establish commerce, and 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 for-
tunes, and our sacred honor.

ATTEST: Charles Thompson,
SECRETARY

MARYLAND
Samuel Chase
William Pace
Thomas Stone
Charles Carroll
of Carrollton

VIRGINIA
George Wythe
Richard Henry Lee
Thomas Jefferson

NORTH CAROLINA
William Hooper
Joseph Hewes
John Penn

SOUTH CAROLINA
Edward Rutledge
Thomas Heyward, Jr.
Thomas Lynch, Jr.
Arthur Middleton