The Declaration of Independence

Teacher's Guide
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THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE:
A FOUNDATION OF IDEAS
FOR A NEW AGE

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The author wishes to dedicate this guide to

THOMAS JEFFERSON

IF A NATION EXPECTS TO BE IGNORANT AND FREE, IT EXPECTS WHAT NEVER WAS AND NEVER WILL BE.

Thomas Jefferson

May all people be rightfully educated and forever free.
The Declaration of Independence: 
A Foundation of Ideas for a New Age 
Grades 5 - 8 
Viewing Time: 17:15 with video quiz 

VIDEO SUMMARY

Ideas expressed from the Magna Carta, the English Bill of Rights, and the Age of Reason helped forge the revolutionary movement in the American colonies during the eighteenth century. In 1215 A.D., the Magna Carta established the tradition that a certain people of equal rank, the barons, were able to limit the absolute power of the king. In 1689, the Declaration of Rights, commonly called the English Bill of Rights, empowered Parliament to have more authority to make laws: laws such as the right to worship, the right of free speech, the right to petition the king, and the right of no taxation without representation. During the 1600s and into the late 1700s, important thinkers, such as John Locke, accepted the philosophy that people could solve their religious, political, and economic problems through reason and science. This time period, called the Age of Reason, was a time when many people believed that they could live better lives by putting their own ideas into action and that it was acceptable to question the ideas of those in authority.

In the mid 1700s, many of the American colonists protested taxation without representation. For instance, the Stamp Act, enacted in 1765, forced the American colonists to pay a tax that would contribute to the funding of the costs of the French and Indian War. This was viewed by many people in the colonies as unjust. This belief united the thirteen separate colonies against England. In the fall of 1774, the First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia to protest the English government’s unfair laws and taxes on its American colonies. Even though King George III,
sovereign ruler of England, canceled some of the English tax on the colonies, he continued to enact other government policies. Without representation in Parliament, many citizens of the colonies protested these mandates and therefore declared their right to be independent from England. Thomas Paine aptly expressed the thoughts of the supporters of the revolt at Lexington, Massachusetts, when he wrote in Common Sense, “It is time we separate.”

In the spring of 1776, the Second Continental Congress held meetings in strictest secrecy and under penalty of death. They met to decide between their English citizenship or their independence. After much serious deliberation, a committee was formed. Its members chose the young Virginian lawyer Thomas Jefferson to write the declaration of their separation from England. In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson expressed the delegates’ principles and beliefs and explained to the world their right to become a new nation.

Following are some of the basic principles advocated and explained in the Declaration of Independence: the basic rights of all people, the source of these rights, the purpose of government, the source of its just powers in the consent of the governed, and the right of the people to alter or abolish a government “destructive of those ends.”

Unfortunately, the Declaration of Independence’s ideals did not acknowledge the freedom of slaves. Their independence from human bondage would not be realized for about another 100 years.

After some revision of the Declaration of Independence, the document was approved and signed by the congressional delegates. On July the fourth, the original thirteen colonies were reborn as the new nation, the United States of America. The Declaration of Independence
proclaimed to all the world the rise of this new nation and
the dawn of a new age of freedom.

**INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES**

Before presenting this lesson to your students, we suggest
that you preview the video and review this guide and the
accompanying blackline master activities in order to
familiarize yourself with their content. Duplicate those
blackline masters you wish to distribute.

A video quiz immediately follows the presentation. An
answer sheet for this quiz is provided on Blackline Master 8, *Quiz*. You may use this quiz immediately following the
video presentation or as an assessment tool at the end of
the lesson, or both.

As you review the materials presented in this guide, you
may find it necessary to make some changes, additions, or
deletions to meet the specific needs of your class. We
encourage you to do so, for only by tailoring this program
to your class will they obtain the maximum instructional
benefits afforded by the materials.

It is also suggested that the video presentation take place
before the entire group under your supervision. The lesson
activities grow out of the context of the video; therefore,
the presentation should be a common experience for all
students.

**STUDENT PREPARATION**

**Materials Needed**
Pen and pencil and materials for activities as follows:
- File folder to act as portfolio.
- Blackline Master 1: butcher paper, computer screen, or
  chalkboard.
- Blackline Master 4: tacks, pins, or tape for posting sheet.
STUDENT OBJECTIVES

After viewing the video and participation in the lesson activities, the students will be able to...

• Argue the question, “Were the American colonists justified in their resistance to the English king’s new laws?”

• Explain why Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence.

• Explain what the signers were risking when they signed their names to the Declaration of Independence.

• Name some of the sources from which the ideas of the Declaration of Independence were derived.

• Explain the major principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence including the basic rights of all people, the purpose of government, and the rights of the people to alter or abolish a government and to institute new government.

• Define vocabulary words and phrases pertinent to the Declaration of Independence and the study of democracy.

• Identify the chronology of the events surrounding the American Declaration of Independence.

VOCABULARY

The following words are used in the video and on the student blackline masters. You may want to review these words with your students before viewing the video. These words are also found in Blackline Master 2, Vocabulary. You may wish to have the students make their own flash cards containing these vocabulary words and their definitions. Students could test their comprehension of the words by working in pairs or small groups.
abolish: to do away with
belief: an accepted opinion
consent: to agree
declaration: a formal statement or announcement
document: a written or printed paper furnishing information or evidence
endowed: provided
government: the ruling or managing of people in a country, community, society, or state
idea: a thought, existing in the mind
ideal: a concept of something in its highest perfection
independence: freedom from subjection, or from the influence of others
law: the principles and regulations issued from a government and applicable to a people
principles: the fundamental truths
proclamation: that which is announced or declared publicly
reason: a ground or cause as for a belief, action, fact, or event
resolution: a determination
rights: that which is due to any one by just claim
self-evident: evident in itself without proof
sentiment: a mental feeling; emotion
treason: violation by a subject of his allegiance to his sovereign or to the state
truth: that which is true; the true or actual facts of a case
unalienable: not capable of being transferred
VIDEO PRESENTATION

• Distribute Blackline Master 1, Video Notes. Have the students read aloud the items listed in the left column. Important vocabulary terms could be shared at this time.

• Explain to the students that they are about to see a video that will help them to complete Blackline Master 1, Video Notes. The video will cover the following:

1. What is the Declaration of Independence?

2. A few of the historical events that led to the writing of the Declaration of Independence: The Magna Carta, the Declaration of Rights, etc.

3. The principles and beliefs stated in the Declaration of Independence: “All men are created equal…,” etc.

• Either during or immediately after viewing the video, have the students record individually or in groups the explanations presented in the video in the spaces provided on Blackline Master 1, Video Notes.

• Present the video. The viewing time is 17:15 with the video quiz.

• You may choose to use the Video Quiz following the video credits immediately after the viewing or after the students have participated in other related activities. The same quiz is provided on Blackline Master 8, Video Quiz.

• Discuss the answers from Blackline Master 1, Video Notes, and write some of them on the chalkboard, poster paper, or computer screen for the entire class to see. Be sure to clarify any misunderstood information. Collect Blackline Masters for grading and/or keep in portfolios for later evaluation.
FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

Following the viewing of *THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE: A FOUNDATION OF IDEAS FOR A NEW AGE*, you may want to have the students share their information from Blackline Master 1, *Video Notes*, or you may lead a discussion using the following questions. These questions appear on Blackline Master 3, *Discussion Questions*, and may be distributed to the class prior to discussion.

1. What did the narrator mean when he said, “... the Declaration of Independence was more than just a document, it was a declaration of ideas?”

   **Suggested answers:**
   1. The idea that a king’s power could be limited.
   2. The idea that there should be no taxation without representation.
   3. The idea that people could solve their political problems through reason.
   4. The idea that it was a natural right for the colonists to have their own government.
   5. The idea that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.
   6. The idea that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.
   7. The idea 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 a new government.

2. Were the American colonists justified in their resistance to the English king’s new laws? Explain your answer.

   **Suggested answers:**
   1. Yes, they should have resisted because the king did not protect their lawful right of no taxation without representation.
   2. No, they should not have resisted because they were British
subjects and they should have obeyed their king. Another reason why they should not have resisted is because by declaring their independence, they would be declaring war and would therefore be jeopardizing the lives of all the colonists.

3. Why did Thomas Jefferson write the Declaration of Independence?
   
   **Suggested answer:** Thomas Jefferson wanted the world to know why as of July fourth, they were to be recognized as a new government and a new nation.

4. What were the signers risking when they signed their names to the document?
   
   **Suggested answers:**
   1. They were risking their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.
   2. They were risking the lives of all the colonists, since a declaration of independence would be taken by the king as a declaration of war.

5. What were some of the sources from which the ideas of the Declaration of Independence were derived?
   
   **Suggested answers:**
   1. The Magna Carta.
   2. The Declaration of Rights, commonly called the English Bill of Rights.
   3. The writings of the thinkers during the time period called The Age of Reason.

6. According to the Declaration of Independence, explain the principle of “the basic rights of all people.”
   
   **Suggested answer:** People are born with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These rights should be secured by the government, and should never be taken away.
7. Explain the purpose of government.
**Suggested answer:** The government secures the people’s basic rights, protects, enforces laws and regulations.

8. Analyze the document’s principle of the right of the people to alter or abolish a government and to form a new government.
**Suggested answer:** Whenever a government does not secure the rights of the governed, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish the government and to institute a new government.

9. How well does our government today protect the rights of people?
**Suggested answer:** By providing protection, enforcement, regulation, and oversight, based on the basic tenets of our governing documents.

10. How can citizens protect his or her rights?
**Suggested answers:**
1. Be informed.
2. Make responsible decisions.
3. Voice his or her decisions and opinions through the power of the vote.

**FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES**

The Blackline Masters may be used immediately following the video presentation, during other class time, or as homework assignments. Answers for the Blackline Masters are found on page 12 of the Teacher’s Guide.

- Distribute Blackline Masters 2, **Vocabulary**. Students should match vocabulary words with the correct definition. Students may need textbooks and dictionaries to complete this exercise.
• Distribute Blackline Master 4, **Time Line**. Ask the students to review the video and place the following events on the time line:

  ✓ The Magna Carta, England (1215)
  ✓ The Declaration of Rights (English Bill of Rights), England (1689)
  ✓ The Age of Reason, Europe (1600s-late 1700s)
  ✓ The Stamp Act (1765)
  ✓ The First Continental Congress, Philadelphia (1774)
  ✓ The Battle of Lexington, Massachusetts (April 19, 1775)
  ✓ *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine (1776)
  ✓ The Second Continental Congress, Philadelphia (1776)
  ✓ The birth date of the United States of America (July 4, 1776)

• Distribute Blackline Masters 5, and 6, **A Declaration of Our Rights**. Students should work in groups to write and rewrite a list of their “unalienable rights.” The final draft should be written on Blackline Master 6 and posted in an appropriate area that is visible for other classmates and/or schoolmates to see and read.

• Distribute Blackline Master 7, **Internet Resources** for those students and/or classrooms with Internet access. These resources can be used in the preparation of reports or to further knowledge of the Student Objectives.

• Distribute Blackline Master 8, **Quiz**. This is the same quiz that follows the credits in the video presentation. This activity can be used as a final evaluation of the students’ progress. Go over the answers in class, or collect the sheets, correct them, and grade them according to your grading system.
PROJECTS

• Select individual students or small groups to prepare written reports on the following topics.
  1. The Magna Carta
  2. The Age of Reason
  3. The Stamp Act
  4. The First Continental Congress, Philadelphia 1774
  5. The Battle of Lexington, Massachusetts
  6. The Second Continental Congress, Philadelphia 1776

• Select individual students or small groups to prepare written biographies on the following historical figures:
  1. Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence and member of the committee to write the declaration
  2. Thomas Paine, author of the pamphlet Common Sense
  3. Patrick Henry, lawyer and politician
  4. Abigail Adams, wife of John Adams
  5. John Adams, member of the committee to write the declaration
  6. John Hancock, president of the Second Continental Congress
  7. John Dickenson, member of the Second Continental Congress
  8. Benjamin Franklin, member of the committee to write the declaration
  9. Roger Sherman, member of the committee to write the declaration
  10. Robert R. Livingston, member of the committee to write the declaration

• Students may write poems about the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence.

• Students may work in organized discussion groups and together make comments on how the ideals expressed in
the Declaration of Independence affect them today. For example, “How does the government protect the people’s rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? Does the Declaration of Independence refer to the rights of minors? Do minors have rights? Who protects the rights of minors?” Have one student in each group record the suggestions. Have another student in the group present the group’s ideas to the class. Teacher may record groups’ ideas on the board or computer screen and encourage discussion on how other governments protect or disregard the rights of people including minors.

ANSWER KEY

Blackline Master 1, Video Notes
Answers will vary, yet should contain some of the following information:

1. The Declaration of Independence was more than just a document, it was a declaration of ideas. A young Virginian lawyer named Thomas Jefferson wrote the declaration of the separation of the British American colonies from England. In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson expressed their principles and beliefs and explained to the world their right to become a new nation. Overall, these principles of the Declaration of Independence were founded upon the ideal that all men should be free. Unfortunately, this ideal were not true for all men, such as slaves, blacks held in bondage. After the Continental Congress reviewed, revised, and approved the Declaration of Independence, this document of “new ideas” was signed by the members of Congress. The Declaration of Independence proclaimed to all the world the rise of a new nation and the dawn of a new age of freedom.

2. King John and the ruling class of England, known as the barons, signed the Magna Carta at Runnymead in the year
1215. This important British historical document established the tradition that a certain people of equal rank were able to limit the absolute power of the king. This event was the root of English common law.

3. The Declaration of Rights, commonly called the English Bill of Rights, was another important British document that limited a king’s tyranny. In England, the assembly of people who made the laws was known as Parliament. Parliament had more power to make laws after the enactment of the Declaration of Rights. These were some of the rights they established by law: the right to worship, the right of free speech, the right to petition the king, and the right of no taxation without representation.

4. The Age of Reason was a time in history when many important thinkers in Europe accepted the idea that people could solve their religious, social, political, and economic problems through reason and science. This way of thinking convinced people that they could live better lives by putting their own ideas into action and questioning the ideas of those in authority.

5. *Common Sense*, a pamphlet written by the reactionary Thomas Paine, urged the people of the colonies to know that, “The blood of the slain and the weeping voice of natures cries out, ‘It is time we separate.’” Radically, Paine further announced, “A government of our own is our natural right…”

6. England did not want to give up her American colonies, so the Americans had to realize that in deciding to declare their independence, they would also be declaring war on England. Their independence could also mean their death.

7. "*All men*” at this time the word “men” referred to only those free males who owned property.
8. “All men are created equal” the Continental Congress wanted the world to know that they believed in a higher law, higher than the king’s, and that the king and his people were equal under this law.

9. “Endowed by their Creator” the Creator was known at that time as Nature’s God.

10. “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” are the rights with which all people are born and these rights should never be taken away.

11. “Just powers” is the authority given to the government.

12. “Consent of the governed” is the permission given to the government by the people to protect their rights.

13. “To institute a new government” meant that the colonies were using their right to free themselves from England, and were now to be known as a new government.

14. Overall, these principles of the Declaration of Independence were founded upon the ideals that all men should be free. Unfortunately, these ideals were not true for all men such as slaves, blacks held in bondage. At that time, slavery was thought by many to be an economic necessity. For many black Americans, the struggle for freedom did not end with the Declaration of Independence or the Revolutionary War. They would have to wait almost another hundred years, until after the Civil War, for their lawful freedom.

15. Students’ answers may include: the freedom from the power of kings, the willingness of men to secure and use their rights of liberty, and to be able to institute new governments.
Blackline Master 2, Vocabulary Words
1. E 11. M
2. I 12. N
3. D 13. G
5. A 15. T
7. L 17. P
8. H 18. O
10. F 20. R

Blackline Master 3, Discussion Questions
Answers appear in “Follow-Up Discussion” section of this guide.

Blackline Master 4, Time Line
• The Magna Carta, England (1215)
• The Declaration of Rights (English Bill of Rights), England (1689)
• The Age of Reason, Europe (1600s-Late 1700s)
• The Stamp Act (1765)
• The First Continental Congress, Philadelphia (1774)
• The Battle of Lexington, Massachusetts (April 19, 1775)
• Common Sense by Thomas Paine (1776)
• The Second Continental Congress, Philadelphia (1776)
• The birth date of the United States of America (July 4, 1776)

Blackline Masters 5 and 6, A Declaration Of Our Rights
Answers will vary.

Blackline Master 8, Quiz
1. A document declaring the principles and beliefs and an explanation to the world of the American colonies’ right to become a new nation
2. Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness
3. July 4, 1776
4. Thomas Jefferson
5. Slaves, black people held in bondage
6. Their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor
7. When a government does not protect the people’s rights.
8. T
9. F
10. T

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE:
A FOUNDATION OF IDEAS FOR A NEW AGE
INTERNET RESOURCES

The following resources on the Internet contain interesting information on the Declaration of Independence, its signers, and the Fourth of July:

The Library of Congress
“Declaring Independence: Drafting the Documents”
http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/declara/declara1.html
Includes copies of the letter drafted by Thomas Jefferson, a fragment of the earliest known draft of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson’s “original Rough Draft” of the document, a fragment of George Washington’s personal copy of the Declaration, and various other exhibits.

National Archives and Records Administration
“The Declaration of Independence”
http://gopher.nara.gov/exhall/charters/declaration/decmain.html
Includes an image of the Declaration taken from an engraving made by printer William J. Stone in 1823, the most frequently reproduced version of the document.
The Indiana University School of Law
“The Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies”
http://www.law.indiana.edu/uslawdocs/declaration.html
Includes the entire text of the document and a list of all the signers by state.

Independence Day on the Net
http://www.holidays.net/independence
Includes the story of America’s independence, a GIF animation of fireworks, a recipe for Mom’s Apple Pie, an Independence Day Fireworks Movie and craft project, and a musical MIDI file of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

SCRIPT OF VIDEO NARRATION

ABIGAIL ADAMS
"We will not be discouraged. We posses a spirit that cannot be conquered."

Abigail Adams, wife of American leader John Adams, aptly expressed how the Declaration of Independence was more than just a document; it was a declaration of ideas. As far back as 1200 A.D., people in England began to question the power of the king. King John was forced by the ruling class of England, known as the barons, to approve the Magna Carta at Runnymead in the year 1215. This important British historical document established the tradition that a certain people of equal rank were able to limit the absolute power of the king. This event was the root of English common law.

"...we will not deny to any man, either justice or right."

Magna Carta
1215 A.D.
The Declaration of Rights, commonly called the English Bill of Rights, was another important British document that limited a king’s tyranny. In England, the assembly of people who made the laws was known as Parliament. Parliament now had more power to make laws. These were some of the rights they established by law: the right to worship, the right of free speech, the right to petition the king, and the right of no taxation without representation.

The Age of Reason was a time in history when many important thinkers in Europe accepted the idea that people could solve their religious, social, political and economic problems through reason and science. This way of thinking convinced people that they could live a better life by putting their own ideas into action and to question the ideas of those in authority.

During the 1700s, many of the people in the American colonies found life difficult especially when dealing with the unfair laws of the British government.

For example, in 1765, England enacted the stamp act on the American colonies. This act forced those citizens of the colonies to pay a tax on newspapers, almanacs, playing cards, and liquor licenses. England was attempting to raise money to pay for the cost of the French and Indian War, an expensive war that was fought to protect the British American colonies from invaders. The British government felt it was only right the colonies should pay for a war to protect themselves; however, many people in the colonies felt the tax was unjust. This tax act united the thirteen colonies against England for the first time.

Patrick Henry, a well known lawyer from Virginia, expressed the feelings of many colonists when he said...
Patrick Henry
"The distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers and New Englanders are no more. I am not a Virginian but an American."

Several representatives from each colony in America, except Georgia, gathered together at Carpenters’ Hall in Philadelphia. This assembly of the colonies’ socially, economically, and politically important men was called the Continental Congress. Their purpose was to protest the English government’s unfair laws and taxes on the colonies.

Even though the king canceled some of the English tax on the colonies, he continued to come up with new ways to tax the colonies. Without representation in Parliament, many citizens of the colonies protested these and other government acts which they considered to be unfair, and declared their right to be independent from England.

PATRICK HENRY
"The battle is not to the strong alone. It is to the vigilant… the active . . . the brave! I know not what course others may take, but as for me . . . Give me liberty, or give me death!"

Eventually, feelings of hostility lead to a citizen army revolt at Lexington, Massachusetts. There, on April 19, 1775, British troops and armed colonists known as patriots, clashed. The result was that eight patriots, supporters of American independence, lay dead on the village green.

Common Sense, written by the reactionary Thomas Paine, urged the people of the colonies to know that . . .

THOMAS PAINE
"The blood of the slain and the weeping voice of nature cries, ‘’Tis time to separate."
Radically, Paine further announced . . .

THOMAS PAINE
"A government of our own is our natural right." [Under voice over: Oh ye that love mankind oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant.]

With these passionate words from Common Sense in their minds, the Continental Congress met again at the Pennsylvania statehouse, this time in strict secrecy and under penalty of death because any move towards separation from the Mother Country was considered an act of treason.

King George III issued a proclamation stating the penalty for any colonist who even talked about independence from England.

REDCOAT
"Your heads will be cut off and your bodies will be divided into four quarters. These parts will then be taken away for the king’s just disposal. And may the Lord Almighty God have mercy upon your souls!"

Regardless of the danger, the delegates decided how they would settle their differences between the American colonies and the King of England, George the III. To separate was a difficult and dangerous decision.

JOHN ADAMS
"In the end, we will survive, and in our survival, we will triumph. Independence, now! Independence, forever!"

JOHN HANCOCK
"Gentlemen, please!"

JOHN MORTON
"We must pause! We must reflect!"

JOHN DICKINSON
"A declaration of independence will mean nothing less than a declared war!"
JOHN HANCOCK, Congressional President
"Order! Order! We must have order!"

JOHN DICKINSON, Pennsylvania Representative
"As British subjects, it is neither our desire, nor is it our interest to separate from England."

JOHN ADAMS, Massachusetts Representative
"What more can we do, Mr. Dickenson? Shall we try argument? We have demonstrated. We have petitioned. We have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and we have been spurned with contempt!"

JOHN DICKINSON
Mr. Adams, at this moment General Washington is in command of 9,000 men. That, sir, is the entire "Continental Army!" Will this so called "army" of poorly trained and underfed men be able to stand and fight an estimated 25,000 highly skilled British and Hessian soldiers? I think not!"

JOHN ADAMS
"Sink or swim, live or die. Survive or perish. I am for this declaration! It will be my living sentiment, and it will be my dying sentiment!"

Eventually the Congressional delegates chose a young Virginian lawyer named Thomas Jefferson to write the declaration of their separation from England. In the Declaration of Independence Thomas Jefferson expressed their principles and beliefs, and explained to the world their right to become a new nation.

THOMAS JEFFERSON
"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."
“... all men...” At this time the word “men” referred to only those free males who owned property.

“...all men are created equal...” The Continental Congress wanted the world to know that they believed in a higher law, higher than the king’s, and that the king and his people were equal under this law.

“...that they are endowed by their Creator...” Creator was known at that time as Nature’s God.

Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness... are the rights with which all people are born, and these rights should never be taken away.

THOMAS JEFFERSON
"...that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

“...deriving their just powers...” is the authority given to the government.

“...from the consent of the governed...” is the permission given to the government by the people to protect their rights.

THOMAS JEFFERSON
"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."

“...to institute a new Government...” meant that the colonies were using their right to free themselves from England, and were now to be known as a new government and a new nation, the united States of America.

Overall, these principles of the Declaration of Independence were founded upon the ideal that all men should be free. Unfortunately, this ideal was not true for all men such as
slaves, blacks held in bondage. At that time, slavery was thought by many to be an economic necessity. For many black Americans, the struggle for freedom did not end with the Declaration of Independence or the Revolutionary War. They would have to wait almost another hundred years for their lawful freedom.

After a few days of writing the text, Thomas Jefferson and his committee presented the Declaration of Independence to the Congress.

JOHN HANCOCK
"The committee will now present the declaration for approval."

After the Continental Congress reviewed, revised, and approved the Declaration of Independence, this document of “new ideas” was signed by the members of Congress.

THOMAS JEFFERSON
I was determined to see how they all looked as they signed what might be their death warrant. I placed myself beside the secretary and I eyed each of them closely as they affixed their name to the document. Undaunted resolution was displayed in every countenance."

As they signed, they were willing to lose their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor. On July 4, 1776, the original thirteen colonies were reborn as the free and independent united States of America. The Declaration of Independence proclaimed to all the world the rise of a new nation and the dawn of a new age of freedom.

THOMAS JEFFERSON
"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never will be."
THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE:
A FOUNDATION OF IDEAS FOR A NEW AGE

Video Notes

**DIRECTIONS:** Review the terms in the left column. Using the information presented in the video, record the explanation of those terms in the right column. Use the back of this sheet if necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERMS</th>
<th>EXPLANATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Declaration of Independence</td>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>6. “A declaration of independence will mean nothing less than a declared war.”</td>
<td>6.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. ”All men are created equal . . .”</td>
<td>8.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. “. . . just powers . . .”</td>
<td>11.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. “. . . consent of the governed.”</td>
<td>12.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. All men should be free.</td>
<td>14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. “age of freedom”</td>
<td>15.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Directions: Match the letter of the definition with its term.

1. ______ law A. Written or printed paper furnishing information or evidence
2. ______ principles B. A thought existing in the mind
3. ______ truth C. Not capable of being transferred
4. ______ idea D. That which is true
5. ______ document E. The principles and regulations issued from a government and applicable to a people
6. ______ belief F. Freedom from subjection, or from the influence of others
7. ______ rights G. That which is announced or declared publicly
8. ______ reason H. A ground or cause as for a belief, action or fact
9. ______ unalienable I. The fundamental truths
10. ______ independence J. An accepted opinion
11. ______ declaration K. A mental feeling; emotion
12. ______ government L. That which is due to anyone by just claim
13. ______ proclamation M. A formal statement or announcement
14. ______ sentiment N. The ruling or managing of people in a country, community, society, or state
15. ______ ideal O. To do away with
16. ______ resolution P. Violation by a subject of his allegiance to his sovereign or to the state
17. ______ treason Q. A determination
18. ______ abolish R. Provided
19. ______ self-evident S. Evident in itself without proof
20. ______ endowed T. A concept of something in its highest perfection
Discussion Questions

Directions: After viewing the video, answer the following questions in preparation for a class discussion. Use the back of this sheet if necessary.

1. What did the narrator mean when he said, "... the Declaration of Independence was more than just a document; it was a declaration of ideas?"

2. Were the American colonists justified in their resistance to the English king's new laws? Explain your answer.

3. Why did Thomas Jefferson write the Declaration of Independence?

4. What were the signers risking when they signed their names to the document?

5. What were some of the sources from which the ideas of the Declaration of Independence were derived?

6. According to the Declaration of Independence, explain the principle of "the basic rights of all people."

7. Explain the purpose of government.

8. Analyze the document's principle of the right of the people to alter or abolish a government and to form a new government.

9. How well does our government today protect the rights of people?

10. How can citizens protect his or her rights?
The Declaration of Independence: A Foundation of Ideas for a New Age

Timeline

Directions: Insert the name of each event listed below in the correct time position on the above timeline. Include the year of the event.

- The Magna Carta, England
- The Age of Reason, Europe
- The Declaration of Rights (English Bill of Rights), England
- The Declaration of Independence, Philadelphia
- The First Continental Congress, Philadelphia
- The Second Continental Congress, Philadelphia
- The Battle of Lexington, Massachusetts
- The Stamp Act
- Common Sense by Thomas Paine
- The First Continental Congress, Philadelphia
- The Age of Reason, Europe
- The Magna Carta, England

The birth date of the United States of America

Date ____________________

Name___________________
**Directions:** In your group, work together to complete the sentence stated below. Just as Thomas Jefferson had to write and rewrite the Declaration of Independence, you may have to do the same for your declaration. Use the space provided and the back of the sheet, if necessary. Neatly write the place and date of your declaration and neatly write your final draft in the space provided. By knowing your rights, it is your responsibility to protect your rights. Neatly write in the space provided how you will be responsible and be able to keep your rights. If you agree to all that is written, sign your names near the bottom of the paper in the same way as the signers of the Declaration of Independence signed theirs. Finally, post this sheet in an area assigned by your teacher.

Place __________________________  Date __________________________

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all young people are created equal: that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights among these are . . .

To protect our rights, we promise to be responsible citizens and to do the following:

Signed __________________________
THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE:
A FOUNDATION OF IDEAS FOR A NEW AGE
A Declaration Of Our Rights

Place Date

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all young people are created equal: that they are en-
dowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights among these are . . .

To protect our rights, we promise to be responsible citizens and to do the following:

Signed
THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE:
A FOUNDATION OF IDEAS FOR A NEW AGE

Internet Resources

The following resources on the Internet contain interesting information on the Declaration of Independence, its signers, and the Fourth of July:

The Library of Congress
“Declaring Independence: Drafting the Documents”
http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/declara/declara1.html
Includes copies of the letter drafted by Thomas Jefferson, a fragment of the earliest known draft of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson’s “original Rough Draft” of the document, a fragment of George Washington’s personal copy of the Declaration, and various other exhibits.

National Archives and Records Administration
“The Declaration of Independence”
http://gopher.nara.gov/exhall/charters/declaration/decmain.html
Includes an image of the Declaration taken from an engraving made by printer William J. Stone in 1823, the most frequently reproduced version of the document.

The Indiana University School of Law
“The Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies”
http://www.law.indiana.edu/uslawdocs/declaration.html
Includes the entire text of the document and a list of all the signers by state.

Independence Day on the Net
http://www.holidays.net/independence
Includes the story of America’s independence, a GIF animation of fireworks, a recipe for Mom’s Apple Pie, an Independence Day Fireworks Movie and craft project, and a musical MIDI file of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”
THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE:
A FOUNDATION OF IDEAS FOR A NEW AGE

Quiz

Directions: Answer the following questions in the spaces provided. Use the back of this sheet if necessary.

1. What is the Declaration of Independence?

2. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?

3. According to the Declaration of Independence, people are born with three basic rights. Name these rights.

4. What were the signers of the Declaration of Independence willing to lose by declaring their independence from England?

5. On what date were the thirteen colonies reborn as the free and independent United States of America?

6. Even after the Declaration of Independence was signed, which American people were refused their freedom?

7. When do people have the right to institute new government?

TRUE OR FALSE?
Directions: Mark the space provided below with a “T” if the statement is true, or an “F” if it is false.

______ 8. The enactment of the Stamp Act was one event that united the 13 American colonies against England.

______ 9. The decision to separate from England was quickly and easily made by the members of the Continental Congress.

______ 10. “All men are created equal . . .” is a belief about how a king and his people are equal under the law.