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| Declaration of Independence |  |
| **IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.  THE UNANIMOUS  DECLARATION  OF THE  THIRTEEN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.**  *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.*  *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 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. 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 Accommodations 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 Tyranny 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 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 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 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 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 neighboring 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:*  *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 Insurrection amongst 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.*  *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.*   * **John Hancock.**   **GEORGIA**, Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, Geo. Walton.  **NORTH-CAROLINA,** Wm. Hooper, Joseph Hewes, John Penn.  **SOUTH-CAROLINA,** Edward Rutledge, Thos Heyward, junr. Thomas Lynch, junr. Arthur Middleton.  **MARYLAND,** Samuel Chase, Wm. Paca, Thos. Stone, Charles Carroll, of Carrollton.  **VIRGINIA,** George Wythe, Richard Henry Lee, Ths. Jefferson, Benja. Harrison, Thos. Nelson, jr. Francis Lightfoot Lee, Carter Braxton.  **PENNSYLVANIA,** Robt. Morris, Benjamin Rush, Benja. Franklin, John Morton, Geo. Clymer, Jas. Smith, Geo. Taylor, James Wilson, Geo. Ross.  **DELAWARE**, Caesar Rodney, Geo. Read.  **NEW-YORK,** Wm. Floyd, Phil. Livingston, Frank Lewis, Lewis Morris.  **NEW-JERSEY,** Richd. Stockton, Jno. Witherspoon, Fras. Hopkinson, John Hart, Abra. Clark.  **NEW-HAMPSHIRE,** Josiah Bartlett, Wm. Whipple, Matthew Thornton.  **MASSACHUSETTS-BAY**, Saml. Adams, John Adams, Robt. Treat Paine, Elbridge Gerry.  **RHODE-ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE**, &c. Step. Hopkins, William Ellery.  **CONNECTICUT,** Roger Sherman, Saml. Huntington, Wm. Williams, Oliver Wolcott.  IN CONGRESS, JANUARY 18, 1777.  ORDERED,  THAT an authenticated Copy of the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCY, with the Names of the MEMBERS of CONGRESS, subscribing the same, be sent to each of the UNITED STATES, and that they be desired to have the same put on RECORD.  By Order of CONGRESS,  JOHN HANCOCK, President.  BALTIMORE, in MARYLAND: Printed by MARY KATHARINE GODDARD.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Questions.**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **1. What Was The Declaration of Independence All About?** | | |  | A Document Wherein Colonists Refused To Pay Taxes To Great Britain | |  | That America's 13 Colonies Were No Longer Part of The British Empire | |  | A Formal Decree Proclaiming Colonists Would Ban Entry of All English Citizens | |  | A Demand Urging That the British Parliament Be Dissolved | | **2. Who Was The Principal Author of The Declaration?** | | |  | Patrick Henry | |  | Benjamin Franklin | |  | John Adams | |  | Thomas Jefferson | | **3. Where Was The Declaration Adopted?** | | |  | The Customs House in the City of New York | |  | The Pennsylvania State House In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania | |  | The Virginia State House attended by 130 Delegates | |  | A Room Above The Langston Stable Outside of Boston | | **4. When Was The Declaration Adopted?** | | |  | Immediately After The Battles at Lexington and Concord in April 1775 | |  | After The 2nd Continental Congress Convened in May 1775 | |  | On July 4, 1776 | |  | The Debate Goes On But Historians Believe Sometime In the Fall of 1776 | | **5. By the time the Declaration of Independence was adopted:** | | |  | The British Parliament Agreed To Reduce Its Taxes To The Colonies | |  | Relations Between The Colonies and The Mother Country Began To Improve | |  | The Colonies & England Had Been At War for Over a Year | |  | Colonists Began To Feel That Acts By The British Parliament Were Constitutional | | **6. By Thomas Jefferson's Own Admission in Later Years:** | | |  | The Declaration of Independence Contained No Original Ideas | |  | Few of The Sentiments Expressed Were Shared By Supporters of The Revolution | |  | The Ideas Were Mostly Copied Word for Word From Previous Writings | |  | He Admitted That Benjamin Franklin Inspired The Ideals He Expressed | | **7. As President of The Second Continental Congress, John Hancock...** | | |  | Was A Wealthy Boston Merchant Who Had Misgivings About Adopting The Declaration | |  | Used His Wealth To Support Opposition To The War Against Britain | |  | Was The First Person To Sign The Declaration of Independence | |  | Signed The Declaration In Very Small Letters So King George Couldn't Read It | | **8. Why Didn't George Washington Sign The Declaration of Independence?** | | |  | As Commander of the Army He Was Unavailable To Participate | |  | He Stayed Home While His Wife Martha Was Ill With The Ague | |  | He Was Ineligible to Do So As A Congressman From Virginia | |  | During The Signing He Was Too Busy At His Farm At Mount Vernon | | **9. Which One of These Phrases Appears In The Declaration of Independence?** | | |  | Governments Are Instituted Of, By And For The People | |  | These United Colonies Are And Ought To Be Dependent States | |  | Life, Liberty And The Pursuit of Happiness | |  | These United Colonies Pledge All Allegiance To The British Crown | | **10. Where Is The Original Declaration of Independence Located?** | | |  | In The Rotunda of The United States Capitol Building | |  | The National Archives In Washington DC | |  | In The Bullion Depository At Fort Knox In A Controlled Environment | |  | At The Library Of Congress | | **11. Why Was The Declaration Read To Washington's Troops Days After It Was Adopted?** | | |  | To Encourage British Forces To Surrender | |  | To Publicly Notify King George The Colonies Were Free Of British Rule | |  | To Inspire The Troops And Encourage Enlistments | |  | To Prove That The Colonists Approved Their Independence | | **12. In Writing The Declaration of Independence Jefferson Was Influenced By:** | | |  | The Massachusetts Declaration of Rights | |  | The Dutch Act Of Redolence | |  | The Virginia Call To Arms | |  | Emerich de Vattel's "The Law of Nations" | | |