



Name _____

Date: _____

Course: US History/Ms. Brown

Homeroom:



7th Grade US History
Standard # – Do Now – Day #61

Aims: SWBAT analyze the Declaration of Independence and explain how African Americans were excluded from the document
SWBAT explain how the contradiction of excluding certain groups from the Declaration of Independence

DO NOW

Directions: write the definition to the following terms in complete sentences. Each word is use only once.

Common Sense	Declaration of Independence	Loyalist	
Patriot	Second Continental Congress	Thomas Jefferson	Thomas Paine

1. The Sons and Daughters of Liberty were American _____, who attempted to free the colonies from King George III’s tyranny
2. _____ wrote the propaganda document _____, a written attempt to convince the colonists to support independence from Great Britain.
3. The _____ appointed _____ to write the Declaration of Independence
4. The _____ was a document that listed the colonist’s grievances and officially separated them from Great Britain.



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I. Image Analysis



1. What do you see in this image?

2. What famous document do you think is being drafted? Cite evidence from the image to support your idea.

3. What groups are not represented at this gathering?



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Thomas Jefferson Drafts a Declaration

A few weeks after the British left Boston, the Second Continental Congress appointed a committee to write a declaration, or formal statement, of independence. The task drafting the **Declaration of Independence**¹ went to the committee’s youngest member, 33-year-old Thomas Jefferson of Virginia. A shy man, Jefferson said little in Congress, but he stated his ideas brilliantly in writing.

Jefferson’s job was to explain to the world why the colonies were choosing to separate from Britain. “When in the course of human events,” he began, if one group of people finds it necessary to break its ties with another, “a decent respect to the opinions of mankind” requires that they explain their actions.

Principles on Which to Base a New Government

Jefferson’s explanation was simple but revolutionary. Loyalists had argued that colonists had a duty to obey the king, whose authority came from God. Jefferson reasoned quite differently. He based his arguments on the principle of **natural rights**². All people are born equal in God’s sight, he reasoned, and all are entitled to the same basic rights. In Jefferson’s eloquent 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.*

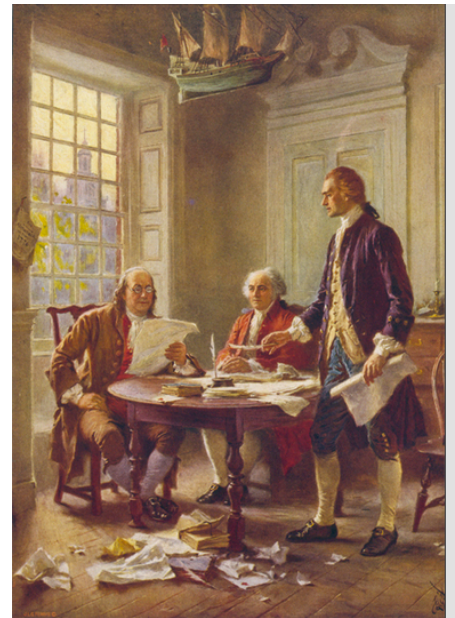
Governments are formed, Jefferson said, “to secure these rights.”

Their power to rule comes from the “consent of the governed.” If a government fails to protect people’s **fundamental**³ rights, “it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it.” The people can then create a new government that will protect their safety and happiness.”

The King’s Crimes King George, Jefferson continued, had shown no concern for the rights of the colonists. Instead, the king’s policies had been aimed at establishing “absolute tyranny over these States” (the colonies).

As proof, Jefferson included a long list of the King’s abuses. In all these actions, Jefferson claimed, George III had shown he was “unfit to be the ruler of free people.”

The time had come, Jefferson concluded, for the colonies’ ties to Great Britain to be broken. “These United Colonies are,” he declared, “and of right, ought to be Free and Independent States.”



Library of Congress

After Thomas Jefferson wrote the first draft of the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams suggested changes.

¹ Declaration of Independence: the document written to declare the American colonies as an independent nation, free from

² Natural Rights: rights common to everyone, as opposed to those given by law

³ Fundamental: basic



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1. Who drafted the Declaration of Independence? What was his main job in writing this document?

2. Choose three important ideas in the Declaration of Independence. Write them in the chart below. Then explain why you think each idea is important.

Ideas in the Declaration	Why This Idea Is Important
1	
2	
3	

The Final Break

On July 1, 1776, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia’s State House to debate independence. By noon, the temperature outside had soared into the nineties, and a thunderstorm was gathering. Inside the State House, emotions were equally hot and stormy. By the end of the day, the issue was still undecided.

The next day was cooler and calmer. On July 2, all but one of the 13 colonies voted for independence. New York cast no vote.

No delegate was more excited about the colonies’ decision than John Adams. He wrote to his wife Abigail, “The second Day of July...will be celebrated by succeeding Generations, with Pomp and Parade, with Shews (shows), Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations, from one End of this Continent to the other from this time forward forever more.”

Debate over slavery Adams was wrong about the date that would be celebrated as America’s birthday, but only because Congress decided to revise Jefferson’s declaration. The delegates liked most of what they read, except for the passage on slavery. Jefferson, had charged King George with violating the “sacred rights of life and liberty...of a distant people [by] carrying them into slavery.”

Almost no one liked this passage. Southerners feared it might lead to demands to free the slaves. Enslaved African Americans were much of the labor used on southern farms. Northerners worried that New England merchants, who benefitted from the slave trade, might be offended. Even delegates who opposed slavery felt it was unfair to blame the king for enslaving Africans. The passage was removed.

Independence Day On July 4, the delegates approved a final version of the Declaration of Independence. When they signed the document, they pledged to support independence with “our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honors.”

This was a serious pledge. Every signer understood that he was committing an act of treason against Great Britain. If the new nation failed to win back its freedom, each of them could very well end up swinging from a hangman’s rope. Knowing this, Benjamin Franklin told the delegates, “We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately.”



Any mention of slavery was removed from the Declaration of Independence because the slave trade was important to the economy of many colonies. In the triangular trade shown here, rum and iron were shipped from New England to Africa. In Africa, these products were exchanged for slaves. The slaves were taken to the West Indies, where many were traded for molasses and sugar. Finally molasses, sugar and remaining slaves were brought to New England.



THE REBELS OF '76. THE GREAT OR THE FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DECLARATION.
EXPLANATION: It is meant on the 4th of July, 1776. The members of the old Continental Congress, having signed the Declaration, are seen in the act of leaving the Hall of Independence. Hancock, distinguished by his dark dress, stands on the steps in front of the hall, announcing to a friend that the Declaration has just been signed. Franklin is seen at his right. Arrows point to the right side of the door. Adams is conversing with Jefferson—between their heads is seen the face of Livingston, and against the left pillar stands Rutledge. ... These form the scene on the steps. ... We have taken, but, eagerly displaying the nature and merits of the Declaration.

This poster shows the delegates leaving Independence Hall in Philadelphia to announce the signing of the Declaration of Independence.



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Debate over Slavery

1. Why did Southern delegates want the passage about slavery taken out of the Declaration of Independence?

2. Why did Northern delegates want the passage about slavery taken out of the Declaration of Independence?

3. Why did delegates who opposed slavery want the passage about slavery taken out of the Declaration of Independence?

1776 and Slavery

What are two arguments Jefferson (and the committee) gives advocating the freedom of slaves

1. _____

2. _____

3. What did the South want Jefferson and the committee to do in order to sign the Declaration of Independence?



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HOMEWORK

_____/10 Mastered/Passing/Not Mastered

Directions: Fill in the thought bubbles. Have each delegate to the Second Continental Congress explain why he opposed Jefferson’s passage on slavery



Northern Delegate



Southern Delegate

2. Explain what might have happened to the delegates if the new nation had failed to win its freedom from Great Britain.

Equality

The greatest source of hope for African Americans was the expectation that white Patriot leaders would realize their revolutionary ideas were mismatched with slavery. Those in England who believed white Americans must submit to British authority pointed out the contradiction. Samuel Johnson, the most famous writer in London asked, “How is it that the loudest complaints for liberty are the people who own slaves?” But white Americans made similar comments.

Thomas Paine, whose pamphlet *Common Sense* encouraged Americans to support independence in 1776 asked them to contemplate [think about] “what right do they have to complain so loudly of attempts to enslave [make a slave] them, while they hold so many hundred thousands in slavery and annually enslave many thousands more?”





3. What is the contradiction⁴ of the American colonists according to both Samuel Johnson and Thomas Paine?

4. Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence that “all men are created equal and deserve the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. BUT Thomas Jefferson was a wealthy planter from the colony of Virginia who owned more than 200 slaves.

Imagine that you are one of his slaves, how would you explain to Thomas Jefferson that this is a contradiction?



⁴ Contradiction: When two ideas are inconsistent or disagree with one another.