

# Declaration of Independence Worksheet

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## Declaration of Independence

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 bonds 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 to 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 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 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 meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and **convulsions** within.

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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 **migration** 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 legislature.

He has affected to render the military independent of and superior to 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 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 offenses:

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 in 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 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 insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is 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 attention 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

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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. 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 the 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.

**New Hampshire:** Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple, Matthew Thornton

**Massachusetts:** John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, Elbridge Gerry

**Rhode Island:** Stephen Hopkins, William Ellery

**Connecticut:** Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, William Williams, Oliver Wolcott

**New York:** William Floyd, Philip Livingston, Francis Lewis, Lewis Morris

**New Jersey:** Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon, Francis Hopkinson, John Hart, Abraham Clark

**Pennsylvania:** Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, John Morton, George Clymer, James Smith, George Taylor, James Wilson, George Ross

**Delaware:** Caesar Rodney, George Read, Thomas McKean

**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

**North Carolina:** William Hooper, Joseph Hewes, John Penn

**South Carolina:** Edward Rutledge, Thomas Heyward, Jr., Thomas Lynch, Jr., Arthur Middleton

**Georgia:** Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, George Walton.

## **Vocabulary —**

Define the following words. Try to keep definitions as brief as possible!

Unanimous, impel, unalienable, instituted, deriving, abolish, Prudence, transient, disposed, usurpations, ursuing, invariably, evinces., despotism, constrains, candid, relinquish, inestimable, depository, fatiguing, compliance, annihilation, convulsions, obstructing, migration, appropriations, judiciary, tenure, harass, quartering, arbitrary, abdicated, mercenaries, desolation, perfidy, barbarous, constrained, redress, emigration, magnanimity, conjured, kindred, disavow, usurpations, acquiesce, denounces, rectitude, absolved, allegiance, levy, alliances, establish, commerce, Divine Providence

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### **Geography —**

- (1) Locate the following geographical places on a map, globe, and atlas.
- (2) Compare/Contrast the weather from these areas with your own for one week.
- (3) Make a meal from one or more of these areas for your family.

United States of America, Great Britain, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia

### **Comprehension/Discussion/Research Questions —**

1. Research: Why do you think the Declaration was issued on July 4, 1776?
2. Why do you think it was important to begin this document by stating, "The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America"?
3. What does the term "created equal" mean? Does it mean that all people everywhere and at all times have the same abilities and talents?
4. Relate the term "created equal" with the history of Creation and what caused Adam and Eve to leave the Garden of Eden.
5. Who is the Creator that this document refers to?
6. What are the certain unalienable rights the Creator gave to mankind? May a government legally usurp those rights? Give scriptural support for your assertions.
7. The Declaration gives numbers examples of how the king of England broke the covenant or contract he had made with the colonists. Site at least three.
8. What is quartering troops? Are property rights secure if a government can quarter military troops upon its citizens without its consent?
9. How did quartering British troops impact the colonists? How would you have responded to such a situation? If property rights are not secure, can civil rights be safe?
10. Why do you think all of the representatives of the colonies signed this Declaration? What were they risking signing it? Would you have had the courage to sign this Declaration?
11. Research 2-3 signers of the Declaration to discover how signing this document impacted their lives.

Note:

Reading and researching events that occurred around source work like legal documents is important.