

American Declarations – The Declaration of Independence

Educational Resource and Activity – Supplemental Material

This activity calls for learners to compare and contrast the Declaration of Independence and another American declaration or proclamation. In no way is the list below meant to be exhaustive, as we acknowledge the many declarations made by those in the United States. If you find that we're missing a voice, perspective, or speech, let us know. We welcome your comments, feedback, and suggestions!

List of Other Declarations/Proclamations

John Locke, Two Treatises of Government (pages 106 – 112; Chapter II of the State of Nature) - <https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/locke/government.pdf>

Frederick Douglass, “The Meaning of the July Fourth to the Negro” also known as “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July” - <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2927t.html>

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Declaration of Sentiments - <https://www.nps.gov/wori/learn/historyculture/declaration-of-sentiments.htm>

General Assembly of the United Nations, Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons - <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/RightsOfDisabledPersons.aspx> - C/W outdated speech and terminology used in this text

United Nations, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf

Dolores Huerta, Proclamation of the Delano Grape Workers - http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=613

Barbara Gittings, Speech at a 1973 Gay Pride March and Rally- <https://vimeo.com/330403041> - Video (suggested timestamp: 0:00 to 7:24)

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

A DECLARATION BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, IN GENERAL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED

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 shewn, 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

Text used by John Dunlap for broadsides w/ additional grievance

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 excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured 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.