



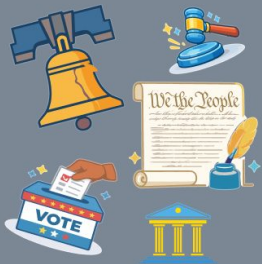
# Student Workbook

## Course 2

Grades 6–8

The Declaration of  
Independence  
and Natural Rights





# The Big Question: *What is Self-Government?*



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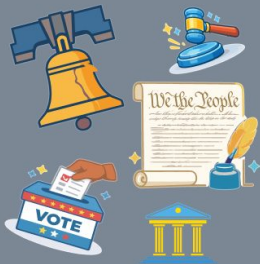
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# The Declaration of Independence & Natural Rights



## Jump In: Rules, Rights, and Responsibility

### Rules in The Giver

- People must use the correct words.
- Families can only have two children.
- Everyone shares feelings and dreams each day.
- Children gain new responsibilities at certain ages.
- Community leaders decide each person's future job.
- Everyone moves to the next age group together.



**Age 7:** Children receive jackets with buttons, a sign of growing independence.



**Age 8:** Comfort objects are taken away, and volunteer work begins.



**Age 9:** Children receive bicycles. Girls stop wearing hair ribbons.



**Age 10:** Children receive shorter haircuts.



**Age 11:** Children receive new clothing based on whether they are a boy or girl.



**Age 12:** Community leaders assign each child a future job.



**Birthdays:** Children do not celebrate individual birthdays. Everyone moves to the next age group together during a community ceremony.

### Share Your Thinking

**Consider:** Which rule seems most fair? Which rule seems least fair? As you think about these rules, ask yourself:

- Who has power? Who gets a voice?
- Which rules protect people? Which rules limit freedom?

**Choose:** Below, write 1) the rule you would keep and why, 2) one rule you would change or remove and why. Be sure to use clear reasoning and examples to support your ideas.

# Think Like an Historian: From Complaints to Change

## Learning from the Declaration of Independence

### Your Task: Build a Historical Complaint

Now, you'll examine the argument made by the colonists. You will read real excerpts from the Declaration of Independence and identify:

- the **problems** they experienced under British rule
- the **evidence** they used to prove unfairness
- and **the beliefs** they had about how government should work

**And check the Glossary on page 4.** The Declaration of Independence was written more than 250 years ago, so some of its words can be hard to understand.

#### Excerpt 1

"He [the King] has refused his **Assent** to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He [the King] has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance...

He [the King] has dissolved **Representative Houses** repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He [the king] has refused to pass other Laws...unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature..."

1. What is the problem the colonists are stating?
2. What is one piece of evidence they used to prove the King's unfairness?
3. **True or False:** The colonists claimed the King refused to approve important laws that were needed for the public good.

### Excerpt 2

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal...

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...

They are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

1. What belief about government are the colonists explaining in this excerpt?
2. What natural rights does the Declaration say people have?
3. What is **one** piece of evidence they used to prove that the government must represent the people?
4. **True or False** The colonists believed that if the government becomes destructive, only the government can alter or abolish it.

## Crafting a Historical Complaint

Now, you'll organize your thinking into a clear complaint, pulling together evidence from the excerpts. Use these sentence frames to support your thinking.

| Your Complaint  |                                                                                |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Problem</b>  | <i>British rule was unfair because:</i>                                        |
| <b>Evidence</b> | <i>An example of this unfairness was:</i>                                      |
| <b>Belief</b>   | <i>The colonists believed government power should come from _____ because:</i> |

## Glossary of Terms

### **Assent**

To agree to or approve something.

In the Declaration, the colonists said the King refused his assent to laws, meaning he would not approve laws they believed were important.

### **Consent of the governed**

Permission from the people being governed.

This means the government gets its power from the people, not just from a king or ruler.

### **Alter**

To change something.

The colonists believed people had the right to change a government that was not protecting their rights.

### **Abolish**

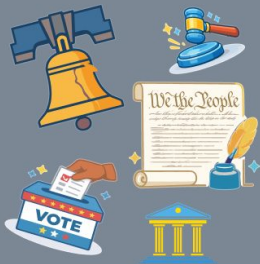
To end or get rid of something.

The colonists believed people had the right to end a government that was harming their rights.

### **Representative Houses**

Groups of elected leaders who speak and make decisions for the people.

In the Declaration, the colonists complained that the King dissolved, or shut down, these groups when they disagreed with him.



# The Declaration of Independence & Natural Rights



## Jump In: The Big Idea: Opportunity for All

Look back and refer to the [key vocabulary words](#) in the Get Ready lesson you just completed.



### Share Your Thinking

Imagine a school says, "Every student deserves the same opportunities." But some students are allowed to join clubs, participate in activities, or share their opinions while others are not.

**Would that feel fair? Why or why not?**

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# Ideas That Echo Beyond History...

## AEIOU Reflection Activity

The Declaration of Independence introduced powerful ideas about freedom, equality, and the role of government. Even though it was written more than 200 years ago, people throughout history have continued using its words to challenge injustice and demand change. In this activity, you'll reflect on how the Declaration's ideas continued to influence American society over time.



### Video Reflection Directions

**1) As you watch:**

- Notice moments connected to equality, rights, fairness, or protest.
- Think about who benefited from the Declaration and who was excluded.
- Pay attention to ideas that still connect to issues people discuss today.

**2) Complete the AEIOU Reflection Organizer**

### AEIOU Reflection Organizer

#### A = Adjective

*Write 1–2 adjectives that describe something you learned or saw in the video.*

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## E = Emotion

*Describe a moment that caused an emotional reaction. How did it make you feel, and why?*

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## I = Interesting

*What was one idea, fact, or connection you found especially interesting?*

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## O = Oh!

*Describe a moment that made you pause, rethink something, or say “Oh!”*

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## U = Um?

*Write one question you still have or something you want to learn more about.*

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## Final Reflection

*What does this video suggest about whether America’s “experiment in liberty” is finished or still continuing today?*

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