

Teaching American History

American Revolution

Project Planning Worksheet

Definition:

This lesson asks students to use their higher order thinking skills of application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation when looking at the Declaration of Independence. Students will look at the wording used, the explanation of the indictment against King George and put it into words common to our language today. Students should be introduced to the issues facing colonists around the time of the American Revolution that influenced the writing of the Declaration of Independence. In the process of doing this lesson students should begin to understand the reasons some wanted to break away from Britain.

Essential Questions:

- Did the crimes of King George, listed in the Declaration of Independence, justify the colonies break from England?
- If our President committed the same crimes today, against U.S. citizens or people in territorial claims, would it justify impeachment of the President or a territory breaking from the United States?
- Did any of the ideas in the Declaration of Independence help to unify the citizens of the United States?

Classroom Activity:

Depending on classroom size and ability what will be accomplished daily will vary. Times are estimates.

Rosalie C. Rossberg Teaching American History Lesson Plan

Day 1: Activities 1-7

Day 2: Activities 8-10

Day 3: Activities 11-12

1. Pass out copies of The Declaration of Independence.
2. Have students start out by working with one partner.
3. As a class, read the Declaration of Independence as a class.
4. As you're reading have students highlight any words they do not know the meaning of or whose meaning they're unsure of.
5. When you're finished have students pick 3 of their highlighted words to add to the class glossary. If a word is picked and defined by another class member students must find another word to define. Students may use a dictionary or go to www.dictionary.com to define their words.
6. Have students go through the document and count the number of crimes the colonists charged King George III with. Each charge should be numbered.
7. Go through each individual crime as a class to ensure students have the correct number of crimes and each is numbered correctly.
8. Divide the crimes amongst the groups. Have students indicate on their copy of The Declaration of Independence the crime(s) they have been assigned.
9. Have students go to <http://colonialhall.com/histdocs/declaration/declarationanalysis01.php>. This site lists each of the indictments against King George and gives an explanation of each. (Note: <http://colonialhall.com/histdocs/declaration/declarationanalysis01.php>. The highlighted

number in the website address is the indictment number. If students delete it and put the number they are looking for in its place it will take them directly to that indictment.)

10. On a separate sheet of paper, students will read each crime they were assigned and describe it, in their own words, or using present day language. Explanations/ rewrites should be no longer than one or two sentences.
11. Once students are finished, as a class read the first and last paragraphs and, as a class, come up with a revised version of the two using today's language.
 - a. Have students answer the journal on the following questions:
 - b. Do you think the actions/crimes of King George were severe enough for the colonists to break away? Explain/justify your answer using a minimum of four sentences.
 - c. If our President would have committed the same crimes today or similar crimes (against U.S. citizens or people in American territories), would do you think they should be removed from office. Explain your answer in a minimum of four sentences.
 - d. In your opinion, did any of the ideas in the Declaration of Independence help to unify the citizens of the United States? If yes, identify one and explain in a minimum of two sentences how it brought citizens together. If no, explain how the ideas did not unify the colonies in a minimum of two sentences.

Strategies Used:

- Reading and evaluating a primary source
- Writing: expressing an opinion and evaluating explanations of each of the indictments
- Research: definition of terms used

Primary Sources:

Declaration of Independence

- “The Declaration of Independence”. *Ushistory.org*. Independence Hall Association. Web. 14 May 2011. <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document>

Resources:

- <http://www.dictionary.com>
- Any print Dictionary
- <http://colonialhall.com/histdocs/declaration/declarationanalysis01.php>
- “The Declaration of Independence”. *Ushistory.org*. Independence Hall Association. Web. 14 May 2011. <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document>

Standards:

1B: The student understands the principles articulated in the Declaration of Independence.

- Draw upon the principles in the Declaration to construct a sound historical argument regarding whether it justified American independence.
- Explain how key principles in the Declaration of Independence grew in importance to become unifying ideas of American democracy.

Evaluation:

(Each teacher will define “well written” or “applicable evidence” differently.)

Definitions: The required number of definitions have been completed by each student/group and the correct definition is used.

Journals: Use the following rubric to evaluate:

1. Student stated their point of view.
2. Student used appropriate arguments to back up their opinion.
3. Student used the correct number of sentences in their journal.

THE U.S. NATIONAL ARCHIVES & RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

www.archives.gov

May 5, 2011

The Declaration of Independence: A Transcription

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 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 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 mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured 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 harrass 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 neighbouring 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 compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & 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 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.

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.

The 56 signatures on the Declaration appear in the positions indicated:

Column 1

Georgia:

Button Gwinnett
 Lyman Hall
 George Walton

Column 2

North Carolina:

This lesson plan was done during the Spring 2011 semester of my Freshman World History class. However, the district updated the online forum I used and all of my student examples were lost except for the glossary. I will send journal examples next year when I do this lesson in Spring 2012.

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- 1 He has refused his **Assent** to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.
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- 5 He has **dissolved** Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his **invasions** on the rights of the people.
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- unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:
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 - 17 For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:
 - 18 For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:
 - 19 For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences
 - 20 For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring 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:
 - 21 For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:
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Sunday, 12 June 2011, 04:05 PM

Site: **Great Falls Public Schools**
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A

abolishing
 to die out, or decay little by little



Accommodation
 adjustment of differences; reconciliation



Acquiesce
 To submit or comply silently



Annihilation
 the act or an instance of annihilating.



Appropriations.
 An act of a legislature authorizing money to be paid from [the](#) treasury for a specified use.



Arbitrary
 subject to individual will or judgment without restriction; contingent solely upon one's discretion: *an arbitrary decision.*



assent
 to agree or [concur](#); subscribe to (often followed by *to*): *to assent to a statement.*



B

Barbarous
 uncivilized; wild; savage; crude.

X 

C

candid

Free from reservation, disguise, or subterfuge; straightforward: *a candid opinion*.X 

Charters

a document, issued by a sovereign or state, outlining the conditions under which a corporation, colony, city, or other corporate body is organized, and defining its rights and privileges.

X 

Consanguinity

A close relationship or connection.

X 

constrained:

forced, compelled, or obliged.

X 

Convulsions

to disrupt the normal running of (a country, etc.)

X 

D

Despotism

The exercise of absolute authority.

X 

E

Endeavoured

to exert oneself to do or effect something; make an effort; strive: *We must constantly endeavor if we are to succeed*.X 

endowed

To provide with property, income, or a source of income

X 

Example: Declaration of Independence

Document outlining the crimes of King George III of England & declaring the colonies independent of England.

**F**

Formidable

causing fear, apprehension, or dread

**H**

hath

3rd person singular present indicative of have.



Hither

Hither and thither, in various quarters; here and there.

**I**

Impel

–*verb (used with object)*, -pelled, -pel·ling.

1. to drive or urge forward; press on; incite or constrain to action.
2. to drive or cause to move onward; propel; impart motion to.



inestimable

inestimable means too great to measure or too large to calculate

Keyword(s):



inevitably

Unable to be avoided, evaded, or escaped; certain; necessary: *an inevitable conclusion*.
sure to occur, happen, or come; unalterable: *The inevitable end of human life is death*.



instituted

verb (used with object)

1. to set up; establish; organize: *to institute a government*.
2. to inaugurate; initiate; start: *to institute a new course in American literature*.

3.
to set in operation: *to institute a lawsuit.*



insurrections
an act or instance of rising in revolt, rebellion, or resistance against civil authority or an established government.



J

Jurisdiction
the right, power, or authority to administer justice by hearing and determining controversies



Justice
rightfulness or lawfulness, as of a claim or title; justness of ground or reason: *to complain with justice.*



L

Levy
An imposing or collecting, as of a tax, by authority or force.



M

magnanimity
generosity



N

Naturalization
To confer upon [the](#) rights and privileges of a citizen.



O

oppressions
The expression of authority or power in a burdensome.



P

perfidy
the quality or state of being disloyal.



plundered
Taken wrongfully, as by pillage, robbery, or fraud.



prudence
caution with regard to practical matters; discretion.



Q

Quartering
Quartering

The assignment of quarters or lodgings.



R

rectitude
Righteousness of principle; integrity



redress
to set right



relinquish
to let go; release



S

Shewn
A. to be seen; be or become visible: Does my slip show?

B. to be seen in a certain way: to show to advantage.

C. to put on an exhibition or performance; display one's goods or products: Several dress designers are showing in [new york](#) now.



Sufferance
suffering; misery.



T

tenure
the holding or possessing of anything: *the tenure of an office*.



Tenure?
The possession or holding of an office or position.



Transient
Not lasting, enduring.



U

Unalienable
not [alienable](#); not transferable to another or capable of being repudiated: *inalienable rights*



unanimous
Of one mind; in complete agreement; agreed.



Usurpations
an [act of usurping](#); wrongful or illegal encroachment, infringement, or seizure

