

COMMON CORE  
Lessons & Activities

# Declaration of **INDEPENDENCE**

Reading for Information

Higher-Order Thinking

Writing Prompts

Primary Source Analysis

Vocabulary

Graphic Organizers

Map Activities

& More!

**REPRODUCIBLE**

*One teacher is allowed to make copies for use in her/his classroom!*



## About this Book

This Common Core Lessons and Activities Book allows you to immediately meet new Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, as well as Literacy and Writing in History/Social Studies. It is designed to supplement your Social Studies resources, adding new Common Core rigor, analysis, writing, inference, text-dependent questions, and more into your daily instruction.

## How to Use this Book:

- Work through the lessons and activities as a class to teach your students higher-order thinking, analysis, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills necessary to meet new Common Core expectations.
- Allow students to work through the lessons independently to build and practice these new skills.
- Include technology, collaboration, presentation, and discussion in the activities as you desire—you can decide how in-depth to go.
- Watch your class develop new abilities to meet the rigor of Common Core State Standards, right before your eyes!

## Tips:

- Use some of the pages—or use them all—based on your grade, your students, your curriculum, and your needs.
- Use the pages at their current size, or if you prefer them to be 8-1/2" x 11", enlarge them 125% on your copy machine.
- Download graphic organizers labeled “GO” in the Table of Contents by going to: [www.gallopade.com/client/go](http://www.gallopade.com/client/go)
- Use the correlations grid to easily see which Common Core standards are covered in each lesson.

# Common Core Lessons & Activities: Declaration of Independence

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**G**: Includes Graphic Organizer

**GO**: Graphic Organizer is also available 8½" x 11" online  
download at [www.gallopade.com/client/go](http://www.gallopade.com/client/go)

(numbers above correspond to the graphic organizer numbers online)

## POINT OF VIEW

# Loyalists, Neutralists, & Patriots

Read the text and fill in the graphic organizer by writing three opinion statements from the point of view of each colonist. An example has been provided.

The American Revolutionary War began in 1775, but that did not mean that all colonists were in agreement about declaring independence from Great Britain—they weren't! In fact, almost one-third of all colonists did not want independence at all!

Colonists who were loyal to King George III and against declaring independence were called loyalists. Loyalists had many reasons to remain faithful to Great Britain. Some loyalists wanted to keep British military protection. Other loyalists were still connected to Britain by family and history. Some colonists felt a strong sense of duty toward King George III. In fact, many colonists considered themselves British citizens instead of "American colonists."

Many colonists wished to remain neutral. Neutralists often valued independence but understood that Britain offered protection, government, and trade. They also were unsure about waging war.

Patriots, colonists who wanted independence, had many reasons to be unhappy with British rule. Many patriots were influenced by the writings of John Locke, who stated that men have the right to oppose unjust governments. The Sons of Liberty were the most famous group of patriots. They were not content with British taxes and longed for freedom from British rule. Patriots saw King George III as a tyrant who ruled unfairly, imposed unfair taxes, and used deadly violence against colonists in the Boston Massacre.

Loyalist	Neutralist	Patriot
1. King George III is our beloved king!	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

# The British Perspective

Read the text and answer the questions. Then complete the graphic organizer.

The colonists listed many complaints against the King, but King George III had a different point of view. For King George III, the Declaration of Independence was a clear sign of disrespect and defiance. Britain had recently defended the colonies during the French and Indian War. British Parliament thought a small tax on certain goods was a small price to pay for the protection of the British army. Britain left a standing army on guard in the colonies to protect the colonists from French and Indian attacks, and acts of Parliament were meant to help govern the colonies. Additionally, the British considered the colonies property of Great Britain.

The British side of key events, such as the Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party, tells a different side of history. British accounts of the Boston Massacre claimed that the massacre was an accident. They also accused the colonists of violently provoking and attacking British guards. When the Sons of Liberty threw British tea into Boston Harbor, British companies lost a large profit. The colonists' attempts at independence, including self-government and independent trade, angered the British government. The Declaration of Independence was a final proof of colonial disrespect toward Great Britain and King George III.

1. Why did Great Britain leave a standing army in the colonies?
2. How did the Boston Tea Party affect the British?

Issue	British Point of View
Taxation	
Standing Army	
Boston Tea Party	
Boston Massacre	
Declaration of Independence	

# Authors of the Declaration

Read the text and answer the questions.

Thomas Jefferson was a well-known politician at the time of the American Revolution. He is often called the “Father of the Declaration of Independence” because he was responsible for writing the document. However, Thomas Jefferson did not write it alone.

Congress selected a “Committee of Five,” including Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, Richard R. Livingston, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson, to produce the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson and the committee took many ideas from other writers and thinkers. One of these writers was George Mason.

George Mason was an important politician who wrote the Virginia Declaration of Rights. He was influenced by John Locke, who claimed all people should have certain rights. These rights are known as natural rights, which are basic rights that Mason believed no government should deny. Mason included the right to “enjoyment of life and liberty, and pursuing and obtaining happiness...” Thomas Jefferson used George Mason’s Declaration of Rights as a model when writing the Declaration of Independence. Mason’s work also had an important influence on another major American document, the Bill of Rights.

1. A. Define natural rights as it is used in the text.  
B. In your own words, give an example of a natural right.
2. Is “Father of the Declaration” a fair title for Thomas Jefferson? Why or why not?
3. How did George Mason’s Virginia Declaration of Rights influence the Declaration of Independence?
4. Choose Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, Richard R. Livingston, or John Adams. Use an online or classroom resource to find five important facts about that person. Share your facts with the class.

# Structure of the Declaration

Read the text and answer the questions.

The Declaration of Independence is a statement against British control on trade, government, and political representation. In fact, it says that the colonies are free from Parliament and King George III. Overall, the Declaration explains and justifies the colonists' independence and gives a straightforward list of reasons why the colonies separated from Great Britain.

The first section of the Declaration, called the Preamble, states that the American people, when necessary, have the right to declare independence. The second section explains the ideas behind the Declaration. According to the Declaration, everyone has "certain unalienable rights," including "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." It says that the purpose of government is to protect those natural rights. In addition, people can change or oppose their government if those unalienable rights are in danger.

The third section is a long list of the colonists' complaints against King George III, including taxation and unfair trials. The fourth section claims that the colonists tried to find solutions and make peace. The fifth section states the colonists' determination to defend their independence and rights. The last section is a list of signers representing all 13 colonies. Congressional delegates signed the Declaration to show the commitment of the colonies to protecting independence from Great Britain.

1. What is the purpose of the Declaration of Independence?
2. Describe the five main parts of the Declaration of Independence, not including the signers.
3. From the text, what is the key purpose of a government?
4. According to the Declaration, when do people have the right to oppose an oppressive government?
5. Explain the purpose of the fourth section. Why might the colonists have included it?
6. If you were a congressional delegate in 1776, would you have signed the Declaration of Independence? Why or why not?