



The Declaration of Independence | Lesson Plan

What is the Declaration of Independence and how did it establish our nation?



Students learn about the Declaration of Independence, the founding document of the United States of America that established what a government's role should be, explained how King George III's rule did not measure up to that standard, and officially declared the nation independent from Great Britain. They'll join Uncle Sam as he quizzes kid contestants about the Declaration of Independence and complete a fun follow-along worksheet.

Learning Objectives:

- Recall key facts about the Declaration of Independence.
- Recognize the reasons for declaring independence from Great Britain.
- Identify the key distinguishing elements of the Declaration of Independence, including unalienable rights, consent of the governed, and equality of man.
- List man's unalienable rights as stated in the Declaration of Independence.
- Appreciate the significance and uniqueness of the Declaration of Independence in history.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Unalienable Rights:** Unalienable rights are very important rights that all people have and cannot be taken away. They include things like the right to life (being alive), liberty (being free), and the pursuit of happiness (doing things that make you happy).
- **Declaration:** A formal statement that declares the rights, grievances, and intentions of a group of people.
- **Preamble:** An introductory statement or opening paragraph that sets forth the purpose, principles, or objectives of the document.
- **Consent of the Governed:** A phrase meaning that true power rests with the people of a country, and they must give their permission or agreement for the government to exist and make decisions on their behalf.
- **Equality:** The belief that all people are inherently equal and possess the same basic rights and opportunities, regardless of their race, beliefs, gender, or social status.

Educational Standards: Civics, American Values, U.S. History

What You'll Need

- Video: [Street Smarts: The Declaration of Independence](#)



Scan to watch video.

- Worksheet: [Street Smarts: The Declaration of Independence](#) ([Download PDF](#))

Lesson Plan (45 mins.)

Warm Up: What do you know about the Declaration of Independence? (10 mins.)

1. Ask: *Have you ever been treated unfairly by an authority figure? What did that feel like? What did/could you do about it?*
2. State: *This was the situation at the time of America's founding. Our Founding Fathers were being treated unfairly by their authority, King George III. Here are some of the main issues they had with King George:*
 - a. *Imposing unfair and oppressive taxes without their consent.*
 - b. *Denying the colonists the right to representation.*
 - c. *Interfering with colonial legal systems.*
 - d. *Quartering British soldiers in colonial homes without consent.*
 - e. *Restricting colonial trade and imposing burdensome regulations.*
 - f. *Violating the rights of colonists through unfair trials and arbitrary imprisonment.*
 - g. *Neglecting the welfare and protection of the colonies and undermining their self-governance.*
3. Display a copy of *Street Smarts: The Declaration of Independence* Worksheet (side with blanks) on a screen in the classroom.
4. Have a student read each statement aloud and attempt to fill in the blanks as a class. Invite students to share out loud (or do this part independently).

Watch and Complete: (25 mins.)

1. State: *Let's play a fun game and see if we got it right.*
2. Watch the video.
3. Pause after each question and allow students to try to answer.
4. Play the video to reveal if they were correct or incorrect.

Wrap-Up: (10 mins.)

1. Allow students 10 minutes to complete the worksheet independently.

2. Collect as formative assessment or discuss in class.

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15 mins.)

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.