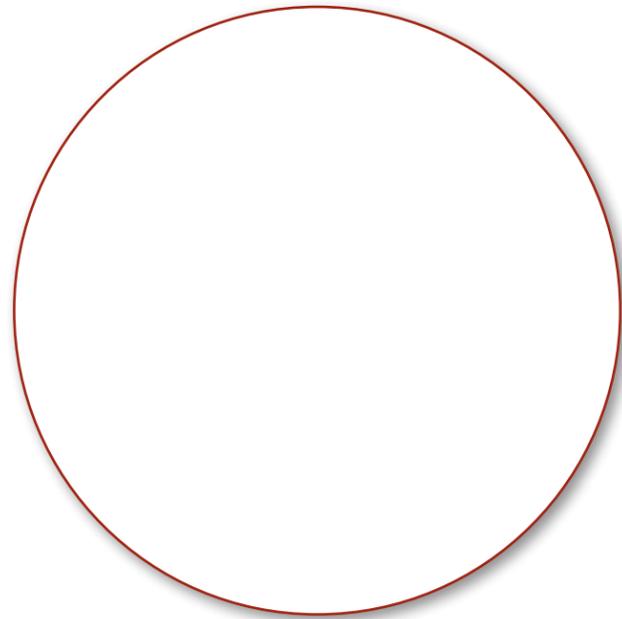


# THE DECLARATION TODAY AND TOMORROW

For more than 200 years, the words of the Declaration of Independence have traveled far beyond the United States of America. They inspired revolutions in France, Haiti, Ireland, India, Korea, and beyond. They gave strength to Frederick Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, John Ross and the Cherokee, and leaders like Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr. They even helped shape the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, led by Eleanor Roosevelt, so that people all over the world could claim their rights.

Even today, in the 21st century, people continue to look back at the Declaration of Independence to remind themselves – and their leaders – of the promises of freedom and equality it held. The work is not finished, but the ideas that “all people are created equal” and that there are rights that cannot be taken away continue to guide movements for justice in America and around the world.

And now, it's your turn! You are part of the next generation who will carry these ideas forward. The Declaration isn't just about the past, it's about what you choose to do today and tomorrow to make the future better. When you stand up for fairness, include others, or speak out against something that's wrong, you are helping to keep the promise of the Declaration alive. The future of freedom, equality, and self-government depends on the choices you make.



## Design a Button

Movements of the 1900s and 2000s used buttons to spread ideas, show support, and remind others that change was possible. Use this space to design a button about a cause that is important to you.

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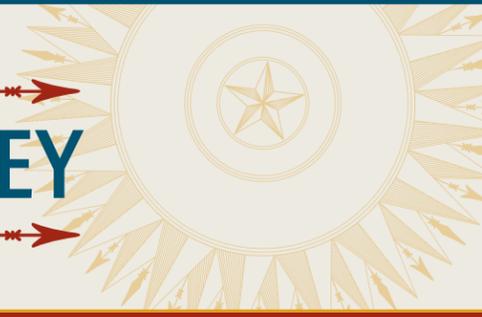
Cloverbrook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

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The Family of Irvin and Anita Schorsch



# The DECLARATION'S JOURNEY



## History Explorers' Family Guide

**The United States of America was born 250 years ago!** For over 10 years before July 1776, many people in the American colonies that were ruled by Great Britain had been fighting against laws that they felt were unfair. But when they wrote and shared the Declaration of Independence with the world, they said they wanted more than to be treated fairly. They wanted to be free and independent.

In front of you are two seats. The chair was used by Thomas Jefferson, the main author of the Declaration. He explained why the American colonies should not be ruled by Great Britain anymore. He included an entire list of things he felt the British had done wrong. And yet, the part of the Declaration that most people around the world remember is in the beginning, where it says, “all men are created equal.” This idea, that everyone should be treated the same, gave hope to many people around the world.

The man who sat on the second seat, Martin Luther King Jr., was inspired by the words of The Declaration many years later. He believed that the Declaration wasn't just about starting a new country. It was a promise that America would be a place where all people would be treated fairly.

In your hands is a passport! You can use it to explore 250 years of history! Travel the world to discover how the big ideas of the Declaration-fairness, equal rights, and people choosing their own leaders- inspired men and women from all walks of life to fight for a better future.

### KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

#### Declaration

A public statement that says what people believe or what they are going to do.

#### Equality

The idea that everyone should be treated the same and have the same chances, no matter who they are or where they come from.

#### Abolition

The act of ending something. In American history, abolition usually means ending slavery. People who fought for abolition were called abolitionists.

#### Suffrage

The right to vote in elections.

#### Rights

Basic freedoms or protections that all people should have.

# PHILADELPHIA 1776

# FIRST FRIENDSHIPS



## Get Your Passport Stamped!

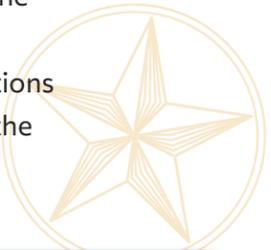
Any time you see this picture, find the stamp to record your trip through *The Declaration's Journey*.

How did people share news before television or the internet? Back during the American Revolution, there were no telephones, radios, or social media to help spread the word that the United States had made its decision: they would never get back together with Great Britain.

One of the most popular way to spread the word was through large posters, called broadsides, with the text of the Declaration of Independence printed on them. Made using printing presses, they were posted in cities and towns across the 13 states. Newspapers carried the words, too, from Philadelphia to the north in Boston, to the south in Charleston, and to many points beyond.

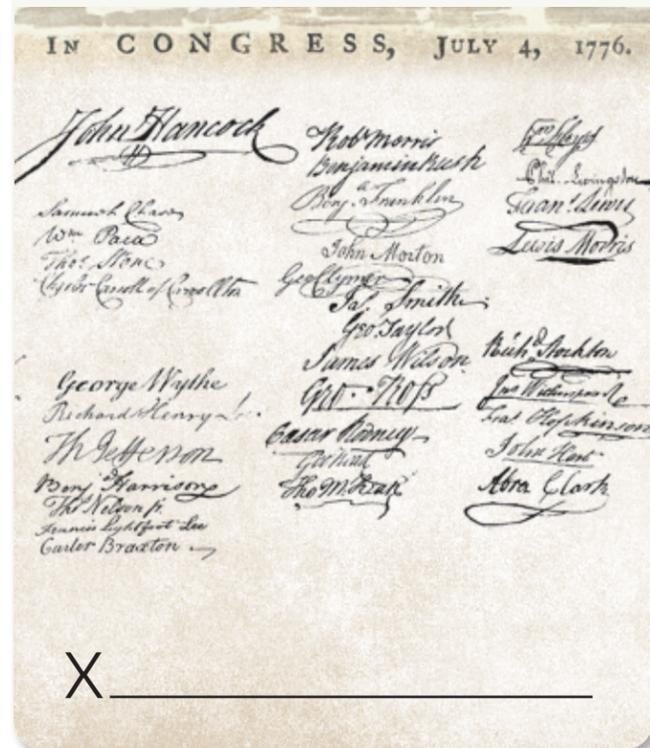
America announced that it was its own country but just saying it didn't make it true. Congress needed to make alliances, or official friendships, with other countries that would agree that the United States was an independent country and join the fight against the British.

The first nations to recognize the United States as independent were two Native American nations, the Wolastoqiyik and the Mi'kmaq. They signed a treaty with the state of Massachusetts called the Treaty of Watertown in July 1776. Some of the words in the treaty even matched the words in the Declaration! Even though some of the leaders in Congress did not fully trust all Native American nations, they still knew it was important to receive help from the other nations who lived in North America. Many Native Americans, including John Neptune, a member of the Penobscot Nation, joined the Continental Army and fought with George Washington.



## SIGN YOUR NAME

In July of 1776, different versions of the Declaration were printed and sent around the new nation. Sign your name to the bottom of this Declaration! Will you print it like Mary Katherine Goddard or sign it like John Hancock?



When the Declaration was first read out loud, people across the 13 states started to ask some big questions. What did it mean to say "all men are created equal"? Did it really include everyone? What about women? What about enslaved people, who the law said were owned by other people?

Even in 1776, many people hoped that the United States could be a place where all people would be treated fairly. They saw the Declaration as a promise of equality and fought to make that promise a reality. Find the faces below in the exhibit. What did they hope the Declaration's promise would change during their lifetime?



Elizabeth Freeman



Lemuel Haynes



James Forten

To share the message of the Declaration around America and the world, the words had to be translated from English to other languages. Translating meant finding the right words to explain what America was trying to say, but for people who didn't speak English. The first step is knowing the definitions of the words being used. Now it's your turn! Look at the words below and match them to what you think they mean.

- |                  |                                                                                  |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ___ Confederacy  | A. Being in charge of yourself instead of being ruled by someone else            |
| ___ Alliance     | B. A group of people who live together under one government                      |
| ___ Independence | C. An organization of smaller groups who have joined together with the same goal |
| ___ Nation       | D. When two countries or groups of people agree to help each other               |

When Congress declared independence, they hoped France would join them in the war. France had a king, but Benjamin Franklin went there to explain that they weren't against all kings, just the King of Great Britain. It took two years before France agreed that the United States was its own country. When France did agree, they also gave the United States important help, such as food, weapons, and soldiers. All of these things made it possible to beat the British Army and Navy and bring the war to an end.



The United States of America officially became independent in 1783, seven years after the Declaration of Independence was signed. But would this new country live up to its language of equality for all people? And what could this idea of equality mean for the rest of the world?

## HOW DO YOU SAY IT?



The names Native Americans use to refer to their own nations are special and have meanings that are important to their cultures. Here are a few of the ones you'll see in this guide.

**Wolastoqiyik** Wool-as-two-wee-ig  
People of the Beautiful River

**Mi'kmaq** Meeg-gah-mah  
My Kin Friends

**Penobscot** Pah-nob-skit  
People of the Rocky Place



After the American Revolutionary War, the ideas in the Declaration of Independence spread to other countries. In 1789, the Marquis de Lafayette, a French veteran of the war, brought those ideas back home to France. There, the king and rich nobles had most of the money and power, while most people were poor and had no voice in their government. The people wanted things to change. They wanted to help make the decisions and to be treated more fairly.

Lafayette helped to write The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. It said that all people should be treated fairly, have freedom, and should help decide how their country is run.

The French Revolution was different from the American Revolution. In America, colonists were fighting to become independent from their mother country. In France, the people were fighting their own king because they wanted better laws and more of a say in their government. Still, the American Declaration helped inspire the French people to express that they also wanted their government to fairly represent them and protect their rights.



CCO Paris Musées / Musée Carnavalet - Histoire de Paris

## DID YOU KNOW?



National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

Thomas Jefferson was the main author of the Declaration of Independence and also helped write the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen while he was living in France years later. Each declaration is different, but they share many common words and phrases.

## FRENCH WOMEN JOIN THE FIGHT

In 1791, Olympe de Gouges wrote her own version of the French Declaration and named it the "Declaration of the Rights of Women and of the Female Citizen." She felt that women had not been represented in the first version and fought for equal rights for all French citizens, not just the men.



© RMN-Grand Palais / ArtResource, NY

Not long after the American Revolution, another powerful fight for freedom began, on the Caribbean Island of Haiti. At that time, Haiti was a French colony called Saint-Domingue. Even though most of the people living there were enslaved people of African descent who worked on sugar and coffee plantations, the wealthy French land owners were in charge of the island.

When the enslaved people of Haiti heard about the American and French Revolutions, they were inspired. The American colonists had fought for independence from Britain, and the French people were demanding fair treatment from their king. The Haitian people felt that if freedom and equality were important in America and France, why should freedom and equality be refused for them?

After years of fighting, in 1804, the leaders of the Haitian Revolution decided that, like the Americans, they would declare their independence. But their declaration also announced that they would be free from slavery as well. They announced that Haiti would be an "empire of liberty," where slavery was abolished.



© Photo courtesy of the Fowler Museum at UCLA

## Word Search

C N C H O Z I Y T R E B I L D  
 N O I T A R A L C E D S E G X  
 K Y T G D F J K V U T X Q U C  
 U H I G M R K V F H Z W U U O  
 H D Z Y F E V E G Q Z Z A J W  
 M V E B Y E N I L E F I L P X  
 D F N Y P D R B Q D C Z I X D  
 S Z X J G O F C K J F P T U V  
 Q U Z B M M N S Q S H A Y Z Y  
 O E C N E D N E P E D N I K K

Declaration	Rights	Equality	Liberty
Citizen	Independence	Life	Freedom

## FOLLOW THE TIMELINE!

For 50 years after the American Revolutionary War, people around the world started to rise up, using the ideas of the Declaration to inspire them and their messages of freedom and equal rights. Use the timeline on the wall to discover more places where these independence movements started to appear.



# ABOLITION AND THE CIVIL WAR

In the early 1800s, Americans were still debating who the words “all men are created equal” included. Some people argued that this promise should be for everyone; people of African descent and women. Others disagreed. They said the Declaration of Independence protected their own rights, even the right to own enslaved people as property.

Frederick Douglass became one of the most famous speakers against slavery in the 1800s. In his speeches, he often used the Declaration to show how the United States had failed to live up to its ideals. Douglass was not alone. Other abolitionists also pointed to the Declaration as proof that slavery was wrong and went against America’s values. They believed the Declaration said that equality was meant for everyone, not just a few.

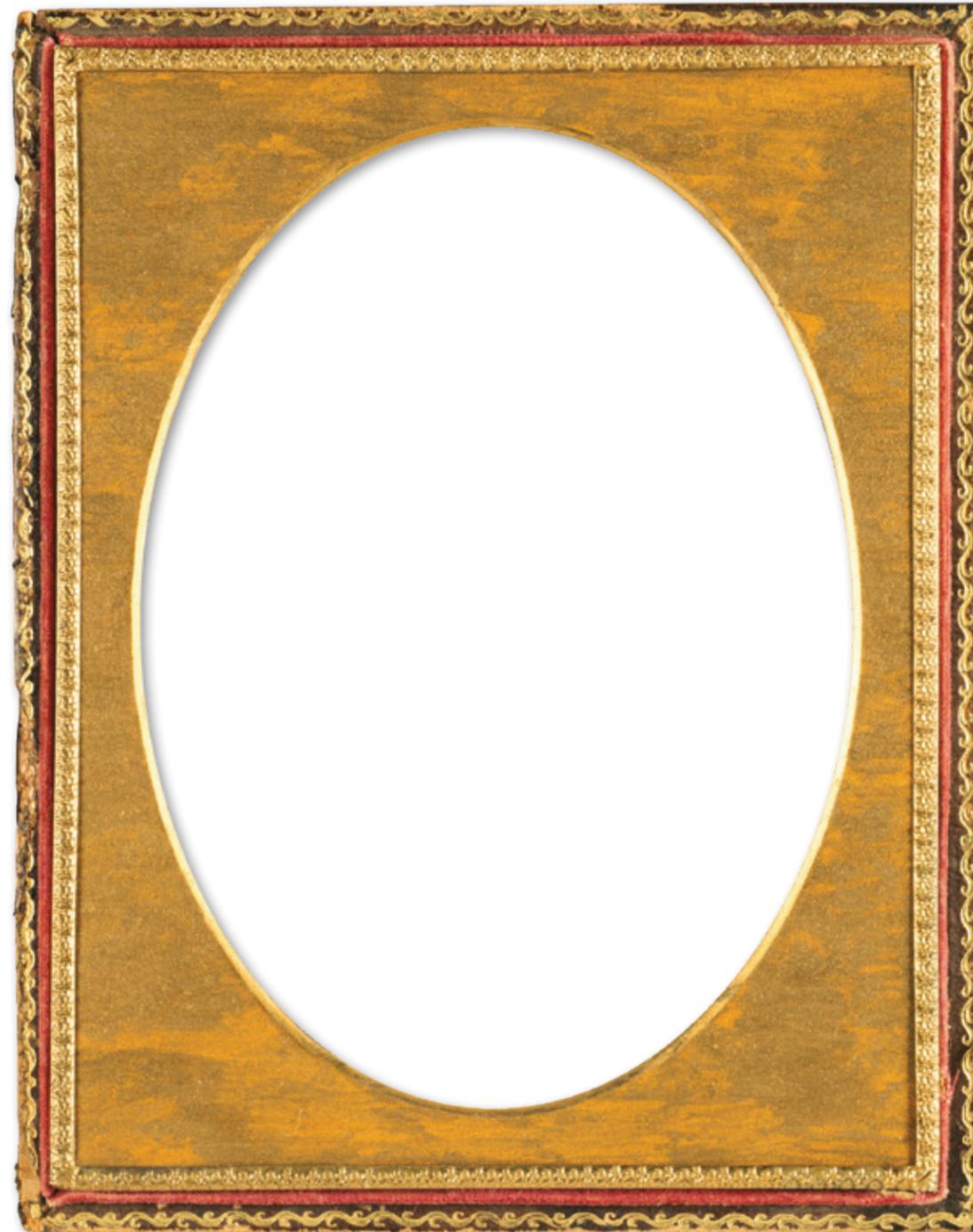
By using America’s own founding words, Douglass and other abolitionists reminded people of what the country claimed to stand for: freedom and equality. They argued that ending slavery was not only the right thing to do, but it was also what America had promised from the very beginning.

The fight over whether people had the right to own enslaved people kept growing as the American Civil War began in 1861. Eleven states left the United States to form a new nation. They called it the Confederate States of America, or the Confederacy. The Declaration said that people could make their own government if the one they had wasn’t working for them. The Confederacy said this gave them permission to leave the United States. On the other side, President Abraham Lincoln also used the Declaration. He said it stood for equality and liberty and argued against allowing slavery to spread into new places.

When the Confederacy was defeated and the 13th Amendment was passed, the United States finally began to answer the question first asked in 1776: Could a country that said “all men are created equal” also allow slavery? The answer was no. Slavery could not exist in a nation built on freedom and equality.

## How would you like to be seen?

Frederick Douglass was known for having his portrait taken often. He thought it was important that he managed how the world saw him. Draw a portrait of yourself and how you would like the world to see you!

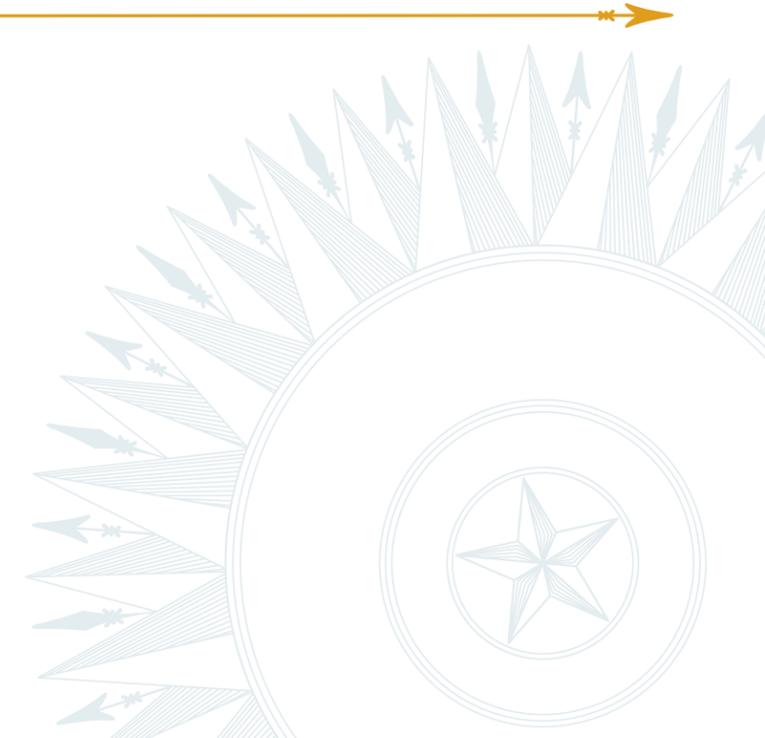


# NATIVE AMERICAN DECLARATIONS

Even before the Declaration of Independence was written, Native Americans were fighting for their own freedom and self-rule. By the 1800s, while some still lived on the same land their families had lived on for centuries, many others had been forced to move far away.

As a way to fight for their freedoms, some Native nations used the words of the Declaration to argue for their own right to self-government. The Mashpee people who lived in Massachusetts were frustrated by state laws that made it hard for them to govern themselves. They argued that they had the right to make their own laws because Massachusetts believed that “all men are born free and equal.” The Cherokee Nation, who were being pushed off their homeland so that others could use the land instead, also said that the Declaration’s words meant the United States should treat them fairly and protect their independence.

Native nations had a complicated relationship to the Declaration of Independence. On one hand, it showed that America wanted more land and control. On the other hand, it talked about ideas like equality, which could include everyone, even them.



# SENECA FALLS 1848

# THE DECLARATION AROUND THE WORLD

In the summer of 1848, women and men from across the country met in Seneca Falls, New York, to talk about another fight for rights. This time it was for the equal rights of women.

Since the United States had become its own nation, the right to vote had mostly been something only men could legally do. With a few exceptions, women, no matter their race, could still not to vote, own property in the same way men could, or go to many schools that men could attend. Many women felt that if the Declaration promised equal rights, why couldn't those rights include women too? They formed a National Woman Rights Movement.

At Seneca Falls, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wanted to write a statement that showed how unfairly women were treated. To do this, she decided to use the words of the Declaration of Independence. Just like the colonists had once listed their complaints against King George III, Stanton listed the many unfair ways women were treated by men and the government. She also changed the words of the Declaration's most famous statement to say "all men and women are created equal."



Celine Jenkins, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Family Archive

In the 1900s, the Declaration's message continued to spread to other parts of the world. Its words and ideas appeared in the declarations of new nations. From Ireland to India, people used the Declaration as inspiration for their own fights for rights, equality, or independence.

In 1916, like the United States many years before, Ireland was ruled by Great Britain. Inspired by earlier revolutionaries, Irish leaders wrote a declaration that said Ireland was "by right a free people," meaning they believed they had the right to rule themselves. It would take years of fighting before the Republic of Ireland was able to form its own government. Today there is still a part of the island of Ireland that is governed by the United Kingdom. It is called Northern Ireland.

In 1919, many Korean people, both in Korea and living around the world, wanted their country to be free from Japan's control. They used words from the United States Declaration of Independence to show that the Korean people should be treated fairly and choose their own leaders. They even visited Independence Hall, the place where America's Declaration was signed, to celebrate their hope for freedom. The fight for Korean independence would last until 1945, when Korea was granted its independence after the Second World War.

In 1930, India had been part of the British Empire for over 200 years. The leaders of India's independence movement issued their own declaration that said if a government takes away people's rights, the people have the right to change or end that government, just like the American Declaration. Also, like Americans in the 1770s, Indians held marches, protests, and boycotts against British goods. It took 17 more years of struggle, but in 1947, India finally became an independent nation.

Movements like these appeared around the world, showing the importance of freedom, equality, and the right to a government that respected everyone.



## BE A CHANGEMAKER

Find the cubbies with objects inside of them and choose one that matches the kind of changemaker you would want to be. Take a picture of yourself posing in front of Independence Hall. What would you raise your voice for?



How does adding "and women" change the meaning of the sentence? Do you think Elizabeth could have made her point without changing the words? Why or why not?

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Women's right to vote was successfully achieved in 1920. But women have carried the dreams of earlier activists — especially for equal rights — into the present day.



Bridgeman Images

Library of Congress

Look for these objects around you and match them to the country whose struggle for independence they represent.

Ireland      Korea      India



Top to bottom: On Loan from Ila Jasan Gooft, Courtesy of the National Museum of Ireland; On loan from the Philip Jaisohn Memorial House

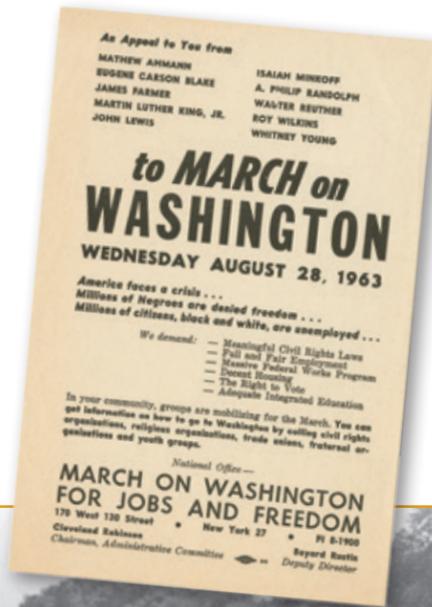
# WASHINGTON, D.C. 1963

# THE UNITED NATIONS



On August 28, 1963, civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. gave one of the most famous speeches in American history. In his speech, he used the words of Thomas Jefferson (remember him?!) and Abraham Lincoln, and he was also inspired by his Christian faith. King called on America to finally live up to the words of the Declaration of Independence, that “all men are created equal.”

Like many Black Americans before him, including James Forten and Frederick Douglass, King believed that America had great promise, but it had not yet lived up to its statements of freedom and equality for all. The civil rights movement that he led was part of a long tradition of Americans asking who is included in “all men are created equal”? Whose rights is the government supposed to protect?



**KING'S SPEECH**

Find the printed copy of King's speech and look out over the crowd. What would you ask Americans to dream about today?



Photo: Dan Siler / Alamy Stock Photo; Flyer: Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

After the Second World War ended in 1945, countries around the world wanted to make sure such a terrible war would never happen again. They created an international group called the United Nations (UN). The UN's goal was to bring countries together to solve problems peacefully and to protect human rights everywhere.

One of the first documents the countries of the UN worked on was called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Eleanor Roosevelt, the former First Lady of the United States, was asked to lead the group that was asked to write this document. People from many nations came together to say that everyone around the world deserved basic rights like safety, freedom of speech, education, and fair treatment under the law.

The ideas in this declaration were inspired by the Declaration of Independence and France's Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. Just like America's Declaration said that “all men are created equal” and have rights that cannot be taken away, the UN's declaration said those rights belong to people all over the world, not just in one country. It also said that those rights applied to all people and all races.



UN Photo

**Your Own Declaration**

Now it's your turn! Imagine you are writing your own declaration. What rights do you think are the most important for everyone to have?

Fill in the blanks below to create your own declaration.

*I believe everyone should have the right to* \_\_\_\_\_

*because* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*My Declaration, written* \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

*Signed:* \_\_\_\_\_