

WHAT MAKES A STATE?



Read each excerpt, then answer the question(s) that follow. Include annotations in the original text that helped you find the answer.

Emer de Vattel's book *The Law of Nations* (1758)

"Every nation which governs itself, under any form whatsoever, without dependency on any foreign country, is a sovereign state. Its rights are by nature the same as those of every other state. These are the moral persons who live together in a natural society subject to the law of nations. For any nation to make its entrance into this great society, it is enough that it should be truly sovereign and independent, that is to say, that it governs itself under its own authority and its own law."

1. In your own words, what are the requirements for statehood according to Vattel?

A Letter from John Adams to Richard Henry Lee, 15 November 1775

"I have made the following sketch, which may be varied in any one particular an infinite number of ways, so as to accommodate it to the different genius, temper, principles, and even prejudices of different people...in adopting a plan, in some respects similar to this, human nature would appear in its proper glory asserting its own real dignity, pulling down tyrannies, at a single exertion and erecting such new fabricks, as it thinks best calculated to promote its happiness."

2. In your own words, what is needed to become an independent nation according to Adams?

A Letter from Richard Henry Lee to Patrick Henry, 20 April 1776

“This proves the indispensable necessity of our taking up government immediately, for the preservation of Society, to effect the purpose of applying with vigor the strength of the Country to its present critical state...

All of this danger however, may be prevented by a timely alliance with proper and willing powers in Europe. Indeed we are a singular instance in Modern times, or a people engaged in war with a powerful Nation, without taking any steps to secure the friendship or even neutrality of foreign states...

...no authorized & consequently sufficiently extensive Trade will be carried on with us whilst we remain in our present undefined unmeaning condition. Our clearest interest therefore, our very existence as freemen requires that we take decisive steps now, whilst we may, for the security of America...

Let us therefore, quitting every other consideration, heartily unite in leading our countrymen to embrace to present flowing tide, which promises fair to waft us into the harbor of safety, happiness, liberty, and virtue.”

3. In your own words, what is needed to secure independence according to Lee?

4. Why is independence important from Lee's point of view?

WHAT MAKES A STATE? Answer Key



Read each excerpt, then answer the question(s) that follow. Include annotations in the original text that helped you find the answer.

Emer de Vattel's book *The Law of Nations* (1758)

"Every nation which governs itself, under any form whatsoever, without dependency on any foreign country, is a sovereign state. Its rights are by nature the same as those of every other state. These are the moral persons who live together in a natural society subject to the law of nations. For any nation to make its entrance into this great society, it is enough that it should be truly sovereign and independent, that is to say, that it governs itself under its own authority and its own law."

1. In your own words, what are the requirements for statehood according to Vattel?

Students should use the quotes above to create their own answers. An example may be something along these lines: Vattel believes that a state is a nation that is independent and governs itself without depending on another country.

A Letter from John Adams to Richard Henry Lee, 15 November 1775

"I have made the following sketch, which may be varied in any one particular an infinite number of ways, so as to accommodate it to the different genius, temper, principles, and even prejudices of different people... in adopting a plan, in some respects similar to this, human nature would appear in its proper glory asserting its own real dignity, pulling down tyrannies, at a single exertion and erecting such new fabricks, as it thinks best calculated to promote its happiness."

2. In your own words, what is needed to become an independent nation according to Adams?

Students should use the quotes above to create their own answers. An example may be something along these lines: Adams believes that a nation needs to create a plan to establish itself as independent and is best for its happiness. Students may also note that the best plan is one that works for various different people within a country.

A Letter from Richard Henry Lee to Patrick Henry, 20 April 1776

“This proves the indispensable necessity of our taking up government immediately, for the preservation of Society, to effect the purpose of applying with vigor the strength of the Country to its present critical state...

All of this danger however, may be prevented by a timely alliance with proper and willing powers in Europe. Indeed we are a singular instance in Modern times, or a people engaged in war with a powerful Nation, without taking any steps to secure the friendship or even neutrality of foreign states...

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^referring to not being independent

requires that we take decisive steps now, whilst we may, for the security of America...

Let us therefore, quitting every other consideration, heartily unite in leading our countrymen to embrace to present flowing tide, which promises fair to waft us into the harbor of safety, happiness, liberty, and virtue.”

3. In your own words, what is needed to secure independence according to Lee?

Students should use the quotes above to create their own answers. An example may be something along these lines: Lee believes that government, alliances, and taking steps towards becoming independent are important for securing independence.

4. Why is independence important from Lee's point of view?

Students should use the quotes above to create their own answers. An example may be something along these lines: Lee believes independence will preserve society, protect the country, allow the country to engage in trade, and unite the country with promises of freedom.

WHY WE'RE WARRING: LETTERS FROM CONGRESS



Review the following questions, then read through your assigned letter. Annotate your letter by circling or highlighting key ideas, writing brief summaries of sections in the margin, underlining unknown words, etc. When you have finished reading, answer the following questions.

1. Who is this letter to? When was it written?
2. Why is the Continental Congress writing? What is their goal/purpose?
3. Why might the Continental Congress have chosen to write to this specific group as opposed to others? What kind of relationship did they hope to have with them?
4. How might the recipients of this letter have reacted to it?

POETIC INDEPENDENCE



Read through the following poem and answer the questions below.

Note: The Spanish version of the poem appears in its original printed form without the accents that would be generally used.

Spanish Version

Vuelve el dia feliz, y esclarecido
De nuestra libertad y nuestra gloria.
El monstruo de opresion enfurecido
Detesta de este dia la memoria.
El huye, y la vileza lo há seguido
Que engana con promesas de victoria:
Y exclama la virtud.....Americanos
Donde florecen heroes, no hoy tiranos.

English Translation

Returns the day of happiness and enlightenment
Of our Freedom and our glory.
The monster of oppression enraged
Detests the memory of this day.
He flees, and vileness follows him
That deceives with promises of victory:
And virtue exclaims Americans
Where heroes flourish, there are no tyrants.

“Octava” published in the *Aurora de Chile*, 1812
John Carter Brown Library

Questions:

1. Summarize the message of this poem. What is it saying/implying?

2. Why might Spanish authorities have wanted to censor this poem?

3. How does this poem show the global importance of the Declaration of Independence?

POETIC INDEPENDENCE Answer Key



Read through the following poem and answer the questions below.

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“Octava” published in the *Aurora de Chile*, 1812
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Questions:

1. Summarize the message of this poem. What is it saying/implying?

Student answers may vary. The general message of the poem implies that freedom, in particular the freedom Americans (United States) gained, defeated tyranny.

2. Why might Spanish authorities have wanted to censor this poem?

Spanish authorities were attempting to avoid independence movements within their own colonies.

3. How does this poem show the global importance of the Declaration of Independence?

It is evidence that people from other countries (in this case Chile) understood and were inspired by the Declaration of Independence.

THE DOCUMENTS THAT DID IT



English Translation of the Index of *La Independencia* by Manuel García de Sena

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English Translation of an Index for *Ideas Necesarias* by Vicente Rocafuerte

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This index was created by the Museum of the American Revolution based on the documents that appear in *Ideas Necesarias* as the book does not include an index.