

DISSECTING THE DECLARATION



This lesson will introduce students to significant causes of the American Revolution as outlined by the Declaration of Independence.

This activity is excerpted from Unit 4 of the *Through Their Eyes: Major Causes and Events of the American Revolution* Teacher Resource Guide. To see the full lesson and all supporting materials, visit: www.amrevmuseum.org/teacher-resource-guides

CONTEXT

The Declaration of Independence is commonly remembered for its philosophical arguments on the basic rights of men, but it also includes a list of grievances that led Revolutionaries to separate from Great Britain. These grievances may not encompass all of the reasons the colonies broke from Great Britain, but examining them, and the events to which they correlate, helps us gain a better understanding of the context in which independence was approved and then declared.

AIMS/OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Analyze a primary source to identify causes of American colonial protest against Britain

Identify and analyze significant moments on the road to independence

MATERIALS

Primary Source:

Text: Declaration of Independence:

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

Other Resources:

MoAR Virtual Museum “The Price of Victory” through “Lexington and Concord” Galleries:
<http://www.amrevmuseum-virtualtour.org/>

Student Response Worksheet

PROCEDURES

- First, provide students with the link to the transcript of the Declaration of Independence. Have students read and review the Declaration.
- Next, let students browse the Museum’s “The Price of Victory” through “Lexington and Concord” galleries using its **Virtual Tour**. Ask them to identify any events from these galleries that seem to be referenced in the Declaration of Independence and record them on their worksheet.
- Then, ask students to choose one of the “injuries and usurpations” listed in the Declaration. Have them record the accusation on their worksheet and then summarize it in today’s language.
- Finally, ask students to answer these questions: Explain how this action by the British affected colonists and why it would have made the list as a grievance. Do you see evidence of events like this still happening in the United States today? If not, what about any of the other injuries or usurpations listed in the Declaration?
- Students should submit their worksheet for review once complete.

RESEARCH EXTENSION

Ask students to research other nations that have declared independence from another political entity. Have each student research one nation, specifically locating and reading whatever document officially declares their intent to become, and rationale for becoming, independent. Have students create a project examining similarities and differences between this document and the Declaration of Independence. Do they believe the Declaration was a model for or an inspiration of the document they have researched? Why or why not?