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Grade level: 5


Allow students, in groups or individually, to examine the document while answering the questions below in order. The questions are designed to guide students into a deeper analysis of the source and sharpen associated cognitive skills.

**Level I: Description**

1. What details do you notice about the writing?
2. Who is the author?
3. What is the name of this document?

**Level II: Interpretation**

1. Who is the intended audience?
2. What purpose does this document serve?
3. What event is about to take place?

**Level III: Analysis**

1. What revisions would you make to this document?
2. How much of a role do you think colonists had in the creation of this document?
3. How will the lives of the colonists be affected or changes by the creation of this document?
A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with one another and to establish separate and equal stations among the powers of the earth, the consent of the governed, to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to thus separate.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence indeed will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, begins at a distinguished period, continuing in the same direction, the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism. Such an Government, it is the right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by the authority of the good People of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States; that they are Absolved from all allegiance to the British crown and of right are bound in allegiance to each other.

For in God is our trust, wherefore, if it seem good, our sons shall grow up in the midst of thrones; in days of peace we will show increased riches; and in battlefields we will cry, 'Our God shall help us!'

And having in the preceding Declaration expressed our firm resolution to support and maintain the independence of these States, and having express'd a desire that all treason towards them should be punished as willfully, obstinately, and purposely, as can be demonstrated. And for the same ends, that the free and equal People of these States, considering the nature of Government, and the degree of authority, which is necessary to the well-organized Government of the Union, have, in the judgment of the free States, deemed it most expedient to adopt the following Constitution for the United States of America:

We, the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.