

2nd Grade

Discover America

Course 4 - Teacher Guide



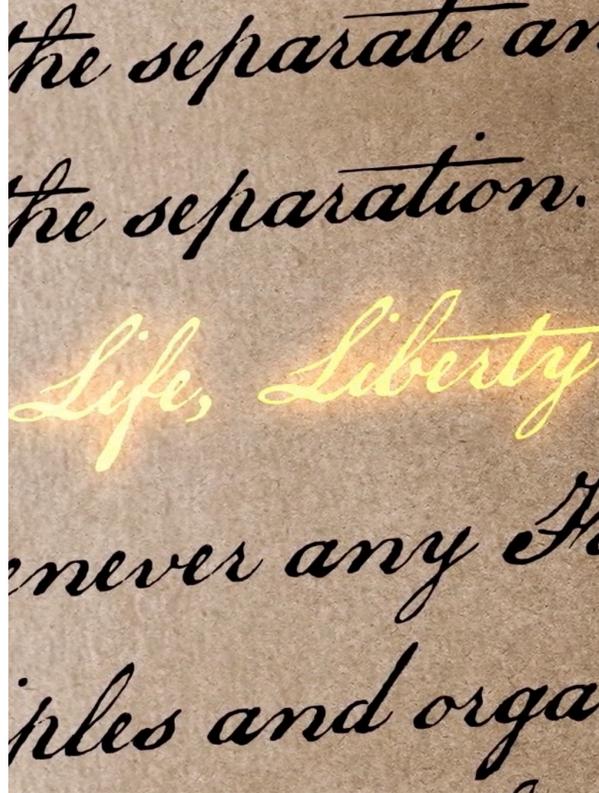
**COURSE 4: THE DECLARATION
OF INDEPENDENCE**

Table of **Contents**

3	Themes + Values
4	Learning Objectives
5	Key Terms
6	Introduction
8	Lesson
13	Our Classroom Declaration
15	Thumbs Up/Down Review
16	Answer Key
17	Resources
18	Notes

2nd Grade

Teacher Guide



Key Themes

- Equity
- Freedom
- Independence

Core Values

- Community
- Faith
- Life
- Liberty

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Recognize similarities between a colony and a community.
- List characteristics of a self-governing community.
- Explain the significance of the Declaration of Independence.



The Declaration of Independence - 2nd Grade

Key Terms

- 01 **colony** - a group of people from one country who build a settlement in a new territory or land.
- 02 **community** - a place where people live, learn, play, and work together.
- 03 **declare** - to say something in a clear and strong way.
- 04 **government** - a group of people who make decisions and rules to help run a community, city, state, or country.
- 05 **opportunity** - a chance or a possibility for something good to happen.
- 06 **resources** - useful materials often needed to create new towns.
- 07 **self-governing** - a place that is run by its own people rather than people from another region or organization.

The Declaration of Independence - 2nd Grade

Introduction

ASK Students

What do you know about the Declaration of Independence?

Why was it written?

(allow students to respond)

TELL Students

A long time ago, English explorers discovered exciting things in what was known as the New World, which we call America today. England wanted more land in the New World. They wanted to build colonies in the New World. A colony is a group of people from one country who build a settlement in a new territory or land.



Map of the American colonies.

England thought the colonies in the New World would bring more money, jobs and places to trade along the American coast. They said it was okay for the colonists to build homes in the New World. England even gave the colonists materials to help them start their new lives. There were 13 colonies located on the east side of North America, near the Atlantic Ocean. [Locate this area on the United States map.] These colonies later became the first states in the United States of America.

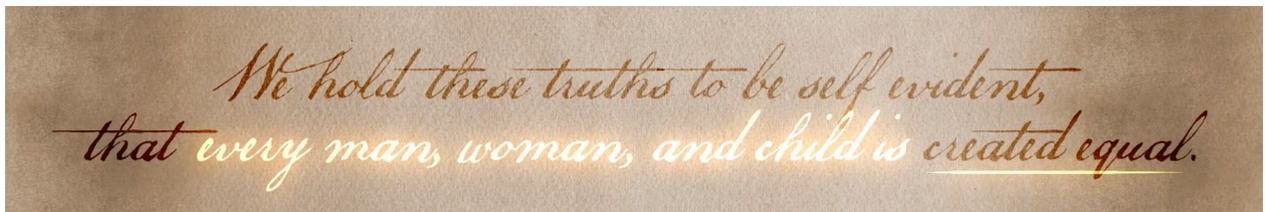
The Declaration of Independence - 2nd Grade

Introduction

TELL Students

As we discussed during our lesson about the Boston Tea Party, America was under British rule at this time. The colonists were upset with King George III because he imposed taxes without giving them a say in government. A government is a group of people who make decisions and rules to help run a community, city, state, or country. They work to keep everyone safe and make sure things are fair for everyone.

In today's lesson, we will explore a very old handwritten document called the Declaration of Independence. We will discuss why this document is still important and talk about the big, brave ideas it contains. You might be wondering why a document that is almost 250 years old, with a lot of scribbles and splotches, matters so much. Well, let's watch another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to find out!



Excerpt from the Declaration of Independence, written in 1776.

WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures:
The Declaration of Independence



The Declaration of Independence - 2nd Grade

Lesson

TELL Students

A community is a place where people live, learn, play, and work together. It includes houses, schools, stores, parks, and friendly neighbors. Today, community helpers like police officers and firefighters keep everyone safe, and special events bring people together for fun. Rules are in place to ensure that everyone is happy and safe in the community, making it a wonderful place to be.

Before the Declaration of Independence was written, people from Europe and Africa moved to the original 13 colonies. They created colonies there. Some of these people were there for religious reasons. Some were there for financial reasons. Sadly, others were there against their will.

ASK Students

How is a colony like a community today?

What did a colony in early America look like?

(allow students to respond)



A police officer offers a gift to a member in her community.

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Lesson

TELL Students

Being in a colony in early America meant living in close-knit groups. The people in these groups relied on each other for support and survival. Individuals worked together on farms, in small towns, or in close neighborhoods. They shared resources, helped each other with tasks like building homes and farming, and often had strong social connections. A resource is something that people value and need such as water and land.



Community members also played important roles in each other's lives, assisting during times of hardship and celebrating together during times of joy. People depended on one another for various aspects of daily life.

ASK Students

What is a self-governing community?

(allow students to respond)

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Lesson

TELL Students

Before the Declaration of Independence, the 13 colonies were under British rule. But they mostly governed themselves. They were essentially self-governed. This means they created their own rules and laws. However, their ability to govern themselves was challenged by the acts and taxes imposed by the British government. The British king and the British government still technically owned the colonies. This meant that the colonies were not exactly free.

ASK Students

How did the colonists gain their freedom?
What document declared the colonists freedom?

(allow students to respond)

TELL Students

On July 4, 1776, the 13 colonies declared that they were independent states. This is our country's birthday, our Independence Day! The document that declared our freedom is called the Declaration of Independence.



Fireworks are in full display on July 4th, the day we celebrate America's independence from British rule.

The Declaration of Independence - 2nd Grade

Lesson



TELL Students

The Declaration of Independence listed the colonists' complaints and shared their beliefs about people's rights, which they used to explain why they wanted to be independent. In one well-known sentence, the Declaration states, "We believe that all people are created equal and that they have certain rights given to them by their Creator, including the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." This idea, that everyone is equal and has inherent rights from God, has continued to influence the foundation of American government ever since.

ASK Students

What does life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness mean?

(allow students to respond)

The Declaration of Independence - 2nd Grade

Lesson

TELL Students

The statement in the Declaration of Independence that “all men are created equal” means that everyone is born with the same rights and opportunities. An opportunity is a chance or a possibility for something good to happen. The Declaration of Independence is essential to the founding principles of our country. It declares that every person in the United States has the right to freedom and the opportunity to pursue their dreams through hard work. Declare means to say something in a clear and strong way.

ASK Students

What dreams will you pursue in America?

(allow students to respond)

The Declaration of Independence - 2nd Grade

Our Classroom Declaration

objective

To engage second grade students in understanding the principles of self-governance and democracy through the creation of a classroom Declaration of Independence.

materials

1. large poster paper or whiteboard
2. markers, crayons, or colored pencils

introduction

- Begin the lesson by explaining to students the concept of self-governance and democracy. Use relatable examples such as voting for classroom activities or rules.
- Introduce the idea of a Declaration of Independence by reviewing its purpose in history. You can mention the American Revolution and how the colonists declared independence from British rule.
- Discuss the importance of having rules and guidelines to ensure fairness and harmony within a community.

brainstorming session

- Facilitate a brainstorming session where students suggest ideas for rules or principles they believe are important for a fair and respectful classroom environment.
- Encourage students to think about what rights they would like to have as members of the classroom community and what responsibilities they should uphold.
- Write down all the ideas on the large poster paper or whiteboard.

The Declaration of Independence - 2nd Grade

Our Classroom Declaration

drafting the declaration

- Based on the brainstorming session, guide students in crafting a Classroom Declaration of Independence.
- Begin with a statement asserting their right to self-governance and fair treatment.
- Break down the Declaration into sections such as:
 - “Our Rights,” “Our Responsibilities,” and “Our Commitment to Each Other.”
- Help students articulate each section using simple language that reflects their ideas and values.

review and revisions

- Review the drafted Declaration as a class, discussing each section to ensure clarity and understanding.
- Encourage students to suggest any revisions or additions they feel are necessary to make the Declaration more inclusive and representative of the class.

signing ceremony

- Once the Declaration is finalized, organize a signing ceremony where each student can sign their name or make a thumbprint as a symbolic commitment to upholding the principles outlined in the document.
- Display the signed Declaration prominently in the classroom as a reminder of the class’s shared values and commitments.

reflection

- Conclude the activity with a brief reflection where students share their thoughts on the process of creating the Classroom Declaration of Independence.
- Encourage students to consider how the Declaration can help promote a positive and self-governing classroom community.

extension activity

For an extension activity, invite students to create individual or group posters illustrating key principles or rights outlined in the Classroom Declaration. Display these posters around the classroom as visual reminders of the class’s values.

The Declaration of Independence - 2nd Grade **Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down Review**

*Read each statement to the class. Students will give a **thumbs up** if the statement is correct. Students will give a **thumbs down** if the statement is false.*

1. England did not want to expand and have more land.
2. The 13 colonies were on the east side of North America.
3. England did not help the colonists start their new lives.
4. The original 13 colonies eventually became the first states in the United States of America.
5. A colony is a place that belongs to another country far away.
6. Early American communities were not tightly connected.
7. The 13 colonies were mainly self-governing communities.
8. The Declaration of Independence does not talk about freedom.
9. The Declaration of Independence declares that all people are created equal and have certain rights.

The Declaration of Independence - 2nd Grade

Review Answer Key

1. Thumbs down (False)

2. Thumbs up (True)

3. Thumbs down (False)

4. Thumbs up (True)

5. Thumbs up (True)

6. Thumbs down (False)

7. Thumbs up (True)

8. Thumbs down (False)

9. Thumbs up (True)

The Declaration of Independence

Resource List

- 01 <https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/april-19/>
- 02 <https://www.nps.gov/mima/learn/historyculture/the-militia-and-minute-men-of-1775.htm>
- 03 <https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/battles-of-lexington-and-concord>
- 04 <https://www.nps.gov/inde/learn/historyculture/resources-declaration-secondcontinentalcongress.htm>
- 05 <https://www.history.com/news/thomas-paine-common-sense-revolution>
- 06 <https://www.nps.gov/inde/learn/historyculture/resources-declaration-secondcontinentalcongress.htm>
- 07 <https://www.monticello.org/thomas-jefferson/brief-biography-of-jefferson/>
- 08 Monticello: The Official Guide to Thomas Jefferson's World
- 09 <https://www.nps.gov/inde/learn/education/classrooms/resources-declarationoverview.htm>
- 10 <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration/what-does-it-say>
- 11 <https://www.nps.gov/inde/learn/education/classrooms/resources-declarationoverview.htm>
- 12 <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>
- 13 <https://www.monticello.org/slavery/paradox-of-liberty/thomas-jefferson-liberty-slavery/jefferson-and-the-enlightenment/the-declaration-of-independence/>
- 14 <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/creating-the-united-states/interactives/declaration-of-independence/equal/index.html>
- 15 <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/signers-factsheet>

