

5th Grade

# Discover America

Course 4 - Teacher Guide



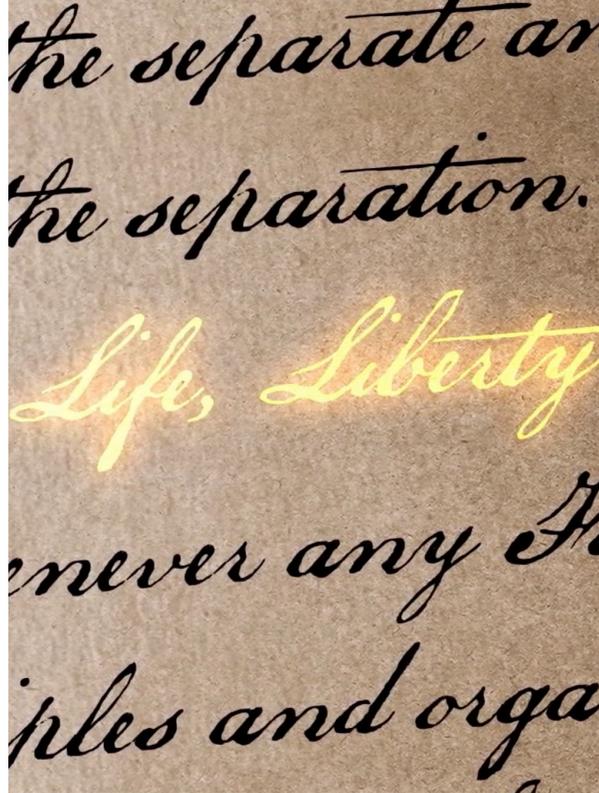
**COURSE 4: THE DECLARATION  
OF INDEPENDENCE**

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5th Grade

# Teacher Guide



## Key Themes

- Equity
- Freedom
- Independence
- Life

## Core Values

- Community
- Faith
- Life
- Liberty

# Learning Objectives

## Students will be able to:

- Define Great Awakening.
- Explain the contributions of the Founding Fathers to American history.
- Explain the relationship between faith and the Declaration of Independence.
- Explain the meaning and origin of “all men are created equal.”



# The Declaration of Independence - 5th Grade

## Key Terms

- 01 **diplomat** - a person who helps people who have differing points of view find common ground.
- 02 **faith** - the act of believing in something.
- 03 **fervor** - a very strong feeling for, or belief in something.
- 04 **Founding Fathers (Founders)** - the individuals who played key roles in establishing the United States of America.
- 05 **Great Awakening** - a religious movement that swept across the British colonies.

# The Declaration of Independence - 5th Grade

# Introduction

## TELL Students

Between 1607 and 1725, England established 13 colonies in America, including Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Virginia. Despite being ruled by the King of England, the colonists enjoyed certain freedoms.



Portrait drawing of King George III.

Many colonies established their own self-governing systems, often featuring the right to vote and elect representatives for decision-making. However, as time passed, conflicts arose between the 13 colonies and the King of England. The King began to enact laws that infringed upon the freedoms of the colonists. He said the colonies were part of England, but the colonists did not want to lose their freedoms. As tensions grew, the King of England imposed more laws to control the colonies.

# The Declaration of Independence - 5th Grade

# Introduction

## TELL Students

One of the most important principles upon which the original colonies were founded is faith. Our friend Liberty has some intriguing thoughts on how faith was protected through a document known as the Declaration of Independence. As you learn about American independence, keep in mind that the declarations and rights extended to all Americans are rooted in the freedom to practice religion, govern themselves, and live their lives.



Excerpt from the Declaration of Independence, written in 1776.

## ASK Students

What do you know about the Declaration of Independence?

(allow students to respond)

# The Declaration of Independence - 5th Grade

# Introduction

## TELL Students

Please read the following passage to learn more about the role faith played in the 13 colonies.



**The First Thanksgiving.**

*In our lesson about the First Thanksgiving, we learned that the first settlers came to the New World for religious freedom and economic opportunities. As time went on, people of different faiths arrived and created their own communities. Sometimes, these early colonies didn't get along because they had different religions.*



**Early American church.**

*Parents passed down their faith to their children. As more people settled in these areas, churches became very important. They guided how people should behave, how the government should work, and how society should function. Even though everyone had different religions, faith and belief in God were so crucial that around 1700 to 1740, about 75-80 percent of people went to church.*

*The First Great Awakening was a religious revival in the American colonies during the 1730s and 1740s that sparked increased religious fervor and a renewed interest in spirituality. It strengthened people's faith, but it also made their religious differences more noticeable. Fervor for something is a very strong feeling for, or belief in it.*

# The Declaration of Independence - 5th Grade

# Introduction

## **ASK** Students

How did faith influence the Founding Fathers?

(allow students to respond)

## **WATCH**

**Star Spangled Adventures:**  
The Declaration of Independence



Scan Me!

# The Declaration of Independence - 5th Grade

# Lesson

## ASK Students

Why are our Founding Fathers important?

(allow students to respond)

## TELL Students

On June 7, 1776, the Continental Congress appointed a Committee of Five to create the Declaration of Independence. The Committee of Five included Founding Fathers John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Livingston, and Roger Sherman. John Adams was a lawyer, diplomat, and the second President of the United States. Thomas Jefferson was a diplomat, lawyer, architect, philosopher, and the third President of the United States. A diplomat is a person who helps people who have differing points of view find common ground. Benjamin Franklin was a writer, scientist, inventor, diplomat, publisher, and philosopher. Roger Livingston was a lawyer and politician, and Roger Sherman was a statesman and lawyer.

## ASK Students

How are the Founding Fathers similar?  
How are they different?

(allow students to respond)



# The Declaration of Independence - 5th Grade

# Lesson

## **TELL** Students

Please read the following passage carefully to review the events leading up to the American Revolution. The American Revolution was a struggle by the American colonies against British rule, leading to the formation of the United States of America as an independent nation.

*Before 1775, the 13 colonies lived under British rule. However, tensions were rising between the colonists and King George III because the colonists felt they were being treated unfairly. The king was imposing taxes on them without giving them a say in the government, and he was ignoring their rights and freedoms.*

*By 1775, things had reached a boiling point. King George III wanted to assert his authority over the colonists because he felt they were rebellious. He sent 700 British troops to seize weapons from the colonists. However, the colonists were warned by Paul Revere and other riders so they were ready for the British troops.*

*The first shots of the American Revolution were fired in the battles of Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775. These battles marked the beginning of the colonists' fight for independence.*

## **ASK** Students

What events led up to the American Revolution?

(allow students to respond)

# The Declaration of Independence - 5th Grade

# Lesson

## TELL Students

During the American Revolutionary War, representatives from the 13 colonies gathered for the Second Continental Congress. This was a meeting where representatives from all the colonies came together to talk about and make important decisions. The representatives decided it was time to officially declare independence from Britain. A special group of Founding Fathers, including Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston, were asked to write a document explaining why independence was necessary and proclaiming America as a free nation, separate from British rule.



Portrait drawing of Founder,  
Thomas Jefferson.

Thomas Jefferson, a 33-year-old from Virginia, was tasked with leading this important work. Jefferson was a remarkable individual known for his curiosity, creativity, and intelligence. He wore many hats throughout his life, serving as a lawyer, inventor, scientist, architect, politician, diplomat, writer, and farmer. Despite his young age, Jefferson played a pivotal role in drafting the Declaration of Independence, contributing significantly to its creation.

## ASK Students

What experiences did Thomas Jefferson have throughout his lifetime?

(allow students to respond)

# The Declaration of Independence - 5th Grade

# Lesson



## **TELL** Students

The Second Continental Congress worked hard to finalize a document that would declare the colonies' independence from Britain. This document became known as the Declaration of Independence. It wasn't an easy task — delegates spent days editing and debating the draft of the Declaration, making a total of 86 changes to the original text. Finally, on July 4, 1776, they reached an agreement on the final version.

One of the most important parts of the Declaration is its opening lines: "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." Here, the Founding Fathers, or Founders, emphasized the idea that everyone is equal and has rights given to them by God. These rights include the right to live freely, think independently, and pursue happiness in their lives.

## **ASK** Students

What does "all men are created equal" mean?

(allow students to respond)

# The Declaration of Independence - 5th Grade

# Lesson



## **TELL** Students

Please read the following passage to learn more about the Declaration of Independence and what it signifies for the United States.

*The Declaration also explains the role of the government in protecting these rights. It states that governments are created by the people to ensure their rights are secured. If a government fails to do so, the people have the right to change it or create a new one. This idea was crucial in shaping the American government system.*

*On August 2, 1776, the delegates began signing the Declaration of Independence, with 56 individuals putting their names to the historic document. This day, when the Declaration was agreed upon, is often called America's birthday and is celebrated every year on July 4th as Independence Day. People across the country come together for parades, fireworks, and barbecues to honor the bravery and determination of our Founders and the American colonists who fought for freedom.*

# The Declaration of Independence - 5th Grade

# Lesson

## **ASK** Students

Why do we celebrate the Fourth of July? What does it mean to you?

(allow students to respond)

## **TELL** Students

The Fourth of July is a day of celebration because it is the day that our great country was born. The next time you celebrate July 4th, remember the bravery, vision, and determination of our Founders and the American colonists who brought the United States to life.



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

# The Declaration of Independence - 5th Grade

## Exploring the Relationship

*Between the Great Awakening and the Declaration of Independence*

### *objective*

To understand the historical significance of the Great Awakening and its influence on the colonists' path to independence, particularly in relation to the Declaration of Independence.

### *materials*

1. printed copies of the student text
2. poster boards or presentation software (e.g., PowerPoint, Google Slides) for each group
3. art supplies (markers, colored pencils, etc.) for poster creation
4. device with school-approved internet access

### *introduction*

- Begin by briefly reviewing the American colonies' establishment and their initial relationship with England.
- Explain that despite enjoying certain freedoms initially, tensions between the colonies and England grew over time, leading to conflicts and eventual calls for independence.
- Introduce the concept of the Great Awakening and its role in shaping colonial society and thought.

### *reading and discussion*

- Divide the class into small groups.
- Distribute printed copies of the student text to each group.
- Instruct students to take turns reading sections of the text aloud within their groups.
- Encourage discussion after each section to ensure understanding and address any questions.
- Have students use school-approved internet sites to find additional information on the Great Awakening and the Declaration of Independence.

# The Declaration of Independence - 5th Grade

## Exploring the Relationship

*Between the Great Awakening and the Declaration of Independence*

### *interactive activity*

- Assign each group the task of creating a poster or presentation highlighting key aspects of the Great Awakening and its relation to the Declaration of Independence.
- Instruct students to include information about:
  - The historical context and significance of the Great Awakening.
  - How the Great Awakening influenced colonial society and attitudes toward authority.
  - The connection between the principles emphasized during the Great Awakening (e.g., religious freedom, individual rights) and the ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence.
- Provide art supplies and access to presentation software as needed.
- Circulate among the groups to offer guidance and support.

### *presentation*

- After completing their posters or presentations, invite each group to share their findings with the class.
- Encourage students to explain their posters or slideshows and answer any questions from their peers.

### *conclusion*

- Conclude the activity by summarizing the key points discussed regarding the Great Awakening and its influence on the Declaration of Independence.
- Emphasize the importance of understanding historical events and their impact on shaping the nation's values and principles.

# The Declaration of Independence - 5th Grade

## Faith and the Declaration of Independence

### *objective*

Students will research and write a report examining the influence of faith on the creation of the Declaration of Independence.

### *materials*

1. Access to school-approved books, articles, and online resources about the Founding Fathers, religious movements, and the historical background of the Declaration.
2. Note-taking materials such as notebooks, pencils, and highlighters.

### *introduction*

- Begin by reviewing the importance of faith in history and its role in shaping significant events.
- Provide a brief overview of the Declaration of Independence and its significance in American history.
- Explain to students that they will be investigating how faith influenced the creation of this pivotal document.

### *research*

- Direct students to independently use school-approved books, articles, and online resources to research the influence of faith on the Founding Fathers and the writing of the Declaration.
- Encourage students to take notes and highlight important information as they conduct their research.

## *writing the report*

- Instruct students to use their research findings to write a report on the role of faith in the creation of the Declaration of Independence.
- Provide guidelines for the report, including a clear introduction, body paragraphs discussing different aspects of faith's influence, and a conclusion summarizing their findings.
- Encourage students to include specific examples and quotes from historical sources to support their arguments.
- Remind students to use proper formatting, grammar, and punctuation in their writing.

## *peer review and revision*

- Have students exchange their reports with a partner for peer review.
- Encourage students to provide constructive feedback to their peers and make revisions based on the feedback received.

## *presentation*

- Select a few student volunteers to present their reports to the class.
- Each presenter should summarize their findings and share key insights about the role of faith in the creation of the Declaration of Independence.
- Encourage classmates to ask questions and engage in discussion after each presentation.

## *reflection and discussion*

- Prompt students to consider how understanding the role of faith in history can deepen their appreciation for the complexities of the past.
- Summarize the main points discussed in the lesson and reinforce the importance of critically analyzing historical events through different perspectives.
- Emphasize the value of research, writing, and critical thinking skills in understanding the role of faith in shaping history.

# The Declaration of Independence - 5th Grade

## Student Text

*In our lesson about the First Thanksgiving, we learned that the first settlers came to the New World for religious freedom and economic opportunities. As time went on, people of different faiths arrived and created their own communities. Sometimes, these early colonies didn't get along because they had different religions.*

*Parents passed down their faith to their children. As more people settled in these areas, churches became very important. They guided how people should behave, how the government should work, and how society should function. Even though everyone had different religions, faith and belief in God were so crucial that around 1700 to 1740, about 75-80 percent of people went to church.*

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*By 1775, things had reached a boiling point. King George III wanted to assert his authority over the colonists because he felt they were rebellious. He sent 700 British troops to seize weapons from the colonists. However, the colonists were warned by Paul Revere and other riders so they were ready for the British troops.*

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*On August 2, 1776, the delegates began signing the Declaration of Independence, with 56 individuals putting their names to the historic document. This day, when the Declaration was agreed upon, is often called America's birthday and is celebrated every year on July 4th as Independence Day. People across the country come together for parades, fireworks, and barbecues to honor the bravery and determination of our Founders and the American colonists who fought for freedom.*

# 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>

