

Discover America

Course 4 - Teacher Guide



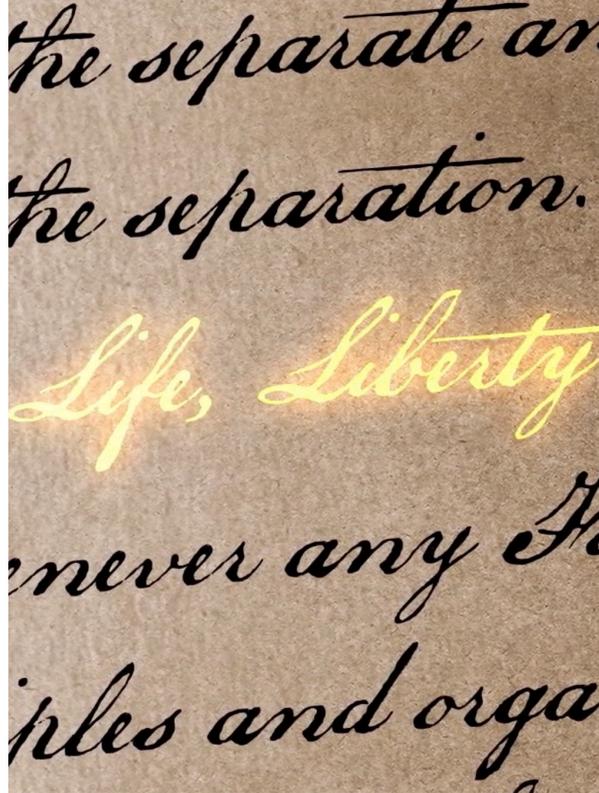
COURSE 4: THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

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Kindergarten

Teacher Guide



Key Themes

- Freedom
- Independence

Core Values

- Community
- Faith
- Life
- Liberty

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain the significance of the Declaration of Independence.
- List two reasons why the colonies were unhappy with Great Britain.



The Declaration of Independence - Kindergarten

Key Terms

- 01 **colonist** - a person who settles in a new colony or moves to a new country.
- 02 **independent** - not being controlled by another, free.
- 03 **tax** - money that adults give to the government to help pay for important things like school, parks, and safety.

The Declaration of Independence - Kindergarten

Introduction

ASK Students

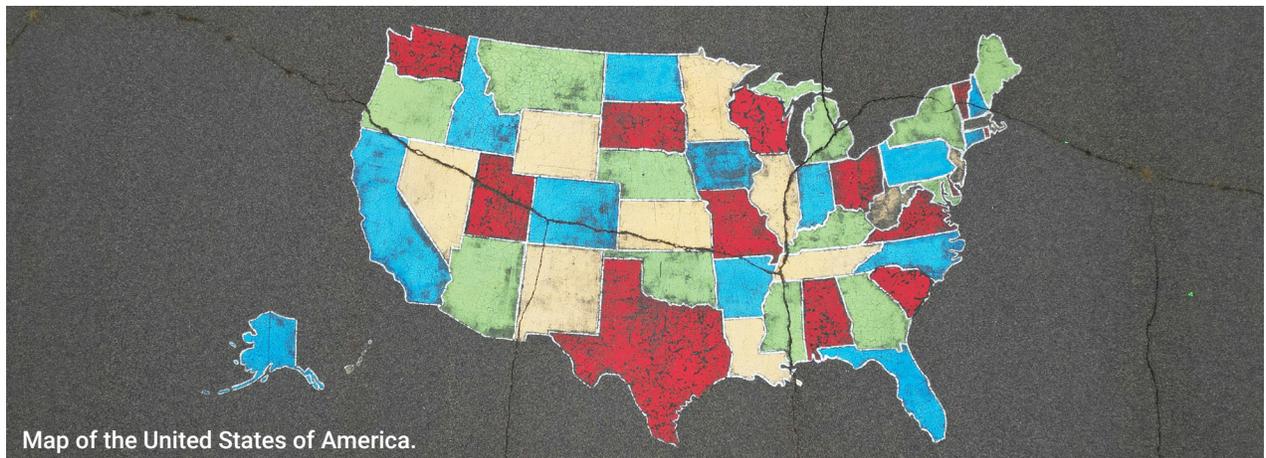
Imagine you have a clubhouse where you and your friends play together. Do you need rules to make sure everyone is treated kindly and has a fair chance to play?

What are some rules you would create for your playhouse?

(allow students to respond)

TELL Students

We live in the United States. The United States is a wonderful country. Did you know that a long time ago our country was ruled by a British king? Some people were not being treated very nicely by the king. The people in America, called the colonists, had to pay the king taxes. A tax is money that adults give to the government to help pay for important things like schools, parks, and keeping us safe. But, the taxes that the colonists paid did not help the colonists. The taxes only benefited the British king.



Map of the United States of America.

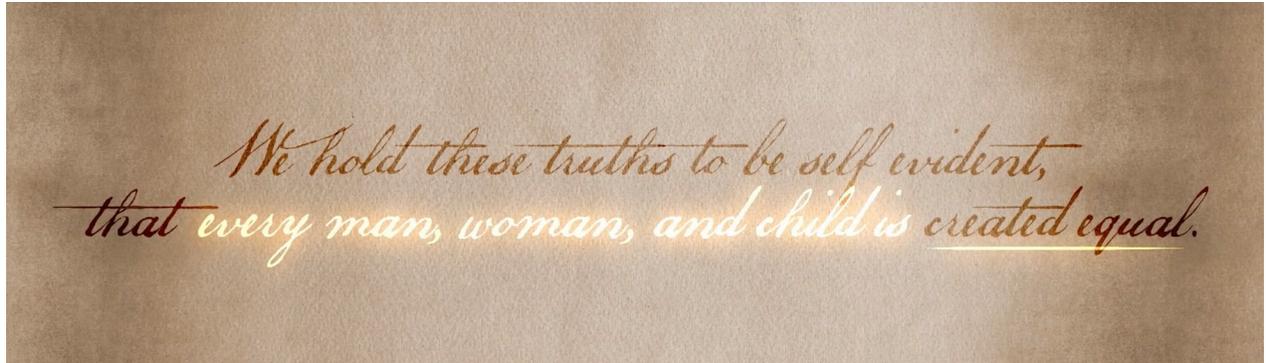
The Declaration of Independence - Kindergarten

Introduction

TELL Students

So, a group of smart, brave colonists wrote the Declaration of Independence. This is a special letter the colonists sent to the British king to say, "We want to make our own rules and be in charge of our own taxes."

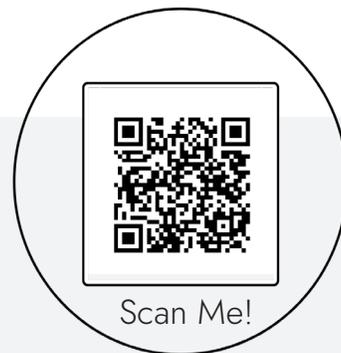
Let's watch another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to learn more about the Declaration of Independence!



Excerpt from the Declaration of Independence, written in 1776.

WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures:
The Declaration of Independence



The Declaration of Independence - Kindergarten

Lesson

TELL Students

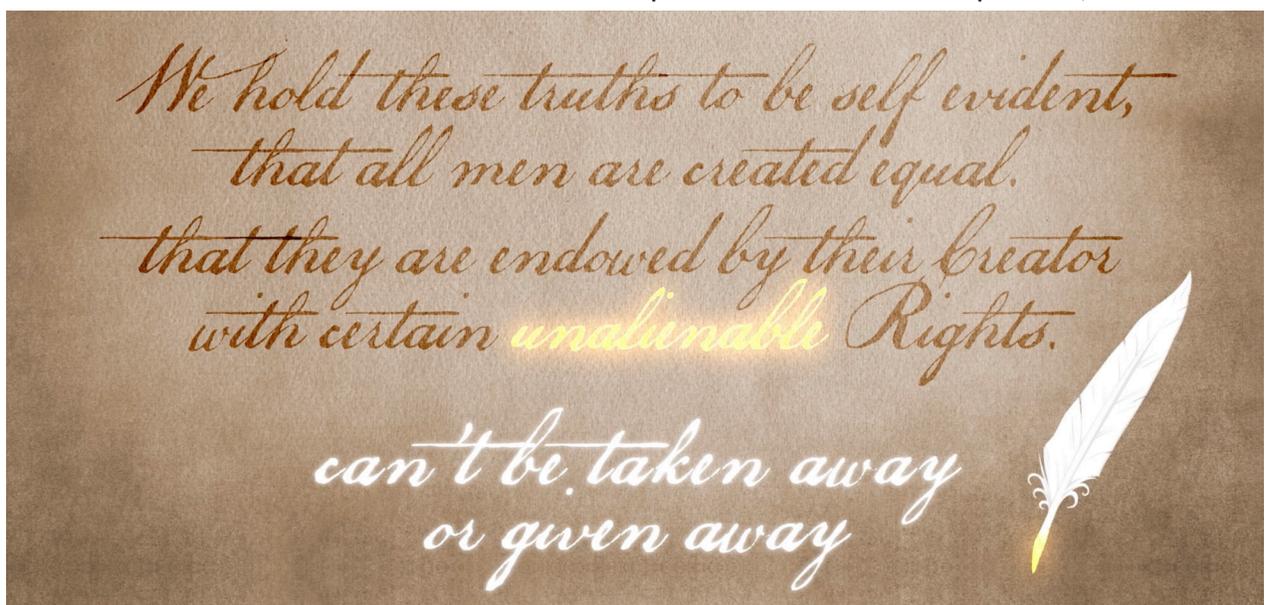
The Declaration of Independence is a special letter that five colonists wrote to the British king. In this special letter, the colonists said that everyone should be treated fair. When everyone is treated fair in a clubhouse, children share and help each other. The people who wrote the Declaration of Independence said they wanted to be happy and safe, just like when you play and feel safe in your clubhouse.

In the summer of 1776, five important men began writing a document that explained why the colonies wanted freedom from Great Britain.

What is this document called?

(allow students to respond)

Excerpt from the Declaration of Independence, written in 1776.



The Declaration of Independence - Kindergarten

Lesson

ASK Students

When the colonists sent the document, they told the British King that they were not going to follow his rules anymore because they wanted to be independent. Independent means being able to do things by yourself without being controlled by someone else.

When the British King heard this, what did he decide to do?

(allow students to respond)

TELL Students

Did you know that the day the Declaration of Independence was agreed to is often referred to as America's birthday? That is why we celebrate the Fourth of July. We remember the day when the American colonists told the British king that they wanted to be in charge of their own rules and have their own country.



The Declaration of Independence - Kindergarten Lesson

TELL Students

The Declaration of Independence is a very important paper that tells the story of how our country started. It tells us that in our country, you have the chance to be happy and independent. It also tells us that in our country, you will be treated with fairness, the same way you want to be treated in your clubhouse.



Joyful American citizens enjoying a beautiful day outdoors.

We are going to play a game. You will pretend to be the American colonists. I will pretend to be the British King. Give each child five M&Ms. Place board games around the room. Explain that students can play board games after they pay you a tax. Tell students that the M&Ms will be used to pay their required tax. Then, walk to each desk and ask each student which game they would like to play. After the student responds, tell them to give you all of their M&Ms. Once you gather their M&Ms, tell them they can go play the games.

The Declaration of Independence - Kindergarten

Lesson

ASK Students

Is it fair that I took all of your M&Ms?

(allow students to respond)

TELL Students

The British king also took a lot of taxes from the colonists. And, the colonists lived a very long way from the British king!



Map showing the distance from Great Britain to the American colonies.

The Declaration of Independence - Kindergarten

Write Your Own Declaration

objective

Kindergarten students will learn about the concept of independence by understanding the purpose of the Declaration of Independence and applying it to a relatable scenario.

materials

1. whiteboard or chart paper
2. markers or chalk
3. picture of M&M candies
4. paper and crayons or pencils

introduction

- Remind students that you are the ruler of M&M Land and you collect taxes (M&Ms) from everyone who plays the M&M board games.
- Ask students to think about whether it is fair for you to collect taxes.

activity

- Tell students that they are going to pretend to be the people of M&M Land who want to declare their independence from the M&M board game tax.
- Ask students to raise their hands if they think it is fair for you to collect taxes from them.
- Have a brief discussion about why they think it is fair or unfair.
- Tell students that just like the people of M&M Land, the colonists in America felt it was unfair for the British to tax them without giving them a say in the government. This led to the Declaration of Independence.
- Explain that students are going to write their own Declaration of Independence from the M&M board game tax.
- On the whiteboard or chart paper, write the following prompt: "We, the people of M&M Land, declare our independence from the M&M board game tax because..."
- Ask students to think about why they want to declare independence and what they want to say about it.
- Allow students to share their ideas aloud.
- Provide each student with a piece of paper and crayons or pencils.
- Instruct students to draw a picture and write a sentence or a few words declaring their freedom from the M&M board game tax.

conclusion

- After students have completed their declarations, invite a few students to share what they wrote.
- Display their declarations around the classroom.
- Recap the lesson by briefly discussing the importance of independence and how it relates to the Declaration of Independence.

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>

