



# Declaring Independence

## 4

### ✓ **Lesson Objectives**

---

#### **Core Content Objectives**

---

Students will:

- ✓ Describe how the thirteen colonies in America evolved from dependence on Great Britain to independence as a nation
- ✓ Describe the contributions of George Washington as Patriot and military commander
- ✓ Describe the contributions of Thomas Jefferson as Patriot, writer, and the author of the Declaration of Independence
- ✓ Describe the contributions of Benjamin Franklin as Patriot
- ✓ Explain the significance of the Declaration of Independence
- ✓ Identify “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal . . .” as a part of the Declaration of Independence
- ✓ Explain the significance of The Fourth of July

#### **Language Arts Objectives**

---

The following language arts objectives are addressed in this lesson. Objectives aligning with the Common Core State Standards are noted with the corresponding standard in parentheses. Refer to the Alignment Chart for additional standards addressed in all lessons in this domain.

Students will:

- ✓ Describe the connection between Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence (RI.1.3)
- ✓ Distinguish between information provided by pictures of a Fourth of July celebration and information about the Fourth of July provided by the words in “Declaring Independence” (RI.1.6)

- ✓ Ask and answer *who* questions orally, requiring literal recall and understanding of the details or facts from “Declaring Independence” (SL.1.2)
- ✓ Describe the meaning of the first few lines of the Declaration of Independence with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly (SL.1.4)
- ✓ Accurately apply the meanings of the antonyms *independent* and *dependent* (L.1.5a)
- ✓ With assistance, create and interpret a timeline of the settlement of North America and the creation of the United States of America
- ✓ Prior to listening to “Declaring Independence,” orally identify what they know and have learned about the British colonies, taxes, the Boston Tea Party, the First Continental Congress, and Paul Revere’s ride

## Core Vocabulary

---


**commander in chief, *n.*** The commander or head of the entire army  
*Example:* The president of the United States is the commander in chief of the army.  
*Variation(s):* none

**Continental Army, *n.*** The army created by the Continental Congress during the time period in which the thirteen British colonies existed  
*Example:* I’ve been told that one of my ancestors was in the Continental Army.  
*Variation(s):* none

**Declaration of Independence, *n.*** A document that explained why the thirteen American colonies no longer wanted to be controlled by Great Britain  
*Example:* The children saw the original Declaration of Independence while in Washington, D.C.  
*Variation(s):* none

**Fourth of July, *n.*** The day that the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress; the national holiday to celebrate this event  
*Example:* Every Fourth of July, Maggie and her family go to the city to see the fireworks.  
*Variation(s):* none

**independent, *adj.*** Not controlled by any person, country, or thing  
*Example:* The girl's older sister lived on her own and was completely independent.  
*Variation(s):* none

<b><i>At a Glance</i></b>	<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Materials</b>	<b>Minutes</b>
<b><i>Introducing the Read-Aloud</i></b>	<b>What Have We Already Learned?</b>	U.S. map; chart paper, chalkboard, or whiteboard	10
	<b>Purpose for Listening</b>		
<b><i>Presenting the Read-Aloud</i></b>	<b>Declaring Independence</b>		15
<b><i>Discussing the Read-Aloud</i></b>	<b>Comprehension Questions</b>		10
	<b>Word Work: Independent</b>		5
 <b>Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day</b>			
<b><i>Extensions</i></b>	<b>Timeline</b>	Image Card 7; timeline from previous lessons	20



# Declaring Independence

# 4<sub>A</sub>

## *Introducing the Read-Aloud*

**10** minutes

### What Have We Already Learned?

**Note:** Creating a story chart may take more than the time allotted. However, a story chart will be very beneficial for students not only to review the story thus far, but also to simulate and truly understand the concept of being a representative. The read-aloud and extension activities in this lesson are somewhat shorter than usual, so it is recommended that you take the additional time to complete the introductory activities.

Remind students that the Pilgrims were not the only people to settle in North America, and that by the early 1700s, there were many settlements along the East Coast of North America. Point to the location of the colonies on a U.S. map.

Tell students that today you want them to help you retell the story they have learned thus far about the founding of the United States by answering some questions. Divide the class into four groups for discussion of their topics below, and prompt each group's discussion with the questions listed. Have each group choose a representative to tell their part of the story after they have had a few minutes to discuss. You may wish to write the story chart on chart paper, a chalkboard, or a whiteboard to read for review the next day as students tell the story. If students have difficulty telling their assigned part of the story, prompt them by stating the questions below as sentences and have them finish your sentences. (For example: Most of the people who lived in the colonies originally came from \_\_\_\_\_. The number of British colonies settled along the coast of North America was \_\_\_\_\_. The colonies were governed and controlled by \_\_\_\_\_.) If students give one-word answers and/or fail to use read-aloud or domain vocabulary in their responses, acknowledge correct responses by expanding students' responses using richer and more complex language.

### ***Group 1: Establishment of the Colonies***

- What country did many of the people who lived in the colonies originally come from? (Great Britain)
- How many different or separate colonies along the coast of North America did the British settle? (thirteen)
- Who governed and controlled the colonies? (the British king and his British Parliament)
- When the colonists needed more help to clear additional land for farming, what did they do? (They brought people from Africa and made them work as slaves, allowing them very few freedoms.)

### ***Group 2: Taxes***

- Why did the king and the British Parliament start taxing the colonies on the goods they purchased, such as tea? (They wanted to make extra money, because it had cost them a lot to set up and protect the colonies.)
- Were the British colonists happy about being taxed? Why or why not? (No, they were angry because they felt it was unfair to be taxed, because they didn't have representatives in the British Parliament to help decide how much the tax should be or what to spend the taxes on.)

### ***Group 3: The Boston Tea Party***

- What did the colonists do in response to the king's taxes, and what is the event called? (The colonists dumped British tea into the Boston Harbor. This event is called the Boston Tea Party.)
- What did the king of Great Britain do in response to the Boston Tea Party? (He closed the ports so that no supplies could get in or out of Boston.)

### ***Group 4: The First Continental Congress***

- What was the First Continental Congress? (It was a meeting of representatives from the colonies who got together to discuss what to do about Great Britain. It took place after the Boston Tea Party.)
- What were the colonists who wanted to remain loyal to the king called? (Loyalists)

- What were the colonists who wanted to rule themselves called? (Patriots)

Finally, as a class, ask students to share what they learned in the previous read-aloud about Paul Revere's ride and "the shot heard round the world." You may prompt discussion with the following questions:

- Why did Paul Revere make his ride?
- What did "one, if by land, and two, if by sea" mean?
- Who were the Redcoats? Who were the Minutemen?
- What was "the shot heard round the world"?
- Why was Paul Revere's ride important?

Finish writing the story on the chart by adding information about Paul Revere and the start of the Revolutionary War. Remind students that they are learning about some of the important events that led to the creation of our country or nation, the United States of America.

### **Purpose for Listening**

---

Tell students to listen carefully to find out how the colonists tried to solve the problems caused by "the shot heard round the world."



## Declaring Independence

### ← Show image 4A-1: Map of the thirteen colonies

- 1 What is a representative? [Pause for students' responses.] Each colony sent someone to represent them at the meeting.

News of “the shot heard round the world” spread throughout the colonies. Once again, the colonists sent representatives to a meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to discuss what had happened and to decide what to do.<sup>1</sup>



### ← Show image 4A-2: Second Continental Congress

- 2 The word *independent* means not controlled by others. If the colonists became independent from Great Britain, they could decide things on their own.

The representatives at the Second Continental Congress were divided in their feelings about breaking away from Britain and becoming a completely **independent** nation.<sup>2</sup> But several more small battles in the Massachusetts colony convinced them that they needed an army and someone to serve as a commander.



### ← Show image 4A-3: George Washington

- 3 George Washington would be in charge of the army created by the Continental Congress.

General George Washington seemed to be the perfect choice to lead the army. He had fought to protect the colonies before and he knew how the British fought. Dressed in his military uniform at the Continental Congress, he was respected by everyone and was easily elected as the **commander in chief** of the **Continental Army**.<sup>3</sup> Washington set off to join troops from across the colonies in Massachusetts, ready to meet the British in battle.

Meanwhile, the Continental Congress continued to meet in Philadelphia.



### ← Show image 4A-4: Benjamin Franklin

- 4 Americans had no official representatives to speak out for them in Parliament, but Franklin went and spoke as their representative.

Among the representatives was a man named Benjamin Franklin. Franklin, who was born in the colony of Massachusetts and then lived in the colony of Pennsylvania, had actually moved to London, England, for a few years. He had gone there to speak out in Parliament against the unfair taxing of the American colonies, and the fact that the Americans had no say in Parliament.<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Franklin was very good at arguing, and he

5 Why do you think the British Parliament started to dislike Franklin?



← **Show image 4A-5: Second Continental Congress**

was able to get the British to remove *some* of their taxes on the colonies. Benjamin Franklin had many British friends in London, but after the Boston Tea Party, an angry British Parliament began to distrust and dislike him.<sup>5</sup> And so, in 1775, Franklin decided that it was time to return home, arriving in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, just in time for the second meeting of the Continental Congress. The other representatives were delighted to have someone there who had spent so much time on the other side of the ocean. He could help them decide what to do.

The Continental Congress decided it was time to announce to Parliament and to the British king that the colonies no longer wanted to be a part of Great Britain. They wanted to declare themselves a free and independent nation. An official declaration would have to be written so that Parliament and the king would take them seriously.

6 or this statement to declare the colonists free



← **Show image 4A-6: Thomas Jefferson writing**

Who would write this important **Declaration of Independence?**<sup>6</sup> The members of the Continental Congress considered different people.

Among those mentioned for the job was Thomas Jefferson, a thirty-two-year-old representative from Virginia, and one of the youngest men there. Jefferson had not been able to attend the First Continental Congress, but the representatives were all familiar with his powerful writing. Jefferson was elected to be its author.<sup>7</sup>

7 What would Jefferson do if he was going to be the author of the Declaration of Independence?

8 Pens in those days did not hold the ink; the pen had to be dipped into the bottle of ink.

Thomas Jefferson went back to the rooms he was renting in Philadelphia, got out some paper, and scratched his head. He dipped his pen in ink and started writing.<sup>8</sup> Sometimes he stopped and crossed out some words, then went on. He knew a lot of important people were going to read this, so he had to make it good. Every morning for seventeen days, he got up at dawn and got to work, writing and rewriting to make sure it was his best work.



The Continental Congress liked Thomas Jefferson's work. Benjamin Franklin, among others, changed a word or two here and there, but most of the words remained those of young Jefferson.



◀ **Show image 4A-7: Declaration of Independence**

On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was approved by a vote of the Continental Congress. It was sent to a printing shop that very night. Riders headed out across the countryside with copies. In town squares all over the colonies, people gathered to hear Thomas Jefferson's words read aloud. One part is still read again and again today:<sup>9</sup>

*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.*

Those words mean that nobody is born any better than anyone else, and that all people all over the world have equal rights.<sup>10</sup>

9 I want you listen to a part of our Declaration of Independence, and then I will explain to you what it means.

10 such as the right to live, the right to liberty (which means freedom), and the right to be happy



◀ **Show image 4A-8: Fourth of July celebration**

We still celebrate this important event every **Fourth of July**, and you could call it the birthday of the United States.<sup>11</sup>

11 The Fourth of July is now a national holiday to celebrate the Declaration of Independence and declaring freedom from Great Britain.

### Comprehension Questions

10 minutes

If students have difficulty responding to questions, reread pertinent passages of the read-aloud and/or refer to specific images. If students give one-word answers and/or fail to use read-aloud or domain vocabulary in their responses, acknowledge correct responses by expanding the students' responses using richer and more complex language. Ask students to answer in complete sentences by having them restate the question in their responses.

1. *Literal* Who was the representative who went to Great Britain, was very good at arguing, and got the British to remove some of the taxes they had put on the colonies? (Benjamin Franklin)
2. *Inferential* How did the colonists try to solve the problem caused by “the shot heard round the world”? (They sent representatives to meet in Philadelphia; this was known as the Second Continental Congress.)
3. *Inferential* What important decisions were made at the Second Continental Congress? (George Washington was chosen as commander in chief of the Continental Army; the representatives decided to declare themselves a free and independent nation by writing the Declaration of Independence.)
4. *Inferential* Who was chosen to write the Declaration of Independence? (Thomas Jefferson) Why do you think Thomas Jefferson was chosen to be the author? (He was an excellent writer.)
5. *Evaluative* How do you think the colonists felt when they first heard the Declaration of Independence? (Answers may vary.)
6. *Evaluative* What do you think of when you hear these words from the Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal . . .”? (All people are equal and have the right to live, the right to be free, and the right to pursue what they believe will make them happy.)

7. *Inferential* What do we celebrate each Fourth of July? (our independence; the signing of the Declaration of Independence; the United States' birthday) [Show image 4A-8.] What is something that happens on the Fourth of July to celebrate our nation's birthday? (fireworks) How do you know this? Did you hear about this in the read-aloud, or did you get this information from the picture? (from the picture)

[Please continue to model the *Question? Pair Share* process for students, as necessary, and scaffold students in their use of the process.]

8. *Who? Pair Share:* Asking questions after a read-aloud is one way to see how much everyone has learned. Think of a question you can ask your neighbor about the read-aloud that starts with the word *who*. For example, you could ask, "Who did you hear about in today's read-aloud?" Turn to your neighbor and ask your *who* question. Listen to your neighbor's response. Then your neighbor will ask a new *who* question, and you will get a chance to respond. I will call on several of you to share your questions with the class.
9. After hearing today's read-aloud and questions and answers, do you have any remaining questions? [If time permits, you may wish to allow for individual, group, or class research of the text and/or other resources to answer these questions.]

## Word Work: Independent

5 minutes

1. In the read-aloud you heard, “The representatives to the Second Continental Congress were divided in their feelings about breaking away from Britain and becoming a completely *independent* nation.”
2. Say the word *independent* with me.
3. *Independent* means not controlled by others.
4. Canada, the United States of America, and Mexico are three independent nations on the continent of North America. (Explain that the word *independent* can also be used to describe a person. An independent person is able to take care of himself.)
5. Who would you describe as an independent person? Try to use the word *independent* when you tell about him or her. [Ask two or three students. If necessary, guide and/or rephrase the students’ responses: “\_\_\_\_\_ is an independent person because . . .”] What’s the word we’ve been talking about?

Use an *Antonyms* activity for follow-up. Directions: The opposite, or antonym, of *independent* is *dependent*. An independent person does for himself what a dependent person relies on someone else to do for him. I am going to name a task. If it is something that you can do by yourself, say, “I am independent when I do that.” If it describes something that you rely on someone else to help you do, say, “I am dependent on someone to help me do that.” (Answers may vary for all.)

1. tying your shoes
2. washing your clothes
3. fixing your breakfast
4. reading a book
5. getting dressed



**Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day**



# Declaring Independence

4<sub>B</sub>

## Extensions

20 minutes

### Timeline

Use the timeline created thus far. Show students Image Card 7 (Declaration of Independence) and ask them to describe the importance of this document. Ask students where on the timeline the Image Card should be placed. Make sure they understand that the Declaration of Independence was written after the establishment of the thirteen colonies in America, the Boston Tea Party, and Paul Revere's ride, so the Image Card should be placed to the right of the Image Card of Paul Revere's ride.