

We Declare

Ideas in the Declaration of Independence

[Morgan Freeman discussing the Declaration of Independence & famous actors reading it:](#)

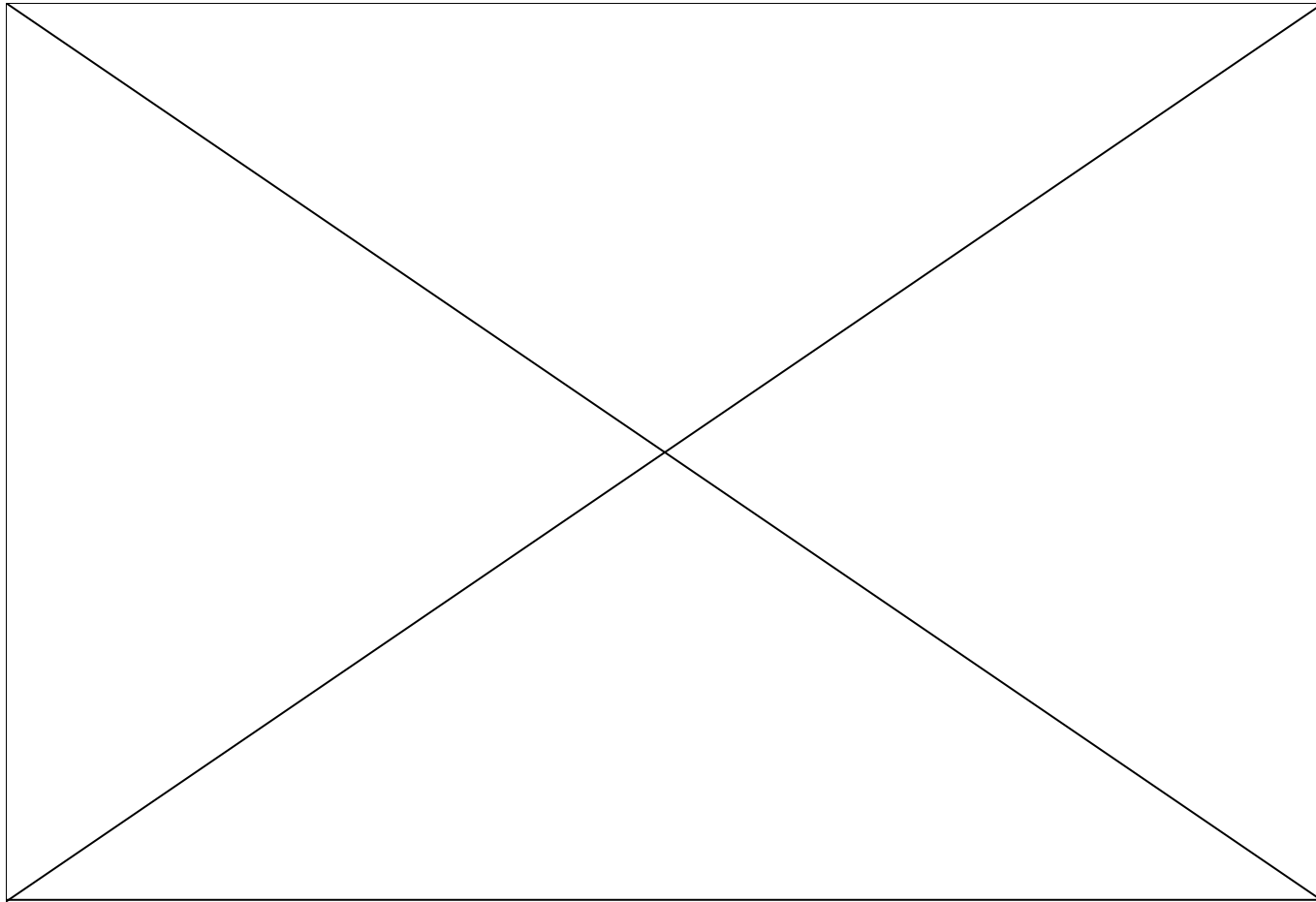
Benchmarks

SS.7.C.1.4 Analyze the ideas (natural rights, role of the government) and complaints set forth in the Declaration of Independence.



The Story of Human Rights

Watch until 3:32



<https://www.youtube.com/v/oh3BbLk5UIQ>

The Declaration of Independence

The Declaration is divided into pieces, including:

Ideas

- Founders' ideas about:
 - Natural Rights
 - Role of Government

Complaints

- Outline of the natural rights violations by the British King and Parliament

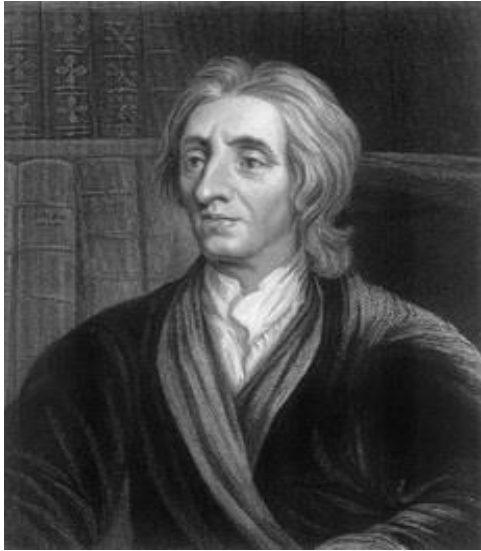
Natural Rights in the Declaration

“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.”

What are natural rights?

Definition: obvious, clear, plain, evident.

Natural Rights



John Locke
English Philosopher

- The concept that all human beings have basic rights, like life, liberty, and property.
- People create governments to protect natural rights.

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Complete each box on Handout A, which will show the relationship between natural rights and the role of government.

ON YOUR HANDOUT

People are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights

- What does that mean? (Explain the Quote:)
 - All people have certain natural rights.
- What are those “unalienable rights,” according to the Declaration?
 - Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness

Governments are instituted among men to secure these rights...

- Explain the quote:
 - In your own words explain the quote (think Locke's social contract)
- What is the role of government?
 - To secure, or protect, our natural rights

Government derive their powers from the consent of the governed...

- Who gives the government power?

- The People

- Explain the quote:

The Government gets their power from the people

Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government.

- What are “**these ends**” that the quote is referring to?
 - The government’s role is to protect natural rights...
When a government destroys or takes away natural rights it is the right of the people to change or get rid of the existing government, and create a new government that protects natural rights.
- What does the **consent of the governed** allow the people to do?
 - **Change or get rid of a government that violates the natural rights of the people**



Can you think of a time when you felt like your natural right to life, liberty, and/or pursuit of happiness was violated?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The following are some of the complaints the colonists wrote in the Declaration of Independence. Explain each complaint in the box on your handout and how it violates the natural right of life, liberty, and/or the pursuit of happiness.

COMPLAINT BOX

For imposing taxes without our consent

- Taxation without representation or consent



For depriving us, in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury

- No trial by jury deprived colonists of the legal right to have justice brought about fairly



He has obstructed the Administration of Justice by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers

- Assent: express approval or agreement
- The King would not agree to laws that created a court system in the colonies



For quartering large Bodies of Armed troops among us

- In times of peace, the King had soldiers placed among the people and housed them in the colonists' homes.



For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with the Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever.

- Legislatures are responsible for making laws in a government. Law-making bodies in the colonies were not allowed, and instead laws were imposed on them by Parliament



He is...transporting large Armies...to complete the Words of Death, Desolation, and Tyranny...

- Tyranny: cruel and oppressive government or rule
- Military being brought to the Colonies to continue the cruel rule of the government.



At every stage of these Oppressions we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms

- Oppression: cruel or unjust treatment or control
- Petitioned: make or present a formal request to (an authority) with respect to a particular cause
- Redress: to remedy (fix) or set right

“Too Late to Apologize” Music Video



Video by Soomo Publishing



How did the author of the Declaration conclude the document?

CONCLUSION

“We...the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA...Declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, FREE AND INDPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown...”



Checking for Understanding

The passage below was written by Thomas Paine in his 1776 book, *Common Sense*.

The powers of governing . . . in the hands of the king . . . himself such an . . . enemy to liberty . . . is he . . . a proper person to say to these colonies, “YOU SHALL MAKE NO LAWS BUT WHAT I PLEASE.”

Source: Public Domain / Project Gutenberg

Based on this passage, with which complaint against the king from the Declaration of Independence would Thomas Paine agree?

- ~~A. persecuting immigrant groups~~
- ~~B. taking away religious rights~~
- C. taking away political rights
- ~~D. persecuting racial groups~~