

# Free term paper on the signing of the declaration of independence

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The colonists were increasingly at odds with Great Britain and the powers that they were holding over the people in the new world. Although the colonists had no representation in Parliament, they were being taxed at increasingly heavy rates and forced to fall ever strict laws. One of the newer laws that infuriated colonists was that Britain now demanded that they be sent to England to be tried for offenses that were committed in the colonies.

As the more influential members of the colonies were agitated, they began to write circular letters. These letters were started by one person, written to another, and then the original letter along with the response was sent to a third person, another response was noted, and all were sent to a fourth person, and so on. These letters were authored by committees of correspondence, various town councils, several legislature groups, and the Sons of Liberty organizations. The letters were often made public as many copies of them were circulated as they traveled from one colony to another and frequently were published in local newspapers or posted in public places. The letters helped to unify the colonies that their plight was the same for all. Britain was becoming oppressive. It was agreed upon that each colony establish its own committee of correspondence.

Even though the governor ordered the committees of correspondence to be dissolved, Thomas Jefferson and some of the others retired to a room in a tavern to meet and agreed that they would fight instead. Each colony agreed that there would be a deputy appointed and that there would be unity among the colonies. An attack on one colony would be interpreted as an attack upon all of the colonies. This proclamation of unification was an essential element of the committees and some of the influential leaders of

the colonies making the turning point to decide to fight England. At the time of their decision, they just did not know that it would end up becoming a full out war. This was May of 1774. The Virginia committee agreed to meet in Williamsburg on August 1st and all of the committees agreed to meet in Philadelphia on September 5th.

The public outcry of taxation without representation was beginning to spread. The unspoken goal of the committees was gaining momentum. This was to oppose any act of royal sovereignty that Great Britain tried to force over the colonies. An article with no identified author explaining such was forwarded to the monarchy. The style of writing was inexplicably that of Thomas Jefferson, although he was never formally identified as the actual writer of the document A Summary View of the Rights of British America. All committees of correspondence members met in Philadelphia from September 5th through October 26th. They agreed to meet again on May 10, 1775. In March of 1775 there was a convention in which a Congress was approved, and the same delegates were asked to represent the colonies in May. The momentum was growing as was the dissent against Great Britain . Colonists agreed in vast numbers to boycott British goods. This was a monumental decision as much of the raw material cotton was grown in the colonies, shipped to England to be manufactured into cloth, and then sent back over to the colonies. Tea, a staple of the colonists' diet, also came from England. Giving up these items were hardships that many colonists were willing to bear. Tradesmen and farmers were ready to serve as local militiamen at a moments' notice. The more distributed that the colonists became with their treatment from the monarchy, the more unified they

became as dissenters against the crown

. When the sway of the colonies became strong enough that living under the rule of tyrannical dictators was not to be tolerated, tensions continued to mount.

A group of men, known as the Founding Fathers, were the ones who helped set the founding of the United States into motion. These were the men who either helped write the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, or helped to form some of the other important pieces of writing or legislation that shaped the earliest days of the country. Some of the fundamental principles in which they believed were that God made people to be free, each person has their own conscience, and each person should be able to make their own choices.

The American colonists were not pleased with many of the practices that the British government imposed upon them. The colonists had their local governments abolished and were forced to allow British soldiers to reside in their houses. Judges and other government officials who disagreed with British politics were not allowed to hold office. Colonists were limited to trading with England, which greatly affected their ability to earn money from their cash crops, tobacco, cotton, and sugar cane. Again, one of the biggest things that irked the colonists were the layers of taxes that Britain laid on them even though their theoretical democratic government had no representatives in the British Parliamentary system.

There were years of negotiations with England. None of the decisions by the colonists were done irrationally. The colonists tried negotiating with England; it was not until England broke off all communication that the colonists felt

the need the act out. It was because of the British actions that the Founding Fathers were very direct in having strong principles of choice and conscience. They wanted to ensure that their new government never acted in the tyrannical manner that the British government had treated them. Keeping in mind the purposes for issuing their declaration to break free from the British Empire, the Founding Fathers had four main purposes when they wrote the Declaration of Independence. The purposes of the Declaration were to: encourage colonists who were hesitant about splitting from England that it was the right choice, explain colonists' position to Great Britain regarding the purpose of human government, provide a specific list of grievances to King George III to justify their actions and their decision to break away from the British Empire, and to encourage other nations to aid them in their quest to leave Britain tyrannical rule.

### **There are six distinct parts to the Declaration of Independence.**

Part one is the Preamble and is familiar to most people in the United States. It gives a statement as to why the colonists are demanding a separation from England. " When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another"

The second part notes the beliefs that the colonists have about the purpose of government and human rights. The familiar phrase " We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal" is the beginning of his section.

The third section lists the grievances, or the complaints, that the colonists

had about the manner in which they were treated by King George III. This list is a good explanation about what made the colonists angry and upset enough to lead them to the point that they were willing to go to war.

The fourth section explains the past attempts to try and rectify their grievances with King George III peacefully and how each of those attempts failed. This is a key point in trying to get assistance in their plight from other nations.

- The fifth section is the actual declaration to be separated from the British Monarchy: " We declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States."

### **The sixth section is the signatures of the men who were a part of the process of**

creating and ratifying the document.

It is because of the men who created and signed this document that citizens of this country today have certain rights, including, but not limited to: the freedoms of speech, religion, press, selection of leaders, right to choose spouses, and choose where we live. The Declaration was carefully written so that the colonists were not viewed as rebels, but instead their actions were clearly understood as justified and no longer wanting to be oppressed by political tyrants .

The document itself was prepared by the Committee of Five. These were five men that were chosen by all of those present at the Continental Congress to draft the official document. To ensure that all regions were represented, two men from New England, John Adams of Massachusetts and Roger Sherman from Connecticut, two from the mid-Atlantic region, Benjamin Franklin from

Pennsylvania and Robert Livingston of New York, and a southerner, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, were chosen to write the declaration. The men agreed that Jefferson should draft the document as he was the best author of the group. After he had done so, he invited Dr. Franklin and Mr. Adams to make corrections, rewrote the document, and presented it to Congress. When it was officially adopted on July 4, 1776, it was announced by the ringing of the church bells in Philadelphia .

As the colonists were preparing for the writing of their official Declaration of Independence, they had promised that an act of violence against one was an act against all. They knew they needed some kind of military force in order to back up such a threat, and so the Continental Congress established a regular army in June 1775, more than a year before the declaration was made to England that independence was going to be sought. George Washington was the commander-in-chief and a combination of regular and state militias were used initially and throughout the entire Revolutionary War to make up the Continental Army.

Washington had to battle not only the British, but a divided group of colonists as well. The best estimates that historians can make are that only about 40-45 % of the colonists were in favor of going to war. About 35-45 % of the colonists wanted to remain neutral and about 15-20% of the colonists wanted to remain a part of the British Empire. With little pay, difficult conditions, and less than half of the population to recruit from, Washington was facing an uphill battle from the beginning of the war. About 25, 000 Loyalists fought on the British side during the war .

Dissent amongst the people brought them together. Although there was

not complete agreement about whether or not to fight or to stay loyal, in the end, when victory was had, the nation was able to move forward, draft a Constitution, and begin a new legacy. Once the war had ended, it seemed that the disagreements between whether or not to remain loyal to the crown or to break free were relatively quickly forgotten. Since the new nation was inevitable, it seemed that people put their differences aside and were just eager to move forward, embarking on a new adventure, unsure of what the future would hold, but excited to find out.

## **Works Cited**

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