

# Critical analysis of the declaration of independence essay



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According to Thomas Jefferson, “ all tyranny needs to gain a foothold is for people of good conscience to remain silent”. On July 4, 1776, our founding fathers took steps to rid the United States of the tyranny of King George the III of England. They would no longer remain silent. The document that declared the independence of this new country is the Declaration of Independence. The first section of the Declaration of Independence includes some of the worlds most quoted words. The introduction serves to declare the reasons the colonists want to separate themselves from England.

The second paragraph contains the statement that gives us the entire philosophy of this declaration. It states that “ all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights”.

Governments are created to secure certain unalienable rights that were give to all mankind by God. However, while the founding fathers believed that God should play an important role in government; they did not go into who or what that God is. The choice of God should be left up to the individual citizen and cannot be taken away by the government.

If the government attempts to take away these rights, the citizens have cause to rise up and overthrow that government. This thought was revolutionary even though John Locke had stated it previously in his Two Treatises of Government when he said, “ under natural law, all people have the right to life, liberty and estate”. He went on to say that “ the people could instigate a revolution against the government when it acted against the interests of the citizens”. This is called the social contract theory.

It was believed that the people actually had the obligation to revolt in the event of tyranny. England was attempting to take away these basic God given rights. Their attempts at tyranny gave the colonists justification for wanting to separate from England. Jefferson and his constituents used deductive reasoning in providing the philosophy and then giving the evidence that supported this philosophy. It is interesting today to look back 235 years and examine the Declaration. Our forefathers were so concerned about their God given unalienable rights.

The separated themselves from England and found the freedom they so desired. However, we must examine what we as citizens have done with these freedoms. It only took a short time for these same citizens to begin extracting their own brand of tyranny on the native Americans. We took away their God given rights, took their land and eventually placed them on reservations. Step ahead a hundred years and look at the Civil War and the issue of slavery. We enslaved an entire race of people. What about their rights? Look ahead another 25 years and we see women fighting for their rights.

According to the Declaration of Independence " all Men are created equal". Yet, this didn't apply to minorities and women. As another 25 years went by, the descendants of those former slaves still had not achieved the same rights as white men and women. We saw a new kind of revolution emerge in the Civil Rights Movement. While we have never had to completely overthrow our government, in many instances, the philosophy that was put forth in the Declaration has allowed many groups to challenge our government's ideals and laws.

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The fight is never over. Revolution brings on evolution. We are a country constantly evolving and becoming more and more inclusive. Without the Declaration of Independence and forward thinkers such as John Locke where would we be today? They had the forethought to make it possible for any oppressed group in this country to rise up and fight for their rights as human beings. Yet, we still see abuses of individual rights every day. Fortunately, we have the Declaration of Independence that insures we can always fight against such abuses.