

Text Title(s): *The Declaration of Independence* – Thomas Jefferson  
 McDougal Littell Literature, pp. 234 - 240  
 Genre/Text Structure: Public document

**Targeted Text Selection – Lines 1 – 15, lines 59 – 76, and lines 102 – 116**

| Targeted Text Selection   | Vocabulary  | Student-Generated Text-Dependent Questions   |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>lines 1 – 15, p. 236</b></p> <p><b>In Congress, July 4, 1776</b></p> <p>1 When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the</p> <p>5 opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which <b>impel</b> them to the separation.</p> <p>7 We hold these truths to be self-evident:—That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain <b>unalienable</b> rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to <u>secure</u> these</p> <p>10 rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the <u>consent</u> of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect</p> <p>15 -their safety and happiness.</p>        | <p><b>line 6 impel:</b></p> <p><b>line 8 unalienable:</b></p> <p><b>line 9 secure:</b></p> <p><b>line 11 consent:</b></p> | <p><b>GUIDING QUESTION:</b> What persuasive techniques and rhetorical questions empower Jefferson’s argument?</p> <p><b>(Q1)</b> Paraphrase lines 1-15 using the graphic organizer. (See student graphic)</p> <p><b>(Q2)</b> What argument does Jefferson present in lines 1 – 6 of the Declaration of Independence?</p>   |
| <p><b>lines 59 – 76, p. 239</b></p> <p>He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our</p> <p>60 constitutions, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation: For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us; For protecting them, by a mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should <u>commit</u> on the inhabitants of these States;</p> <p>65 For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world; For imposing taxes on us without our consent; For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury; For transporting us beyond the seas, to be tried for pretended offenses; For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province,</p> <p>70 establishing there an <b>arbitrary</b> government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these colonies; For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering, fundamentally, the forms of our governments;</p> <p>75 For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to <u>legislate</u> for us in all cases whatsoever.</p> | <p><b>line 64 commit:</b></p> <p><b>line 70 arbitrary:</b></p> <p><b>line 76 legislate:</b></p>                           | <p><b>(Q3)</b> Reread lines 59 -76. Explain the significance of the itemized list of examples in lines 62 – 76. What persuasive techniques and rhetorical questions empower Jefferson’s argument?</p> <p><b>(Q4)</b> What are Jefferson’s purposes for listing the despotic acts of the king?</p> <p><b>(Q5)</b> List the types of grievances (complaints) that Jefferson outlines in the text. Identify the <i>verb</i> and the <i>noun</i> for each (e.g. quartering troops)</p> |



## || The Declaration of Independence ||

Author: **Thomas Jefferson**



In June of 1776, Thomas Jefferson and other colonial leaders had decided to rebel against British rule. But they needed to justify their dangerous action—to themselves, to the king, and to the world. Amid all the clash of conflicting interests, amid all the welter of partisan politics, Thomas Jefferson crafted the Declaration of Independence that, after two centuries, Americans can turn to with the assurance and confidence that this great charter of freedom and justice remain firm and unshaken.

*Directions: The first 15 lines of the Declaration of Independence consist of 3 long sentences. Use this chart to paraphrase these 3 sentences phrase-by-phrase and explain the meaning of each phrase. Next, write an objective summary of Jefferson's Declaration wherein you analyze how he articulates the central ideas of liberty and how those ideas interact and build on one another.*

Paraphrased:

**In Congress, July 4, 1776**

- (1) When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to
- (2) dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to
- (3) assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which
- (4) the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the
- (5) opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which **impel**
- (6) them to the separation.
- (7) We hold these truths to be self-evident:—That all men are created equal;
- (8) that they are endowed by their Creator with certain **unalienable** rights; that
- (9) among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these
- (10) rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from
- (11) the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes
- (12) destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and
- (13) to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and
- (14) organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect
- (15) their safety and happiness.

**Summarization:** *Write an objective summary of Jefferson's Declaration wherein you analyze how he articulates the central ideas of liberty and how those ideas interact and build on one another.*

## THE ENLIGHTENMENT – Ideas of the Age - STUDENT

### Thomas Jefferson's The Declaration of Independence and John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*

In the 1700s, there was a burst of intellectual energy taking place in

Europe that came to be known as the Enlightenment. Enlightenment thinkers had begun to question previously accepted truths about who should hold the power in government. Their thinking pointed the way to a government by the people—one in which people consent to government limitations in exchange for the government's protection of their basic rights and liberties.

For centuries, European kings and queens had ruled because it was believed that they had a God-given right to do so. But in the Age of Enlightenment, people began question basic assumptions about government. In America, a popular uprising put a new kind of government to the test: democracy. With this experiment, the young American nation was asking: Who really has the right to rule?

American colonists adapted these Enlightenment ideals to their own environment. The political writings of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, and Thomas Jefferson shaped the American Enlightenment and began to eclipse even the most brilliant European thought. Enlightenment ideals prompted action and gave colonists a philosophical footing for their revolution. "I know not what course others may take," Patrick Henry thundered to the delegates at the second Virginia Convention 1775, "but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!"

Thomas Jefferson was clearly influenced by John Locke's *Second Treatise* when he composed the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson was also inspired by the writing of other Enlightenment thinkers. For instance, Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote that if a government did not protect its people's freedom, it should not exist. Voltaire also believed that people had a right to liberty. The Declaration of Independence reflects many of these old and new beliefs.

#### GUIDING QUESTION:

- What great thinkers and documents of the 1700s influenced Jefferson as he drafted the Declaration?
- What is the fundamental difference between a system based on "a God-given right" to rule and a system based on democracy?



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#### Influence of Enlightenment Thinkers

#### Thomas Jefferson

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