

# Unit 1 : Lesson #2:

## Government Power and Individual Rights

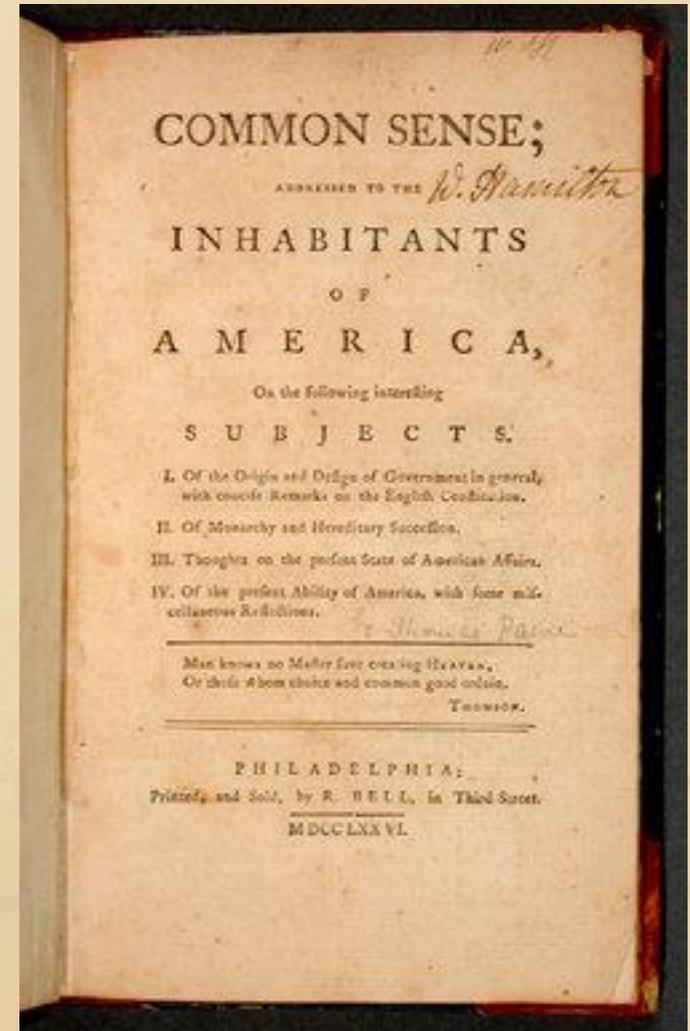
- Background to Declaration of Independence
- Thomas Jefferson / John Locke
- Purpose
- Parts
- Significance
- Reminders

# The Declaration of Independence



# Background

- January 1776 – Common Sense is distributed throughout colonies
- June 7, 1776 - Richard Henry Lee offers a resolution to Congress that “these United Colonies...ought to be free and independent”
- June 11, 1776 – Congress appoints a committee to write a Declaration of Independence: Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, John Adams, Robert Livingston and Thomas Jefferson

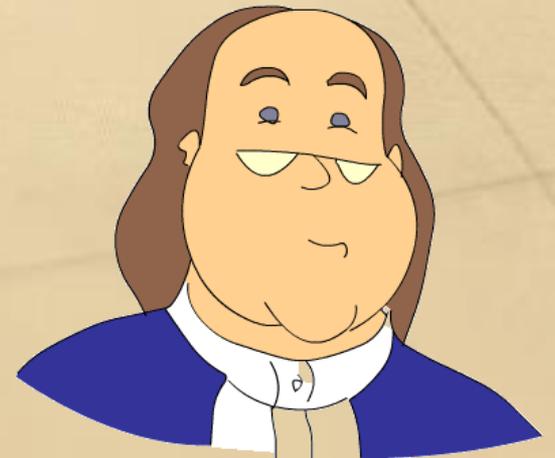


# More Background

- July 4, 1776 – Declaration of Independence is adopted by Congress, John Hancock was the first person to sign it
- August 2, 1776 – Declaration of Independence is signed by 50 present members of Congress, Franklin remarks “We must all hang together or we shall hang separately.”



In your most Obedt  
Servt  
John Hancock



# Main Author – Thomas Jefferson

- Although there were 5 men appointed to write the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson was the main author
  - Congress only accepted the Declaration of Independence after they cut a large portion that attacked slavery



# Enlightenment

- Jefferson used the Enlightenment ideas of JOHN LOCKE
  - People are born with certain natural rights: life, liberty and property
  - People form governments to protect these rights
  - If governments interfere with these rights, the people have the right to OVERTHROW them



# Purpose

- To show why the colonies were revolting against Britain and Declaring their Independence



# Parts of the Declaration of Independence

- Introduction/**Preamble**
- Declaration of Natural Rights
- Indictment/List of Grievances/ Denunciation
- Resolution of Independence/Conclusion
- Signatures



# PREAMBLE

- First part of the Declaration of Independence
- Introduction
- *Explains why the Continental Congress wrote the Declaration of Independence*

091 07

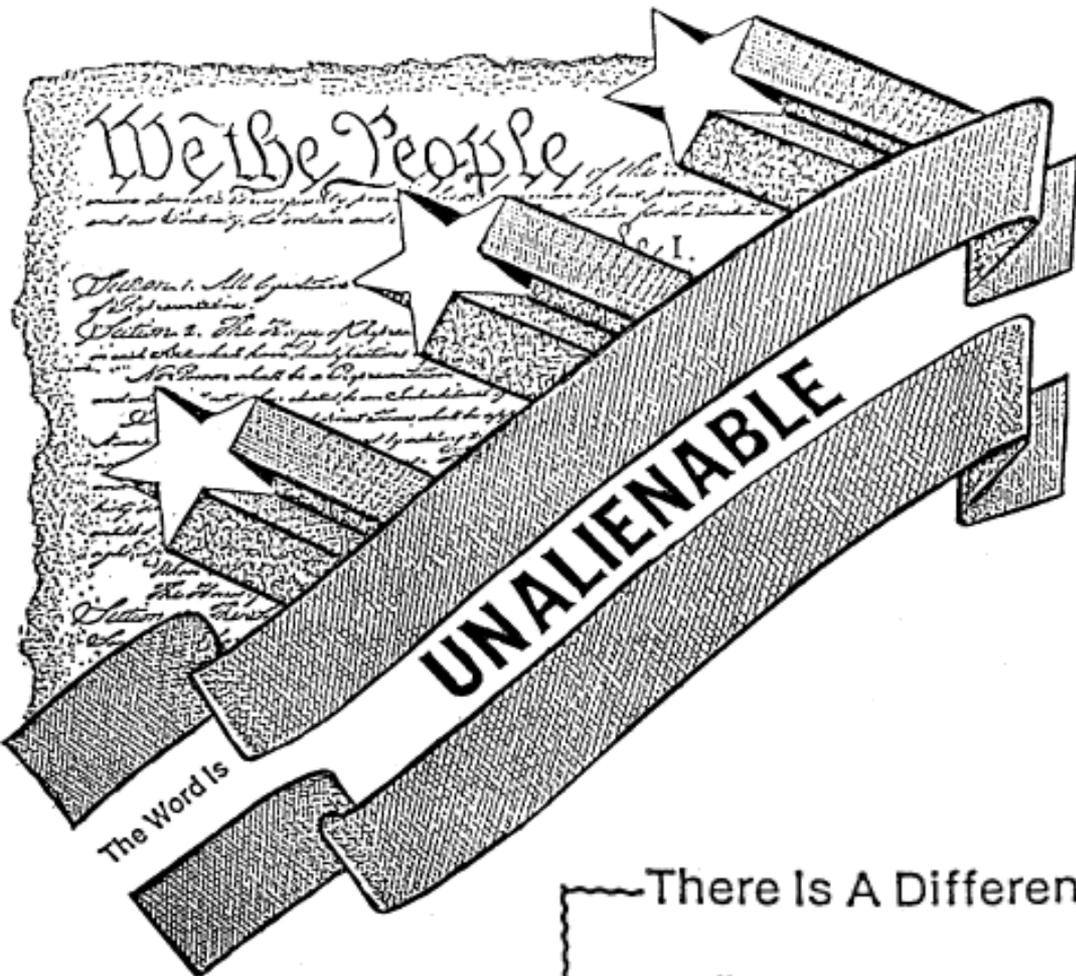
*“When in the Course  
of human events, it  
becomes necessary  
for one people to  
dissolve the  
political bands  
which have  
connected them  
with another...a  
decent respect to  
the opinions of  
mankind requires  
that they should  
declare the causes  
which impel them  
to separate.”*

Preamble

When it is  
necessary for  
people to separate  
from their  
government, these  
people need to tell  
others the reasons  
why they are  
separating.

# Declaration of Natural Rights

- Second part of the Declaration of Independence
- Lists the rights of the citizens
- *Explains that in a republic, the government is there to protect the rights of the people*
- *Jefferson calls these rights **UNALIENABLE** rights, which means they can never be taken away*



The Word Is

## UNalienable

... NOT INalienable, when referring to our UNALIENABLE RIGHTS!

Our Founding Fathers referred to our 'Unalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'

Over the years, the dictionaries have gradually been altered to put more emphasis on INalienable than on the word UNalienable.

There Is A Difference!

### UNalienable

is that which CANNOT be separated, surrendered or taken away.

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### INalienable

is that which SHOULD NOT be separated, surrendered or taken away.

# Declaration of Natural Rights

*“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.”*

- Only men are mentioned in the Declaration
- These ideas are taken from the Enlightenment thinker, *John Locke* who said people have natural rights like life, liberty and property.



# Declaration of Natural Rights

*“That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their powers from the consent of the governed...”*

- Only Men mentioned
- Government’s job is to protect the rights of the people
- Governments should get their power from the people they govern

# Declaration of Natural Rights

*“ That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it...it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government and provide new Guards for their future security.”*

- If a government is not protecting the people's rights the people have the right AND obligation to overthrow that government and start a new one.

## List of Grievances / Indictment / Denunciation

- Third part of the Declaration of Independence
- *List of the colonists' complaints with England*
- *They specifically blame King George III*
- There are 28 grievances, or complaints, that are listed in this section of the Declaration of Independence

# Here are some of the complaints:

- *British soldiers in colonies without permission*
- *Quartering British troops in the colonies*
- *Not punishing these troops when they harm colonists*
- *Cutting off the colonists' trade with the rest of the world*
- *Taxing the colonists without their permission*

**NAVIGATION  
ACTS**

**QUARTERING  
ACT**

**TEA  
ACT**

**INTOLERABLE  
ACTS**

**STAMP  
ACT**

# Resolution of Independence/Conclusion

- Final part of the Declaration of Independence
- *Declares that the colonies are “Free and Independent States”*
- *Includes the signatures of the signers of the Declaration of Independence*



# Resolution of Independence



- These states have the power to:
  - Declare war
  - Trade with other countries
  - Form alliances

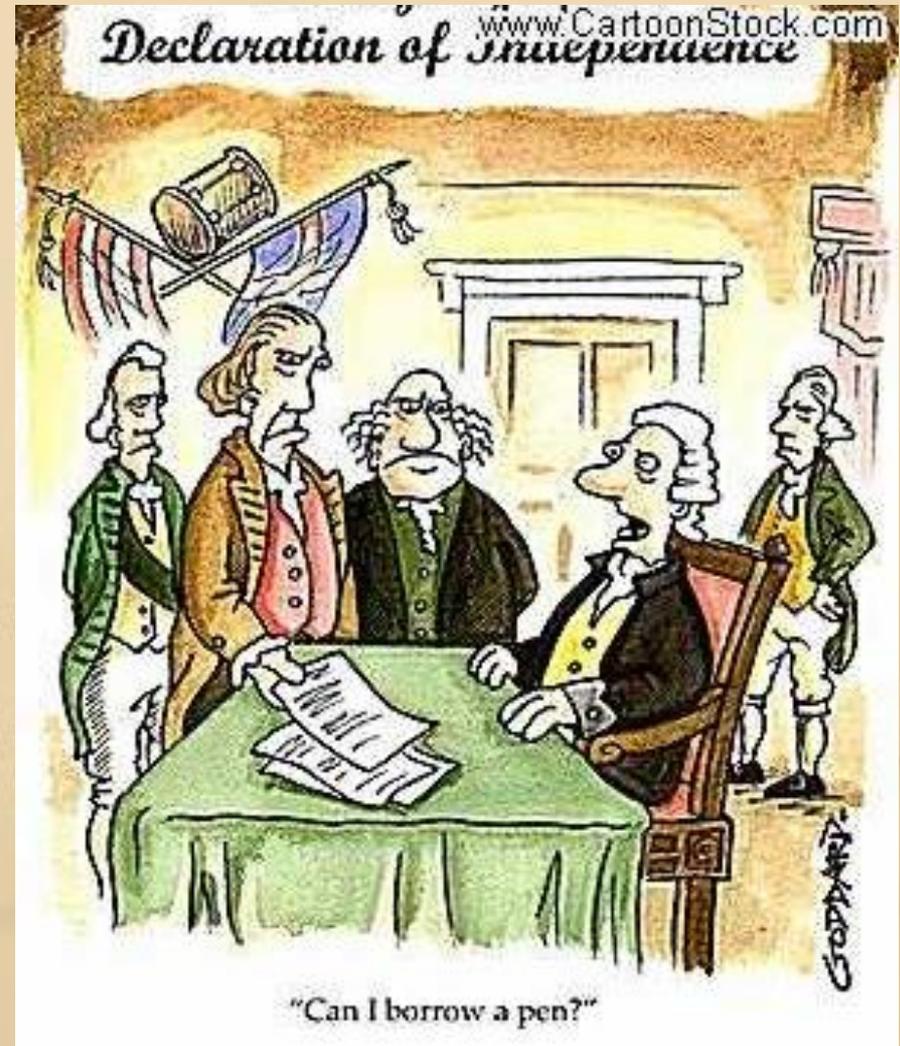
John Hancock was the first person to sign the Declaration of Independence.

(He signed it very largely so King George could see it all the way from England.)

There were 56 signers of the Declaration from all of the 13 colonies.

Signing the Declaration was considered treason, punishable by death

# The Signers



# Significance

- Marks the **FIRST TIME EVER** that a group of revolutionaries explained in detail why they had the right to change their government
- Ideas of the Declaration of Independence influenced the French Revolution and revolutions in South America.



# Remember...

1. Main idea of Declaration of Independence and Constitution – **governments should be based on the consent of the governed**
2. Declaration of Independence states that people have the right to overthrow **an oppressive government**
3. The main purpose of the Declaration is to justify the **colonists' revolt against England**
4. **John Locke** contributed to the Declaration (natural rights...overthrow unjust government)