

## PRIMARY SOURCE

“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.”

—Thomas Jefferson, *The Declaration of Independence*

If a government disregards these rights, Jefferson explained, it loses its right to govern. The people then have the right to abolish that government, by force if necessary. They can form a new government that will protect their rights. When Jefferson spoke of “the people,” however, he meant only free, white, landowning men. Women, the enslaved, and those without property were left out of the Declaration.

The Declaration also explained the reasons for breaking with Britain. It declared the colonies to be free and independent states. This was a very serious action—treason from the British point of view—and the delegates knew it. John Hancock urged the delegates to stand together in mutual defense. He realized that if the war were lost, they might all be hanged.

The Declaration closed with this pledge: “And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.”

Americans had declared independence. Now they had to win their freedom on the battlefield.

**MAIN IDEAS & DETAILS** Explain what ideas can be found in the Declaration of Independence.

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## Section Assessment



### ONLINE QUIZ

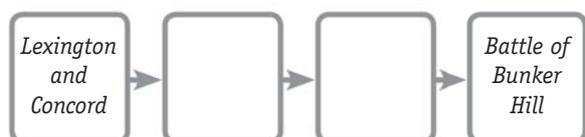
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### TERMS & NAMES

1. Explain the importance of
  - Ethan Allen
  - Continental Army
  - Second Continental Congress
  - Declaration of Independence
  - Thomas Jefferson
  - Thomas Paine

### USING YOUR READING NOTES

2. **Sequence Events** Complete the diagram that you started at the beginning of this section.



### KEY IDEAS

3. **Make Inferences** What forced the British to leave Boston?
4. **Analyze Primary Sources** What does the Declaration of Independence say about government and the rights of the people?

### CRITICAL THINKING

5. **Draw Conclusions** Why did it take the colonists so long to declare independence?
6. **Make Inferences** Why do you think *Common Sense* was so popular?
7. **Sequence Events** Why do you think militiamen surrounded the British in Boston?
8. **Math Graph** Research the population statistics of colonial Boston. Make a graph to show how the population of Boston changed during the Revolution.