



A DECLARATION

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students read an excerpt from the *Declaration of Independence* and interpret it in their own words.

MATERIALS

A Declaration handout

GET READY

- ✓ Make a copy of the *A Declaration* handout for each student in your class.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Explain to your class that the *Declaration of Independence* was the document that laid the groundwork for the shaping of our country. Further explain that many of the rights Americans cherish are referenced in the *Declaration of Independence*.
- ✓ Give each student a copy of *A Declaration* handout.
- ✓ Have your students read the excerpt from the *Declaration of Independence* found on the handout.
- ✓ Tell your class that they need to summarize, in their own words, what the excerpt means and then write their interpretations in the space provided.
- ✓ Inform your students that next they need to identify and interpret the various rights that are included in the passage. (There is a space provided on the handout for this as well.)

- ✓ Once your students have completed the handout, divide them into groups of three or four. Give these small groups time to review their summaries and interpretations.
- ✓ Have the small groups come back together for a class discussion. Dissect the *Declaration of Independence* excerpt and allow your students to share their insights and ideas.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What does this passage from the Declaration of Independence tell us about our rights and responsibilities as United States citizens?*
- ★ *Why do you think you were given this particular section of the Declaration of Independence to summarize and interpret?*
- ★ *Was it difficult to analyze and summarize the excerpt? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Were your thoughts similar to those of the other people in your group? Were they different? Explain how?*



A DECLARATION

Name: _____

Read the following excerpt from the *Declaration of Independence*. First, summarize the content of the passage and then list in your own words the rights it specifies.

Excerpt from the *Declaration of Independence*:

“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. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent 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 new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”

Summary: _____

Rights Specified in the Above Excerpt: _____
