



WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF EVIDENT

Learning Objectives: The students will...

1. Understand the meaning of key passages of the Declaration of Independence.
2. Recognize the impact of key passages of the Declaration of Independence on America's government as well as others throughout history.

TEKS: Secondary "Celebrate Freedom" TEKS; Govt 1A

Materials Needed: Sets of cards of key phrases of the Declaration of Independence and paraphrases; materials for the selected optional activity.

Teaching Strategy:

1. Introduce the lesson by using the Celebrate Freedom video clip from "I Was First. Vote for Me" (www.texasbar.com/iwasthefirst) to have the students recite the passage from the Declaration of Independence. See if the students can identify the key personalities reciting this passage and the role each played in helping achieve and maintain freedom for the people of the United States.
2. Decide whether the students will be using Option 1 or Option 2—both are described below—to analyze the meaning of the key phrases from the Declaration of Independence. Prepare the appropriate set of cards for the option selected.

Option 1:

1. Use the sets of cards from Attachment 1.
2. Divide the class into small groups and give each group a set of cards. Explain that there are two types of cards: phrases from a key passage of the Declaration of Independence and paraphrase cards of these phrases.
3. Have the group separate the cards into the two types. (Note: The teacher can run the two types of cards on two colors of paper if desired.)
4. Next, have the group match the correct paraphrase card with the passage card. When the cards are matched, the groups should put both sets of cards in the correct order to prepare to read this portion of the document aloud. Ask for a volunteer to read the original passage and another to read the paraphrase of the passage. Continue until the entire passage has been shared.

Key: Phrases of the Declaration are bolded with paraphrases following.

We hold these truths to be self-evident—These rights should be clear to everyone.

That all men are created equal—There is no difference in people when they are born.

That they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights—The Creator gives people certain rights that nobody can take away.

That among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—The rights that we are born with are a right to live, a right to freedom, and the right to find what makes us happy.

That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed—Since the people are the ones that created the government and give it its power, the government must protect the rights of these people.

That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it—If the government doesn't protect its citizens, then the citizens should be able to change or do away with this government.

And to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles—When a new government is created, it should be based on these key ideas.

And organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness—The powers of the government should be created to bring about what is best for citizens for them to be safe and happy.

Option 2:

1. Use the cards from Attachment 2, which only contain a phrase from the Declaration of Independence and then a section for a student to create a paraphrase.
2. Pass out the cards to individual students making sure that all the phrases are as equally represented as possible.
3. Have the students create their own paraphrase for the passage they were given and write it in the section provided. After they have completed their paraphrases, ask for a group representing each of the eight passages to come to the front of the class and place themselves in order.
4. Once the correct order has been established, have the student with the first passage, read it. After the first passage has been read, have the students who have that paraphrase share what they have written. Continue the process until the entire section the Declaration has been read and paraphrases have been shared.

Extension Ideas: Use one of the following suggestions to culminate the study of the Celebrate Freedom passage from the Declaration of Independence:

1. Divide the students into 8 groups and give each group one of the passages from the Declaration. Explain that they are to create a visual representation (no words) of the passage to be posted around the room. After all the visuals, have been posted, see if the class can identify the passage illustrated in each.
2. Divide the students into small groups of approximately 4 each. Give each group a piece of poster board. Explain their finished product will be a collage of pictures from magazines using very few words (if any) to illustrate the all eight of the passages from this part of the Declaration of Independence. When all the collages are completed, have the students post them around the room for the students to examine.
3. Using the sheets provided, have the students compare excerpts from one or more of the following documents with this key passage of the Declaration of Independence. They should analyze similarities and differences to assess the influence of the Declaration of Independence on the passage of these future documents.
 - a. Compare the Declaration of Independence to the Texas Declaration of Independence adopted at Washington-on-the-Brazos in 1836. (7th grade Texas History—Attachment 3)
 - b. Compare the Declaration of Independence to the Declaration of Sentiments passed at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. (8th and 11th grade American History—Attachment 4)
 - c. Compare the Declaration of Independence to the Declaration of the Rights of Man passed by the National Assembly of France in 1789 during the French Revolution. (World History—Attachment 5)
 - d. Compare the Declaration of Independence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the UN Assembly in 1948. (World Geography, American History, and Government—Attachment 6)



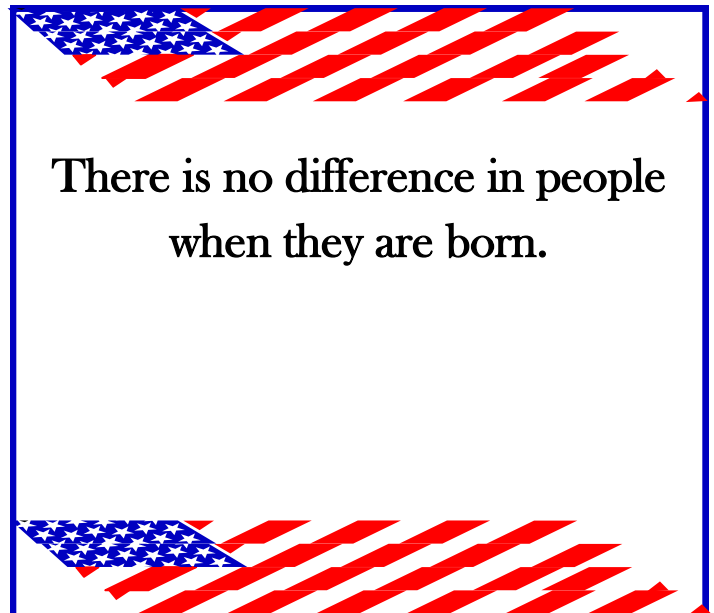
We hold these truths to be self-evident



These rights should be clear to everyone.



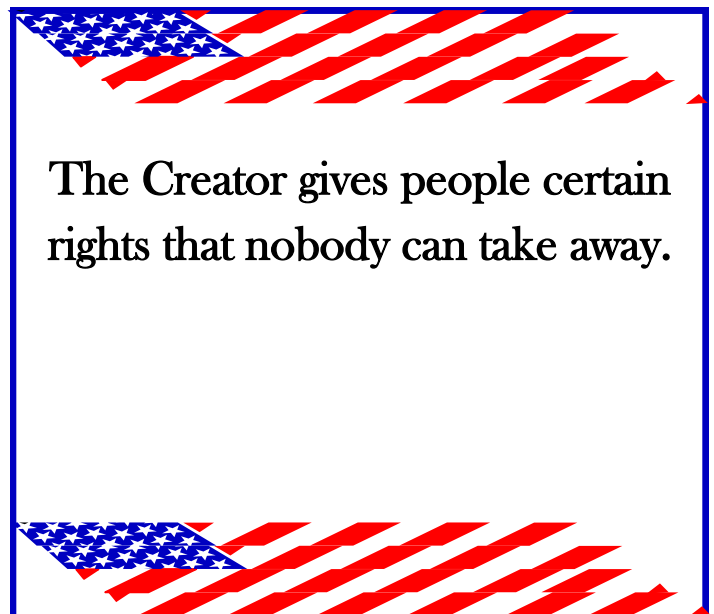
That all men are created equal



There is no difference in people when they are born.



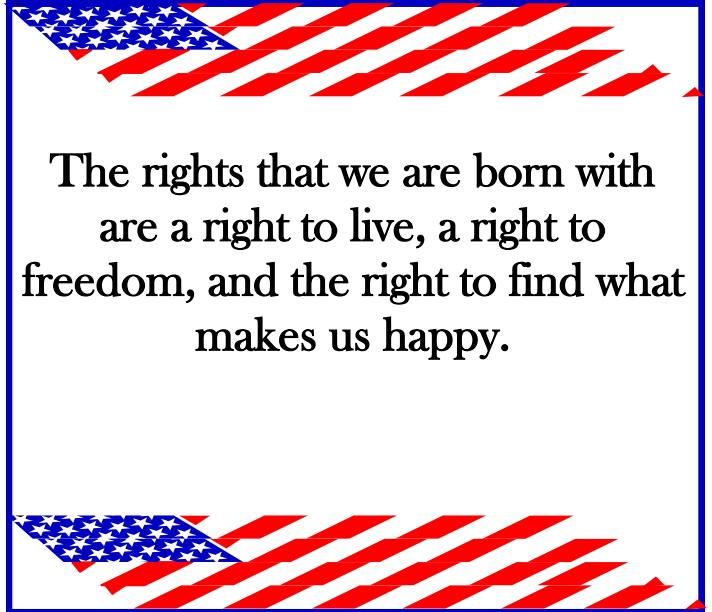
That they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights



The Creator gives people certain rights that nobody can take away.



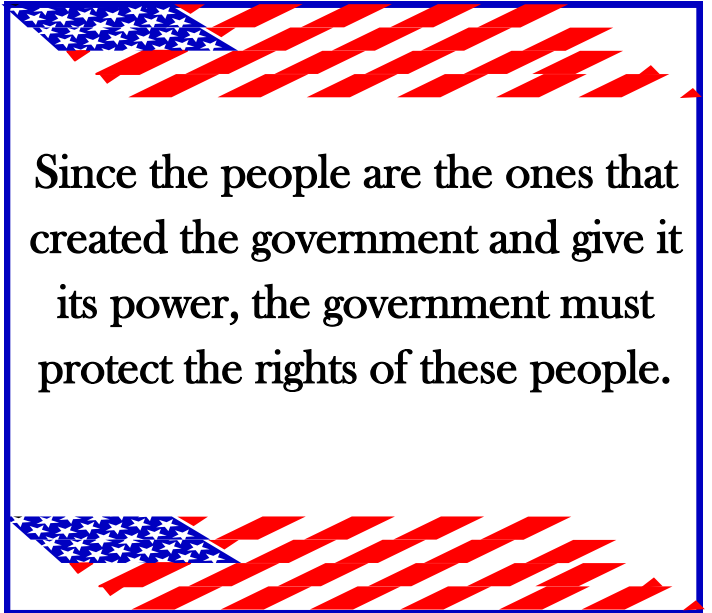
That among these are life, liberty,
and the pursuit of happiness



The rights that we are born with
are a right to live, a right to
freedom, and the right to find what
makes us happy.



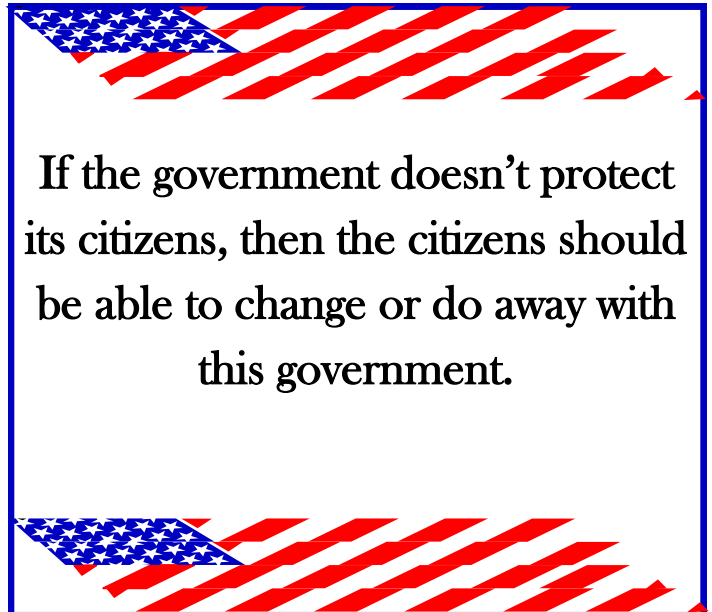
That to secure these rights,
governments are instituted among
men, deriving their just powers
from the consent of the governed.



Since the people are the ones that
created the government and give it
its power, the government must
protect the rights of these people.



That whenever any form of
government becomes destructive
of these ends it is the right of the
people to alter or to abolish it.



If the government doesn't protect
its citizens, then the citizens should
be able to change or do away with
this government.



And to institute new government,
laying its foundation on such
principles



When a new government is
created, it should be based on
these key ideas.



And organizing its powers in such
form, as to them shall seem most
likely to effect their safety and
happiness



The powers of the government
should be created to bring about
what is best for citizens in order
for them to be safe and happy.



US Declaration—Adopted by the 2nd Continental Congress, July 4, 1776

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.

Texas Declaration of Independence—Adopted by Convention at Washington-on-the-Brazos, March, 1836

When, in consequence of such acts of malfeasance and abdication on the part of the government, anarchy prevails, and civil society is dissolved into its original elements. In such a crisis, the first law of nature, the right of self-preservation, the inherent and inalienable rights of the people to appeal to first principles, and take their political affairs into their own hands in extreme cases, enjoins it as a right towards themselves, and a sacred obligation to their posterity, to abolish such government, and create another in its stead, calculated to rescue them from impending dangers, and to secure their future welfare and happiness.

Similarities:

Differences:

US Declaration—Adopted by the 2nd Continental Congress, July 4, 1776

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.

Declaration of Sentiments—Adopted by the Seneca Falls Convention, 1848

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of 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 their safety and happiness.

Similarities:

Differences:

US Declaration—Adopted by the 2nd Continental Congress, July 4, 1776

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.

Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen—Approved by the National Assembly of France, August 1789

The representatives of the French people, organized as a National Assembly, believing that the ignorance, neglect, or contempt of the rights of man are the sole cause of public calamities and of the corruption of governments, have determined to set forth in a solemn declaration the natural, unalienable, and sacred rights of man, in order that this declaration, being constantly before all the members of the Social body, shall remind them continually of their rights and duties; in order that the acts of the legislative power, as well as those of the executive power, may be compared at any moment with the objects and purposes of all political institutions and may thus be more respected, and, lastly, in order that the grievances of the citizens, based hereafter upon simple and incontestable principles, shall tend to the maintenance of the constitution and redound to the happiness of all. Therefore the National Assembly recognizes and proclaims, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following rights of man and of the citizen:

Articles:

- 1.** Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good.
- 2.** The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.

Similarities:

Differences:

US Declaration—Adopted by the 2nd Continental Congress, July 4, 1776

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.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights—Passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations, December, 1948

Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Similarities:

Differences:



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,
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men, deriving their just powers
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That whenever any form of
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