

LESSON 27

TEXAS ALMANAC TEACHERS GUIDE

Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Texas

- *Convention of 1836*

SOCIAL STUDIES TEKS

4 - 15, 21, 22, 23

7- 14, 16, 21, 22, 23

8 - 15, 19, 29, 30

STAAR

4, 7 - Writing - 1, 2, 3

4, 7, 8 - Reading - 1, 2, 3

8 - Social Studies - 3

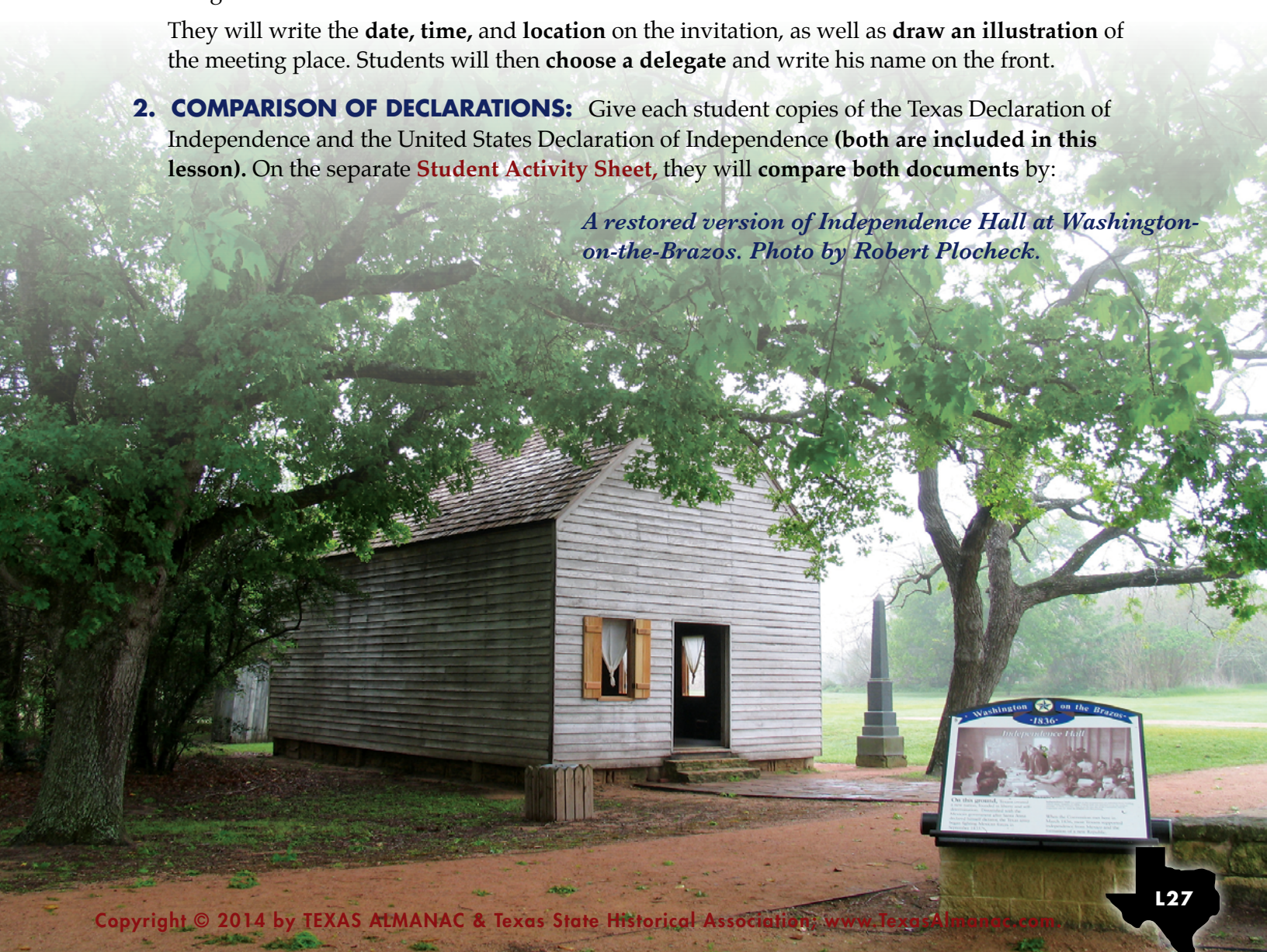
INSTRUCTIONAL SUGGESTIONS

- 1. FOLDED ENVELOPE INVITATIONS:** Using the “Texas Declaration of Independence” (included in this lesson), students will design a **Folded Envelope Card** (see Appendix) inviting delegates to the Convention of 1836.

They will write the **date, time, and location** on the invitation, as well as **draw an illustration** of the meeting place. Students will then **choose a delegate** and write his name on the front.

- 2. COMPARISON OF DECLARATIONS:** Give each student copies of the Texas Declaration of Independence and the United States Declaration of Independence (**both are included in this lesson**). On the separate **Student Activity Sheet**, they will **compare both documents** by:

A restored version of Independence Hall at Washington-on-the-Brazos. Photo by Robert Plocheck.



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- a. Identifying specific phrases used in both documents that are similar.
TEXAS: “Lives, liberty and property”
U.S.: “Life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness”
- b. Identifying who is being accused.
- c. Identifying the rights addressed in both documents, such as “trial by jury,” “right of representation.”
- d. Identifying specific complaints in the Texas document that are **not** in the United States document, such as religion.

3. ANNOTATED TEXAS DECLARATION:

Give each student a copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence (**included in this lesson**). They will use it to answer the questions on the **Student Activity Sheet** using **illustrated annotations**; such as, an **illustration or symbol** of the event, conflict, or item in the document, along with a **summary explanation**.

4. DECLARATION TERMINOLOGY:

Students will work in groups. Each group will **define a selected number of terms** from the Texas Declaration of Independence that are listed on the **Student Activity Sheet**.

Students will locate the words or phrases in the Texas Declaration of Independence and then rewrite the sentence or phrase using contemporary terminology.

5. GRIEVANCES AGAINST MEXICO

T-CHART: Students will work in groups to **analyze the grievances** the Texans had against the Mexican government, as listed in the Texas Declaration of Independence.

Using the T-chart on the **Student Activity Sheet**, students will write the **grievance** on one side and the **historical background** on the other side.



A copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence lies on a table in Independence Hall, a restored version of the building where the declaration was signed on March 2, 1836, at Washington-on-the-Brazos. Photo courtesy of the Texas Department of Parks & Wildlife.

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STUDENT ACTIVITY

Comparison of Declarations

Use copies the Texas Declaration of Independence and the United States Declaration of Independence and compare both documents in each of the four ways outlined, below.

- a. Identify specific phrases used in both documents that are similar: _____

- b. Identify who is being accused: _____

- c. Identify the rights addressed in both documents: _____

- d. Identify specific complaints in the Texas document that are not in the United States document: _____

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STUDENT ACTIVITY

Annotated Texas Declaration

Read your copy of the Texas Declaration of Independence and answer these questions using illustrated annotations; such as, an illustration or symbol of the event, conflict, or item, along with a summary explanation of the event, conflict, or item.

- a. To which constitution does the third paragraph refer?
- b. To which convention does the eighth paragraph refer?
- c. To which citizen does the ninth paragraph refer?
- d. To which conflict does the 14th paragraph refer?
- e. To which battle does the 17th paragraph refer?
- f. Highlight **five words** you do not know on your copy of the Texas Declaration. Write each word and its definition below and draw an illustration of the definition.
 1. _____

 2. _____

 3. _____

 4. _____

 5. _____

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STUDENT ACTIVITY

Declaration Terminology

Working in groups, define a selected number of the terms from the Texas Declaration of Independence that are listed at left. Locate the words or phrases in the Declaration and rewrite the sentence or phrase using contemporary terminology.

inestimable and
inalienable rights

oppression

sovereign states

military despotism

minions

tyrant

remonstrances

mercenary

malfeasance and
abdication

anarchy

enjoins

posterity

grievances

acquiesce

incarcerated

zealous endeavor

procure

axiom

palladium of civil liberty

arbitrary

desperadoes

emissaries

dictates of our
ownconscience

melancholy conclusion

forbearance ceases to
be a virtue

plenary powers

rectitude of our
intentions

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

Grievances Against Mexico T-Chart

GRIEVANCES	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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STUDENT ACTIVITY

UNANIMOUS

Declaration of Independence,

BY THE
DELEGATES OF THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS,
IN GENERAL CONVENTION,
AT THE TOWN OF WASHINGTON,
ON THE SECOND DAY OF MARCH, 1836.

Notes

When a government has ceased to protect the lives, liberty, and property of the people, from whom its legitimate powers are derived, and for the advancement of whose happiness it was instituted; and so far from being a guarantee for the enjoyment of those inestimable and inalienable rights, becomes an instrument in the hands of evil rulers for their oppression.

When the Federal Republican Constitution of their country, which they have sworn to support, no longer has a substantial existence, and the whole nature of their government has been forcibly changed, without their consent, from a restricted federative republic, composed of sovereign states, to a consolidated central military despotism, in which every interest is disregarded but that of the army and the priesthood, both the eternal enemies of civil liberty, the ever-ready minions of power, and the usual instruments of tyrants.

When, long after the spirit of the Constitution has departed, moderation is at length so far lost by those in power, that even the semblance of freedom is removed, and the forms, themselves, of the constitution discontinued; and so far from their petitions and remonstrances being regarded, the agents who bear them are thrown into dungeons, and mercenary armies sent forth to force a new government upon them at the point of the bayonet.

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.

Nations, as well as individuals, are amenable for their acts to the public opinion of mankind. A statement of a part of our grievances is, therefore, submitted to an impartial world, in justification of the hazardous but unavoidable step now taken, of severing our political connection with the Mexican people, and assuming an independent attitude among the nations of the earth.

The Mexican government, by its colonization laws, invited and induced the Anglo-American population of Texas to colonize its wilderness under the pledged faith of a written constitution, that they should continue to enjoy that constitutional liberty and republican government to which they had been habituated in the land

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of their birth, the United States of America.

In this expectation they have been cruelly disappointed, inasmuch as the Mexican nation has acquiesced in the late changes made in the government by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, who, having overturned the constitution of his country, now offers us the cruel alternative, either to abandon our homes, acquired by so many privations, or submit to the most intolerable of all tyranny, the combined despotism of the sword and the priesthood.

It has sacrificed our welfare to the state of Coahuila, by which our interests have been continually depressed through a jealous and partial course of legislation, carried on at a far distant seat of government, by a hostile majority, in an unknown tongue; and this too, notwithstanding we have petitioned in the humblest terms for the establishment of a separate state government, and have, in accordance with the provisions of the national constitution, presented to the general Congress a republican constitution, which was, without just cause, contemptuously rejected.

It incarcerated in a dungeon, for a long time, one of our citizens, for no other cause but a zealous endeavor to procure the acceptance of our constitution, and the establishment of a state government.

It has failed and refused to secure, on a firm basis, the right of trial by jury, that palladium of civil liberty, and only safe guarantee for the life, liberty, and property of the citizen.

It has failed to establish any public system of education, although possessed of almost boundless resources (the public domain) and although it is an axiom in political science, that unless a people are educated and enlightened, it is idle to expect the con-

tinuance of civil liberty, or the capacity for self-government.

It has suffered the military commandants, stationed among us, to exercise arbitrary acts of oppression and tyranny, thus trampling upon the most sacred rights of the citizens, and rendering the military superior to the civil power.

It has dissolved by force of arms, the state Congress of Coahuila and Texas, and obliged our representatives to fly for their lives from the seat of government, thus depriving us of the fundamental political right of representation.

It has demanded the surrender of a number of our citizens, and ordered military detachments to seize and carry them into the Interior for trial, in contempt of the civil authorities, and in defiance of the laws and constitution.

It has made piratical attacks upon our commerce, by commissioning foreign desperadoes, and authorizing them to seize our vessels, and convey the property of our citizens to far distant ports for confiscation.

It denies us the right of worshipping the Almighty according to the dictates of our own conscience, by the support of a national religion, calculated to promote the temporal interest of its human functionaries, rather than the glory of the true and living God.

It has demanded us to deliver up our arms, which are essential to our defense, the rightful property of freemen, and formidable only to tyrannical governments.

It has invaded our country, both by sea and by land, with intent to lay waste our territory and drive us from our homes; and has now a large mercenary army advancing, to carry on against us a war of extermination.

Notes

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STUDENT ACTIVITY

It has, through its emissaries, incited the merciless savage, with the tomahawk and scalping knife, to massacre the inhabitants of our defenseless frontiers.

It hath been, during the whole time of our connection with it, the contemptible sport and victim of successive military revolutions, and hath continually exhibited every characteristic of a weak, corrupt, and tyrannical government.

These, and other grievances, were patiently borne by the people of Texas, until they reached that point at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue. We then took up arms in defense of the national constitution. We appealed to our Mexican brethren for assistance. Our appeal has been made in vain. Though months have elapsed, no sympathetic response has yet been heard from the Interior.

We are, therefore, forced to the melancholy conclusion that the Mexican people have acquiesced in the

destruction of their liberty, and the substitution therefor of a military government; that they are unfit to be free and incapable of self-government.

The necessity of self-preservation, therefore, now decrees our eternal political separation.

We, therefore, the delegates with plenary powers, of the people of Texas, in solemn convention assembled, appealing to a candid world for the necessities of our condition, do hereby resolve and DECLARE, that our political connection with the Mexican nation has forever ended, and that the people of Texas, do now constitute a FREE, SOVEREIGN, and INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC, and are fully invested with all the rights and attributes which properly belong to independent nations; and, conscious of the rectitude of our intentions, we fearlessly and confidently commit the issue to the decision of the Supreme Arbiter of the destinies of nations.

Notes

RICHARD ELLIS, President
of the Convention and
Delegate from Red River.

Charles B Stewart

Thos Barnett

John S.D. Byrom

Franco Ruiz

J. Antonio Navarro

Jesse B. Badgett

Wm D. Lacey

William Menefee

Jno Fisher

Mathew Caldwell

William Mottley

Lorenzo de Zavala

Stephen H. Everitt

Geo W Smyth

Elijah Stapp

Claiborne West

Wm B Scates

M.B. Menard

A.B. Hardin

J.W. Bunton

Thos J. Gasley

R. M. Coleman

Sterling C. Robertson

Benj Briggs Goodrich

G.W. Barnett

James G. Swisher

Jesse Grimes

S. Rhoads Fisher

John W. Moore

John W. Bower

Saml A Maverick from
Bejar

Sam P. Carson

A. Briscoe

J.B. Woods

Jas Collinsworth

Edwin Waller

Asa Brigham

Geo. C. Childress

Bailey Hardeman

Rob. Potter

Thomas Jefferson Rusk

Chas. S. Taylor

John S. Roberts

Robert Hamilton

Collin McKinney

Albert H Latimer

James Power

Sam Houston

David Thomas

Edwd Conrad

Martin Parmer

Edwin O. LeGrand

Stephen W. Blount

Ja^s Gaines

Wm Clark, Jr

Sydney O. Penington

Wm Carrol Crawford

Jno Turner

Test. H.S. Kimble,
Secretary

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STUDENT ACTIVITY

In Congress, July 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration

of the thirteen united
States of America,

Notes

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 opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

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. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing

invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

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He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, 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 commit on the In-

habitants of these States:

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 Seas to be tried for pretended offences

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary 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:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeav-

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oured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity,

which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. 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.

Notes

Georgia	North Carolina	Massachusetts	Pennsylvania	New York	New Hampshire
Button Gwinnett	William Hooper	John Hancock	Robert Morris	William Floyd	Josiah Bartlett
Lyman Hall	Joseph Hewes	Maryland	Benjamin Rush	Philip Livingston	William Whipple
George Walton	John Penn	Samuel Chase	Benjamin Franklin	Francis Lewis	Matthew Thornton
		William Paca	John Morton	Lewis Morris	Massachusetts
	South Carolina	Thomas Stone	George Clymer	New Jersey	Samuel Adams
	Edward Rutledge	Charles Carroll of Carrollton	James Smith	Richard Stockton	John Adams
	Thomas Heyward Jr.	Virginia	George Taylor	John Witherspoon	Robert Treat Paine
	Thomas Lynch Jr.	George Wythe	James Wilson	Francis Hopkinson	Elbridge Gerry
	Arthur Middleton	Richard Henry Lee	George Ross	John Hart	Rhode Island
		Thomas Jefferson	Delaware	Abraham Clark	Stephen Hopkins
		Benjamin Harrison	Caesar Rodney		William Ellery
		Thomas Nelson Jr.	George Read		Connecticut
		Francis Lightfoot Lee	Thomas McKean		Roger Sherman
		Carter Braxton			Samuel Huntington
					William Williams
					Oliver Wolcott