

The Declaration of Independence, 1776

The Continental Congress appointed a number of American leaders including Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin to draft the Declaration of Independence, which declared the thirteen colonies independent from the British colonization on July 4th, 1776. The Declaration listed the colonists' right to live, to be free, and to seek happiness; which could not be taken by any person. The role of the government was to protect these rights, and in case it failed, people had the right to change it and establish another one. It also clarified why the colonies had to separate from Britain by listing George III's acts of tyranny.

An 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 affect their Safety and Happiness...

...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 the 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 do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do.”