

We Declare

Ideas in the Declaration of Independence

Benchmark: SS.7.C.1.4 Analyze the ideas (natural rights, role of the government) and complaints set forth in the Declaration of Independence.

Clarifications/Objectives:

- Students will explain the concept of natural rights as expressed in the Declaration of Independence.
- Students will identify the natural rights specifically expressed in the Declaration of Independence (life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness).
- Students will analyze the relationship between natural rights and the role of government: 1. People are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; 2. Governments are instituted among men to secure these rights; 3. Governments derive their just powers from the consent of governed; and 4. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government.
- Students will recognize the connection between specific grievances in the Declaration of Independence and natural rights' violations.
- Students will recognize colonial complaints as identified in the Declaration of Independence (imposing taxes without the consent of the people, suspending trial by jury, limiting judicial powers, quartering soldiers, and dissolving legislatures).

Time: One class period

Materials:

- We Declare PowerPoint
- Computer
- Projector
- Handout A: Too Late to Apologize Lyrics
- Handout B: Linking Up - Natural Rights and Role of Government
- Handout C: Complaint Box

Lesson Preparation

- Review all handouts and PowerPoints
- Print and review the PowerPoint in “notes view”. The PowerPoint includes notes to guide the lesson.
- Print Handout A: Linking Up - Natural Rights and Role of Government
- Print Handout B: Complaint Box

Lesson Overview

Watch the segment from The Story of Human Rights. The video will review the topic of natural rights and natural law and the impact of those concepts in the writing of the Declaration.

Using the PowerPoint briefly explain that the Declaration is divided into pieces including the ideas and complaints that the Founders wanted the king to know. The PowerPoint will go on to review natural rights as per John Locke’s Enlightenment idea and the ideas embodied in the Declaration.

Distribute Handout A where students will read a portion of the Declaration and explain it in their own terms. Students will be exploring natural rights and the role of government. Debrief the activity by having students read their responses. Also have students think of a time where they felt like their natural rights (life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness) had been violated and how that made them feel.

Distribute Handout B where students will read and explain complaints from the Declaration of Independence and how the action described was a violation of the right to life, liberty, and/or pursuit of happiness. Using the PowerPoint, debrief and discuss the activity.

Distribute Handout C. Students will watch “Too Late to Apologize: A Declaration” and underline the natural rights and **circle the complaints** expressed in the song. Debrief with the students. To conclude, read from the conclusion of the Declaration provided in the PowerPoint.

Check for Understanding The final slide will include a question from the End of Course Exam Item Specifications book. Have the students independently write down their answer and ask student to explain how they made their decision.

Extension Activity: Divide the class into 6 groups. Using the complaints outlined in the PowerPoint and the “Complaint Box” handout, assign each small group a complaint. Students will create an ad (poster, commercial, etc.) based on the complaint. This extension will link to Benchmark SS.7.C.2.11 – Analyze media and political communications (bias, symbolism, propaganda).

Linking Up

Natural Rights and the Role of Government

Directions: Read each quote and answer the corresponding question.

| Quote | Questions |
|---|--|
| People are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights | What are the “unalienable rights” mentioned in the quote? |
| Explain the quote: | |
| Governments are instituted among men to secure these rights... | What is the role of government? |
| Explain the quote: | |
| Government derive their powers from the consent of the governed... | Who gives the government power? |
| Explain the quote: | |
| Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government. | What are “these ends” that the quote is referring to? What does the consent of the governed allow the people to do? |
| Explain the quote: | |

Complaint Box

Directions: Below are quotes from the complaint section of the Declaration of Independence. **Explain each complaint** and **how it violates** the natural right of life, liberty, and/or pursuit of happiness.

Complaint Box

For imposing taxes without our consent

For depriving us, in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury

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

For quartering large Bodies of Armed troops among us

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with the Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever.

He is...transporting large Armies...to complete the Words of Death, Desolation, and Tyranny...

Directions: Read the lyrics as you listen to the song. Underline the natural rights you find in the song. The song will be played a second time. This time, circle the complaints expressed.

Too Late to Apologize: A Declaration

T.J. and the Revo – Soomo Publishing

Halfway across the globe
And we're standing on new ground
Screaming 'cross the waves
You can't hear a sound
There's no fair trials, no trade, no liberties
No tea
We've colonized America; we won't stand for tyranny,
Oh king

And it's too late to apologize
It's too late
I said it's too late to apologize
It's too late

We've paid your foolish tax, read the acts
And they just won't do
We want to make it clear, we believe this much is true
All men were created with certain
Unalienable rights
Among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit
Of happiness

And it's too late to apologize
It's too late
I said It's too late to apologize
It's too late

It's too late to apologize
It's too late
I said it's too late apologize
It's too late

I said it's too late to apologize, yeah
It's too late
I said it's too late to apologize, yeah

Halfway across the globe
And we're standing on new ground

Directions: Read the lyrics as you listen to the song. Underline the natural rights you find in the song. The song will be played a second time. This time, **circle** the complaints expressed (words have been bolded for the purposes of the teacher handout).

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