

DECLARATIONS OF INDEPENDENCE

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Grade Level: 9-12

Subject: U.S. and World History

Objective: Students will be able to explain three differences and/or similarities between the Declaration of Independence of the United States and the Declaration of Independence of Korea.

Periods needed: Two 45 minute period if both documents are read aloud in class, one if the documents are distributed the day before and students have read them before class.

Ohio American History Standards Met:

3 – Historians develop theses and use evidence to support or refute positions.

5 – The Declaration of Independence reflects an application of Enlightenment ideas to the grievances of British subjects in the American colonies.

Background:

The Enlightenment –

In 1690 the English philosopher John Locke published *Two Treatises of Civil Government*. Locke offered a justification for the Glorious Revolution in which James II was overthrown and replaced by William and Mary in 1688. Locke argued against the divine right of Kings and claimed that government existed because of “the consent of the governed.” He also claimed that God gave all people the right to life, liberty and property. If a government did not protect those rights the people had the right and the duty to overthrow that government and create a government that would protect those rights. Locke’s writings were read by many Colonial American leaders like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson and many of his principles are found in the Declaration of Independence.

Japan and Korea-

Japan became increasingly interested in Korea in the late 1800’s and kept exerting more control over the peninsula throughout the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century. In 1905, Korea became a protectorate of Japan, which gave the Japanese control of Korea’s foreign policy and established and established a Japanese Resident-General in Korea. Japan formally annexed Korea in 1910. The Japanese rule of Korea was extremely harsh and Japan tried to erase and replace Korean culture with that of Japan. However, the spirit of Korean nationalism remained strong and led to a massive march in 1919 in which the Declaration was read in several major cities. Over a million Koreans marched in Seoul and the Japanese forces sent to break up the march killed or injured over 20,000 and sent another 20,000 to jail. In the years that followed the Japanese softened their rule and implemented a Cultural Policy designed to make the culture of Korea more like the culture of Japan.

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Plan of instruction:

1. If students are not familiar with the backgrounds of both situations cover the essential facts in a mini-lecture or discussion.
2. Divide students into pairs or small groups.
3. Pass out copies of Document A (U.S. Declaration of Independence) and Document B (Korean Declaration of Independence.)
4. Have each group or pair answer the questions on the worksheet.
5. When all groups are finished go over the answers as a whole class.

For non-traditional learners, ESL students, slower paced classes:

1. Students draw pictures of, make collages of, or write poems and songs about the grievances listed in the U.S. Declaration of Independence.
2. Students draw pictures of, make collages of, or write poems and songs about the problems in Korea under Japanese rule and how the changes advocated in the Korean Declaration of Independence would fix them.
3. Each group or pair will answer one question about each document.

For gifted and accelerated classes:

1. Students will correlate specific elements of British policies and actions with the grievances contained in the U.S. Declaration of Independence.
2. Students will write a one page essay arguing that the Korean Declaration of Independence and its aftermath was a fulfillment or a betrayal of Wilson's 14 Points.

References:

afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/korea/march_first_declaration.pdf

Murphey, Rhoads. *East Asia: A New History*. Boston: Longman, 2010. Print.

Robinson, Michael E. *Korea's Twentieth-century Odyssey*. Honolulu: U of Hawaii, 2007. Print.

www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/

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DOCUMENT A

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America

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.

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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.

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 harass 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 Inhabitants 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 benefit of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

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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 endeavoured 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 British 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

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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.

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DOCUMENT B

(Korean) Declaration of Independence (March 1, 1919)

We hereby declare that Korea is an independent state and that Koreans are a self – governing people. We proclaim it to the nations of the world in affirmation of the principle of the equality of all nations, and we proclaim it to our posterity, preserving in perpetuity the right of national survival. We make this declaration on the strength of five thousand years of history as an expression of the devotion and loyalty of twenty million people. We claim independence in the interest of the eternal and free development of our people and in accordance with the great movement for world reform based upon the awakening conscience of mankind. This is the clear command of heaven, the course of our times, and a legitimate manifestation of the right of all nations to coexist and live in harmony. Nothing in the world can suppress or block it.

For the first time in several thousand years, we have suffered the agony of alien suppression for a decade, becoming a victim of the policies of aggression and coercion, which are relics from a bygone era. How long have we been deprived of our right to exist? How long has our spiritual development been hampered? How long have the opportunities to contribute our creative vitality to the development of world culture been denied us?

Alas! In order to rectify past grievances, free ourselves from present hardships, eliminate future threats, stimulate and enhance the weakened conscience of our people, eradicate the shame that befell our nation, ensure proper development of human dignity, avoid leaving humiliating legacies to our children, and usher in lasting and complete happiness for our posterity, the most urgent task is to firmly establish national independence. Today when human nature and conscience are placing the forces of justice and humanity on our side, if every one of our twenty million people arms himself for battle, whom could we not defeat and what could we not accomplish?

We do not intend to accuse Japan of infidelity for its violation of various solemn treaty obligations since the Treaty of Amity of 1876. Japan's scholars and officials, indulging in a conqueror's exuberance, have denigrated the accomplishments of our ancestors and treated our civilized people like barbarians. Despite their disregard for the ancient origins of our society and the brilliant spirit of our people, we shall not blame Japan; we must first blame ourselves before finding fault with others. Because of the urgent need for remedies for the problems of today, we cannot afford the time for recriminations over past wrongs.

Our task today is to build up our own strength, not to destroy others. We must chart a new course for ourselves in accord with the solemn dictates of conscience, not malign and reject others for reasons of past enmity or momentary passions. In order to restore natural and just conditions, we must remedy the unnatural and unjust conditions brought about by the leaders of Japan, who are chained to old ideas and old forces and victimized by their obsession with glory.

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From the outset the union of the two countries did not emanate from the wishes of the people, and its outcome has been oppressive coercion, discriminatory injustice, and fabrication of statistical data, thereby deepening the eternally irreconcilable chasm of ill will between the two nations. To correct past mistakes and open a new phase of friendship based upon genuine understanding and sympathy — is this not the easiest way to avoid disaster and invite blessing? The enslavement of twenty million resentful people by force does not contribute to lasting peace in the East. It deepens the fear and suspicion of Japan by the four hundred million Chinese who constitute the main axis for stability in the East, and it will lead to the tragic downfall of all nations in our region. Independence for Korea today shall not only enable Koreans to lead a normal, prosperous life, as is their due; it will also guide Japan to leave its evil path and perform its great task of supporting the cause of the East, liberating China from a gnawing uneasiness and fear and helping the cause of world peace and happiness for mankind, which depends greatly on peace in the East. How can this be considered a trivial issue of mere sentiment?

Behold! A new world is before our eyes. The days of force are gone, and the days of morality are here. The spirit of humanity, nurtured throughout the past century, has begun casting its rays of new civilization upon human history. A new spring has arrived prompting the myriad forms of life to come to life again. The past was a time of freezing ice and snow, stifling the breath of life; the present is a time of mild breezes and warm sunshine, reinvigorating the spirit. Facing the return of the universal cycle, we set forth on the changing tide of the world. Nothing can make us hesitate or fear. We shall safeguard our inherent right to freedom and enjoy a life of prosperity; we shall also make use of our creativity, enabling our national essence to blossom in the vernal warmth.

We have arisen now. Conscience is on our side, and truth guides our way. All of us, men and women, young and old, have firmly left behind the old nest of darkness and gloom and head for joyful resurrection together with the myriad living things. The spirits of thousands of generations of our ancestors protect us; the rising tide of world consciousness shall assist us.

Once started, we shall surely succeed. With this hope we march forward.

Three Open Pledges

1. Our action today represents the demand of our people for justice, humanity, survival, and dignity. It manifests our spirit of freedom and should not engender antforeign feelings.
2. To the last one of us and to the last moment possible, we shall unhesitatingly publicize the views of our people, as is our right.
3. All our actions should scrupulously uphold public order, and our demands and our attitudes must be honorable and upright.

[Translated by Han-Kyo Kim]he

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Questions for Document A

1. What is the purpose the first paragraph?
(It explains why the American colonies are issuing the Declaration of Independence. When one part of a group of people want to separate from the rest of the group it is necessary to tell everyone the reasons for the separation.)
2. Where can the influence of the Enlightenment be seen in the second paragraph?
(Governments exist because of the consent of the government. Everyone is equal and has the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. When a government tries to take away those rights the people have the right to abolish that government and replace it with a government that will protect those rights.)
3. What is the proof that people have the rights of life, liberty and property?
(It is self-evident. It is so obvious that it needs no other proof.)
4. The majority of the document is blaming who for the problems of the colonies?
(The King of England, George III.)
5. What was the response of the British Parliament and people to the complaints and concerns of the colonies?
(They have ignored the colonists and done nothing to correct the situation.)

Questions for Document B

1. The document states that Korea has been in existence for how long?
(5,000 years)
2. On what grounds do the Koreans claim they should be independent?
(The spirit of world reform)
3. What has been the major source of the problems of the Koreans the previous decade?
(Occupation and Oppression from a foreign power.)
4. What does the document say about the Japanese?
(They caused the unnatural conditions that caused problems in the Korean peninsula but they will not be blamed for all those problems.)
5. How does Japanese control over Korea cause problems in other areas of East Asia.
(The Chinese see the control as a reason not to trust Japan.)

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Questions for Comparison

1. Why is the main difference between the justification for independence in the two documents.
(The American declaration is based upon Enlightenment ideas from the recent past while the Korean declaration claims there is a morality or spirit of reform in the present.)
2. What would account for the difference?
(The American declaration is written almost 150 years before the Korean declaration and independence for separate ethnic groups is accepted. Also, U.S. President Wilson's 14 Points includes national self-determination.)
3. Which document is concerned with assigning blame?
(The American declaration)
4. Why would assigning blame be important?
(This was the first time a colony was trying to break away from the mother country)
5. Which declaration seeks the help of God?
(The American declaration)
6. How do we know that the Koreans rule out armed rebellion in gaining independence?
(The Korean declaration states "All our actions should scrupulously uphold public order." The signers of the American declaration pledge their lives to securing independence.)
7. What other differences between the documents can you identify?
8. What other similarities between the documents can you identify?