

# Celebrate Freedom



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....”



## Declaration of Independence

Thomas Jefferson and other Founding Fathers wrote the Declaration of Independence in 1776. By issuing this document, some of England’s colonies in North America announced to the world that they were separating from England and forming a new, independent nation. Many ideas in the Declaration were inspired by English philosopher John Locke. He believed that all people were born with certain natural rights. As you study about other parts of the world this year, you will have a chance to see how the ideas of the Declaration have affected people in other places.

Read this opening section of the Declaration of Independence aloud. As you read, think about the ideas it expresses.

**Identify Central Ideas** What point is Jefferson making about the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?

**Make Inferences** Based on this passage, what is a “just,” or fair, government?

**Apply Information** How could the ideas expressed in this section of the Declaration be used to justify a political revolution?

**endowed**, v. given; provided

**unalienable**, adj., not to be taken away

**deriving**, v., getting from a source

**consent**, n., agreement

## Connect to World Events

The Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution inspired people around the world. In 1789, the French Revolution began. French revolutionaries issued the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.

“Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good.”

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.”

After a slave revolt, the French colony of Haiti became the second independent nation in the Americas. Other Latin American nations soon followed. Haitian leaders issued their own Declaration of Independence in 1804.

“We must, with one last act of national authority, forever assure the empire of liberty in the country of our birth; we must take any hope of re-enslaving us away from the inhuman government that for so long kept us in the most humiliating torpor. In the end we must live independent or die.”

Liberia, on the west coast of Africa, was founded as a colony for freed American slaves. In 1847, Liberia also issued a Declaration of Independence.

“We recognize in all men certain inalienable rights; among these are life, liberty, and the right to acquire, possess, enjoy, and defend property. By the practice and consent of men in all ages, some system or form of government is proved to be necessary to exercise, enjoy, and secure their rights....”

**Compare and Contrast** Identify at least three similarities between these documents and the Declaration of Independence. Why do you think the American Revolution and the Declaration had an impact around the world?



>> Toussaint L'Ouverture, leader of the rebellion that led to Haiti's independence