

# DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



AMERICAN  
BATTLEFIELD  
TRUST

x UNTOLD

*How do you think the ideas of equality expressed within the Declaration of Independence affect you today?*

## SUMMARY:

The Declaration of Independence conceived the ideals of natural rights and the principles of self-government to the world audience, in order to begin to separate entirely from Great Britain.

## KEY QUESTION:

How do you think the ideas of equality expressed in the Declaration of Independence affect you today?

## PERIOD:

Development of U.S. Constitutional Democracy (1650- 1783)

## THEMES:

War of Independence, Founding Fathers

## KEY VOCABULARY:

Independence, freedom, liberties, compromise, Anti-Federalist, Democracy, Constitution, declaration



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

### Source

[Declaration of Independence](#)

### Article

[Franklin's Contributions to the American Revolution as a Diplomat in France](#)

# DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



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*How do you think the ideas of equality expressed in the Declaration of Independence affect you today?*

## DISCUSSION SPARKS:

- Did you know? The thunderstorm that raged throughout John Adams' entire speech ultimately convinced wary delegates to vote in favor of the Declaration of Independence the following day.
- On June 7, 1776, Virginia delegate Richard Henry Lee declared, "That these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States", it was the first time this idea was formally presented before Congress. In response, a committee was formed to put these sentiments into action.
- Among the committee were John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson, the latter encouraged to author it because of his previous, political writings on natural rights.
- Jefferson would write, "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; all men are created equal; the purpose of government is to protect rights, and that government authority comes from citizens." These sentiments were advocated in other, emerging local constitutions; thereby presenting the founding creeds of the United States to the world.

## ACTIVITY: TWEET IT!

*In this activity, students will consolidate the motives and reasons behind the United Colonies' plea for independence, by putting Jefferson's words into modern context.*

## STEPS

1. Introduce to students what Jefferson wrote in his plea for independence to the international community: "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; all men are created equal; the purpose of government is to protect rights, and that government authority comes from citizens."
2. Read it together as a whole class. Check for understanding and highlight the keywords (e.g. life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, equal, rights, citizens). Discuss with students how this would translate into a tweet.
3. Working in pairs, students create a tweet (under 280 words) imagining it coming from Thomas Jefferson's Twitter account. Compare and contrast different interpretations and evaluate how powerful each tweet is.

*\*This is just one example activity you can use in class. Go to our website's resource page to find other activity ideas.*

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE RESOURCES](#)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Benjamin Franklin is alleged to have said, "We must, indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately," upon the passing of the Declaration of Independence. What could he have meant?
- Can you think of how the Declaration of Independence affects you today?

# TWEET IT! (EASY)

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

**Practice Tweet** (no character limit)

**Real Tweet** (max. 280 characters / 40-70 words)

What's happening?



# TWEET IT! (HARD)

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

**Long Tweet** (max. 280 characters / 40-70 words)

What's happening?



**Short Tweet** (max. 140 characters / 20-35 words)

What's happening?



# DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



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The Continental Congress

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America's Two-Party System

Wartime Elections

# CONTINENTAL CONGRESS



AMERICAN  
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TRUST



*How does the spirit of compromise the Continental Congress embodied live on in government today?*

## SUMMARY:

As the American Revolution unfolded, the colonies sent delegates to meet as a national body of legislators, known as the Continental Congress.

## KEY QUESTION:

How does the spirit of compromise the Continental Congress embodied live on in government today?

## PERIOD:

Development of U.S. Constitutional Democracy (1650- 1783)

## THEMES:

War of Independence, Founding Fathers

## KEY VOCABULARY:

Continental Congress, ruling body, delegates, Intolerable Acts, petition, Articles of Confederation, federal system



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

### Primary Source

[Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress](#)

### Articles

[Continental Congress \(ABT\)](#)

[Continental Congress \(History Channel\)](#)

### Biography

[George Washington](#)

# CONTINENTAL CONGRESS



How does the spirit of compromise the Continental Congress embodied live on in government today?

## DISCUSSION SPARKS:

- Did you know? Despite popular belief, many signatures on the Declaration of Independence were added after July 4, 1776, as they were either not present or elected when the document was ratified.
- In response to the Boston Tea Party and the British government imposing the Intolerable Acts; shutting down the port of Boston. The First Continental Congress met in September 1774 to petition Parliament. Their efforts at finding a compromise failed.
- Each colony selected a handful of delegates to represent them. These men were often lawyers or members of colonial assemblies while others were wealthy citizens of influence.
- The Second Continental Congress met in May 1775; immediately following the events at Lexington and Concord.

## ACTIVITY: VIDEO NOTEPAD

*In this activity, students develop their understanding of the Continental Congress by finding the answers to the guiding question.*

## STEPS

1. Before watching the video, present on the board the guiding question: How did the Continental Congress ensure American Independence?  
Brainstorm some ideas together. Students should then write it down on their Video Notepad.
2. Watch the video for the first time and students have to grasp the main idea, then write these down onto the Video Notepad.
3. Watch for the second time, students note down two supporting details to the main idea(s).
4. Students then share their notes in pairs or small groups, then decide together one or two questions to extend their learning about the Continental Congress or American Independence.

*\*This is just one example activity you can use in class. Go to our website's resource page to find other activity ideas.*

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE RESOURCES](#)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Were the Founders correct to include mechanisms in the Legislative Branch that creates gridlock? Does this encourage division, compromise, or both? Why?
- Would a Continental Congress work today, where there is not one president but a collective of representatives? Why or why not?

# VIDEO NOTEPAD

Guiding question(s):

Main ideas(s):

Supporting detail 1:

Supporting detail 2:

Question 1:

Question 2:

A connection I made:

# CONTINENTAL CONGRESS



*How does the spirit of compromise the Continental Congress embodied live on in government today?*

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# ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION



*How did the Articles of Confederation differ from the Constitution?*

## SUMMARY:

The Articles of Confederation was the first, binding doctrine creating a loose system of government for the United States of America.

## KEY QUESTION:

How did the Articles of Confederation differ from the Constitution?

## PERIOD:

Development of U.S. Constitutional Democracy (1650- 1783)

## THEMES:

War of Independence, Founding Fathers

## KEY VOCABULARY:

Separation of powers, taxation, federal system, Constitution, autonomy, Republic, judicial system, Congress



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

### Source

[Articles of Confederation](#) (US History)

### Article

[Articles of Confederation](#) (ABT).

# ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION



How did the Articles of Confederation differ from the Constitution?

## DISCUSSION SPARKS:

- Did you know? During the 1770s and 1780s, the United States is usually referred to in the plural, indicating an equal collaboration of independent states forming a common Union. In fact, the plural United States would continue until the 1860s when President Abraham Lincoln sought to redefine the country as indivisible. This singularity continues today.
- The Articles of Confederation were drafted in 1777 and finally adopted in 1781, with the Confederation Congress assuming the legislative duties of the country.
- The document created the first system of government for the new United States. It gave each state a single vote on legislation that affected the 'national' body.

## ACTIVITY: PMI

*In this activity, students will evaluate the relevance and significance of the Articles of Confederation in binding a loose system of government.*

## STEPS

1. Before watching, explain to students to look out for a positive (for P), a minus (for M), and an interesting detail (for I) about the Articles of Confederation.
2. Consider watching the video twice if some students are not able to make notes for all three sections.
3. Extend the discussion with students on why the Articles of Confederation was limited (e.g. no separation of power, no president) and eventually paving the way for the Constitution.

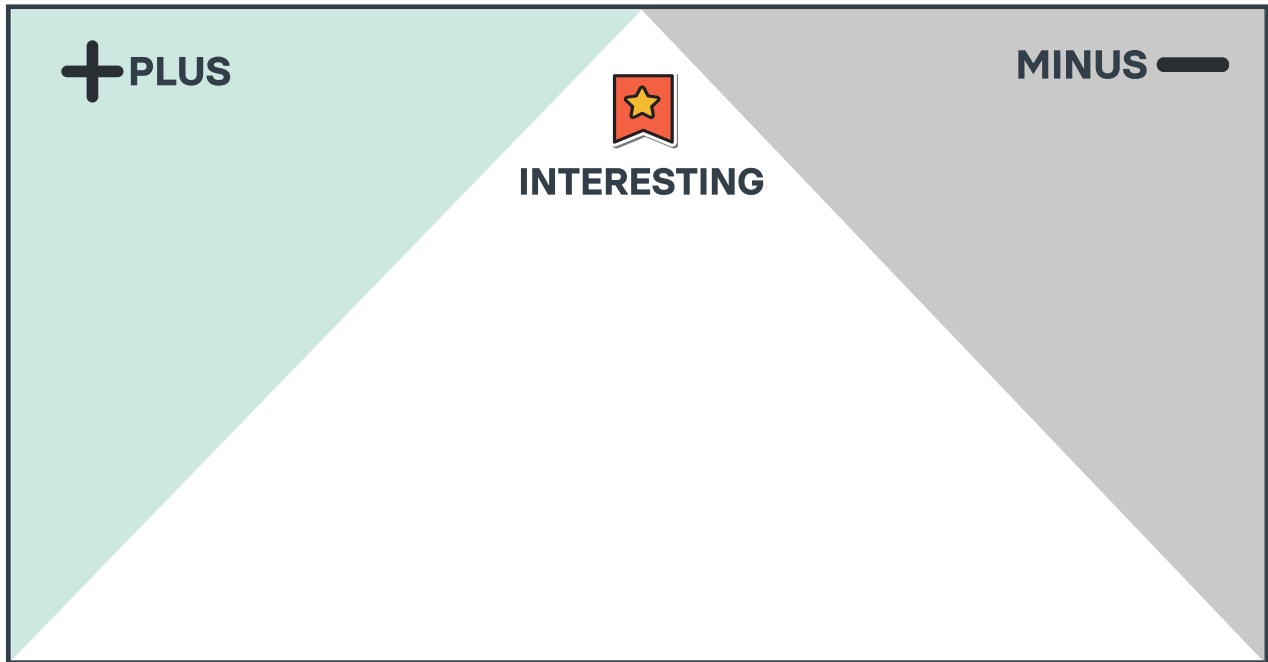
*\*This is just one example activity you can use in class. Go to our website's resource page to find other activity ideas.*

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE RESOURCES](#)

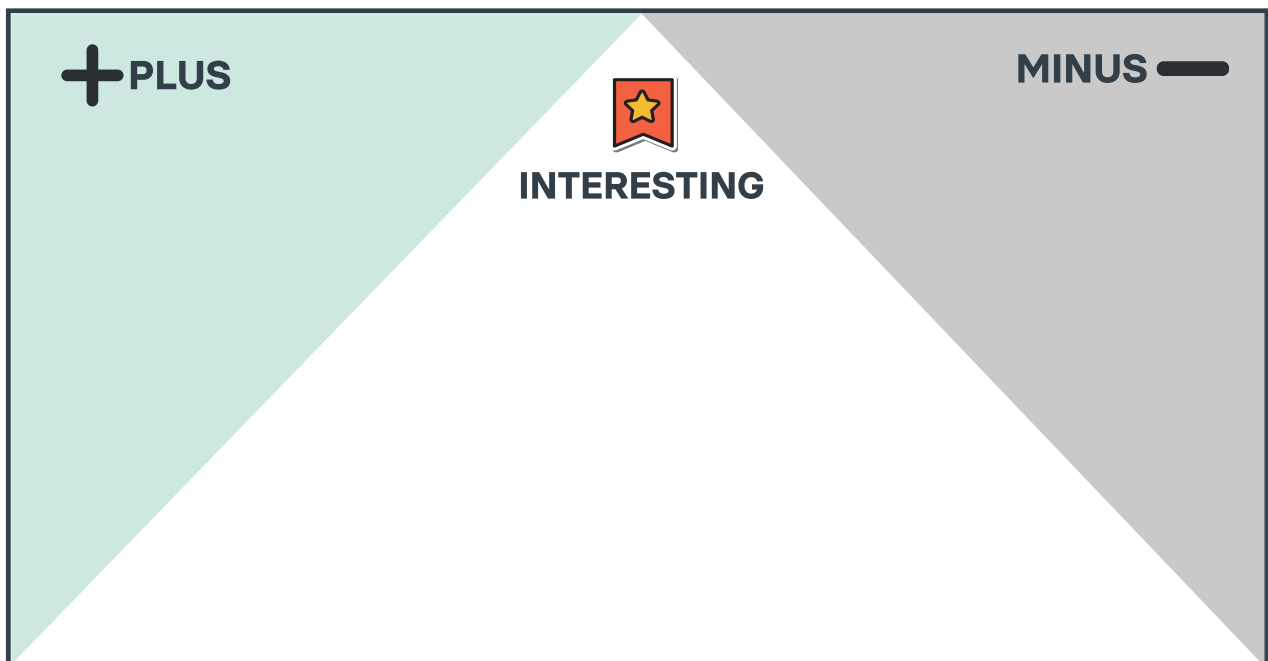
## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why were the Articles of Confederation considered a failure?
- Were there any benefits to how it structured powers among the states?
- How are we doing today? Does our existing Constitution satisfactorily answer the issues that plagued the Articles of Confederation? Are there new issues to be considered?

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_



Topic: \_\_\_\_\_



# ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

How did the Articles of Confederation differ from the Constitution?



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# AMERICA'S TWO-PARTY SYSTEM



AMERICAN  
BATTLEFIELD  
TRUST

UN TOLD

Do you agree or disagree with America's commitment to a two-party system?

## SUMMARY:

The emergence of political parties after the American Revolution created new challenges for suppressing power and corruption in the American government.

## KEY QUESTION:

Do you agree or disagree with America's commitment to a two-party system?

## PERIOD:

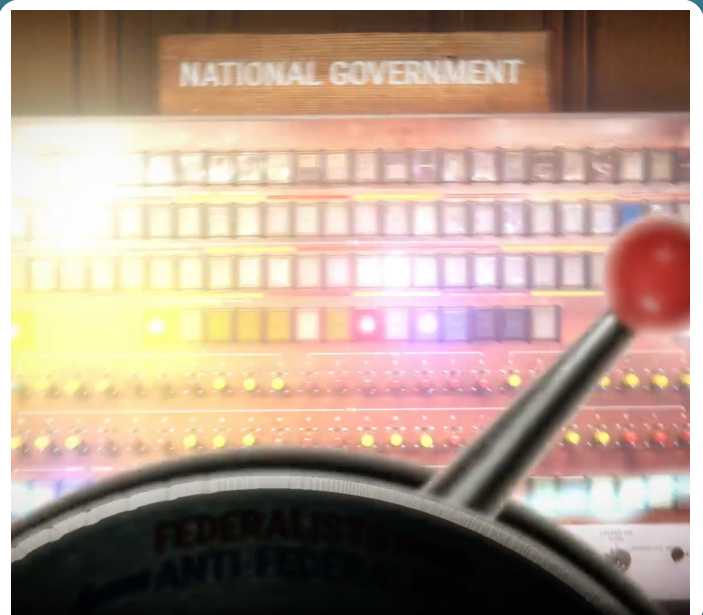
Development of U.S. Constitutional Democracy (1650- 1783)

## THEMES:

War of Independence, Founding Fathers

## KEY VOCABULARY:

Constitutional Convention, two-party system, political parties, Federalist, National government, Democratic-Republican Party, secession



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

### Source

[Political Parties \(Origins, 1790s\)](#)

[Political Parties \(US History\)](#)

[Two Parties Emerge \(US History\)](#)

[History of American Political Parties](#)

### Article

[Antifederalists and the Birth of American Party Politics](#)

[Mapping Early American Elections](#)

### Timeline

[Political Party timeline: 1836-1864](#)

# AMERICA'S TWO-PARTY SYSTEM



AMERICAN  
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Do you agree or disagree with America's commitment to a two-party system?

## DISCUSSION SPARKS:

- Did you know? James Madison; before becoming our 4th President, was known for drafting much of the Constitution. He was a staunch Federalist during ratification. However, he quickly became an Anti-Federalist in the 1790s because he feared the Constitution would be used to enrich Northern merchants.
- The root of the political divide in American politics largely stems from the mistrust of centralized power. This can be understood by studying the many grievances colonial assemblies had with Parliament over taxation.
- As the American Revolution unfolded, mistrust between local governments at the state level clashed with those who represented on the national level within Congress.
- The Constitution was a compromise between these divisions, entrusting certain powers to both state and federal governments.

## ACTIVITY: COMPASS CHECK

*In this activity, students will begin developing an understanding of why specific parties have dominated American politics.*

## STEPS

1. Before watching the video, show the title "America's Two-Party System" or the video thumbnail. Brainstorm as a class their opinion and why they think there are only two parties. Discuss the pros and cons, any controversial opinions, and what else they might want to find out.
2. Students can work individually or in pairs to complete the Compass Check graphic organizer by drawing on the class discussion.
3. After watching, students elaborate on their notes on the Compass Check and review as a class any additional information they learned.

*\*This is just one example activity you can use in class. Go to our website's resource page to find other activity ideas.*

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE RESOURCES](#)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Consider the history. Has the United States benefited from having two, political parties? Why or why not?
- How does a two-party system still manage to take into consideration the diverse viewpoints of all Americans? What are its limitations?
- What would a three or four-party system look like? Could it benefit American democracy?

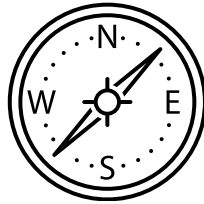
# COMPASS CHECK

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

How did this video make you feel?

**Need to Know**

**Worrying**



**Exciting**

What's the downside?

What's the upside?

**Stance**

What are the different options?

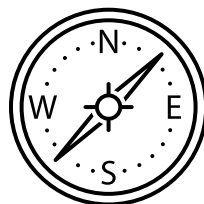
# COMPASS CHECK

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# AMERICA'S TWO-PARTY SYSTEM



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Wartime Elections



# WARTIME ELECTIONS



*In what circumstances could you see a Presidential election being put on hold?*

## SUMMARY:

Presidents have responded differently to international crises, at times receiving mixed responses by American voters.

## KEY QUESTION:

How did presidential elections continue through times of war and international crises?

## PERIOD:

Development of U.S. Constitutional Democracy (1650- 1783)

## THEMES:

War of Independence, Founding Fathers

## KEY VOCABULARY:

Presidential elections, reelection, mandate, term, electorate



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

### Source

US [Presidential election of 1812](#) (Britannica).

US [Presidential election of 1916](#) (Britannica).

### Article

[FDR's third-term election and the 22nd amendment](#)

[James Madison Defeats DeWitt Clinton](#)

[The Election of 1864](#)

[The Most Important Presidential Election in History.](#)

# WARTIME ELECTIONS



*In what circumstances could you see a Presidential election being put on hold?*

## DISCUSSION SPARKS:

- Did you know? When is the most recent presidential election during times of war? President George W. Bush was reelected in 2004 at the height of the American wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This highlights a trend by voters keeping sitting presidents in power during times of war.
- The first peaceful transfer of power between rival, political parties occurred during the election of 1800. This coincided with the ongoing, tensions overseas between France and Great Britain that threatened the United States' neutrality for much of the 1790s. President Jefferson would purchase Louisiana from Napoleon Bonaparte for 15 million dollars in 1803.
- James Madison was elected for a second term in 1812 as a second war with Britain erupted. Two years later, Madison would fail to stop British troops from burning Washington, DC.

## ACTIVITY: VIDEO STORYBOARD

*In this activity, students will consider the magnitude of an event that could force a presidential election to be put on hold, by creating an imaginary scenario represented in the form of a storyboard.*

## STEPS

1. As a whole class, discuss the implications of war on presidential elections as presented in the video and why it was so important to ensure these elections took place despite unforeseen circumstances.
2. In pairs or small groups, students should brainstorm ideas of other, unforeseen scenarios that could potentially derail a presidential election and share them with the whole class.
3. Working individually, students choose one of the scenarios and create a storyboard for a hypothetical, future event. Emphasize to students that the magnitude of the scenario has to be greater than war, asking them to justify why their scenario would put the election on hold with no other alternative.

*\*This is just one example activity you can use in class. Go to our website's resource page to find other activity ideas.*

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE RESOURCES](#)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why do you think it was important for news of Sherman's victory in Atlanta to reach Northern voters in the election of 1864?
- What would have happened if elections did not take place during war times?
- What are the key differences between presidential elections in war times and times of peace?
- What risks were mitigated during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure its presidential election stayed on track?

# STORYBOARD TEMPLATE



Topic:

Introduction


Problem


Rising Action


Climax


Falling Action


Resolution


# WARTIME ELECTIONS



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