

Unfinished Revolutions

The Holt Broadside Declaration of Independence

OVERVIEW

Theme Introduction

In this unit, we're exploring "Unfinished Revolutions." What do America's founding documents have to do with our lives today? How do they change? How and when have groups expanded liberty and equality for all? Let's explore these questions and more by investigating an early printing of the Declaration of Independence.

Video

[Holt Broadside Declaration of Independence](#) with Anne Kling, Senior History Curator and Technology Manager at Cincinnati Museum Center

Guiding Questions

As students listen to the podcast, have them consider the following questions:

- What was the purpose of the Declaration of Independence?
- Who helped create, adopt, sign and distribute the Declaration?
- According to the Declaration, what rights do all people deserve? Have these rights existed for all Americans throughout our nation's history?

Key Vocabulary

- **Broadside:** Single-sheet document printed on only one side.
- **Abstain:** To refrain from voting, saying neither "yes" or "no."
- **Resolution:** A formal written opinion or decision of a legislature.
- **Engrossed:** Officially handwritten, as on a final document.

ACTIVITIES

Create Your Own Broadside

Recommended for grades 3-6

In the 1700s, documents like the Holt Broadside featured in the video were printed on hand-operated presses. Printers arranged letters one by one, pointing them backward and putting them in reverse order. Then, printers covered the letters with ink and pressed them onto paper. In this activity, students will explore the historical printing process by creating their own broadsides.

- Have students choose a short excerpt from the Declaration of Independence (e.g. "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness").
- Give students letter stickers, label sheets or construction paper and glue. If using stickers, have students select each letter that forms their phrase. If using construction paper or label sheets, have students write and cut out each letter of their phrase.
- Once students have selected or cut each letter, have them "set" their type on a desk or table by arranging the letters to form their selected phrase. Important: To mimic the colonial printing process, they must place the letters facing backwards and in reverse order.
- Once they set their type, students can put glue on the top of their letters if using construction paper or remove the backing if using label sheets; the sticky surface facing up represents the ink in the printing process.
- Students can "print" their message onto their broadside by pressing a sheet of paper firmly atop the letters, so that they stick to that paper and will be displayed in the correct direction to read.

Optional extension: Have students type and print the same phrase on a computer. Then, compare the effort, speed, neatness and accuracy of colonial printing versus modern technology.

Unfinished Revolutions

The Holt Broadside Declaration of Independence



Class Declaration

Recommended for grades 3-8

The Declaration of Independence declared the colonies' independence from Great Britain. Colonies listed their grievances and named the rights of citizens and responsibilities of the government. This activity helps students connect with the purpose and themes of the Declaration of Independence by composing a classroom version.

- Review the format and main ideas of the Declaration of Independence. As a group, brainstorm a list of grievances the class might have (e.g. long lunch lines, cafeteria food or indoor recess) and a list of ideas about what rights all students should have.
- Using the original Declaration as a model and the lists of student ideas for content, work with the students to draft a "Classroom Declaration of Independence," including: a) a statement of their rights, b) a list of "grievances" and c) a bold conclusion declaring their independence.
- Once students have written the document, create a large broadside version, inviting all students to sign their names at the bottom as the Founders of our nation did. Display it in the classroom if desired.

Note: For older grades, the students may work in groups or individually to complete their own Declaration. Younger groups could compose the document together as a class.

Broadside Compare and Contrast

Recommended for grades 5-12

As discussed in the video, there were multiple printings of the Declaration of Independence at different stages of its adoption and signing. In this activity, students will become historians and practice observation and critical thinking skills by examining, comparing and contrasting images of two printings: the Holt Broadside and the Dunlap Broadside.

Provide students with copies of the two broadsides from the files below or project images of each for the students to examine. Ask students to make a list of similarities and differences and to note anything that stands out. Prompt them with these questions:

- Look at the date that each document was created. Which one was drafted first?
- Whose names appear on each document? Who were they?
- What differences in fonts, spelling, layout and overall design do you notice? Is one easier to read? Why might printers have made different choices in these aspects?
- Is the wording the same on each document? If not, why did the text change?

Review students' responses as a class. You could mention:

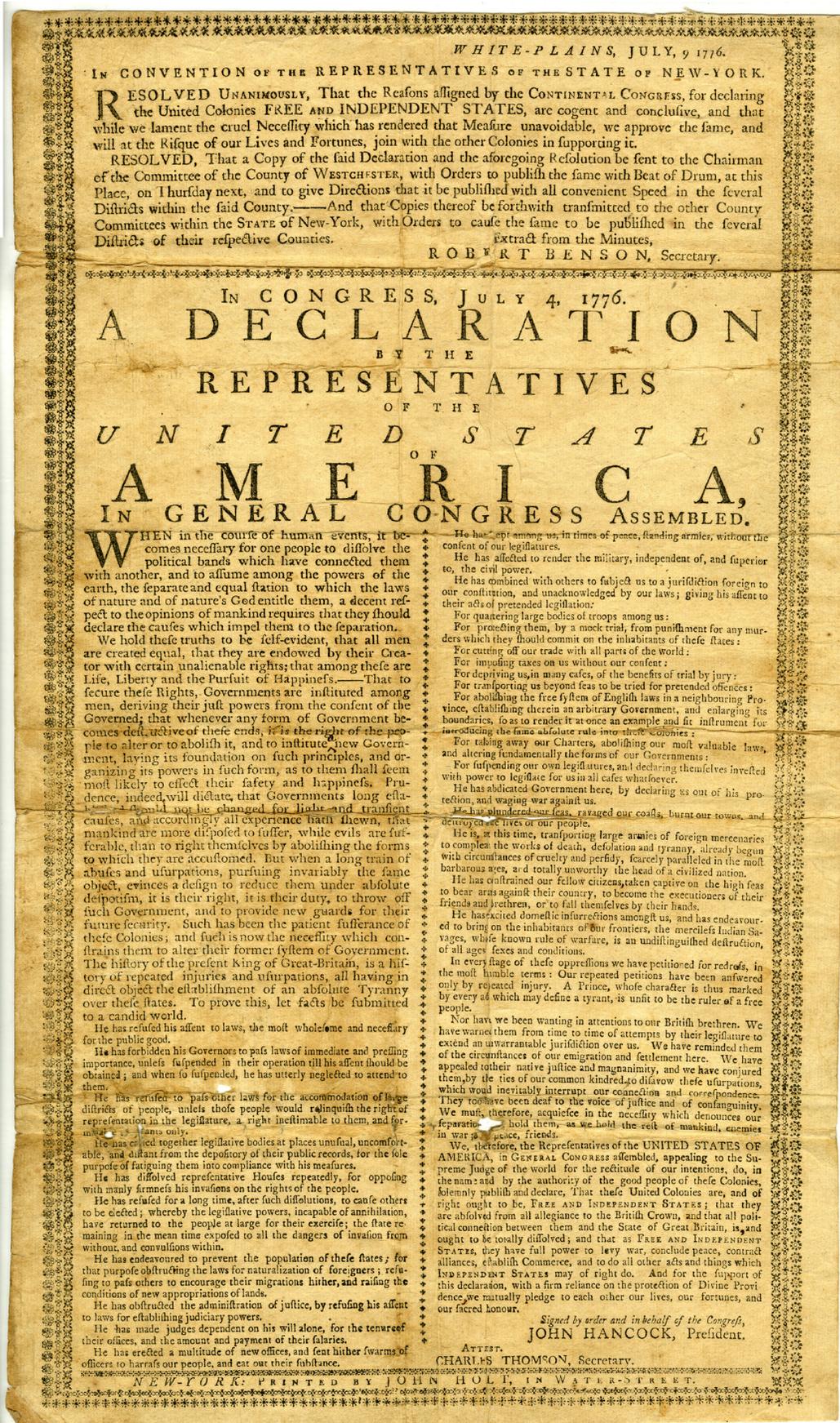
- The Declaration had not yet been signed by all delegates at the time of either of these printings.
- The Holt Broadside was created 5 days later than the Dunlap Broadside after the New York Provincial Congress approved it, so it includes their resolution at the top.
- The bottom of each broadside displays the name of the printer and location of its printing.

Images:

- Holt Broadside (Page 3): <https://www.cincymuseum.org/2019/03/14/the-holt-broadside-printing-of-the-declaration-of-independence/>
- Dunlap Broadside (Page 4): <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/301682>

Unfinished Revolutions

The Holt Broadside Declaration of Independence



Unfinished Revolutions

The Holt Broadside Declaration of Independence



IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

A DECLARATION

BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
IN GENERAL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

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.

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 Benefits of Trial by Jury;

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended Offences;

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 complete the Works of Death, Desolation, and Tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and 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 Attention 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 Connect 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.

Signed by ORDER and in BEHALF of the CONGRESS,

JOHN HANCOCK, PRESIDENT.

ATTEST.
CHARLES THOMSON, SECRETARY.

PHILADELPHIA: PRINTED BY JOHN DUNLAP.

Unfinished Revolutions

The Holt Broadside Declaration of Independence



Exploring the Meaning of the Declaration of Independence

Recommended for grades 6-12

The 18th-century English language of the Declaration of Independence can be challenging. In this activity, students will explore the purpose and themes of the Declaration by analyzing excerpts and translating them into modern, student-friendly language.

- After viewing the video, review the historical context of the Declaration of Independence.
- Divide students into groups and provide each group with one of the excerpts below. Invite students to read, research and discuss the excerpt to understand its meaning.
- Then, have students rewrite the excerpt in their own words, making the meaning clear and accessible to their classmates. Allow each group to present their excerpt and explain its meaning to the class.
- After all groups have shared, reflect and discuss as a group. Possible discussion questions include: What do these phrases indicate about the writers' beliefs about what citizens should expect from their government? In what ways are the ideas in these excerpts still relevant or in development today?
- If desired, students can combine their translated excerpts to create a modern version of the Declaration.

Optional extension: You may choose to repeat this activity with the list of grievances from the Declaration of Independence.

Excerpts:

1. "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."
2. "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."
3. "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."
4. "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."
5. "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."
6. "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 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."

Unfinished Revolutions

The Holt Broadside Declaration of Independence



STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

- **OH History 3.2:** Primary and secondary sources can be used to show change over time.
- **OH History 3.11:** Laws are rules which apply to all people in a community and describe ways people are expected to behave. Laws promote order and security, provide public services and protect the rights of individuals in the local community.
- **OH History 3.12:** Governments have authority to make and enforce laws.
- **OH History 4.2:** Primary and secondary sources can be used to create historical narratives.
- **OH History 4.4:** The 13 colonies came together around a common cause of liberty and justice, uniting to fight for independence during the American Revolution and to form a new nation.
- **OH History 8.5:** The ideas of the Enlightenment and dissatisfaction with colonial rule led English colonists to write the Declaration of Independence and launch the American Revolution.
- **OH History 8.6:** Key events and significant figures in American history influenced the course and outcome of the American Revolution.
- **OH American History HS.4:** The Declaration of Independence elaborates on the rights and role of the people in building the foundations of the American nation through the principles of unalienable rights and consent of the people.
- **KY 3.I.U.E.2:** Explain the relationship between two or more sources on the same theme or topic.
- **KY 5.H.CH.1:** Describe the impact of fundamental documents on the development of the United States.
- **KY 8.C.CP.2:** Explain the origins, functions and structure of government, with reference to the Declaration of Independence and their impacts on citizens.
- **KY 8.H.CH.6:** Analyze the impact of fundamental documents and speeches on the development of the United States from 1600-1877 that shall include but are not limited to: the Declaration of Independence.