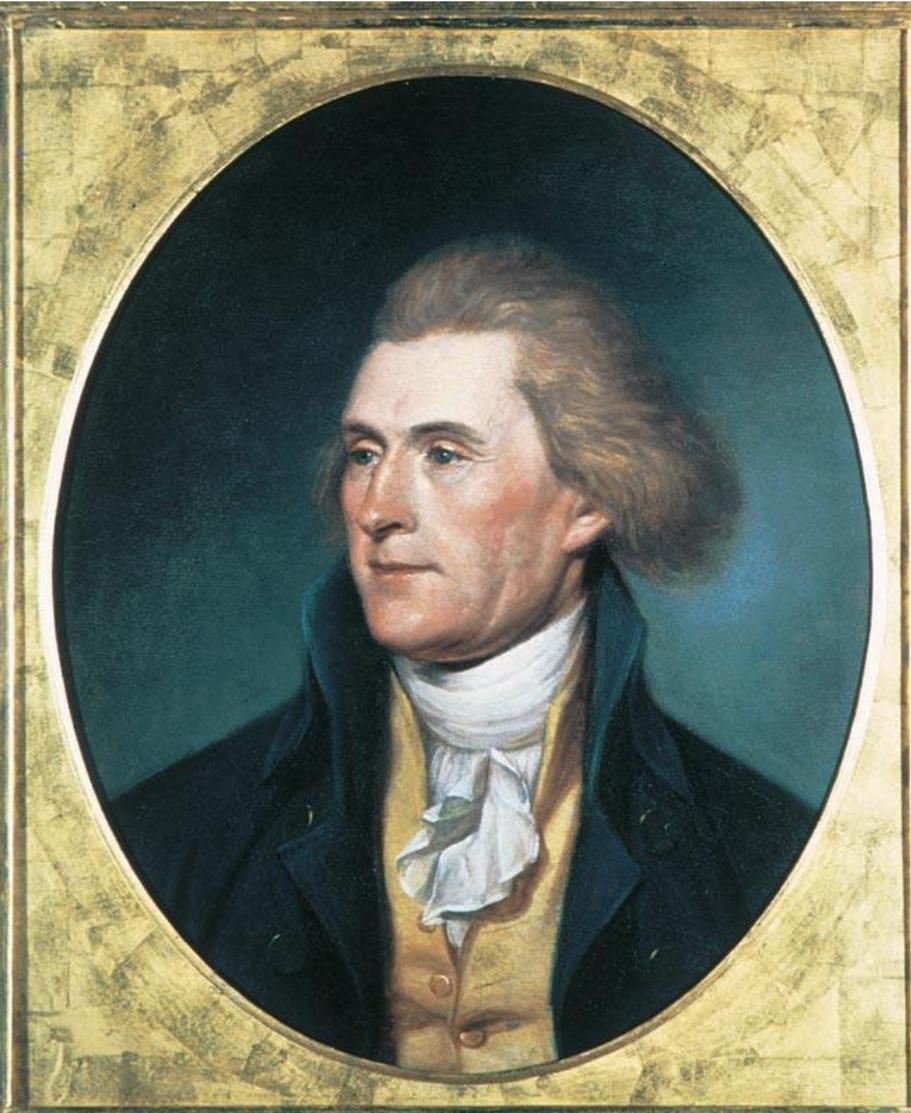


The Declaration of Independence



Historical Context

Thomas Jefferson



About The Author

- **Born on April 13, 1743 in Virginia to a wealthy family.**
- **He was very well educated. Attended The College of William & Mary.**
- **Served in the Virginia House of Burgesses.**
- **Eloquent correspondent, but not good public speaker**
- **Known as the "silent member" of the Congress**
- **Was unanimously chosen by the Committee of Five to prepare a draft of the Declaration alone.**

Major Events of The Time

- Common Sense is published
- North Carolina produces the Halifax Resolves making it the first British colony to officially authorize its delegates to vote for independence.
- Richard Henry Lee of Virginia proposes a resolution calling for a Declaration of Independence.
- Virginia Declaration of Rights by George Mason is adopted by the Virginia Convention of Delegates.
- The Delaware General Assembly votes to suspend government under the British Crown

Intended Audience

- The audience were those wanting independence from England.
- International audience



Jefferson's Viewpoint on the Major Issues of His Time

- He believed in the separation of church and state.
- He believed that the colonies had the right to overthrow a tyrannical government.



Main Points of the Declaration of Independence

- **All men are created equal.**

“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.

- **Men are given by God certain unalienable rights.**

“They are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.”

- **We have the natural right by God to declare our independence from England.**

“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...

Main Points of the Declaration of Independence

- **Governments derive their authority from the consent of the people.**

“Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

- **When a government abuses it's power, the people have the right to overthrow it.**

“That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it...”

- **The colonies tried repeatedly to compromise with King George, but has been a tyrant.**

“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.

Historical Significance

- The American Colonies finally declared their independence from England
- It was the first step in the creation of a new nation.

