Name _____

PRIMARY SOURCE

On July 4, 1776, Congress approved the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson wrote the first draft, and Congress made changes. It has three main parts: a statement of ideas about rights and government, a list of 27 complaints (grievances) against King George III, and the declaration that the colonies are free. Here are the opening, the ideas, some grievances and the ending.

The Declaration of Independence

	The Declaration (exact words)	In plain English
The opening	*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.*	Sometimes one people has to break its ties with another and become an equal, separate country, as nature allows. When that happens, they should respect the rest of the world enough to explain why.
The big ideas	*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 ...*	We believe these things are plainly true: all people are created equal, and they are born with rights that cannot be taken away, including life, liberty and the chance to seek happiness. People create governments to protect these rights, and a government gets its power from the agreement of the people. When a government works against these rights, the people may change it or get rid of it and set up a new one.
Grievances: soldiers		
	He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures. ... 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:	The king has kept armies here in peacetime without our assemblies' agreement. Parliament has made us house large numbers of soldiers, and it has protected soldiers from punishment with fake trials, even if they kill people here.
Grievances: trade, taxes, juries		
	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:	Parliament has cut off our trade with the rest of the world, taxed us without our agreement, and often taken away our right to a trial by jury.
Grievances: our own lawmakers		
	For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.	Parliament has shut down our own lawmaking assemblies and said it has the power to make laws for us about everything.
The ending	*... 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 ...*	These united colonies are now, and have the right to be, free and independent states. They no longer owe any loyalty to the king of Britain.

The Declaration of Independence, adopted by the Second Continental Congress, July 4, 1776. Text from the National Archives transcription, "Declaration of Independence: A Transcription" (https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript). Public domain. Exact words, spelling and capital letters; ... marks words left out.