

## Stark County Teaching American History Grant

Stark County Educational Service Center  
2100 38th Street NW  
Canton, Ohio 44709



### *Working Towards Independence*

for the growing tension between the colonists and Great Britain  
from 1763-1775

#### **Grade Level 4**

Created by Stacey Bell  
Louisville Elementary

**Duration** 4-5 days, 40 min. classes

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#### **Overview**

In this lesson, students learn about the growing tensions between the colonists and Great Britain from 1763-1775. Students experience the injustice of “taxation without representation” when they are told that they need to pay for worksheets. Students then listen to the story “King George’s Head was Made of Lead” by F.N. Monjo to help better understand why there is tension between the colonists and Great Britain. Students will then write a letter to King George III as a colonist explaining why they believe his governing is unjust. Students will then watch “Brain Pop-Causes of the American Revolution” from the Internet. They will then take the review quiz using the Classroom Response System. After learning about the key events that led to the Declaration of Independence, they will then examine the actual document of the Declaration of Independence and will work together to create an illustrated version of the Declaration of Independence. A classroom computer and projector or computers for each student are necessary for this lesson.

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## **Ohio Academic Content Standards (Current)**

**Standard:** History

**Benchmark B:** Describe the cultural patterns that are evident in North America today as a result of exploration, colonization and conflict.

**Indicator 5:** Explain how the United States became independent from Great Britain.

**Standard:** Social Studies Skills and Methods

**Benchmark B:** Obtain Information from a variety of primary and secondary sources using the component parts of the source.

**Indicator 3:** Differentiate between primary and secondary sources.

## **Revised Ohio Academic Content Strands**

**Theme:** *Ohio in the United States*

**Topic:** *Heritage*

**Content Statement 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.

**Topic:** *Historical Thinking and Skills*

**Content Statement 2:** Primary and secondary sources can be used to create historical narratives.

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## **Enduring Understandings**

Citizens engage in various political activities to gain political and personal freedom.

## **Essential Questions**

In which activities do citizens engage to gain political and personal freedom?

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## **Historical Background**

From 1763-1775 there were growing tensions between the colonists and Great Britain. The British government had a large debt left over from the French and Indian War.

In 1765, Prime Minister George Grenville, leader of the British government, proposed a new act, or law, called the Stamp Act. This law required colonists to buy a stamp for every piece of paper they used. Newspapers had to be printed on stamped paper. Wills, licenses, and even playing cards had to have stamps.

It wasn't the idea of the higher taxes that upset the colonists. They were willing to pay taxes by their own assemblies, where their representatives could vote on them. The colonists had no representation in Parliament. For this reason, they argued that the Parliament had no right to tax them. They saw the Stamp Act as a violation of their rights as British subjects. "No taxation without representation."

Some colonists protested the Stamp Act by sending messages to Parliament. Loyalists simply refused to buy stamps. Patriots took more violent action. Mobs calling themselves "Sons of Liberty" attacked tax collectors' homes. After months of protest, Parliament repealed, or canceled, the Stamp Act.

Parliament passed another law in 1765 called the Quartering Act. This ordered colonial assemblies to provide British troops with quarters, or housing.

In 1767, Charles Townshend, a British leader, persuaded Parliament to pass the Townshend Acts. The British thought the American colonists should pay their share of the costs associated with the French and Indian War and for the expense of governing the colonies. These new laws placed a duty or tax on certain goods the colonies imported from Britain. These goods included such popular items as glass, paint, paper, and tea. Samuel Adams led an opposition to the Townshend Acts. To protect the rights, the colonies decided to boycott British goods. Lord North became head of the British government. He realized that the Townshend duties were not making money. The duties didn't begin to make up all the money British merchants had lost because of the boycott. Early in 1770, the Townshend Act was repealed except for one-the tax on tea.

In March 1770, on the same day that Parliament repealed most of the Townshend duties, a brawl broke out between soldiers and colonists in Boston. This incident is known as the "Boston Massacre."

On December 16, 1773, to protest the tax on tea, Patriots disguised as Native Americans threw 342 chests of tea overboard from three British ships. Colonists called this the Boston Tea Party.

Britain's anger led Parliament to pass a series of laws called the Intolerable Acts in 1774. The first law closed Boston Harbor to all shipping until the ruined tea was paid for. The second law placed the government of Massachusetts firmly under British control. The third law said the British soldiers who were accused of murder would be tried in England, not in the colonies.

In September 1774, The First Continental Congress, which consisted of 50 leaders from 12 colonies, met in Philadelphia. Many delegates were strong Loyalists who still thought of themselves as British. Still others, like George Washington were somewhere in between. Only one thing united the delegates-their love of liberty and hatred of tyranny.

The First Continental Congress sent a formal complaint to the king. Meanwhile, Patriots formed militias to defend themselves against the British troops. British troops and colonists fought at Lexington and Concord in 1775. This was a turning point for colonists. This struggle with Great Britain then turned into an all-out war, the American Revolution. The Second Continental Congress elected George Washington as the head of the Continental Army. After the Battle of Bunker hill, American troops threatened the city of Boston with heavy guns and the British decided to abandon the city.

The failure of the Olive Branch Petition, and Thomas Paine's eloquent pamphlet, *Common Sense*, moved the colonies closer to a declaration of independence. Thomas Jefferson, a delegate to the Second Continental Congress, was selected to write a draft of the declaration.

The declaration began with a declaration of individual rights and then listed acts of tyranny by King George III that formed the justification for seeking independence. After debate and changes to accommodate regional interests, including deletion of a condemnation of slavery it was approved on July 2, 1776. On July 4, 1776, delegates signed the Declaration of Independence. A government was being established on the basis of natural rights of people and the duty of government to honor those rights.

## **Instructional Strategies**

**Day One:** This activity is designed to allow students to experience the injustice of “taxation without representation” that the colonies felt. Tell students you just received an important memo from the principal. Then read the following memo, which you may want to put on a letterhead to make it look more authentic.

“Funding for education has been drastically reduced due to shortfalls in state revenue. As a result, monies that ordinarily would be granted to (your school’s name) will not be forthcoming. The school faces severe financial problems, and the administration has been forced to consider alternative funding sources. Therefore, a new policy is in effect immediately. Each student in social studies classes will be required to pay for all photocopied materials. The fee will be 10 cents per page. There will be no exceptions. Any student who does not pay the 10-cent fee will receive a zero for the assignment. While this may seem a burden, it is absolutely necessary. We must all work together to solve this temporary financial problem.”

Tell students they will now take a quiz/worksheet. Explain that they must pay 10 cents for the photocopied quiz. Tell students who have no money that they can borrow money from a classmate or fill out an IOU. Ask a volunteer to collect the money. Mention that the volunteer’s fee for the quiz will be waived.

Pass out quizzes/worksheet to students who paid the fee. Remind those who did not pay the fee that they will receive a zero for the quiz/worksheet and have them sit quietly. After a minute or so, explain to students that the memo was fictitious. Return students’ money. Then hold a class discussion centered on these questions:

- How did you feel when the principal’s “memorandum” was read?
- What seemed unfair about it?
- Did you understand the principal’s reasoning? What were your feelings toward the principal?
- What were your feelings toward the volunteer fee collector?
- How did you feel about my reaction?
- Why did some of you pay? Why did some of you not pay?
- Why did this activity provoke such strong reactions?

After the discussion, tell students the feelings they experienced are similar to those felt by many colonists between 1763-1775, when a series of British laws were imposed on them without their input. British government passed various laws, such as a Stamp Act, to help pay debts from the French and Indian War. Colonists had no representation in parliament. Many colonists thought “taxation without representation” was unfair and displayed their anger by organizing boycotts and protests. Many colonists obeyed the laws because they feared being punished. Officials were appointed by the British to collect taxes and enforce trade laws.

### **Day Two:**

Students will listen to the story “King George’s Head was Made of Lead” by F.N. Monjo to help better understand why there was tension between the colonists and Great Britain. This is a fictional story that helps explain how King George III was a tyrant and caused tension with the colonists in an entertaining way which is good way to help students understand. Students will

then write a letter to King George III as a colonist explaining why they believe his governing is unjust and why he must end his rule of the colonies using the friendly letter rubric attached.

### **Day Three:**

Students will then watch “Brain Pop-Causes of the American Revolution” from the Internet website <http://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/ushistory/causesoftheamericanrevolution/> which takes about 3-4 minutes. Then they will take a review quiz from this site of 10 questions using the Classroom Response System. If you do not have a Classroom Response System you can either print the quiz, or they can take it on their own on a computer.

### **Day Four:**

After learning about the key events that led to the Declaration of Independence, they will then examine the actual document of the Declaration of Independence. Students will be put into groups of 2-3 and will be given “Our Version of the Declaration of Independence” worksheet with an excerpt from the actual Declaration of Independence. The excerpt is typed on the worksheet so it can be easily read. Each group will be given a different excerpt of the Declaration of Independence. Groups will work together to rephrase the excerpt into simpler language that a fourth grader could understand. Students will also be given a “Glossary for the Declaration of Independence” handout to help them understand the difficult vocabulary. Then they need to create an illustration to represent the excerpt. Students will then share their rephrased excerpts and illustrations with the rest of the class.

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### **Resources and Materials**

Hart, Diane. *History Alive! The United States*. Teachers' Curriculum Institute. Palo Alto, CA: 2002. P. 63-85

Hart, Diane. *History Alive! The United States*. Interactive Student Notebook 1. Chapters 1-22. Teachers' Curriculum Institute. Palo Alto, CA: 2002. P. 36-37.

Hart, Diane. *History Alive! The United States*. Lesson Guide 1 . Lesson 1-10. Teachers' Curriculum Institute. Palo Alto, CA: 2002. P. 60-62, 94.

“Causes of the American Revolution,” Brain POP, FWD Media, Inc., <http://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/ushistory/causesoftheamericanrevolution/> (accessed March 29, 2011).

Monjo, F.N. *King George's Head Was Made of Lead*. Longman Canada Limited, Toronto, Canada: 1974.

*Declaration of Independence*. Printed by MaryKatharine Goddard, Baltimore: 1777. Copy can be found at National Archive and Records Administration, [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html). (accessed April 10, 2011.)

## Appendices

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### Assessments

Students will write a letter to King George III as a colonist explaining why they believe his governing is unjust. (Appendix A and B)

Students will then watch “Brain Pop-Causes of the American Revolution” from the Internet and will take a review quiz using the Classroom Response System. (Appendix C and D)

After learning about the key events that led to the Declaration of Independence, they will then examine the actual document of the Declaration of Independence and will work in groups of 2-3 students to re-write an excerpt from the Declaration of Independence in language understandable to a fourth grader and create an illustrated version of this excerpt. (Appendix F, G and H)

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### Assessment Rubric

- Informative letter rubric scoring the students letter to King George III as a colonist explaining why they believe his governing is unjust.(Appendix A)
- Brain Pop review quiz using the Classroom Performance System (Appendix C)
- Our Version of the Declaration of Independence worksheet and a Glossary for the Declaration of Independence handout (Appendix F and H)

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### Assessment Key

- See Appendix B, D and G

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## Appendices

- Appendix A: Rubric for letter to King George III
  - Appendix B: Sample student response for letter to King George III
  - Appendix C: Brain Pop Quiz
  - Appendix D: Brain Pop Quiz Answer Key
  - Appendix E: Excerpts from the Declaration of Independence
  - Appendix F: Glossary of *Declaration of Independence* vocabulary
  - Appendix G: Excerpts from *Declaration of Independence* Answer Key
  - Appendix H: Excerpts from *Declaration of Independence* Worksheets
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## Appendix A

Name \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

# Letter Rubric to King George III

Directions: Write a letter to King George III explaining the reasons why he must end his rule of the colonies. You need to include at least five sentences, and you must include everything on this rubric in your letter.

### **Greeting: 5 points**

- \_\_\_\_\_ greeting
- \_\_\_\_\_ greeting is capitalized
- \_\_\_\_\_ name is capitalized
- \_\_\_\_\_ comma after name
- \_\_\_\_\_ other

### **Body: 10 points**

- \_\_\_\_\_ indented body
- \_\_\_\_\_ topic Sentence
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3 historically accurate detailed sentences on why King George III must end his rule (3 points)
- \_\_\_\_\_ stayed on topic
- \_\_\_\_\_ concluding sentence
- \_\_\_\_\_ punctuation throughout entire body
- \_\_\_\_\_ capitalized the beginning of all sentences
- \_\_\_\_\_ other

### **Closing: 5 points**

- \_\_\_\_\_ closing
- \_\_\_\_\_ closing is capitalized
- \_\_\_\_\_ comma after closing
- \_\_\_\_\_ name under the closing
- \_\_\_\_\_ other

\_\_\_\_\_ out of 20      Grade= \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### Sample Student Response for King George Letter

*April 6, 1773*

*Dear King George III,*

*We no longer would like you to rule our country. You don't even live here so how can you make decisions for us when you're across the sea. We have the right to vote and make our own decisions. The colonists were the ones that stood beside you and helped you defeat France and the Native Americans. This is how you repay us for helping you win by making us pay a stamp tax. You're going to make us pay for your war? We have the right to have someone represent us in Parliament. The colonists need someone to look out for us. Please King George allow us to be independent from your rule.*

*Sincerely,  
John Dean, Colonist*



## Appendix C (2 pages)

### Brain Pop-Causes of the American Revolution Quiz

<http://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/ushistory/causesoftheamericanrevolution/>

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. The Sons of Liberty were far more radical than the Stamp Act Congress. In this context, what does radical mean?
  - a. popular
  - b. secretive
  - c. extreme
  - d. subdued
2. How could the British government have prevented the American Revolution?
  - a. By forcing King George III to give up the throne.
  - b. By allowing colonists to elect representatives to Parliament.
  - c. By overruling the decisions of the colonial legislatures.
  - d. By increasing taxes on the colonists
3. If you were a colonist, why would you have been upset about the Quartering Act?
  - a. It would have forced you to pay taxes on tea, paper, and other British goods.
  - b. It would have made all of your Colonial money worthless.
  - c. It would have prevented you from being represented in Parliament.
  - d. It might have forced you to let British soldiers live in your house.
4. What is the best definition of "tyranny?"
  - a. Not allowing citizens to have any say in the government.
  - b. Allowing a legislative body to determine tax policy.
  - c. Maintaining a standing army.
  - d. Passing laws that some people don't like.
5. Place the following events in sequence: A) The Boston Massacre; B) The Quartering Act; C) The Tea Act
  - a. A,C,B
  - b. B,A,C
  - c. C,B,A
  - d. B,C,A
6. If you were boycotting British tea, what would you be doing?
  - a. Tarring and feathering British tea merchants.
  - b. Dumping British tea into Boston Harbor.
  - c. Refusing to buy British tea.

- d. Paying high prices for British tea.
7. What is an example of an imported good?
- a. A car that's manufactured in Germany but sold in the United States.
  - b. A car that's manufactured in Michigan but sold in Tennessee.
  - c. A car that's brought into Canada illegally into the United States.
  - d. A car that's manufactured in the same country that it's used.
8. How was the Boston Massacre different from the battles of the Revolutionary War?
- a. The war was fought between two armies; in the Massacre soldiers shot unarmed civilians.
  - b. The war began during the 1770's; the Massacre took place during the 1760's.
  - c. The war was fought far away from Massachusetts, where the Massacre took place.
  - d. The Massacre involved guns; the battles were fought with swords.
9. What does it mean to “repeal” a law?
- a. To protest it.
  - b. To overturn it.
  - c. To refuse to obey it.
  - d. To obey it grudgingly.
10. How did the British respond to the Boston Tea Party?
- a. They pulled all British troops out of Massachusetts.
  - b. They passed the Townshend Acts
  - c. They blockaded Boston Harbor.
  - d. They invaded the United States.

## Appendix D

### Brain Pop-Causes of the American Revolution Quiz

<http://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/ushistory/causesoftheamericanrevolution/>

1. C
2. B
3. B
4. D
5. A
6. B
7. C
8. A
9. A
10. B
11. C



## Appendix E (2 pages)

### Our Version of the Declaration of Independence

Excerpt	Rephrased Excerpt	Simple Sketch
<b>Excerpt 1:</b> "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 Nature's God entitles them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."		
<b>Excerpt 2:</b> "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by the Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."		
<b>Excerpt 3:</b> "That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."		
<b>Excerpt 4:</b> "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."		

## Our Version of the Declaration of Independence

Excerpt	Rephrased Excerpt	Simple Sketch
<p><b>Excerpt 5:</b> "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."</p>		
<p><b>Excerpt 6:</b> "To prove that this [that England has interfered with colonial rights], let Facts be submitted to a candid world. He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good."</p>		
<p><b>Excerpt 7:</b> "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 ruler of a free people."</p>		
<p><b>Excerpt 8:</b> "We, therefore...solemnly publish and declare. That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States."</p>		

## Appendix F

# Glossary for the Declaration of Independence

### Excerpt 1

dissolve	end
bands	ties
assume	take
powers	other nations
station	place
entitle	give right to
impel	force

### Excerpt 2

self-evident	obvious
endowed	given
unalienable	not to be taken away

### Excerpt 3

secure	defend
institute	establish
derive	receive
just	fair
consent	agreement

### Excerpt 4

alter	change
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### Excerpt 5

usurpation	illegal seizure of power
in direct object	the goal of
tyranny	government by an unjust ruler

### Excerpt 6

Submit	present for judgement
Candid	fair
Assent	agreement

### Excerpt 7

oppression	unjust action
Redress	relief

## Appendix G

### Our Version of the Declaration of Independence Sample Responses

Excerpt	Rephrased Excerpt	Simple Sketch
<p><b>Excerpt 1:</b> "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 Nature's God entitles them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."</p>	<p><i>We want to explain why we don't want to be part of Britain</i></p>	
<p><b>Excerpt 2:</b> "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by the Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."</p>	<p><i>Everybody knows that we are all equal. God gave us certain rights. Nobody can take those rights away.</i></p>	
<p><b>Excerpt 3:</b> "That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."</p>	<p><i>We make the government. The purpose of government is to protect our rights.</i></p>	
<p><b>Excerpt 4:</b> "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."</p>	<p><i>When the government does not protect our rights, we can get rid of it. Then we can start a new government.</i></p>	



## Our Version of the Declaration of Independence

Excerpt	Rephrased Excerpt	Simple Sketch
<p><b>Excerpt 5:</b> "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."</p>	<p><i>The King has been very mean. He wants to order us around.</i></p>	
<p><b>Excerpt 6:</b> "To prove that this [that England has interfered with colonial rights], let Facts be submitted to a candid world. He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good."</p>	<p><i>We are going to tell why the King is mean. He won't pass any laws that help us.</i></p>	
<p><b>Excerpt 7:</b> "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 ruler of a free people."</p>	<p><i>When we complain to the king, he just becomes meaner. He shouldn't be our King.</i></p>	
<p><b>Excerpt 8:</b> "We, therefore...solemnly publish and declare. That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States."</p>	<p><i>We are not going to be part of Great Britain anymore.</i></p>	

## Appendix H (8 pages)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Our Version of the Declaration of Independence

**Directions:** Rephrase the following excerpt from the Declaration of Independence in your own words so a third grader can understand it. Use the Glossary for the Declaration of Independence handout for help with difficult terms. Then draw a simple drawing to illustrate the excerpt below.

**Excerpt 1:** "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 Nature's God entitles them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

**Rephrased Excerpt**

**Simple Sketch**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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**Excerpt 2:** “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by the Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

**Rephrased Excerpt**

**Simple Sketch**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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**Excerpt 3:** "That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

**Rephrased Excerpt**

**Simple Sketch**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Our Version of the Declaration of Independence

**Directions:** Rephrase the following excerpt from the Declaration of Independence in your own words so a third grader can understand it. Use the Glossary for the Declaration of Independence handout for help with difficult terms. Then draw a simple drawing to illustrate the excerpt below.

**Excerpt 4:** "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."

**Rephrased Excerpt**

**Simple Sketch**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Our Version of the Declaration of Independence

**Directions:** Rephrase the following excerpt from the Declaration of Independence in your own words so a third grader can understand it. Use the Glossary for the Declaration of Independence handout for help with difficult terms. Then draw a simple drawing to illustrate the excerpt below.

**Excerpt 5:** "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."

**Rephrased Excerpt**

**Simple Sketch**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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**Excerpt 6:** “To prove that this [that England has interfered with colonial rights], let Facts be submitted to a candid world. He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.”

**Rephrased Excerpt**

**Simple Sketch**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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**Excerpt 7:** "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 ruler of a free people."

**Rephrased Excerpt**

**Simple Sketch**



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Our Version of the Declaration of Independence

**Directions:** Rephrase the following excerpt from the Declaration of Independence in your own words so a third grader can understand it. Use the Glossary for the Declaration of Independence handout for help with difficult terms. Then draw a simple drawing to illustrate the excerpt below.

**Excerpt 8:** "We, therefore...solemnly publish and declare. That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States."

**Rephrased Excerpt**

**Simple Sketch**