

Declaration Of Independence Analysis Worksheet

Name: _____

The Declaration of Independence

Background

The Declaration of Independence is a statement originally composed by Thomas Jefferson, then adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. It announced that the 13 American colonies, then at war with Great Britain, regarded themselves as independent states, and no longer a part of the British Empire.

Close Reading/Annotation of the Text

Read the Declaration of Independence printed for you below. As you read, use the questions in the right margin to guide your annotations. (Keep in mind that this document was written before the regulation of spelling and capitalization.)

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| <p>[1] IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.</p> <p>The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,</p> <p>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.</p> | <p>Why would it be important for the decision to separate from Britain to appear to be <i>unanimous</i>?</p> <p>Paragraph 1 provides exigence (the reason why the document was written). What is the purpose of this declaration?</p> |
| <p>[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. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments</p> | <p>Jefferson notes that "all men are created equal," suggesting that this was "self-evident." What is meant by that statement? Was this principle fully honored when crafting the U.S. Constitution? (What about Jefferson underscores the hypocrisy of this statement?)</p> <p>What similarities do you see in this passage to Locke's theories?</p> |

Declaration of Independence analysis worksheet is an essential tool for students and educators alike, providing a structured approach to understanding one of the most significant documents in American history. By dissecting the Declaration of Independence, learners can gain insight into the philosophical underpinnings of democracy, the nature of government, and the historical context surrounding its creation. This article will explore the importance of using an analysis worksheet, the key components of the Declaration itself, and how to effectively utilize such a worksheet in the classroom or for personal study.

The Importance of an Analysis Worksheet

An analysis worksheet serves multiple purposes in the study of historical documents. Here are some key benefits:

- **Enhances comprehension:** Breaking down complex texts into manageable parts allows students to grasp the meaning behind the words.
- **Promotes critical thinking:** Analyzing the motivations of the authors and the impact of the document encourages deeper engagement.
- **Facilitates discussion:** Worksheets can serve as a basis for group discussions, fostering collaboration and diverse viewpoints.
- **Encourages reflection:** Students can contemplate the relevance of the Declaration in today's context, making historical study more applicable to modern life.

Key Components of the Declaration of Independence

To effectively analyze the Declaration of Independence, it is essential to understand its major components. The document can be divided into several sections, each serving a distinct purpose:

1. The Preamble

The preamble sets the stage for the Declaration's purpose. It outlines the philosophical foundations of the document, emphasizing the concepts of natural rights and the social contract. Key phrases include:

- "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..."

The preamble is crucial for understanding the ideological framework that justified the colonies' break from British rule.

2. List of Grievances

This section details the specific complaints the colonists had against King George III. Each grievance illustrates the ways in which the British Crown violated the rights and liberties of the American people. Some notable grievances include:

- Imposing taxes without consent

- Denying the right to trial by jury
- Dissolving colonial legislatures

This list is critical for understanding the rationale behind the colonists' decision to declare independence.

3. The Conclusion

The conclusion serves as a powerful affirmation of the colonies' intent to separate from Britain. It asserts the right to establish a new government and signals a commitment to the principles of democracy. Noteworthy phrases include:

- "...we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

This final statement encapsulates the resolve of the signers and the sacrifices they were willing to make for independence.

Using the Declaration of Independence Analysis Worksheet

When utilizing a Declaration of Independence analysis worksheet, consider the following steps to maximize its effectiveness:

1. Read the Document Thoroughly

Before diving into the worksheet, students should read the Declaration of Independence in its entirety. This initial reading allows them to grasp the overall message and context before analyzing individual sections.

2. Break Down Each Section

The worksheet should be structured to encourage analysis of each component:

- Preamble: Identify key themes and phrases. Discuss their significance and how they reflect Enlightenment thinking.
- Grievances: Choose a few grievances to analyze in detail. Why were these issues significant to the colonists? How did they contribute to the push for independence?
- Conclusion: Reflect on the concluding statements. What emotions do they evoke? How do they encapsulate the spirit of the revolution?

3. Encourage Group Discussion

After completing the worksheet, students should engage in group discussions to share their insights. This collaborative exercise fosters a deeper understanding of the material and promotes diverse interpretations.

4. Relate to Modern Contexts

Finally, encourage students to draw parallels between the Declaration's themes and contemporary issues. Questions to consider include:

- How do the principles of the Declaration apply to today's political climate?
- What modern grievances might be comparable to those listed in the Declaration?
- How can the spirit of the Declaration inspire current movements for social justice and equality?

Conclusion

In conclusion, a **Declaration of Independence analysis worksheet** is an invaluable resource for both students and educators. By providing a structured framework for examining this historic text, it fosters comprehension, critical thinking, and meaningful discussion. Understanding the Declaration of Independence is not only essential for grasping American history but also for appreciating the ongoing relevance of its principles in today's society. Through thoughtful analysis and reflection, students can develop a deeper connection to the ideals of freedom and democracy that continue to shape the nation.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Declaration of Independence analysis worksheet?

A Declaration of Independence analysis worksheet is an educational tool designed to help students break down and understand the key components, themes, and historical context of the Declaration of Independence.

What key elements should be included in a Declaration of Independence analysis worksheet?

Key elements should include sections for summarizing the main ideas, identifying important quotes, analyzing the authors' intentions, and discussing the historical significance of the Declaration.

How can a Declaration of Independence analysis worksheet enhance critical thinking skills?

By prompting students to analyze the text, consider the motivations behind its creation, and relate its

principles to contemporary issues, the worksheet encourages deeper engagement and critical thinking.

What are some common themes explored in a Declaration of Independence analysis worksheet?

Common themes include the ideas of liberty, equality, government by consent, and the right to revolution, as well as the philosophical influences of Enlightenment thinkers like John Locke.

How can teachers effectively use a Declaration of Independence analysis worksheet in the classroom?

Teachers can use the worksheet as a guided reading exercise, facilitate group discussions based on the findings, or assign it as a project to encourage independent research on the historical context and impact of the Declaration.

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