Reasons to Separate

Trace the complaints behind the Declaration of Independence

5.H.9 "Analyze the causes of the American Revolution as outlined in the Declaration of Independence."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three actions the Declaration criticized, and circle one way an action affected colonists. Use your marks to trace how complaints became reasons for independence.

Why Did the Colonies Want Independence?

1. Imagine a town meeting where elected leaders are sent home before they can vote. In 1776, colonial leaders wrote the Declaration of Independence to explain why they wanted to separate from Britain. They said King George III had dissolved colonial lawmaking groups when those groups opposed him. To the writers, losing those groups meant colonists had fewer ways to speak up or make decisions about their own government.

2. The Declaration listed other actions the writers saw as unfair. It accused the king of keeping armies in the colonies during peacetime without the consent of colonial lawmakers. It also accused Britain of cutting off colonial trade and placing taxes on colonists without their consent. Trade limits could hurt people who bought and sold goods. Taxes set without consent made colonists feel they had little say in the rules they had to follow.

3. The writers said they had asked the king to fix these problems, but their requests had not worked. They believed a government should protect people's rights and listen to the people it governs. The Declaration argued that repeated unfair actions showed a pattern, not one mistake. That pattern, the writers said, gave the colonies a reason to leave British rule and form a new nation.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did dissolving colonial lawmaking groups give the writers a reason to seek independence?

2. Why did the writers object to armies staying in the colonies during peacetime?

3. How could trade limits and taxes without consent each affect colonists?

4. Why did the writers see independence as an answer to these complaints, rather than asking the king again?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-line conversation between a colonist who favors independence and a neighbor who is unsure. Have the neighbor give a reason to stay with Britain, and have the colonist use two different complaints from the passage to explain why independence might be needed.

ANSWER KEY

Reasons to Separate

GRADE 5 · 5.H.9

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three actions the Declaration criticized, and circle one way an action affected colonists. Use your marks to trace how complaints became reasons for independence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did dissolving colonial lawmaking groups give the writers a reason to seek independence?	**It left colonists with fewer ways to speak up and make decisions about their government.**
2	Why did the writers object to armies staying in the colonies during peacetime?	**Colonial lawmakers had not agreed to the armies staying, so colonists had little say in that decision.**
3	How could trade limits and taxes without consent each affect colonists?	**Trade limits could hurt people buying and selling goods. Taxes without consent made colonists feel they had little say in the rules.**
4	Why did the writers see independence as an answer to these complaints, rather than asking the king again?	**They said their requests had not worked and that repeated unfair actions showed a pattern. They believed they needed a government that listened to them.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Neighbor: Britain's soldiers might keep us safe. Why leave?
Colonist: They stay here in peacetime without our lawmakers' consent.
Neighbor: But could we make decisions without Britain?
Colonist: Britain also taxes us without our consent. We need a government that listens to us.

Accept answers that connect a complaint to its effect on colonists or to the writers' case for independence. The conversation may use any two distinct complaints from the passage.