

Words for Freedom

Read for the purpose, parts, and lasting importance of a founding document.

5.14.A “explain the purposes, key elements, and the importance of the Declaration of Independence;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two sentences that explain the Declaration's purpose, circle three phrases that name key elements, and put a star beside one sentence that explains why the document was important.

A Declaration Takes a Stand

- ① In 1776, representatives from the thirteen American colonies met as the Second Continental Congress. They approved the Declaration of Independence on July 4. The document announced that the colonies would no longer be ruled by Great Britain. It explained why the colonies believed separating was necessary. The Declaration also helped unite people behind the risky decision to form a new nation.
- ② The Declaration begins with ideas about natural rights. It says all people have rights such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It explains that governments are created to protect these rights and receive their power from the people. Next, it lists complaints, called grievances, against King George III. These examples were meant to show that Britain had not protected the colonists' rights.
- ③ The final section states that the colonies were free and independent states. This declaration told other countries that the new United States could make war, make peace, trade, and govern itself. The Declaration was important because it gave the revolution a clear reason and goal. Its ideas about rights and government have continued to influence Americans and people in other places.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What were the two main purposes of the Declaration of Independence?

2 Name two key elements included in the Declaration.

3 Why did the Declaration list grievances against King George III?

4 How was the Declaration important during the Revolution and in later years?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a three-sentence declaration for an imaginary town that wants to make its own rules. Include one right people have, one complaint showing that right is not protected, and a final statement saying the town will govern itself and why that matters.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two sentences that explain the Declaration's purpose, circle three phrases that name key elements, and put a star beside one sentence that explains why the document was important. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What were the two main purposes of the Declaration of Independence?	It announced that the colonies would no longer be ruled by Great Britain, and it explained why separation was necessary.
2	Name two key elements included in the Declaration.	Answers may include natural rights, the idea that government protects rights, power from the people, grievances against King George III, or the statement that the colonies were free and independent.
3	Why did the Declaration list grievances against King George III?	The grievances were meant to show that Britain had not protected the colonists' rights.
4	How was the Declaration important during the Revolution and in later years?	During the Revolution, it gave people a clear reason and goal. Later, its ideas about rights and government continued to influence Americans and people in other places.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The people of Pine Town have the right to speak at town meetings. The distant rulers have stopped citizens from sharing their ideas. Therefore, Pine Town will govern itself so its people can protect their rights and make fair rules.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the Declaration's purpose, elements, and importance when they are supported by the passage. For the open response, look for all three required parts in three complete sentences.