

Writing Your Own Declaration of Independence

The Founding Fathers risked their lives and the lives of their families to make a statement to the empire of Great Britain and the rest of the world. The document they created would have been viewed as *treason* by the British government, and had they failed in their great plight for independence they would likely have lost everything, including their lives.

Your task is to write your own Declaration of Independence. You must follow the guidelines below to create this document, which should mirror the real Declaration of Independence. Remember, that you must agree as a group on everything that is written, or else this Declaration will not be signed and supported by everyone who has helped to create it.

Guidelines for writing Declaration of Independence:

- **Preamble:** Discuss the reasons for why you are writing this Declaration. (From, “When in the Course of human Events” to “declare the Causes which impel them to the Separation.”) What reasons do you believe you should declare your independence?
- **Declaration of Student Rights:** Explain what you believe, the philosophy and ideals behind your document. (From, “We hold these Truths to be self-evident....”) What beliefs about your independence do you have?
- **List of Complaints/Grievances:** List the person/persons to whom you are addressing your complaints, and what you **specifically** are complaining about. (From, “To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World....”) An example might be “Our Teachers have assigned an enormous amount of homework that we were forced to complete at times inconvenient.” (*Caveat: You may not list any individuals by name, and all complaints must be intelligently worded and appropriate for school!*)
- **Statements of prior attempts to redress grievances:** List the ways in which you have already tried to address your complaints. (From “Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren...”) In what ways have you already tried to address your complaints?
- **Declaration of Independence:** Describe how you want things to change as a result of this Declaration. (From “We, therefore...”) How would you want things to change if you became independent?

Suggestions

- You may use the same words that are written in the Declaration of Independence to help fill in your Declaration. For example, you may start off your Preamble with “In the course of human events....” Just remember to replace their ideas, complaints and what should be changed with your own.

Here is an example **Student Declaration of Independence**
(YOU MAY NOT COPY THIS!!)

Preamble

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for students to cut ties with their parents and teachers and to become independent, they must explain why they deserve to be independent to the rest of the world. This requires us, as students, to write our own Declaration of Independence for the rest of the world to see and understand why we should be and will be independent and equal to the station of our parents and teachers.

Declaration of Student Rights

We hold these truths to be obvious, that all students are created equal and are given by their Creator the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of whatever makes them happy. To obtain these rights, parents and teachers should enable students to do as they wish. However, when parents and teachers begin a long train of mistreatment against students that shows they only want to control every aspect of their lives, it is the duty and right of students to get rid of the control their parents and teachers have over them and establish their independence.

List of Grievances

Until now, students have been very patient with parents and teachers, but with such a long history of mistreatment and unfairness by the parents and teachers toward students, it is now time that the rest of the world find out what has been going on.

- They have given us too much homework with little class time to complete it
- They have given us repeated detentions without good cause
- They have grounded us for reasons that were unfair and not our fault

Statements of Prior Attempts to Redress Grievances

Even after all of this mistreatment, we have explained how we felt to both our parents and teachers. However, our complaints have fallen on deaf ears, and we have been ignored. We have even appealed to our school administrators, grandparents and even our friends at other schools, but our appeals have been ignored and we must now announce that we are separating ourselves from our homes and our schools to become independent.

Resolution of Independence

We, therefore, the representatives of the student body at Oak Mountain Middle School in Birmingham, Alabama, present these facts to the rest of the country and the world. In the name and by the permission of all of our fellow students, we solemnly write and declare that the students at Oak Mountain Middle School out to be free and independent, and we give ourselves the same powers as any adult has who is also free and independent. For the support of our declaration, we pledge our lives, honor and all that we have!