

US Declaration of Independence in Outline Form

1. When, in the course of human events,
 - a. it becomes necessary
 - i. for one people
 1. to dissolve the political bands
 - a. which have connected them with another,
 2. and to assume among the powers of the earth,
 - a. the separate and equal station
 - i. to which
 1. the laws of nature
 2. and of nature's God entitle them,
 - ii. a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires
 1. that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.
2. We hold these truths
 - a. to be self-evident,
 - i. that all men are created equal,
 - ii. that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights,
 1. that among these are
 - a. life,
 - b. liberty
 - c. and the pursuit of happiness.
 - iii. That to secure these rights,
 1. governments are instituted among men,
 - a. deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.
 - iv. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends,
 1. it is the right of the people
 - a. to alter
 - b. or to abolish it,
 2. and to institute new government,
 - a. laying its foundation on such principles
 - b. and organizing its powers in such form,
 - i. as to them shall seem most likely to effect their
 1. safety
 2. and happiness.
3. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that
 - a. Governments
 - i. long established

- b. should not be changed
 - i. for light
 - ii. and transient causes;
- c. and accordingly all experience hath shown
 - i. that mankind are more disposed to suffer,
 - 1. while evils are sufferable,
 - ii. than to right themselves
 - 1. by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.
- 4. But when a long train of
 - a. abuses
 - b. and usurpations,
 - i. pursuing invariably the same object
 - c. evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism,
 - i. it is their right,
 - ii. it is their duty,
 - iii. to throw off such government,
 - iv. and to provide new guards for their future security.
 - d. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies;
 - e. and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government.
- 5. The history of the present King of Great Britain
 - a. is a history of
 - i. repeated injuries
 - ii. and usurpations,
 - 1. all having in direct object
 - a. the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states.
 - b. To prove this,
 - i. let facts be submitted to a candid world.
 - 1. He has
 - a. refused his assent to laws,
 - i. the most wholesome
 - ii. and necessary for the public good.
 - 2. He has
 - a. forbidden his governors to pass laws
 - i. of immediate
 - ii. and pressing importance,
 - b. unless suspended in their operation
 - i. till his assent should be obtained;
 - c. and when so suspended,
 - i. he has utterly neglected to attend to them.
 - 3. He has

- a. refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people,
 - i. unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature,
 - 1. a right inestimable to them
 - 2. and formidable to tyrants only.
- 4. He has
 - a. called together legislative bodies at places
 - i. unusual,
 - ii. uncomfortable,
 - iii. and distant
 - 1. from the depository of their public records,
 - b. for the sole purpose
 - i. of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.
- 5. He has
 - a. dissolved representative houses repeatedly,
 - i. for opposing
 - 1. with manly firmness
 - ii. his invasions on the rights of the people.
- 6. He has
 - a. refused
 - i. for a long time,
 - ii. after such dissolutions,
 - b. to cause others to be elected;
 - i. whereby the legislative powers,
 - 1. incapable of annihilation,
 - ii. have returned to the people at large for their exercise;
 - c. the state remaining in the meantime
 - i. exposed to all the dangers of invasion
 - 1. from without,
 - 2. and convulsions within.
- 7. He has
 - a. endeavored to prevent the population of these states;
 - i. for that purpose
 - 1. obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners;
 - 2. refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither,

3. and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.
8. He has
 - a. obstructed the administration of justice,
 - i. by refusing his assent to laws
 1. for establishing judiciary powers.
9. He has
 - a. made judges dependent on his will alone,
 - i. for the tenure of their offices,
 - ii. and the amount
 - iii. and payment of their salaries.
10. He has
 - a. erected a multitude of new offices,
 - b. and sent hither swarms of officers
 - i. to harass our people,
 - ii. and eat out their substance.
11. He has
 - a. kept among us,
 - i. in times of peace,
 - b. standing armies
 - i. without the consent of our legislature.
12. He has
 - a. affected to render the military
 - i. independent of
 - ii. and superior to civil power.
13. He has
 - a. combined with others
 - i. to subject us to a jurisdiction
 1. foreign to our constitution,
 2. and unacknowledged by our laws;
 - ii. giving his assent
 1. to their acts of pretended legislation:
 - a. For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:
 - b. For protecting them,
 - i. by mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states:
 - c. For cutting off our trade
 - i. with all parts of the world:

- d. For imposing taxes on us
 - i. without our consent:
- e. For depriving us
 - i. in many cases,
 - ii. of the benefits of trial by jury:
- f. For transporting us beyond seas
 - i. to be tried for pretended offenses:
- g. For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province,
 - i. establishing therein an arbitrary government,
 - ii. and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example
 - iii. and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule in these colonies:
- h. For taking away our charters,
 - i. abolishing our most valuable laws,
 - ii. and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments:
- i. For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

14. He has

- a. abdicated government here,
 - i. by declaring us out of his protection
 - ii. and waging war against us.

15. He has

- a. plundered our seas,
- b. ravaged our coasts,
- c. burned our towns,
- d. and destroyed the lives of our people.

16. He is

- a. at this time
 - i. transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries
 - 1. to complete the works of
 - a. death,
 - b. desolation
 - c. and tyranny,
 - 2. already begun
 - a. with circumstances of cruelty
 - b. and perfidy
 - i. scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages,
 - ii. and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.
17. He has
- a. constrained our fellow citizens
 - i. taken captive on the high seas
 - b. to bear arms against their country,
 - c. to become the executioners of their friends and brethren,
 - d. or to fall themselves by their hands.
18. He has
- a. excited domestic insurrections amongst us,
 - b. and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers,
 - i. the merciless Indian savages,
 - 1. whose known rule of warfare,
 - a. is undistinguished destruction
 - i. of all ages,
 - ii. sexes
 - iii. and conditions.
6. In every stage of these oppressions
- a. we have petitioned for redress
 - i. in the most humble terms:
 - b. our repeated petitions have been answered
 - i. only by repeated injury.
 - c. A prince,
 - i. whose character is thus marked
 - 1. by every act which may define a tyrant,
 - ii. is unfit to be the ruler
 - 1. of a free people.
7. Nor have we been wanting
- a. in attention to our British brethren.

- i. We have
 - 1. warned them
 - a. from time to time
 - 2. of attempts
 - a. by their legislature
 - 3. to extend
 - a. an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us.
 - ii. We have
 - 1. reminded them
 - a. of the circumstances of
 - i. our emigration
 - ii. and settlement here.
 - iii. We have
 - 1. appealed to their
 - a. native justice
 - b. and magnanimity,
 - 2. and we have conjured
 - a. them by the ties
 - i. of our common kindred
 - b. to disavow these usurpations,
 - i. which,
 - 1. would inevitably interrupt
 - a. our connections
 - b. and correspondence.
 - iv. They too
 - 1. have been deaf
 - a. to the voice of justice
 - b. and of consanguinity.
8. We must, therefore,
- a. acquiesce in the necessity,
 - i. which denounces our separation,
 - b. and hold them,
 - i. as we hold the rest of mankind,
 - 1. enemies in war,
 - 2. in peace friends.
9. We, therefore,
- a. the representatives of the United States of America,
 - i. in General Congress, assembled,
 - 1. appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world
 - a. for the rectitude of our intentions,
 - ii. do,
 - 1. in the name,

2. and by the authority
 - a. of the good people of these colonies,
 - iii. solemnly
 1. publish
 2. and declare,
 - iv. that these united colonies are,
 1. and of right ought to be
 - a. free
 - b. and independent states;
 - v. that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown,
 - vi. and that all political connection between them
 1. and the state of Great Britain,
 - a. is
 - b. and ought to be
 2. totally dissolved;
 - vii. and that
 1. as free
 2. and independent states,
 - viii. they have full power to
 1. levy war,
 2. conclude peace,
 3. contract alliances,
 4. establish commerce,
 5. and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.
- b. And
- i. for the support of this declaration,
 1. with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence,
 - ii. we mutually pledge to each other
 1. our lives,
 2. our fortunes
 3. and our sacred honor.

Signers by State:

Connecticut: Samuel Huntington, Roger Sherman, William Williams, Oliver Wolcott

Delaware: Thomas McKean, George Read, Caesar Rodney

Georgia: Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, George Walton

Maryland: Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Samuel Chase, William Paca, Thomas Stone

Massachusetts: John Adams, Samuel Adams Elbridge Gerry John Hancock, Robert Treat Paine

New Hampshire: Josiah Bartlett, Matthew Thornton, William Whipple

New Jersey: Abraham Clark, John Hart, Francis Hopkinson, Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon

New York: William Floyd, Francis Lewis, Philip Livingston, Lewis Morris

North Carolina: Joseph Hewes, William Hooper, John Penn

Pennsylvania: George Clymer, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, John Morton, George Ross, Benjamin Rush, James Smith, George Taylor, James Wilson

Rhode Island: William Ellery, Stephen Hopkins

South Carolina: Thomas Heyward, Jr., Thomas Lynch, Jr., Arthur Middleton, Edward Rutledge

Virginia: Carter Braxton, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Jefferson, Francis Lightfoot Lee, Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Nelson, Jr., George Wythe

Note: The original spelling and capitalization have been retained as printed in The Pennsylvania Packet, July 8, 1776.

Adopted by Congress on July 4, 1776.