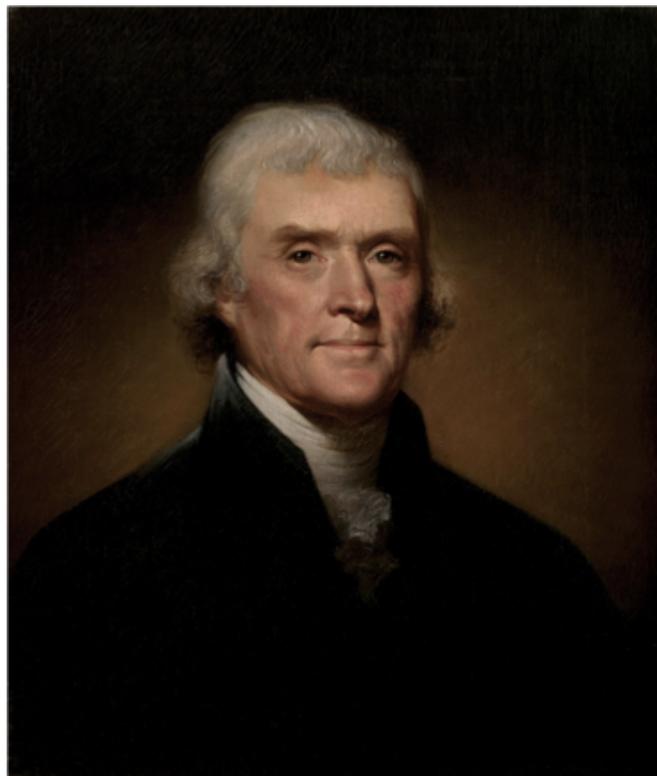
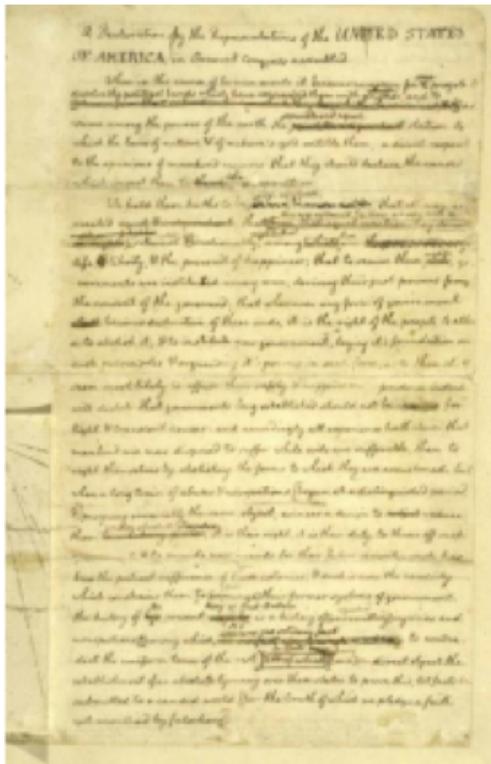


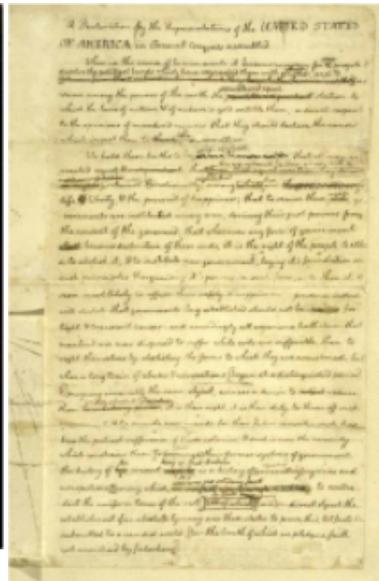
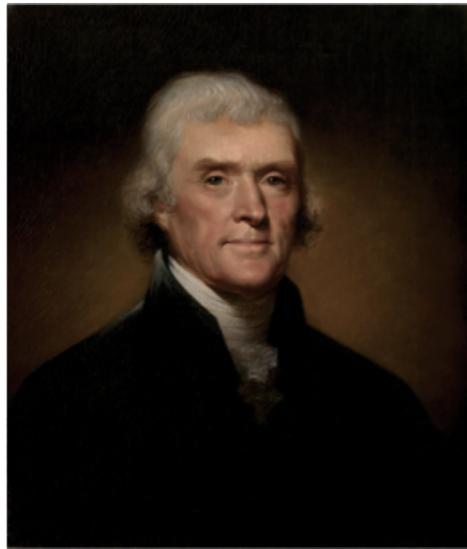
SSUSH4: ANALYZE THE IDEOLOGICAL, MILITARY, SOCIAL, AND DIPLOMATIC ASPECTS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



Jefferson's Draft of
the Declaration of
Independence (LOC)

ELEMENT A: Investigate the intellectual sources, organization, and argument of the Declaration of Independence including the role of Thomas Jefferson and the Committee of Five.

The Declaration of Independence



Jefferson's Draft of the Declaration of Independence (LOC)



- ❑ The Declaration of Independence was the ideological explanation for American independence.
 - Although Thomas Jefferson was the principal author of the document, he was one member of the Committee of Five who had been tasked with drafting a statement to represent the Continental Congress delegates' decision to seek independence from Britain.
 - Richard Henry Lee, a delegate to the Continental Congress from Virginia, proposed in June of 1776 that the colonies should be free and independent.
 - The full Congress voted in favor of the break from British control on July 2, 1776 and formally adopted the Declaration of Independence two days later on July 4, 1776.
 - The document had been under construction since early June.

The Declaration of Independence



- ❑ Tension had escalated in Boston between the Patriots and the British who occupied the city throughout 1776.
 - Frenzied support for Thomas Paine's Common Sense pamphlet also helped embolden the American Patriots.
 - By June of 1776, the Continental Congress recognized the critical juncture they were fast approaching and designated five delegates to write a rationale for independence.
- ❑ The Committee of Five, as they were known, included Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Robert Livingston of New York, and Roger Sherman of Connecticut.
 - Jefferson was known to be a prolific writer and was asked by the group to write an initial draft of the public statement for independence.



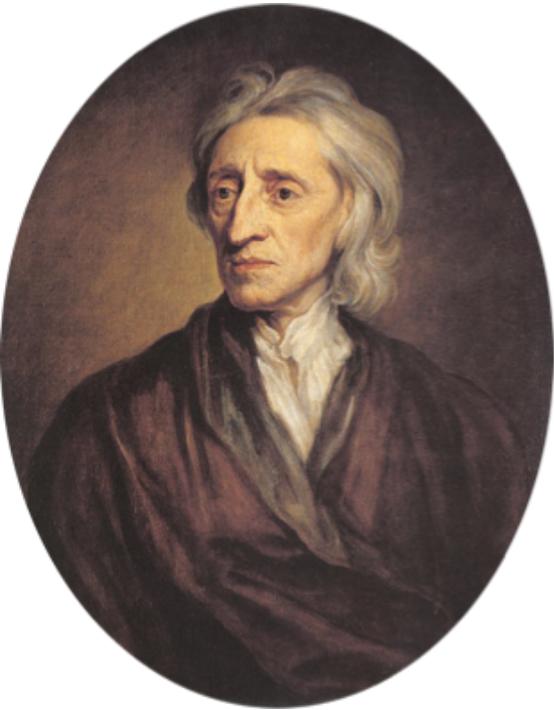
The Declaration of Independence



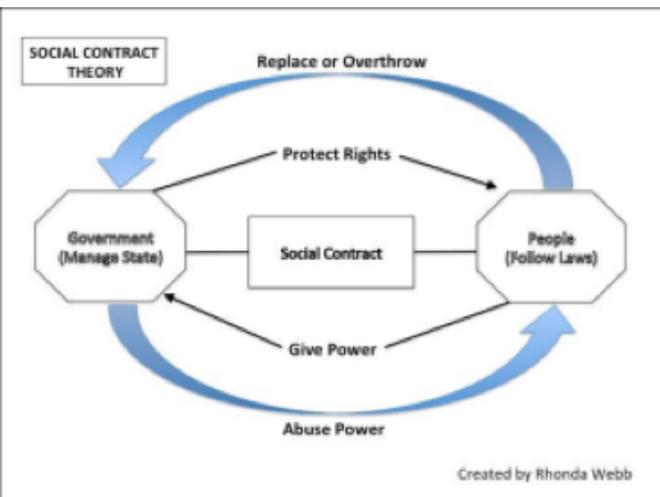
- ❑ After about two weeks of diligent work, Jefferson presented the draft to some of the other members of the Committee of Five for review.
 - They made only a few minor adjustments and the document was provided to the full Continental Congress on June 28, 1776 for consideration.
 - A few sticking points emerged that caused more revisions to be made to Jefferson's draft.
 - In all, there were eighty-six changes made by the Continental Congress to Jefferson's draft before it was finally adopted on July 4, 1776.
 - The major revisions to the document concerned slavery.
 - Some of the delegates from Southern Colonies refused to sign the document as written by Jefferson because it was critical of slavery.
 - All references to slavery were consequently struck from the document.



The Declaration of Independence's Underpinnings

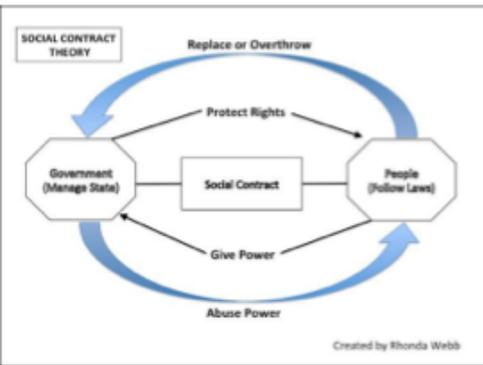


- ❑ Scholarly debate continues today on the origins of the ideas contained in the Declaration of Independence.
 - Most scholars hold that the ideas of John Locke's Second Treatise of Government significantly influenced Jefferson's writing.
- ❑ John Locke was a British philosopher who believed that all individuals naturally possess certain rights regardless of status.
 - As part of these natural rights, Locke proposed that people have the right to choose their own form of government and consequently give it power.
 - The Social Contract Theory, subscribed to by John Locke and other political thinkers, forms the basis of this argument.
 - The Social Contract Theory is the underlying philosophy for justifying colonial independence.
 - In this theory, the relationship between people organized in a political state and their government relies on each side's rights and responsibilities.



“The Social Contract Theory” and “Natural Rights”

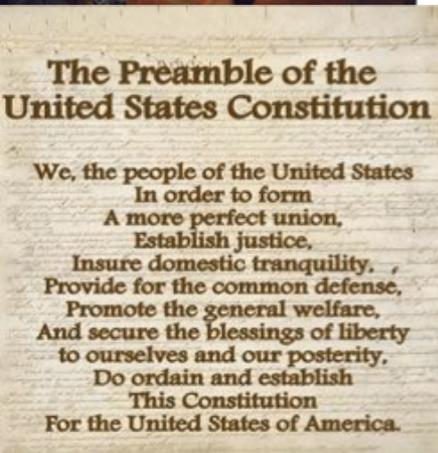
- The people give the government its power and in return the government gives the people defense and protection of their natural rights while managing the government.



- The people have a responsibility in the arrangement to follow the laws created by the government intended to manage and protect the nation.
- If people don't follow the laws, the government will restrict their individual rights. If the government, at some point, abuses the power given to it by the people, the people in turn have the right to replace or overthrow the government.

- This social contract arrangement is the basis for colonial independence.

- The colonists believed that King George III's government had violated their social contract and abused its power with the implementation of unfair taxes, attacks by British forces against colonial citizens, and the restrictions placed on local colonial assemblies.
- The colonists, in turn, believed they were exercising their right to replace or overthrow the government that had abused the power it had been given.



- Locke's key ideas of “natural rights” form the foundation of the social contract theory.

- He believed that all people possess natural rights that are unconditional, such as a person's life, liberty, and property. A discussion of these rights and their protection is prominently featured in the *Declaration of Independence's* “Preamble.”

Organization of *The Declaration of Independence*

- ❑ The Declaration of Independence is organized into three key sections:
 1. The first section, the Preamble, calls the attention of the world to the plight of the American colonists.
 - In this section, Jefferson laid out the main ideological reasons why the American colonies had chosen to, and had a right to, break away from the British government.
 - Key ideas included in the Preamble are natural rights, the origin and purposes of government as explained above in the Social Contract Theory, and the reasons why the colonists had elected to rebel against the King and Parliament.
 2. The second section of the Declaration of Independence is a list of grievances or justifications.
 - This section contains 27 separate points of difference the colonists had with King George III and his government.
 - The grievances provide evidence of the social contract violations the government made in its role with the people.
 3. The final section of the document offers a discussion of the Americans' many unsuccessful previous attempts to get relief from Britain.
 - An example of the previous attempts for peace referred to in this section of the Declaration of Independence is the "Olive Branch Petition."
 - This was a plea directly to King George III by the colonists' Second Continental Congress in 1775 for negotiation to avoid armed conflict, which was ignored by the king.
 - The section ends with the colonists' determination that the only way for Americans to have their rights restored is to reclaim them by declaring independence from Britain and by controlling their own government.
- ❑ The final signed document was printed for wide distribution throughout the thirteen new and independent states now united in war against Britain.

