

# Let facts be submitted to a candid world: Categorizing the List of Grievances

## Excerpt from the Declaration of Independence

*“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness – That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”*

## Introduction:

Most readers are familiar with the excerpt from the Declaration of Independence above. However, less people are familiar with what’s known as the List of Grievances. It’s the third part of the document that follows the phrase: *“let facts be submitted to a candid world.”* The following activity provides an opportunity to examine those complaints and tie them into the reasons for American Revolution.

## Instructions:

First, cut out the individual grievances in the following pages. Next, write down possible categories on a poster board or use the papers provided. Then, read and sort individual grievances into the appropriate category. Don’t be afraid to debate over the category placement of certain grievances since perspectives may differ. Finally, do your best to tie specific historical content such as the Sugar Act or Stamp Act to the grievances provided. Responses can be written directly on the category paper.

## Note:

The derogatory use of the term “savages” to describe American Indians reflects a bias on the part of the authors of the Declaration of Independence. American Indians typically allied themselves with the British

since it offered them the best protection for their land and their way of life. That same grievance refers to “domestic insurrections” which is often seen as a reference to promises from the British such as Lord Dunmore’s Proclamation. That proclamation promised freedom to any enslaved African Americans who would bear arms and help “his Majesty’s troops.” In Thomas Jefferson’s original draft, this grievance about insurrection was followed by another one that accused King George III of waging “cruel war against human nature itself” with the institution of slavery. However, this grievance was struck for South Carolina and Georgia who intended to keep the practice. The notes on the proceeding of the Continental Congress also note that “our Northern brethren” were a “little tender” about censures toward slavery despite having “very few slaves themselves.”Page Break

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.	He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.	He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.
He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.	He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise; the state remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.	He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.
He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.	He has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.	He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislature.
He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.	He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.	He has affected to render the military independent of and superior to civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:	For imposing taxes on us without our consent:	For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule in these colonies:
For protecting them, by mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states:	For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury:	For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments:
For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world:	For transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offenses:	For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow citizens taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

Possible Category 1  
Violating individual rights

Possible Category 2  
Taking away people's voice in government

Possible Category 3  
Using violence or the threat of violence

*Th. Jefferson*  
MONTICELLO