

Revise and Finalize: The Declaration of Independence from the Rough Draft to the Final Copy

Title: "Revise and Finalize"

Descriptive Subtitle: The Declaration of Independence from the Rough Draft to the Final Copy Using Documents, Art, and Drama

Grade level: Fifth Grade and up

Topic/subject:

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Duration: two 45-60 minute classes with optional extension activities

Overview:

Students will view Thomas Jefferson's draft of the Declaration of Independence and infer the purpose of the document, focusing on comparing Thomas Jefferson's rough draft of the Declaration of Independence with the final copy. It will also feature a close visual analysis of three paintings. The first image depicts Jefferson's presentation of his rough draft to Benjamin Franklin and John Adams. The second painting portrays the Committee of Five handing a draft of the declaration to John Hancock, the President of the Continental Congress, on June 28, 1776. In the final painting Benjamin Franklin faces the other delegates with a quill in his hand during the signing of the declaration.

Fifth grade students study colonial history with an emphasis on the American Revolutionary War. Examining the creation of the Declaration of Independence will deepen their understanding of this critical time in our nation's history.

Prior knowledge:

The concept of primary source documents as the “raw materials of history – original documents and objects which were created at the time under study” will be examined during a library media class prior to the “Revise and Finalize” lessons. Also the idea of secondary sources as “accounts or interpretations of events by someone without firsthand experience” will be presented. (Library of Congress definitions). Students will sort a variety of written documents, images, and objects classifying the items as primary or secondary sources.

During social studies instruction in the classroom students will engage in a variety of lessons on life during colonial times including the American Revolutionary War.

Standards:

Common Core Reading Standards for Informational Texts – Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.3 Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

Common Core Writing Standards – Research to Build and Present Knowledge

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Objectives:

Students will understand...

- *that different perspectives had an impact in the revisions made to the Declaration of Independence.*

Students will be able to...

- *compare a draft of the Declaration of Independence with the final copy.*
- *closely examine a painting to create observations, reflections, and questions.*

Students will know...

- *the difference between a primary and a secondary source.*
- *that creating the Declaration of Independence was a process that included many revisions.*
- *the Declaration of Independence was written by Thomas Jefferson in Philadelphia with input from other delegates.*
- *that the Committee of Five presented a draft of the Declaration of Independence to the Second Continental Congress.*
- *that the Declaration of Independence was adopted on July 4, 1776 after the delegates debated a variety of issues and made changes to the draft.*

Steps:

Day One: (45-60 minutes)

Students are arranged in five table groups (approximately five students per table)

1. Review the concept of primary source documents with the whole class. Students provide examples of a variety of types of primary sources such as diaries, letters, newspaper articles, artifacts, paintings, photographs, and maps.
2. Explain that this lesson focuses on an important historical document. Do not name the document. Hand out copies of one page of the rough draft of the Declaration of Independence to four tables and the final copy to the fifth table. Students work in pairs or threes to complete the Primary Source Analysis Tool.
3. Guide the students with their observations, reflections, and questions. Use the [Library of Congress Teacher's Guide to Analyzing Manuscripts](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Manuscripts.pdf) (http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Manuscripts.pdf) for additional questions.

Observations:

- What do you notice first?
- How would you describe what you are seeing?
- What words or phrases can you read?
- What do you see that looks strange or unfamiliar?

Encourage the students to reflect on their observations:

- Who do you think created this document?
- What tools and materials were used to create this document?
- Who do you think was the intended audience?
- Why do you think this document was made?
- What do you think was happening when it was created?
- What do you think this document was about? What words or phrases give clues?
- Is this the complete document or are pages missing?

Finally, the students record their questions about this document.

4. During a whole class discussion, the students share their observations, reflections, and questions. Hand out transcriptions of the page their group analyzed to help with additional insights. Ask students to draw conclusions about this document. Reveal its identity if not previously named. Continue the discussion about what the students know about the Declaration of Independence. Why is this document important?
5. Make comparisons with the rough draft and the final copy. What conclusions can be made with this comparison? Do you notice any changes in wording? Is there a significant difference in the length of these two documents?
6. Challenge the students to find out about the adoption of the Declaration of Independence to prepare for the next lesson. Who presented the rough draft to the Continental Congress? What issues were debated?

Day Two: (45-60 minutes)

1. Revisit the first lesson comparing the rough draft and the final copy with students sharing their insights. What additional information was gained through researching the process involved in the revisions and final adoption of the Declaration of Independence?
2. Select a picture book to read aloud to the whole class providing additional background knowledge on the various personalities and perspectives of the leaders of the American Revolution such as:

John, Paul, George, and Ben by Lane Smith (2006)

A humorous fictionalized account of the boyhoods of John Hancock, Paul Revere, George Washington, Ben Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson which portrays different childhood personality traits eventually valuable to the revolutionary cause.

Those Rebels: John and Tom by Barbara Kerley (2012) Portrays how two opposite personalities came together to help the Continental Congress reach consensus and adopt the Declaration of Independence.

3. This lesson focuses on paintings that depict the drafting and adoption of the Declaration of Independence.
4. Students work in pairs to analyze one of the three painting and to complete the Primary Source Analysis Tool. Hand out one of the paintings to each student group. Have the students first quickly glance at their image. Are any of pictures familiar? Hand out a \$2 bill to each table. The Trumbull painting is reproduced on the back of this currency.
5. Guide the students with their observations, reflections, and questions. Use the [Library of Congress Teacher's Guide to Analyzing Photographs and Prints](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Photos_and_Prints.pdf) (http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Photos_and_Prints.pdf) for additional questions if needed.

Observations:

- What do you notice first?
- What people and objects are shown?
- How are they arranged?
- What are the physical arrangements?

Encourage students to reflect on their observations:

- What is happening in this painting?
- Why do you think this painting was made?
- Who do you think was the audience for this image?
- What can you learn from examining this image?

Finally, the students record what they wonder about their painting.

6. During a whole class discussion, the students share their observations, reflections, and questions. Compare the three paintings. Which image is most familiar to most people? Why? What are some of the similarities and differences in the three images? Do the people appear to be still or active? Do the people seem to be in agreement or discord? What conclusions can be made with these comparisons?
7. Challenge the students to create a tableau portraying the scene in one of the paintings. A description of this small group project is found in the Extension Activities.

Materials:

Written documents:

[Rough draft of the Declaration of Independence](https://www.loc.gov/item/mtjbib000156/) (<https://www.loc.gov/item/mtjbib000156/>) (image of third page on page 8)

[Transcription of the rough draft](https://classroom.monticello.org/media-item/rough-draft-of-declaration-of-independence/)

(<https://classroom.monticello.org/media-item/rough-draft-of-declaration-of-independence/>)

[Final copy of the Declaration of Independence \(Stone Engraving Image\)](https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs)

(<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs>) (image on page 9)

[Transcription of the Declaration of Independence](https://classroom.monticello.org/media-item/engraving-of-the-declaration-of-independence/)

(<https://classroom.monticello.org/media-item/engraving-of-the-declaration-of-independence/>)

Primary Source Analysis Tools and Teacher's Guides:

[Library of Congress Primary Source Analysis Tool](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Primary_Source_Analysis_Tool.pdf)

(http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Primary_Source_Analysis_Tool.pdf)

[Library of Congress Teacher's Guide to Analyzing Manuscripts](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Manuscripts.pdf)

http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Manuscripts.pdf

[Library of Congress Teacher's Guide to Analyzing Photographs and Prints](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Photos_and_Prints.pdf)

(http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Photos_and_Prints.pdf)

Teacher Created Primary Source Analysis Tool (Attachment)

Paintings:

- Jean-Leon Gerome Ferris, *Drafting of the Declaration of Independence*, 1900, (Virginia Historical Society) (image on page 10)
- John Trumbull, *The Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776*, 1786-1820, (Yale University Art Gallery) (image on page 11)
- *The Signing of the Declaration of Independence*, 1947, (Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <<https://www.loc.gov/item/2005694793/>>. (image on page 12)

Two-Dollar bills

Picture Books:

- Kerley, Barbara. *Those Rebels, John and Tom*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2012.
- Smith, Lane. *John, Paul, George, and Ben*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2006.

Extension Activities:

[Comparing the Rough Draft with the First Printing](#)

(<https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/declaration/pdf/comparisons.pdf>)

[“The Declaration of Independence: Rewriting the Rough Draft”](#)

(<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/activities/rough-draft/index.html>)

Assessment:

- Teacher observation of small group work and participation in class discussions
- Evaluate the Primary Source Analysis Tool written response

Accommodations:

- The Library of Congress version of the Primary Source Analysis Tool may be used with secondary students or advanced elementary students.
- Students research the adoption of the Declaration of Independence in small groups. Many nonfiction books and databases are available in the media center in different reading levels and languages to accommodate various student needs.
- The extension activities described below addresses different learning styles and expressions of understanding.

Extension Activities:

Day One:

- Students compare the draft of the first two paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence with the final copy in this [Library of Congress created activity](#) (<https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/declaration/pdf/comparisons.pdf>)
- Students use an online activity to read the first two paragraphs of the draft of the Declaration of Independence, note the words edited and then create a new version of their own.

[“The Declaration of Independence: Rewriting the Rough Draft”](#)

(<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/activities/rough-draft/index.html>)

Day Two:

- Art Gallery Tableau Activity

An “Art Gallery” of student-posed tableaus of paintings would demonstrate learning in a unique and engaging way. After selecting one of the paintings a small group of students research the people and the event depicted in the image. Students may work together or assign specific tasks such as writing the script, gathering props and costumes, creating a background, and role playing in the tableau.

First, the actors place themselves in the position of the people in the painting recreating the scene in a stationary manner. After a few moments the actors come to life with dialog and actions reflecting the ideas of each person represented. The action can be in the form of a monologue with one character

speaking at a time while the other are motionless. Or the dialog can be interactive with all of the characters coming to life at the same time.

Following the “Art Gallery Tableau” presentations, creating a bulletin board designed to imitate a Facebook page displays the students’ understanding in a colorful and interactive manner. Divide the bulletin board into sections one for each tableau. Photographs of the tableau as well a copy of the painting arranged in a collage represent a Facebook page. Students interact with the bulletin board by applying stickers of smiley faces, hearts, stars, etc. to indicate “likes”. Also, by placing comments under the collage the students record their reactions, new understandings, and connections to their own life that the tableau inspired.