

1. What does Jefferson mean when he writes, "...in the course of events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume...the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and Nature's God entitle them..."?
2. According to his introduction (preamble), what purpose does the Declaration serve?
3. Jefferson said that "all men are created equal." How has our interpretation of that line changed over time?
4. According to the Enlightenment philosopher, John Locke, who inspired many of the founding fathers, the Natural rights of man are life, liberty, and the pursuit of property. Jefferson chose to replace "property" with "Happiness"? Why do you think this is? How does changing that one word change the meaning of the passage?
5. Why does Jefferson capitalize words that we would not ordinarily capitalize?
6. According to Enlightenment philosophy, governments exist to serve the will of the people. Jefferson includes this idea in the Declaration when he writes...
7. What rights do people have when a government becomes destructive of their natural rights?
8. After reading the list of complaints against Britain, look back at the language used. How does his word selection influence the tone and mood of the Declaration?
9. Why do you think Jefferson repeats "he has" and "he is" so much in the list of grievances?
10. In the conclusion to the Declaration, Jefferson makes repeated mention of the colonies as Free and Independent States. What can you infer about Jefferson's view of the political status of the colonies based on his language in this paragraph? How does that idea still impact us today?
11. Look at the blue passage to the right of the signatures. Why do you think the Continental Congress removed those words from the Declaration?