

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (1776)

Instructions: Read the topics from the document and write down talking points for in class discussion. The most famous sentence 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*

1. WE HOLD THESE **TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT, THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL**

ARE WE **ALL CREATED EQUAL**? IS IT A TRUTH? GIVE YOUR OPINION AND EXAMPLES. **TOPICS TO CONSIDER:** WHEN **AFRICAN-AMERICANS** WERE LEGALLY DEEMED 3/5THS OF A PERSON TO ENABLE THE CONTINUING THE PRACTICE OF SLAVERY (1787 – 1861), ENSLAVEMENT OF **NATIVE AMERICANS** ALONG WITH **AFRICAN-AMERICANS** (1700's), THE SCALP ACT OF 1756, BRACERO PROGRAM – **MEXICAN** FARM LABOR SUPPLY PROGRAM IMPORTED APPROXIMATELY 350,000 **MEXICANS** ANNUALLY TO WORK AS FARM LABOR (1951 – 1964). OBJECTIFICATION OF HUMANS.

2. THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED ...WITH CERTAIN **UNALIENABLE RIGHTS,**

WHAT DOES **UNALIENABLE RIGHTS** MEAN? **TOPICS TO CONSIDER:** THE DRED SCOT COURT DECISION DENIED **AFRICAN-AMERICAN SLAVES** CITIZENSHIP (1857), PLESSY VS. FERGUSON - SEPARATE BUT EQUAL (1868), **WOMEN** NOT GUARANTEED THE RIGHT TO VOTE UNTIL THE 19TH AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION (1920), **MISCEGENATION LAWS** (1700's – 1967), CALIFORNIA - **CHINESE** EXCLUSION ACT DENYING CHINESE CITIZENSHIP (1866-1898), LIMITS NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS (1921) AND DEPORTATION OF **MEXICANS** BEGINS (1932 - PRESENT), OPERATION WETBACK, 3.8 MILLION **MEXICAN** DEPORTED (1954 – 1958).

3. ...AMONG THESE ARE **LIFE,**

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF THE UNITED STATES MEANT WHEN THEY DECLARED '**LIFE**' TO BE ONE OF THE **UNALIENABLE RIGHTS**? **TOPICS TO CONSIDER:** ABORTION, THE DEATH PENALTY, WAR, LYNCHING (NO MANDATORY PUNISHMENT UNTIL 1964), EUTHANASIA, AND QUALITY OF LIFE...

4. **LIBERTY** AND

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF THE UNITED STATES MEANT WHEN THEY DECLARED '**LIBERTY**' TO BE ONE OF THE **UNALIENABLE RIGHTS**? **TOPICS TO CONSIDER:** **SLAVERY** (1700's to 1865), **JAPANESE-AMERICAN** INTERNMENT CAMPS (1942-1946), **ARIZONA SB 1070** LAW – LAWFUL STOP, DETENTION & ARREST OF **MEXICANS** MEANT TO CURB ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION BUT MEANS YOU CAN STOP ANY **MEXICAN** AND DEMAND TO SEE THEIR CITIZENSHIP PAPERS (2010), GUANTANAMO BAY **MUSLIMS** (2002- PRESENT) DETAINED INDEFINITELY WITHOUT TRIAL...

5. THE **PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS.** —

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF THE UNITED STATES MEANT WHEN THEY DECLARED '**PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS**' TO BE ONE OF THE **UNALIENABLE RIGHTS**? **TOPICS TO CONSIDER: (DEFINE HAPPINESS)** AND DISCUSS THE VARIOUS PERSPECTIVE ON WHAT HAPPINESS IS. **TOPIC TO CONSIDER:** LEGALIZATION OF MARIJUANA, LEGALIZATION OF ALCOHOL, ADDICTIONS, LEGALIZATION OF PROSTITUTION.

DUTY TO PROTEST - IN THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Excerpts of complaints against King George and England by the 13 colonies listed in the Declaration of Independence.

How might some of these complaints be evident in the past that instigated protests or warranted amendments?

How might some of these complaints or injustices be currently observable? What actions were taken to rectify the injustices?

CALL TO ACTION:

...whenever **any Form of Government becomes destructive** ... it is the Right of the People to **alter** or to abolish it,

Consider: (Bill of Rights Amendments through protest and course cases).

...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.**

...when **a long train of abuses and usurpations** ... **it is their right, it is their duty** ... **to provide new Guards for their future security.**

ACTIONS TAKEN	EXCERPTS OF COMPLAINTS
	<p>... 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.</p> <p>Consider: Voting for former prisoners, African-Americans, Women.</p>
	<p>... prevent the Population (name group discriminated against) ...obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their Migrations hither, and raising the Conditions of ... Appropriations of Lands.</p> <p>Consider: Immigration Laws, Chinese, Mexicans, Native Americans, Slaves.</p>
	<p>Sent ... Swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their Substance (taxes or citations).</p> <p>Consider: Lynching, JOD findings for Ferguson, Sandra Bland, Mexican Farm Workers</p>
	<p>For depriving us, in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury.</p> <p>Consider: Guantanamo, Japanese Internment Camps</p>
	<p>... tried for pre-tended Offences. Consider: Lynching, Trayvon Martin...</p>
	<p>In every stage of these Oppressions we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble Terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated Injury.</p> <p>Consider: Non-violent protests and their repercussions.</p>