

**Connect Across Texts**

In “Long Walk to Freedom,” you read about how South Africans overcame **exploitation** and **oppression** and demanded equal rights. Now travel to the United States and read how two other groups declared their rights.

## WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS



In 1776, a group of men representing Great Britain’s 13 North American colonies wrote one of history’s most famous persuasive texts. In it, they outlined the British king’s exploitation of the Colonies and declared their freedom from the oppression of his rule.

Seventy years later, another group made a similar declaration, this time demanding women’s equality and rights, including the right to vote.

John Parrot/Stocktrek Images, after the painting by J.L.G. Ferris.



▲ Ben Franklin (left), John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson (standing) study a draft of the Declaration of Independence.



▲ Elizabeth Cady Stanton (seated) and Susan B. Anthony (standing) were leaders and partners in the fight for women's rights.

**Key Vocabulary**

- **exploitation** *n.*, selfish use of others for personal gain
- **oppression** *n.*, the act of preventing people from having equal rights





## from THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, 1776

...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.... —Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. **1**

The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and **usurpations**, all having in direct object the establishment of **an absolute Tyranny** over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world....

—He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures....

—He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws...

—For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world...

—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... **2**

We, therefore...solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States...

### **1 Argument**

What reasons do the authors give to support their claim for changing the current government? What specific word choices help the authors support their claim?

### **2 Form Generalizations**

What generalization can you make about the King of Great Britain, based on evidence from the text?

#### **In Other Words**

**endowed** given  
**unalienable** guaranteed  
**consent of** agreement by  
**abolish** end  
**usurpations** takeovers  
**an absolute Tyranny** complete power

#### **Historical Background**

The authors used a writing style typical of the 1700s, which included capitalizing important nouns. The Declaration contained the first formal statement by a whole people of their right to a government of their choosing.





## from THE DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS, 1848

...We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse **allegiance** to it, and to insist upon the institution of a 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.... Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled. **3**

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world....

He has **compelled** her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice....

He has denied her the **facilities** for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her....

He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and **abject** life.

Now,... because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and **fraudulently deprived of their most sacred** rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.... **4** ❖



### **3 Argument**

What reasons do the authors give for changing the current government? How do their reasons relate to the reasons in the Declaration of Independence?

### **4 Form Generalizations**

What generalization can you make about what the authors want, based on their reasons and evidence?

#### **Key Vocabulary**

- **distinction** *n.*, difference
- apathetic** *adj.*, indifferent, uninterested

#### **In Other Words**

**allegiance** loyalty  
**compelled** forced  
**facilities** opportunities  
**abject** horrible  
**fraudulently deprived of their most sacred** without their most important

#### **Historical Background**

In 1848, the U.S. drew big **distinctions** between men and women, and many were **apathetic** about women's rights. Women's rights activists held a meeting in Seneca Falls, New York. There they signed the **Declaration of Sentiments**.





## ANALYZE We Hold These Truths

1. **Inference** Why did the authors of the Declaration of Sentiments base their document on the Declaration of Independence?
2. **Vocabulary** What is an example of **oppression** given by the authors of the Declaration of Independence? What is an example of oppression in the Declaration of Sentiments? Explain why each is an example of oppression.
3. **Relate Arguments** How are the two declarations alike? How are they different? Use the authors' claims, reasons, and evidence from both texts to explain your responses.
4. **Focus Strategy Form Generalizations** What generalization can you make about how the authors of the two declarations had been treated? Use evidence from each text to support your response.

### Return to the Text

**Reread and Write** With a partner, choose one of the declarations and write a paragraph about how the authors' word choices support their claims and appeal to readers' emotions.

