

Declaration of Independence: V1 to V2 Answer Key

Here is the list of possible changes between Jefferson's initial version and that reported by the Committee; in other words, these are the changes proposed by Franklin and Adams. [(Stylistic changes in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling, such as replacing "&" with "and", have been omitted.)¹ Consistent with how Jefferson later marked the modifications Congress (v3) made to the Committee's draft (v2), the additions the Committee (v2) made to Jefferson's first draft (v1) are in {brackets}, deletions made to Jefferson's draft by the committee are underlined.²

A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for a{one} people to advance from that subordination in{dissolve the political bands} which they have hitherto remained, &{connected them with another, and} to assume among the powers of the earth the {separate and} equal & independant station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the change{separation}.

We hold these truths to be sacred & undeniable {self evident}: that all men are created equal & independant; that from that equal creation they derive rights{are endowed by their Creator with} inherent and inalienable {rights; that} among which{these} are the preservation of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these ends{rights}, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government shall become {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. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long

¹ This change list was created by comparing the final version against Jefferson's annotated Committee draft, found at <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/draft-of-the-declaration-of-independence/>

² This change list was created by comparing the Committee draft with Jefferson's rough draft. <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/draft-of-the-declaration-of-independence/> ; *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. Vol. 1, 1760-1776. Ed. Julian P. Boyd. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950, pp 243-247", found at the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/declara/ruffdrft.html>

See also the drafts of the Declaration gathered by Carl Becker and found at the Online Library of Liberty, https://oll.libertyfund.org/page/1776-declaration-of-independence-various-drafts#f0034_footnote_nt072

train of abuses and usurpations, begun at a distinguished period and pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to subject *{reduce}* them to arbitrary power *{under absolute despotism}*, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to expunge their former systems of government. The history of his *{the}* present majesty *{king of Great Britain}* is a history of unremitting injuries and usurpations, among which no one fact stands single or *{appears no}* solitary *{fact}* to contradict the uniform tenor of the rest *{but}* all of which have in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this let facts be submitted to a candid world for the truth of which we pledge a faith yet unsullied by falsehood.

He has refused his assent to laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

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 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 *{the}* tyrants alone *{only}*.

{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 dissolved representative houses repeatedly and continually for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long space of 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 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 migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has suffered the administration of justice totally to cease in some of these colonies *{states}* refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made *our* judges dependent on his will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount *{and payment}* of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices by a self assumed power and sent hither swarms of *{new}* officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us in times of peace standing armies and ships of war *{without the consent of our legislatures.}*

He has affected to render the military independent of, and superior to, the civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitutions and unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their *{acts of}* pretended acts of legislation for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us;

for protecting them by a mock trial from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states;

for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world;

for imposing taxes on us without our consent;

for depriving us of the benefits of trial by jury;

for transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences; *{ 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 into these states};* for taking away our charters, *{abolishing our most valuable laws, and}* altering fundamentally the forms of our governments;

for suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here withdrawing his governors, and declaring us out of his allegiance and protection.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt 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 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 endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions of existence.

He has incited treasonable insurrections *{of}* our fellow subjects*{citizens}*, with the allurements of forfeiture and confiscation of our property.

He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, capturing and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of INFIDEL powers, is the warfare of the CHRISTIAN king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce. And that this assemblage of horrors might *want no fact of distinguished die*³ he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, &*{by}* murdering the people on whom he also obtruded them: thus paying off former crimes committed against the LIBERTIES of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the LIVES of another.

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 injuries.

A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant is unfit to be the ruler of a people who mean to be free. Future ages will scarcely believe that the hardiness of one man adventured, within the short compass of twelve years only, on*{to lay a foundation}* so many acts of *{broad and so undisguised for}* tyranny without a mask, over a people fostered and fixed in principle of liberty *{freedom}*.

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend a jurisdiction over these our states. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here, no one of which could warrant so strange a pretension: that these were effected at the expense of our own blood and treasure, unassisted by the wealth or the strength of Great Britain: that in constituting indeed our several forms of government, we had adopted one common king, thereby laying a foundation for perpetual league and amity with them: but that submission to their parliament was no part of our constitution, nor ever in idea, if history may be credited: and, we *{have}* appealed to their native justice and magnanimity and as well as to the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations which were likely to interrupt our connection and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity, and when occasions have been given them, by the regular course of their laws, of removing from their councils the disturbers of our harmony, they have, by their free election, re-established them in power. At this very time too, they are permitting their chief magistrate to send over not

³ A die as in a government seal or stamp: Jefferson's draft is saying in effect that in order to make this happen, the government is undertaking what follows.

only soldiers of our common blood, but Scotch and foreign mercenaries to invade & deluge {and destroy} us in blood. These facts have given the last stab to agonizing affection, and manly spirit bids us to renounce forever these unfeeling brethren. We must endeavor to forget our former love for them, and to hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends. We might have been a free and a great people together; but a communication of grandeur and of freedom, it seems, is below their dignity. Be it so, since they will have it. The road to happiness and to glory is open to us too. We will climb {tread} it in a separate state {apart from them}, and acquiesce in the necessity which pronounces {denounces} our everlasting Adieu! {eternal separation.}

We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled, do in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these states reject and renounce all allegiance and subjection to the kings of Great Britain and all others who may hereafter claim by, through or under them; we utterly dissolve & break off all political connection which may heretofore have subsisted between us and the people or parliament of Great Britain: and finally we do assert and declare these colonies to be free and independent states, and that as free and independent states, they shall hereafter have {full} power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.

And for the support of this declaration, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

Significant changes you may wish to note:

The truths go from "sacred and undeniable" to "self-evident".

The derivation of these from rights from a Creator, rather than merely creation, is made more explicit.

The charge of "calling together legislative bodies at places unusual" was likely added by Adams, since that happened in Massachusetts.

The preservation of more aristocratic governance in Quebec ("abolishing the free system of English laws") as a model for eliminating English liberty is an additional charge not made by Jefferson.

It is clarified that the problem of keeping of troops is because it has been done without the consent of the colonial legislatures.