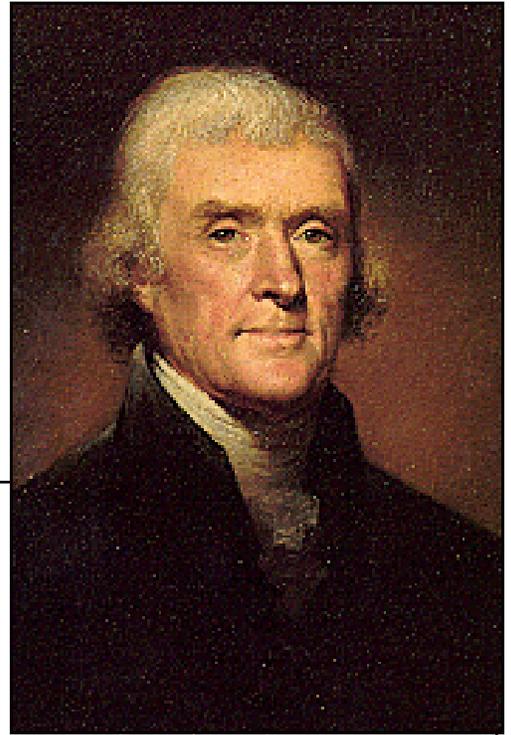




## Teaching Guide

### SEGMENT 1, WEBISODE 1

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



Thomas Jefferson



#### Segment Overview

On July 4, 1776, representatives from the thirteen American colonies affixed their signatures to a manifesto declaring their independence from Great Britain. The political ideas contained in the Declaration of Independence had been set forth by John Locke and other European philosophers, but Thomas Jefferson expressed the convictions and resolution of the American people in enduring prose and unforgettable phrases.

The declaration outlines the “self-evident” truths and “unalienable rights” of man and lists the grievances against King George III, justifying the breaking of ties between the colonies and the mother country.

#### Teacher Directions

1. Determine what students know about the Declaration of Independence by asking the following questions.
  - Why were the signers of the Declaration of Independence willing to risk their lives?
  - What did they want?
  - According to the declaration, what rights do all men have?
2. Discuss with the students.

The signers of the Declaration of Independence were willing to risk their lives for independence from Great Britain. They believed England had denied them a basic political right—the right to govern themselves. In the declaration, they wrote that all men are created equal and have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. They expressed the belief that government only has the power that the people grant to it.



#### Let's Discuss



### History Sleuth

#### Teacher Directions

1. Show an image of the Declaration of Independence to the students. If possible, use the link to Declaration @ <http://www.nara.gov/exhall/charters/declaration/decstone.jpg>
2. Students, in small teams, discuss the following questions.
  - Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?
  - Who signed the declaration first? Why?
  - Do you recognize the names of any of the signers?
  - Why are the names arranged in columns and/or groups?
3. In the discussion of the questions, students should understand the following information.

Members of the Continental Congress chose thirty-three year-old Thomas Jefferson, an experienced and talented writer, to draft the Declaration of Independence. Other members of the congress made some corrections to his draft and crossed out a section that restricted the slave trade. On July 4, 1776, all the members of the congress approved the declaration and voted to adopt it. The president of congress, John Hancock, signed the declaration. The congress ordered that copies be sent to assemblies throughout the colonies and to the commanding officers of the continental troops. A few weeks later, a copy of the declaration was printed and signed by every member of congress. Men signed in groups according to the colonies they represented.

4. Students create an ABC book about the Declaration of Independence and its signers. Students feature one letter of the alphabet on each page with a word, term or person related to the Declaration. Students illustrate their books.

#### Teacher Directions

1. Students, in small teams, discuss the following questions.
  - Have you ever signed your name to something really important? Something that could change your life? Something that could possibly lead to prison or death?
  - If you knew that you might be thrown into prison, hanged as a traitor, or lose everything you owned just by signing your name, what might go through your mind just before your pen touched that paper? Is there any cause or belief for which you might be willing to give up everything?
2. Discuss the following with the students.

On July 4, 1776, fifty-six men representing the thirteen colonies signed a document that declared their desire to be free from English rule. The



### What do you Think?

What Do You Think, Cont.

Declaration of Independence was revolutionary—in every sense of the word. These men knew that by signing, they could be executed for treason against England. That’s why they wrote, “We mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honour.”

3. Ask the students the following question,  
What do they mean by “sacred honour”?

4. Tell the students.

The declaration said that ordinary men—not kings or emperors—would write their own laws and rule their nation.

5. Distribute the Student Sheets: *Five Signers*.

Students use the sheets to find out what happened to five signers of the Declaration of Independence.

### Teacher Directions

1. Ask the students.

How did Benjamin Rush and Richard Allen help African Americans move toward freedom?

2. Students read the Student Sheet: *Moving Towards Heaven*.
3. Students design a magazine cover and brief biographical sketch honoring either Rush or Allen as “Person of the Year.”
4. Display student magazine covers in the classroom.

### Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

**Science** — Students read about the yellow fever epidemic that afflicted Philadelphia in 1793. What caused it? What symptoms does it produce? How is it treated today? Are vaccinations available?

**Language Arts** — Phillis Wheatley’s book *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, was the first book of poetry by a black American writer (in 1773). Benjamin Rush wrote that her “singular genius and accomplishments are such as not only do honour to her sex, but to human nature.” Distribute Student Sheet: *Phillis Wheatley’s Poetry* to students. Students read one of



Connections, Cont.

Wheatley's poems, such as "On Imagination" or "On Being Brought from Africa to America."

**Music** — What music might Benjamin Rush, John Adams, and Benjamin Harrison have listened to during that summer of 1776? Who were the leading composers of the day, and what popular "Top Ten" pieces might these gentlemen have enjoyed? Students research and listen to eighteenth century music. Students might start by visiting the web site Popular Songs in American History @ <http://www.contemplator.com/america/index.html>.

## *Five Signers*

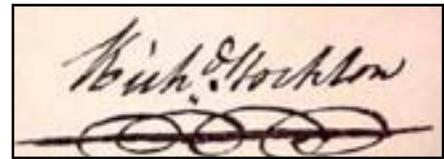
**Charles Carroll** — Carroll, one of the richest men in the colonies, owned a large estate in Maryland. When he signed the declaration, one observer, realizing that Carroll would lose all his wealth if the British defeated the colonists, commented, “There go a few millions.” Carroll served in the Continental Congress and in the United States Senate until retiring from public service in his mid-sixties. The last surviving signer of the declaration, Carroll died at age ninety-five.



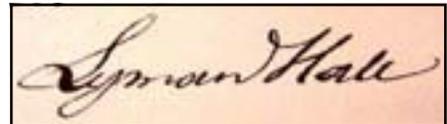
**John Hart** — Hart, a wealthy farmer from New Jersey, saw his property destroyed, his children scattered, and his wife die during the war. He fled for his own life, living in caves and forests to escape capture by the British. He died just three years after signing his name to the declaration.



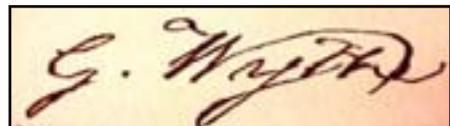
**Richard Stockton** — Stockton, a justice in colonial New Jersey’s supreme court, returned home after signing the declaration to find that his wife and children had fled in anticipation of a British invasion. The British overran New Jersey, pulled Justice Stockton from his bed, beat him, and threw him into prison. He nearly starved, and never fully recovered from the bad treatment he received at their hands. He lost his home, which included his large library, and died in poverty in 1781.



**Lyman Hall** — Hall, who represented Georgia at the Continental Congress, was a physician and plantation owner. The British burned his plantation near Savannah and accused him of high treason. He fled to Charleston and later to Connecticut. After the war, he returned to Georgia, reclaimed his land, and served in the state assembly and as governor. He died in 1790 at the age of seventy-four.



**George Wythe** — Wythe, who dropped out of college because he couldn’t pay the fees, studied law on his own and became a practicing lawyer at the age of twenty. He served in the Virginia House of Burgesses and became America’s first professor of law at the College of William and Mary, where his students included Thomas Jefferson. After signing the declaration as a representative from Virginia, he returned to his home, where he served in several important posts. An abolitionist, he freed his slaves and made provisions for their support until they could reach financial independence. A family member, who resented seeing part of the family fortune



## *Moving Toward Heaven: Benjamin Rush, Richard Allen, and the Free Black Church*



**Richard Allen** fought for the rights of African Americans and founded the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) denomination in 1817, the first national African American church.

**I**t was an outrage, and Richard Allen knew it. So did Benjamin Rush.

Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and other free black men had helped contribute money to expand the church they attended in Philadelphia. On the first Sunday in the newly expanded building, an usher pulled Allen and Jones off their knees and told them they must sit in the back balcony—just because of their race. They left—and took other black worshippers with them—realizing they needed to build a church of their own.

Richard Allen and Absalom Jones had founded the Free African Society, a mutual-aid association that stressed charity and self-help some five years before. One of their strongest supporters was Benjamin Rush, the Philadelphia doctor and signer of the Declaration of Independence, who served as president of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society. Several other prominent whites, including Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson, assisted.



**Benjamin Rush**

It took several years, but the group raised funds to build a church. To celebrate the raising of the roof of the first African Church in the United States, the society held a dinner. Rush described the event. “About one hundred white persons, chiefly carpenters, dined at one table, who were waited upon by Africans. Afterward about fifty black people sat down at the same table, who were waited upon by white people. Never did I see people more happy.” He toasted the occasion: “May African Churches everywhere soon succeed African bondage.” (In this instance, “succeed” means “take the place of” or to “follow.”)

# Phillis Wheatley's Poetry



## On Being Brought from Africa to America

**W**AS mercy brought me from my Pagan land,  
Taught my benighted soul to understand  
That there's a God, that there's a Saviour too:  
Once I redemption neither sought nor knew,  
Some view our sable race with scornful eye,  
"Their colour is a diabolic die."  
Remember, Christians, Negroes, black as Cain,  
May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train.

## On Imagination

**I**hy various works, imperial queen, we see,  
How bright their forms! how deck'd with  
pomp by thee!  
Thy wond'rous acts in beauteous order stand,  
And all attest how potent is thine hand.

From Helicon's refulgent heights attend,  
Ye sacred choir, and my attempts befriend:  
To tell her glories with a faithful tongue,  
Ye blooming graces, triumph in my song.

Now here, now there, the roving Fancy flies,  
Till some lov'd object strikes her wand'ring eyes,  
Whose silken fetters all the senses bind,  
And soft captivity involves the mind.

Imagination! who can sing thy force?  
Or who describe the swiftness of thy course?  
Soaring through air to find the bright abode,  
Th' empyreal palace of the thund'ring God,  
We on thy pinions can surpass the wind,  
And leave the rolling universe behind:  
From star to star the mental optics rove,  
Measure the skies, and range the realms above.  
There in one view we grasp the mighty whole,  
Or with new worlds amaze th' unbounded soul.

Though Winter frowns to Fancy's raptur'd eyes  
The fields may flourish, and gay scenes arise;  
The frozen deeps may break their iron bands,  
And bid their waters murmur o'er the sands.

Fair Flora may resume her fragrant reign,  
And with her flow'ry riches deck the plain;  
Sylvanus may diffuse his honours round,  
And all the forest may with leaves be crown'd:  
Show'rs may descend, and dews their gems disclose,  
And nectar sparkle on the blooming rose.

Such is thy pow'r, nor are thine orders vain,  
O thou the leader of the mental train:  
In full perfection all thy works are wrought,  
And thine the sceptre o'er the realms of thought.  
Before thy throne the subject-passions bow,  
Of subject-passions sov'reign ruler thou;  
At thy command joy rushes on the heart,  
And through the glowing veins the spirits dart.

Fancy might now her silken pinions try  
To rise from earth, and sweep th' expanse on high:  
From Tithon's bed now might Aurora rise,  
Her cheeks all glowing with celestial dies,  
While a pure stream of light o'erflows the skies.  
The monarch of the day I might behold,  
And all the mountains tipt with radiant gold,  
But I reluctant leave the pleasing views,  
Which Fancy dresses to delight the Muse;  
Winter austere forbids me to aspire,  
And northern tempests damp the rising fire;  
They chill the tides of Fancy's flowing sea,  
Cease then, my song, cease the unequal lay.

