

## **Inventing America: The Untold Story of the Declaration of Independence**

### **Activity 1:**

Directions: Watch Inventing America: Making A Nation. As you watch, answer the following questions.

1. According to John Adams, when did the Revolution begin?
2. What does John Adams call the Boston Massacre? Why?
3. Why was Parliament taxing the colonists in the first place?
4. Why did John Adams defend the British soldiers on trial for murder? What was the result of the case?
5. Who made an engraving of the Boston Massacre? How did this image portray the event?
6. According to John Adams what was “the last straw” for the colonists? What did they do as a response?
7. Why was Benjamin Franklin frustrated with Pennsylvania’s government?
8. What was the Stamp Act?
9. How did Thomas Jefferson argue that the American colonists did not have to follow the laws of Parliament?
10. “Can His Majesty thus put down all laws under his feet? Can he erect a power superior to himself? He has done it indeed by force; but let him remember that force cannot give

## Grades 6-8

right....Kings are the servants, not the proprietors of the people....Let not the name of George the Third be a blot on the page of history.”

What is Jefferson saying in this passage? How was it received by the Virginia delegates? By the English?

11. What was the punishment for treason?
12. Why did Adams nominate Washington over Hancock to command the Continental Army?
13. What did Mr. Dickinson say in his Declaration of the Causes of Taking Up Arms?
14. How did this differ from what he wrote in the Olive Branch Petition?
15. Why did Mr. Dickinson change his mind about revolution and oppose war?
16. What does Jefferson mean by “natural law”? How is this different from common law?
17. What document helped “turn the tide of public in favor of independence?”
18. What were some of the different arguments between the radicals and conservatives over the Declaration?
19. The following statement was in the original draft of the Declaration: “The Christian king of Great Britain has waged cruel war against human nature in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere.” Why was it taken out?
20. When was the vote unanimous in favor of passing the Declaration?

## Activity 2

Reflecting on the video: Think back on the conversations you heard with the four men. They talked a lot about the origins of the Revolution. Fill out the following chart based on the information you received from the video.

**Origins of the Revolution**

Political Reasons	Beliefs or Religious Reasons	Economic Reasons

**Activity 3:**

During the American Revolution, the American colonists had to decide whether to support Revolution and a war for independence or to remain loyal to the British. Some Americans choose to not pick either side.

Define the following vocabulary terms and give a reason why someone would have chosen that particular side.

**Patriot:**

Why:

**Loyalist:**

Why: