

## TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

**Lesson Title** – Seneca Falls Declaration (Declaration of Sentiments)

Grade - 8

Length of class period – 60 minutes

Inquiry – (What essential question are students answering, what problem are they solving, or what decision are they making?) – Would you have attended the Women’s Rights Conference at Seneca Falls, New York in 1848?

Objectives (What content and skills do you expect students to learn from this lesson?)

- The student will understand similarities and differences in the first two paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence and the first two paragraphs of the Declaration of Sentiments.
- The student will be able to explain the sentiments (complaints) and the resolutions listed in the Declaration of Sentiments.
- The student will improve his/her ability to defend a position based on historical information.

Materials (What primary sources or local resources are the basis for this lesson? – (please attach)

- Declaration of Independence – (attached)
- Seneca Falls Declaration (Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions) – (attached)
- Group recording sheet – (attached)

Activities (What will you and your students do during the lesson to promote learning?)

- Teacher introduces Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott’s idea for the Women’s Rights Conference based on their own experiences and the treatment of other women.
- Students are grouped in threes.
- Teacher hands out copies of the Declaration of Independence, Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, and the group recording sheet to each group.
- Teacher asks students to work together, examine each document and complete the group recording sheet to be prepared for class discussion.
- Teacher moves group to group helping students with wording as each group discusses and responds to questions.
- Class discussion asking students to explain and react to the sentiments and resolutions in the document.
- Teacher asks students to take a position (perhaps by standing on one side of the classroom or the other), would they have attended the 1848 Women’s Rights Conference – why or why not?
- Closure activity – each student is given a half sheet of paper and asked to respond to the following – “If you had attended the Women’s Rights Conference, what is

your reaction to the Declaration they approved? If you did not attend, what is your reaction to the conference when you read about it in the newspaper the following week?"

- Discussion of closure question.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

- Students participation during the groupwork
- Students participation during class discussion
- Students responses to closure writing question
- Students understanding of the Seneca Falls Conference as demonstrated in their newspaper assignment

## **Seneca Falls Declaration Lesson Group Recording Sheet**

Names –

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Please work together as a group, discuss your ideas, and have one person record your group's response to each of the following questions.

1. Read the first two paragraphs of The Declaration of Independence and the first two paragraphs of the Seneca Falls Declaration.
  - How are they similar?
  - How are they different?
  
2. Following the first two paragraphs in the Declaration of Independence are listed a series of complaints against the King. Following the first two paragraphs in the Seneca Falls Declaration are listed a series of complaints (sentiments) against American men in 1848. Select five of these sentiments and rewrite them in your own words, modern day English that we can easily understand.
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- 3. Following the list of sentiments, there is a list of resolutions, things the participants at the convention wanted done to solve these problems. Select three of these resolutions and rewrite them in your own words.
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- 4. Can you think of any resolutions that women of today might want to include in a list of resolutions about their life today?
- 5. If you had been alive and living near Seneca Falls, New York in 1848, would you have attended the convention? Why or why not. (You may have different answers from group members.)

□<http://www.law.indiana.edu/uslawdocs/declaration.html>

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## **The Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies**

### **The Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies**

In CONGRESS, July 4, 1776

### **The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,**

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal 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 separation.

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. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, 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 train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them 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 alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain [George III] 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 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 tyrants 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, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long 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 mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured 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 obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made 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, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies 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 constitution and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended 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, in many cases, 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 neighbouring 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 Colonies:

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, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

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 compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally 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 excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured 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.

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. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

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 an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by the Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British

Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they 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, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

*The signers of the Declaration represented the new states as follows:*

## **New Hampshire**

Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple, Matthew Thornton

## **Massachusetts**

John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, Elbridge Gerry

## **Rhode Island**

Stephen Hopkins, William Ellery

## **Connecticut**

Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, William Williams, Oliver Wolcott

## **New York**

William Floyd, Philip Livingston, Francis Lewis, Lewis Morris

## **New Jersey**

Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon, Francis Hopkinson, John Hart, Abraham Clark

## **Pennsylvania**

Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, John Morton, George Clymer, James Smith, George Taylor, James Wilson, George Ross

## **Delaware**

Caesar Rodney, George Read, Thomas McKean

## **Maryland**

Samuel Chase, William Paca, Thomas Stone, Charles Carroll of Carrollton

## **Virginia**

George Wythe, Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Nelson, Jr., Francis Lightfoot Lee, Carter Braxton

## **North Carolina**

William Hooper, Joseph Hewes, John Penn

## **South Carolina**

Edward Rutledge, Thomas Heyward, Jr., Thomas Lynch, Jr., Arthur Middleton

## **Georgia**

Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, George Walton

## THE SENECA FALLS DECLARATION (1848)

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

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### 1. Declaration of Sentiments

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one 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 that impel them to such a course.

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. 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 train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, 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 the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled. 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 never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.**

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

**He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men\_both natives and foreigners.**

**Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.**

**He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead. He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.**

**He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband.**

**In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master—the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.**

**He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes, and in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.**

**After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single, and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.**

**He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration. He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.**

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

**He allows her in Church, as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.**

**He has created a false public sentiment by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated, but deemed of little account in man.**

**He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and to her God.**

**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, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation—in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and 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.**

**In entering upon the great work before us. we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and National legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions embracing every part of the country.**

## **2. resolutions**

**WHEREAS, The great precept of nature is conceded to be, that ' man shall pursue his own true and substantial happiness.' Blackstone in his Commentaries remarks, that this law of Nature being coeval with mankind, and dictated by God himself, is of course superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries and at all times; no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this. and such of them as are valid, derive all their force. and all their validity, and all their authority, mediately and immediately, from this original; therefore,**

**Resolved, That such laws as conflict, in any way with the true and substantial happiness of woman, are contrary to the great precept of nature and of no validity, for this is "superior in obligation to any other."**

**Resolved, That all laws which prevent woman from occupying such a station in society as her conscience shall dictate, or which place her in a position inferior to that of man, are contrary to the great precept of nature, and therefore of no force or authority.**

**Resolved, That woman is man's equal\_was intended to be so by the Creator, and the highest good of the race demands that she should be recognized as such.**

**Resolved, That the women of this country ought to be enlightened in regard to the laws under which they live, that they may no longer publish their degradation by declaring themselves satisfied with their present position, nor their ignorance. by asserting that they have all the rights they want.**

**Resolved. That inasmuch as man, while claiming for himself intellectual superiority. does accord to woman moral superionty. it is pre-eminently his duty to encourage her to speak and teach. as she has an opportunity, in all religious assemblies.**

**Resolved, That the same amount of virtue, delicacy, and refinement of behavior that is required of woman in the social state, should also be required of man, and the same transgressions should be visited with equal severity on both man and woman.**

**Resolved, That the objection of indelicacy and impropriety, which is so often brought against woman when she addresses a public audience, comes with a very ill-grace from those who encourage, by their attendance, her appearance on the stage, in the concert. Or in feats of the circus.**

**Resolved, That woman has too long rested satisfied in the circumscribed limits which corrupt customs and a perverted application of the Scriptures have marked out for her, and that it is time she should move in the enlarged sphere which her great Creator has assigned her.**

**Resolved, That it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.**

**Resolved, That the equality of human rights results necessarily from the fact of the identity of the race in capabilities and responsibilities.**

**Resolved, therefore. That, being invested by the creator with the same capabilities, and the same consciousness of responsibility for their exercise, it is demonstrably the right and duty of woman, equally with man, to promote every righteous cause by every righteous means; and especially in regard to the great subjects of morals and religion, it is self-evidently her right to participate with her brother in teaching them, both in private and in public, by writing and by speaking, by any instrumentalities proper to be used, and in any assemblies proper to be held; and this being a self evident truth growing out of the divinely implanted principles of human nature, any custom or authority adverse to it, whether modern or wearing the hoary sanction of antiquity, is to be regarded as a self- evident falsehood, and at war with mankind.**

**Resolved, That the speedy success of our cause depends upon the zealous and untiring efforts of both men and women, for the overthrow of the monopoly of the pulpit, and for the securing to women an equal participation with men in the various trades, professions, and commerce.**

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