



Museum & Archives of Rockingham County & Charters of Freedom
Essay Competition

Title: "Why is the Declaration of Independence important"?

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It has been over two hundred and thirty-nine years since the Declaration of Independence has been signed. Some people may ask if the Declaration of Independence is still important today. In this essay I would like to pose a question. Would there be a United States of America without the Declaration of Independence? While you ponder that question, I would like to share with you some reason why the Declaration of Independence is so important. I would like to begin by telling you about the riveting history of this important document. The Declaration of Independence was written by Thomas Jefferson (Fradin, 2002, p.24). He was from Virginia, but wrote the document over seventeen days in Philadelphia. It was adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. (Fradin, 2002, p.24)

Now, let's talk about why the Declaration of Independence is so important. This document set the framework for the nation. It set in motion the chain of events that gave birth to our great nation. The declaration was the official announcement that the colonies would no longer be ruled by Great Britain. Thomas Jefferson made it clear in the document that the thirteen colonies would govern themselves and be set apart from Great Britain. Jefferson drafted the declaration in an attempt to build a nation unlike any other at the time. They were able to do this by laying out the problems with being governed by the crown. By doing this they also laid out how the colonies would govern themselves differently. The solution was to set up our democracy. It was a very successful plan.

The Declaration of Independence outlined what The Continental Congress envisioned for the new nation. We still enjoy these freedoms and liberties written about in the declaration today.

Third, the declaration contains the arguments that the colonists used to explain why they wanted to be free of British rule. Also, it gave us unalienable Rights, which among these are "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," and that is why the Declaration of Independence is so important. It ensured that the American government would never be a tyranny but a democracy. It will be where the people's voices could be heard. Liberty was the main purpose of the Declaration of Independence. The definition of liberty is the state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one's way of life, behavior, or political views. The Declaration evokes this definition for everyone in the colonies to see there could a better way of life. It ensured that there would be checks and balances put into place. That is what would set the tone for democracy and freedom to be set into motion. The Declaration commands the people to "alter or to abolish" any government when it becomes destructive and fails the people. That is why we have the House of Representatives and the Senate. These two chambers are the representatives for the people. Their job is to make sure the people's voices are heard. They are there to make sure bills are voted on and not just made into law. Under British rule, the colonist was subject to all laws and taxes without proper representation. By setting up checks and balances we would also avoid a dictatorship or communist government. Even though some people do not agree, the declaration is important because it made this great nation what it is today. The Declaration of Independence proves that it is possible to change the course of a nation. The governing powers can use democracy to evoke change. The Declaration of Independence is still with us and that we will not collapse if we stand by this document. Also, the Declaration of Independence changed the world as we know it because it gave birth to the United States of America and gave birth to democracy. We were one of the first nations to use democracy in a very long time, where we broke the chains to Britain and we were free, and that is something to be thankful for.

In conclusion, the reason why the Declaration of Independence is so important is because without it America wouldn't exist as we know it today. Some people call the Declaration of Independence the birth certificate to the nation. Reading this very important document helps us look back and we can imagine how different life would be if America was still governed by the crown. That is the whole reason we celebrate the 4th of July. It is our great nation's birthday.