

Name _____

The Declaration of Independence: Catalyst for the American Revolution

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. The Declaration of Independence provided a moral basis for the American Revolution through its articulation of key philosophical principles. These principles included the idea that individuals possess unalienable rights, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The declaration also emphasized that governments exist to secure these rights and that when a government violates them, the people have the right to alter or abolish it. These principles justified the colonists' rebellion against British rule by highlighting their moral duty to resist oppressive government and pursue self-determination.
2. The Declaration of Independence served as a unifying force among the American colonists during the revolution by providing a clear statement of purpose and shared ideals. The document's powerful rhetoric, particularly its famous opening lines, resonated with people from various backgrounds and regions, fostering a sense of commitment to the cause of independence. It inspired a shared sense of purpose and unity, bringing together colonists who might have had different perspectives on other issues.
3. The list of grievances against King George III in the Declaration of Independence played a significant role in justifying armed conflict. It served several purposes, including documenting the colonists' specific complaints against British rule, providing evidence of British tyranny, and justifying their decision to seek independence. By listing these grievances, the document made a compelling case for the necessity of armed conflict to secure their rights and freedom, as it demonstrated that peaceful resolutions had been exhausted and that the British government had repeatedly violated the colonists' rights.
4. The international impact of the Declaration of Independence during the American Revolution was significant. The document resonated with sympathizers in Europe and other countries who shared similar ideals of individual rights and self-determination. This support helped the American colonies secure vital alliances and resources, ultimately contributing to their success in the revolution. The document served as a symbol of hope and inspiration beyond American borders, inspiring movements for freedom and self-determination in other parts of the world.

