

Name _____

The Minds Behind the Declaration: Authors and Drafters

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. Answer: John Adams nominated Thomas Jefferson to write the Declaration and played a crucial role in building support for independence. Benjamin Franklin provided valuable input and guidance during the drafting process. Roger Sherman and Robert Livingston were part of the Committee of Five, representing diverse interests among the colonies and contributing to the document's development.
2. Answer: The Committee of Five was significant in drafting the Declaration of Independence, bringing together a diverse group of delegates from different colonies. Their diverse backgrounds and perspectives ensured that the document represented a broad range of colonial interests. This diversity helped create a well-rounded and inclusive declaration.
3. Answer: The drafting process began with Thomas Jefferson's initial draft, which was reviewed and edited by the Committee of Five. The entire Continental Congress then debated and made revisions to the document before its adoption on July 4, 1776. Debates centered on issues such as the inclusion of specific grievances against the king and the wording of the declaration's principles.
4. Answer: The Declaration of Independence has enduring significance as a symbol of freedom, equality, and the pursuit of happiness. It laid the foundation for the United States, influencing the nation's values and identity by emphasizing natural rights, government by consent, and the right to revolution. It is celebrated today as a document that embodies the core principles of American democracy and independence.

