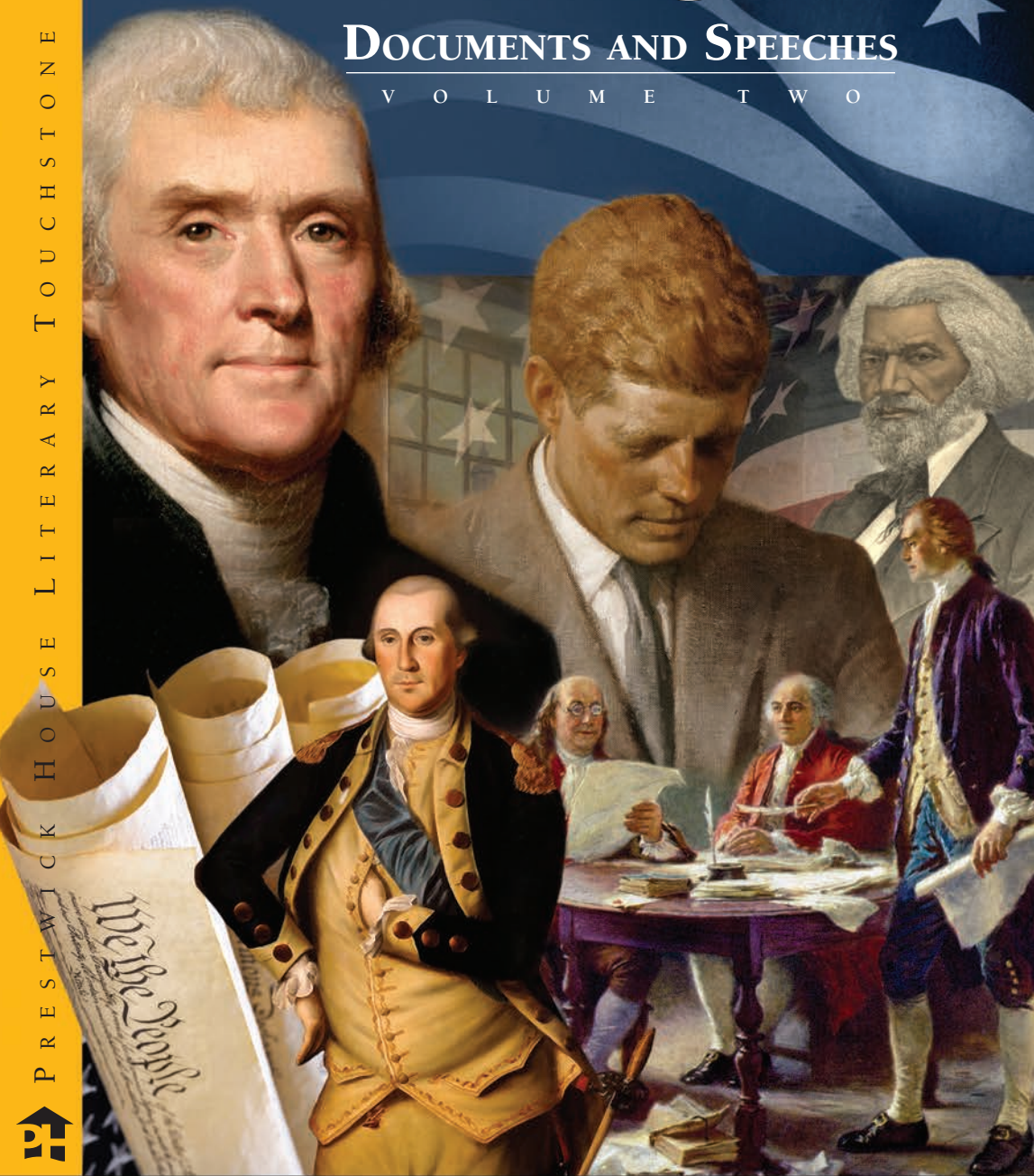


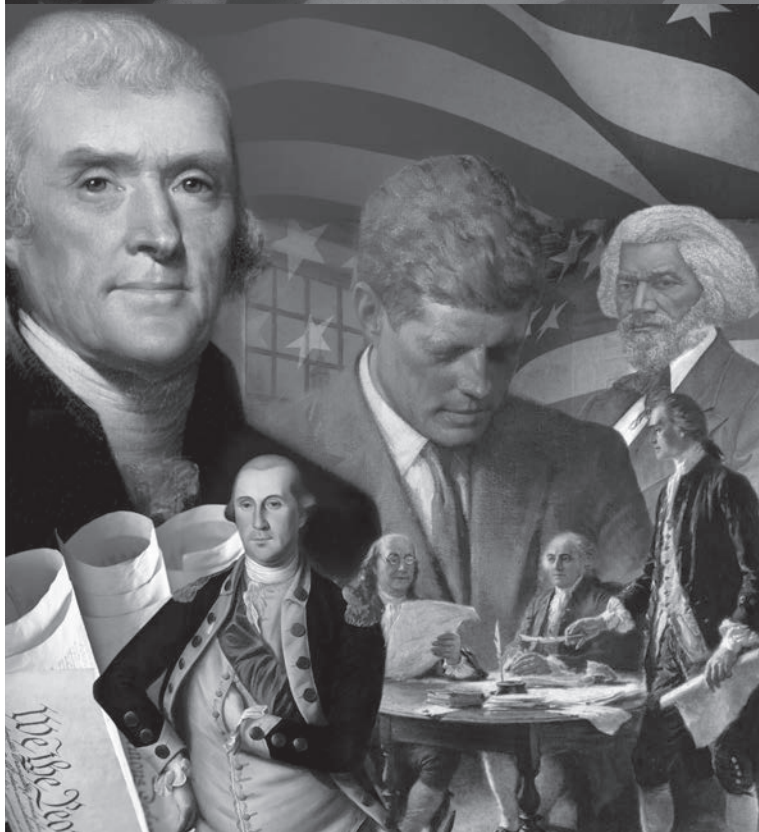
# ESSENTIAL AMERICAN

DOCUMENTS AND SPEECHES

VOLUME TWO



# ESSENTIAL AMERICAN DOCUMENTS AND SPEECHES



V O L U M E T W O



PRESTWICK HOUSE  
LITERARY TOUCHSTONE CLASSICS™

P.O. Box 658 • CLAYTON, DELAWARE 19938

**SENIOR EDITOR:** Paul Moliken

**COVER DESIGN:** Jen Mendoza

**PRODUCTION:** Jeremy Clark



**Prestwick House**

LITERARY TOUCHSTONE CLASSICS™

P.O. BOX 658 • CLAYTON, DELAWARE 19938

TEL: 1.800.932.4593

FAX: 1.888.718.9333

WEB: [www.prestwickhouse.com](http://www.prestwickhouse.com)

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# ESSENTIAL AMERICAN DOCUMENTS AND SPEECHES

V O L U M E T W O

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# ESSENTIAL AMERICAN

## DOCUMENTS AND SPEECHES

V O L U M E T W O



# INTRODUCTION

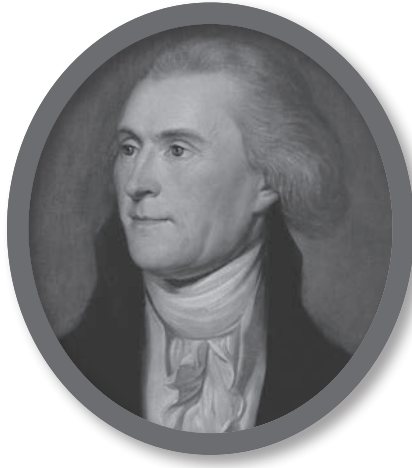
THE SPEECHES AND DOCUMENTS in this second volume of *Essential American Documents and Speeches* cover the entire time span of the United States' existence, from Thomas Jefferson's ideas of its inception to George Bush's State of the Union speech after 9/11. There is a great diversity in the selections, with many of them being mentioned as exemplar texts as established by the Common Core State Standards: Supreme Court decisions, *Federalist Number 10*, and the Bill of Rights as examples. However, others are just as important and equally as complex, well written, and logical.

The selections are arranged in chronological order, so that, for instance, Jefferson Davis's reasoning for Mississippi's secession from the Union can be examined next to Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Students will see James Madison and the Bill of Rights, followed by two scathing pieces that cast doubts on those rights, one by Chief Tecumseh and the other by Frederick Douglass, aligning with CCSS History and Social Studies Craft and Structure 5. The one exception to the chronology is in the case of three pieces on nuclear weapons, which are not precisely chronological; the editors felt, however, that these three are so closely related that they can be considered as one topic, and, therefore, are also aligned with CCSS Craft and Structure 5.

Each passage is preceded by a very short biography of the author, followed by a few paragraphs explaining what students should look for in the piece. Sometimes, this explanation is dominated by ideas about the text, sometimes by syntax, and other times, by the author's rhetoric. We frequently ask open-ended questions about the passages in order to provoke thinking about sub-topics, whether the statements have come true, the logic of the conclusions drawn, etc. These correspond to CCSS Key Ideas and Details 1-3, and Craft and Structure 4, 5.

Throughout the book, the passages reflect Common Core State Standards of Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 8, 9 for 11-12 grade students. Additionally, *Essential American Documents and Speeches* is aligned with Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts: Reading Informational Text for these grades. The selections are specifically applicable to all three Standards in Key Ideas and Detail, as well as in Craft and Structure. They are also aligned with—and some are mentioned as exemplars—in Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 8, 9.

Beyond the needs of teachers for having texts that are aligned with and fulfill Common Core State Standards, these documents and speeches are striking examples of non-fiction writing, even if read strictly as literature.



## **THOMAS JEFFERSON:**

### THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (1776)

THOMAS JEFFERSON (1743-1826) became the third U.S. President, but as a delegate to the second Continental Congress, he wrote the Declaration of Independence, which declared the Thirteen Colonies' independence from England and the reasons for taking that action.

When reading this quintessential document, note that Jefferson prefaces his argument with the logical, and famous, statement of basic human values given by God—"Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Then, pay attention to the details Jefferson provides in a list of "Facts," which establishes how the "present King of Great Britain" desires to establish an "absolute Tyranny over these States." Finally, Jefferson reaches the only conclusion possible under the circumstances: The colonies "ought to be Free and Independent States."

Jefferson states his reasons in an orderly, logical manner, but rhetoric also plays an important part. Many times, he avoids conjunctions in a series (asyn-deton), but elsewhere, he includes them between each item (polysyndeton). His writing is filled with the poetic phraseology and elements of repetition (anaphora and epistrophe), hyperbole, antithesis, and many others.

In order to portray the grievances against Great Britain and the solution that the Declaration reaches, it also has a specific audience in mind, besides the Thirteen Colonies. Jefferson reaches out to all people who desire freedom from a "totally unworthy...Head of a civilized nation." In a statement that seems to reflect a concept that hints at other countries' fights for independence and at the future leadership of the United States, Jefferson also makes sure that the "candid world" will be aware of the colonists' issues and lists those offenses. Throughout,

*however, he does not stray from the basic theme and concept of the Declaration: The colonies cannot continue to exist under the present conditions and must become an independent country, free of England's rule.*

*Pay attention to his unusual phrasing, the lengthy sentences, and odd spelling and capitalization you will come across.*



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## THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (1776)

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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 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 complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances

of Cruelty & 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 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.

# COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

## KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1](#) Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.2](#) Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.3](#) Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

## CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.4](#) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.5](#) Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.6](#) Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.