

Declaration of Independence Lesson Plan 8th Grade

8th Grade Lesson Plan (50 minutes)

Topic: Causes & Meaning of the Declaration

Objective

Students will:

- Explain causes of independence
 - Understand natural rights
 - Identify key leaders and their roles
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Warm-Up (5 min)

Prompt:

- “What rights should every person have?”
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Direct Instruction (15 min)

Teach:

- **Natural rights:** Life, Liberty, Pursuit of Happiness
- Government gets power from the people
- If government abuses power → people can change it Introduce figures:
- John Adams – strong advocate for independence
- Samuel Adams – organized resistance
- Benjamin Rush – education and reform

Activity (15 min)

Primary Source Breakdown Students

analyze:

- “All men are created equal...” Questions:
- What does it mean?
- Why was it important?

Discussion (10 min)

- Were the colonists justified in declaring independence?
- Could this happen today?

Exit Ticket (5 min)

- What is one grievance against the king?

8th Grade Quiz

1. What are natural rights?
2. Name two grievances against the king
3. Who helped organize the Sons of Liberty?
4. Why was the Declaration important?

Answer Key:

1. Rights given at birth (life, liberty, happiness)
2. Taxes, no representation, soldiers in homes, etc.
3. Samuel Adams
4. Explained independence and rights