

The Declaration of Independence

by Thomas Jefferson et al.

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: abdicated, acquiesce, despotism, endowed, evinces, impel, redress, relinquish, transient, usurpations

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Vocabulary Preview 2

Answer Key — Preview 3

Caution: share only if self-checking

OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context 4

Answer Key — In Context 5

Caution: do not share with students

About the Pre-Reading Activity (open-dictionary; ungraded or completion grade):

Students preview 10 words from the upcoming reading, each in a sentence that supports understanding. They choose the best meaning from 3 choices.

About the Optional Post-Reading Quiz (use after reading, or skip):

Same words, now in real excerpts from the text, with questions that build reading and analytical skills.



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Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.

1. The manager **abdicated** responsibility for the project's failure, leaving her team to take the blame.
 - A. minimized the importance of
 - B. shared the details of
 - C. abandoned or failed to fulfill
2. Although she disagreed, she chose to, she chose to **acquiesce** rather than argue further.
 - A. to accept reluctantly without protest
 - B. to formally request additional time to decide
 - C. to express cautious support for a proposal
3. The philosopher warned that unchecked **despotism** destroys the spirit of a nation as surely as any invading army.
 - A. a system of alliances between rival nations
 - B. widespread unrest among a population
 - C. cruel, absolute rule by one person
4. The young musician seemed **endowed** with a rare talent that no amount of training could explain.
 - A. inspired or motivated by a strong inner drive
 - B. provided or equipped with a quality or ability
 - C. recognized or celebrated for a notable trait
5. Her detailed research **evinces** a deep commitment to understanding the problem fully.
 - A. reveals clearly; makes evident
 - B. develops gradually through sustained effort
 - C. requires as an essential condition
6. Only his neighbor's call for help could **impel** him to leave the safety of his home.
 - A. to drive or force into action
 - B. to persuade through careful reasoning
 - C. to give official permission to act
7. The workers filed a formal complaint seeking **redress** for months of unpaid overtime.
 - A. a detailed record of workplace violations
 - B. remedy for a wrong or grievance
 - C. public acknowledgment of dedicated service
8. The aging champion refused to **relinquish** her title without one final match.
 - A. to give up, especially unwillingly
 - B. to earn through sustained effort
 - C. to modify the terms or conditions of
9. The **transient** beauty of the cherry blossoms reminds visitors to appreciate each moment.
 - A. deeply rooted in cultural tradition
 - B. striking or remarkable in appearance
 - C. lasting only a short time; temporary
10. The council accused the mayor of **usurpations** that centered decision-making in her office alone.
 - A. wrongful seizures of power or authority
 - B. excessive demands placed on citizens
 - C. formal accusations brought against a leader

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

unalienable — impossible to take away or give up (today usually spelled "inalienable")

perfidy — deliberate betrayal of trust

conjured — solemnly appealed to (not the modern sense of performing magic)

consanguinity — relationship by blood; shared ancestry

rectitude — moral correctness

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	C
2	A
3	C
4	B
5	A
6	A
7	B
8	A
9	C
10	A

Vocabulary in Context

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

Read each excerpt carefully. Then choose the best answer to each question.

1 "When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another ... a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

As it is used in the excerpt, the word "impel" most nearly suggests that the colonists are...

- A. choosing freely out of personal preference
- B. being pressured by foreign governments to act
- C. driven by powerful forces toward separation

2 "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."

The author most likely uses the word "endowed" in order to emphasize that these rights are...

- A. achievements earned through loyalty and service
- B. protections that exist only under British law
- C. inherent gifts, not government-granted privileges

3 "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."

The information in this excerpt primarily functions to...

- A. argue governments deserve unconditional loyalty
- B. suggest people generally prefer revolt to suffering
- C. acknowledge that revolution requires weighty cause

4 "But when a long train of abuses and usurpations..."

It can reasonably be inferred that the word "usurpations" characterizes the king's actions as...

- A. well-intentioned but poorly executed policies
- B. temporary measures taken during a crisis
- C. wrongful seizures of the colonists' authority

5 "But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design..."

As it is used in the excerpt, the word "evinces" most nearly suggests that the pattern of abuses...

- A. clearly reveals a deliberate plan
- B. accidentally coincides with a single aim
- C. gradually conceals the government's motives

6 "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."

Which choice best describes how this sentence functions in the text as a whole?

- A. It argues that absolute tyranny justifies revolution
- B. It describes a hypothetical that does not apply here
- C. It warns future governments against overreach

7 "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"

According to the excerpt, the King required colonists to...

- A. expand their legislative districts
- B. surrender their right of representation
- C. petition for accommodation of their people

8 "He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us."

The passage most strongly suggests that by "abdicating" government, the king...

- A. formally transferred power to colonial leaders
- B. abandoned his duty to protect the colonies
- C. temporarily suspended enforcement of his laws

9 "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."

Which statement is best supported by the excerpt?

- A. The colonists pursued peaceful remedies first
- B. The king offered compromises that were rejected
- C. Colonial complaints were resolved through reform

10 "They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces [proclaims] our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends."

Which choice best describes the authors' attitude toward separation as conveyed by the word "acquiesce"?

- A. reluctant acceptance of an unavoidable outcome
- B. enthusiastic embrace of a long-desired goal
- C. bitter resentment toward former allies

ANSWER KEY
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#	KEY	TEACHER NOTE
1	C	
2	C	
3	C	
4	C	
5	A	
6	A	
7	B	
8	B	
9	A	"The right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances" is one of the 5 core freedoms later guaranteed in the 1st Amendment of the Constitution.
10	A	The excerpt uses an older, less common sense of <i>denounces</i> — meaning <i>proclaims</i> or <i>formally declares</i> .