



*The Founding: From Colonies to
the United States: SS.7.CG.1.6*
Declaration of Independence
READING #2

Name: _____

Date: _____



SS.7.CG.1.6 Benchmark Clarification 2: Students will explain the concept of natural rights as expressed in the Declaration of Independence.

The writers of the **Declaration of Independence** included **Enlightenment** ideas in this document. The idea of **natural rights** was their primary focus and the Founders' main reason for declaring independence. The Declaration of Independence stated that natural rights were not "given" to people by governments. They said natural rights could only come from "Nature and Nature's God." Natural rights included "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness".

Declaration of Independence - a document written in 1776 that listed the basis for democratic government and the grievances of the colonists

Enlightenment - a period in European history when many educated people stressed the importance of learning and reasoning; education was considered the key to understanding and solving society's problems

natural rights - the belief that individuals are born with basic rights that cannot be taken away by governments