



*The Founding: From Colonies to the United States: SS.7.CG.1.6*  
**Declaration of Independence**  
**READING #4**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**SS.7.CG.1.6 Benchmark Clarification 4:** Students will analyze the relationship between natural rights and the role of government: 1. People are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; 2. Governments are instituted among men to secure these rights; 3. Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed; and 4. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it and to institute new government.

One of the basic roles of government is to protect the **natural rights** of individuals. According to the **Declaration of Independence**:

1. Government does not give individuals these natural rights, nor can the government take them away; they are endowed, or given by their Creator, and people possess them the moment they are born.
2. The role of government is to secure and protect these rights with the **consent of the governed**.
3. Government, then, gets its power from the people who are being governed.
4. When the government becomes **oppressive** and does not protect the rights of the people, it becomes a **tyranny**. If this happens, the people have the right to “alter or abolish” the government (change it or replace it with another government).

**consent of the governed** - an agreement made by the people to establish a government and obey its laws

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

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

**oppression** - the use of authority or power in a cruel or unjust manner

**tyranny** - a government that abuses its power