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## Thomas jefferson wrote the declaration of independence mainly because

The Declaration of Independence Delegates from each of the Thirteen Colonies met in Philadelphia in the summer of 1776 to decide the case for liberty. The goal was to convince the States that the time had come for the United Colonies to declare their independence from Mother England. It was an incredibly difficult time for the young United States. For more than a year, Great Britain and the Thirteen Colonies had been at war over the issue of "taxation without representation." The Colonies believed that their rights were being impeded by the British, who were levying taxes upon them without their consent. The conflict had quickly escalated into more of an issue than just taxation, however, and many of the Colonies had started to think that they were capable of governing themselves. They were persuaded that Parliament wasn't looking out for their interests, proven by the fact that despite their population the Colonies had not been allowed represent themselves in the British Legislature. As a result, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in June of 1776. Slightly more than a month later, the Declaration of Independence was proposed to the States. John Hancock, the first signatory, was the only person to sign on July 4. Many of the other delegates would place their names on the completed Document on August 2 of that same year. The last person to sign, the New Hampshire delegate Matthew Thornton, endorsed the document on November 4, 1776. The Lee Resolution The Lee Resolution The Lee Resolution, also known as the resolution of independence, was an act of the Second Continental Congress declaring the Thirteen Colonies to be independent of the British Empire. Richard Henry Lee of Virginia first proposed it on June 7, 1776. It is the earliest form and draft of the Declaration of Independence. The text of the Resolution stated: Resolved, That these United Colonies are, and of right 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. That it is expedient forthwith to take the most effectual measures for forming foreign Alliances. That a plan of confederation be prepared and transmitted to the respective Colonies for their consideration and approbation. From Left: Roger Sherman, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Robert Livingston First draft of the Declaration of Independence, presented by the Committee of Five Early in the development, many delegates weren't yet allowed to vote for independence as the states had not yet authorized them to do so. In the meantime, a group of men were appointed to draft an official declaration, with hopes that the states would soon be willing to back the document when it was sent to the crown in England. On June 11, 1776, Congress appointed a "Committee of Five" consisting of John Adams of Massachusetts, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, Robert R. Livingston of New York, and Roger Sherman of Connecticut, to draft a declaration. This Declaration committee operated from June 11,1776 until July 5, 1776, the day on which the Declaration was published. The Committee of Five first presented the document to Congress on June 28, 1776. First draft of the Declaration of Independence, presented by the Committee of Five First draft of the Declaration of Independence, presented by the Committee of Five First draft of the Declaration of Independence, presented by the Committee of Five Originally, the delegates pushed for Richard Henry Lee, author of the Lee Resolution, to write the Declaration of Independence, not Jefferson. However, circumstances changed the course of history. First, Lee was appointed to the Committee of Confederation for the writing of the Articles of Confederation, and thought that being part of both committees would be too great an effort. Second, his wife became gravely ill during the Philadelphia convention, forcing him to return home prematurely. A young delegate from Virginia who had shown great promise was selected to take Lee's place. His name was Thomas Jefferson, and he would quickly become one of the most important individuals in the history of the United States. What most people don't know is that, at first, Jefferson had no interest in penning the Declaration. He wanted John Adams to do it instead. Adams writes in his account of the episode in a letter to Timothy Pickering, a politician from Massachusetts and a good friend of Adams: Jefferson proposed to me to make the draft. I said, 'I will not,' 'You should do it.' 'Oh! no.' 'Why will you not? You ought to do it.' 'I will not.' 'Why?' 'Reasons enough.' 'What can be your reasons?' 'Reason first, you are a Virginian, and a Virginian ought to appear at the head of this business. Reason second, I am obnoxious, suspected, and unpopular. You are very much otherwise. Reason third, you can write ten times better than I can.' 'Well,' said Jefferson, 'if you are decided, I will do as well as I can.' 'Very well. When you have drawn it up, we will have a meeting.' And so, it was settled. Over the course of seventeen days, in between meetings and other governmental affairs, Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence under the advisement of the Committee. It was an act that secured Jefferson's name in history forever. All portraits of the founders from Wikimedia Commons licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-Share-Alike License 3.0. Document Images courtesy of the Library of Congress under the Open Government License Back To Top The Declaration of Independence was the first formal statement by a nation's people asserting their right to choose their own government.When armed conflict between bands of American colonists and British soldiers began in April 1775, the Americans were ostensibly fighting only for their rights as subjects of the British crown. By the following summer, with the Revolutionary War in full swing, the movement for independence from Britain had grown, and delegates of the Continental Congress were faced with a vote on the issue. In mid-June 1776, a five-man committee including Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and Benjamin Franklin was tasked with drafting a formal statement of the colonies' intentions. The Congress formally adopted the Declaration of Independence—written largely by Jefferson—in Philadelphia on July 4, a date now celebrated as the birth of American independence.America Before the Declaration of Independence Even after the initial battles in the Revolutionary War broke out, few colonists desired complete independence from Great Britain, and those who did-like John Adams- were considered radical. Things changed over the course of the next year, however, as Britain attempted to crush the rebels with all the force of its great army. In his message to Parliament in October 1775, King George III railed against the rebellious colonies and ordered the enlargement of the royal army and navy. News of his words reached America in January 1776, strengthening the radicals' cause and leading many conservatives to abandon their hopes of reconciliation. That same month, the recent British immigrant Thomas Paine published "Common Sense," in which he argued that independence was a "natural right" and the only possible course for the colonies; the pamphlet sold more than 150,000 copies in its first few weeks in publication.Did you know? Most Americans did not know Thomas Jefferson was the principal author of the Declaration of Independence until the 1790s; before that, the document was seen as a collective effort by the entire Continental Congress.In March 1776, North Carolina's revolutionary convention became the first to vote in favor of independence; seven other colonies had followed suit by mid-May. On June 7, the Virginia delegate Richard Henry Lee introduced a motion calling for the colonies' independence before the Continental Congress when it met at the Pennsylvania State House (later Independence Hall) in Philadelphia. Amid heated debate, Congress postponed the vote on Lee's resolution and called a recess for several weeks. Before departing, however, the delegates also appointed a five-man committee-including Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, John Adams of Massachusetts, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania and Robert R. Livingston of New York-to draft a formal statement justifying the break with Great Britain. That document would become known as the Declaration of Independence.Thomas Jefferson Writes the Declaration of IndependenceJefferson had earned a reputation as an eloquent voice for the patriotic cause after his 1774 publication of "A Summary View of the Rights of British America," and he was given the task of producing a draft of what would become the Declaration of Independence. As he wrote in 1823, the other members of the committee "unanimously pressed on myself alone to undertake the draught [sic]. I consented; I drew it; but before I reported it to the committee I communicated it separately to Dr. Franklin and Mr. Adams requesting their corrections...I then wrote a fair copy, reported it to the committee, and from them, unaltered to the Congress."As Jefferson drafted it, the Declaration of Independence was divided into five sections, including an introduction, a preamble, a body (divided into two sections) and a conclusion. In general terms, the introduction effectively stated that seeking independence from Britain had become "necessary" for the colonies. While the body of the document outlined a list of grievances against the British crown, the preamble includes its most famous passage: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable 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."The Continental Congress Votes for Independence The Continental Congress reconvened on July 1, and the following day 12 of the 13 colonies adopted Lee's resolution for independence. The process of consideration and revision of Jefferson's declaration (including Adams' and Franklin's corrections) continued on July 3 and into the late morning of July 4, during which Congress deleted and revised some one-fifth of its text. The delegates made no changes to that key preamble, however, and the basic document remained Jefferson's words. Congress officially adopted the Declaration of Independence later on the Fourth of July (though most historians now accept that the document was not signed until August 2).The Declaration of Independence became a significant landmark in the history of democracy. In addition to its importance in the fate of the fledgling American nation, it also exerted a tremendous influence outside the United States, most memorably in France during the French Revolution. Together with the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence can be counted as one of the three essential founding documents of the United States government.READ MORE: Why Was the Declaration of Independence Written?



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