

Declaring Independence

The Big Idea

The colonies formally declared their independence from Great Britain.

Main Ideas

- **Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*** led many colonists to support independence.
- Colonists had to choose sides when independence was declared.
- The Declaration of Independence did not address the rights of all colonists.

Main Idea 1: Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* led many colonists to support independence.

- *Common Sense*: a forty-seven-page pamphlet written by **Thomas Paine**, published in January 1776



- Urged separation from Great Britain
- Argued that citizens, not monarchs, should make laws
- Argued for economic freedom and the right to military self-defense
- Cried out against tyranny, the abuse of government power
- Reached a wide audience, selling some 500,000 copies

Main Idea 2: Colonists had to choose sides when independence was declared.

- Many colonial leaders agreed with Thomas Paine's ideas.
- Second Continental Congress created a committee in June 1776 to write a document declaring independence.



- **Thomas Jefferson** was main author.
- **Declaration of Independence** formally announced break with Great Britain.



- Approved on July 4, 1776.

Choosing Sides

Patriots



- **Patriots chose to fight for independence.**
- About 40 to 45 percent of Americans were Patriots.

Loyalists



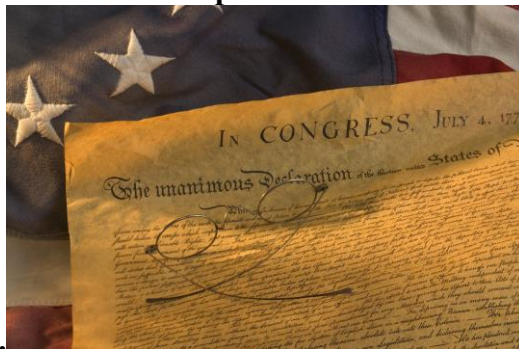
- **Loyalists, sometimes called Tories, remained loyal to Britain.**
- About 20 to 30 percent of Americans were Loyalists.

Neutral

- About 25 percent of Americans remained neutral.

Main Idea 3:

The Declaration of Independence did not address the rights of all



colonists.

- Declaration ignored many colonists.
 - Did not address the rights of women
 - Did not recognize the rights of enslaved African Americans
 - Did not address the rights of Native Americans to life, liberty, or property