

## Declaration of Independence: Background Information and Brainstorming

### Background Information-ANSWER KEY

#### Notes

- During the Second Continental Congress in 1775, delegates argued over whether to seek independence or remain loyal to Great Britain. Many did not want to seek independence as they feared that this would start a war with Great Britain. Others felt that independence was necessary because King George III was an oppressor who was limiting the colonists' rights and actions. They felt that Great Britain was becoming a tyranny.
- In 1776, Thomas Paine stated that it was "common sense" for the colonies to break away from Great Britain. He said that King George was a "royal brute" and the colonies had every right to sever ties.
- After many months of debate, more than half of the delegates agreed to declare independence from Great Britain.
- Thomas Paine's writings were very influential in the decision to declare independence.
- Thomas Jefferson, the main author, detailed the colonies' reasons for breaking away with Great Britain.
- The document argued that the king did not look after the interests of the colonies anymore.
- He listed the grievances, or complaints, that the colonists had towards the crown.

### Document Brainstorming-SAMPLE ANSWERS

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| What features do you notice about the document?                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written in cursive</li><li>• The paper looks old and worn</li><li>• It is 3 pages long</li><li>• One long, big document</li></ul>   |
| What does this document make you feel or think about?                                | It makes me think that three pages of information is a lot for an entire group, like in the painting, could agree on.   |
| What are the words or phrases from the document that caused this feeling or thought? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Declaration is written across the top in all capital letters showing that they were serious about what they wanted</li><li>• "All men are created equal" which should be true that everyone should have rights</li><li>• "Establishment of absolute tyranny" that the colonists were trying to get away from and develop a more fair type of government</li></ul> |