International Storytelling Center, Kids' Institute, November 2026
Storyteller Tim Lowry presents "Liberty March: On the Trail with The Overmountain Men"
Post Show Activity

In this follow up activity students will match stories they heard during the show with key phrases from the Declaration of Independence. This activity is designed to help students summarize the text of a story and identify the theme or central idea. (Tennessee ELA Standard 5.RL.KID.2)

First, lead a class discussion on summarizing the main points of the Declaration of Independence. The chart below gives a side-by-side simplification of Thomas Jefferson's text.
Note- There are a number of children's books that present simplified versions of the DOI with illustrations. These may also be useful in your class discussion.

Next, point out to the students that certain phrases from the DOI are highlighted.

Then, take a break from the DOI to make a list of the stories that Storyteller Tim Lowry shared on the field trip. Have students retell the highlights of each of these stories.

1. Peter Parker's Pants
2. The Founding of Watauga Settlement or I Am the King, Don't Bother Me! (Student Role Play)
3. The Cherokee Siege of Fort Watauga
4. The March of The Overmountain Men
5. The Battle of Kings Mountain

Finally, go back to the DOI and look at each highlighted section asking the students. "Can you think of a story that Mr. Lowry told us that shows what Thomas Jefferson is talking about here?"

Here is a color-coded answer key.

The Founding of Watauga Settlement

Peter Parker's Pants

The Battle of Kings Mountain

The March of the Overmountain Men

The Cherokee Siege of Fort Watauga

Declaration of Independence Simplified (from the Dept of Ed Missouri)

What the Declaration Says	Paraphrasing in Modern Language
The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.	**Sometimes in life it becomes necessary to separate from your current government and form a new nation.** **If you do form a new nation, you should declare the causes of your separation to the world.**
We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable 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, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.	**We believe all men are created equal and they are given rights by God such as LIFE, LIBERTY, and the pursuit of HAPPINESS.** **Whenever a government takes away these rights, we should make a change or start a new government.**

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.- Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of	**Governments should not be changed or removed when problems occur for a short time.** **But when a government abuses and injures its people for a long time, we must throw off that government and start again.**

Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.	

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing

To prove to the world that the colonies need to start their own nation we will list all ways the King of Britain has harmed us.

1. **He has refused to protect us by law.**
2. **He won't pass laws we need.**
3. **He will only pass laws we need if we give up our rights.**
4. **He calls meetings of lawmakers at unusual times and in unusual places.**
5. **He has taken away our rights to have a say in our government.**
6. **He has stopped the population from growing and prevents us from moving into certain lands.**
7. **He controls the judges.**
8. **His officers harass our people.**
9. **He quarters large bodies of troops among us.**
10. **He protects his troops from punishments for crimes.**
11. **He stops trade with other parts of the world.**
12. **He taxes us without our permission.**
13. **He does not protect us and wages war against us.**
14. **He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and**

Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offenses

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighboring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to

destroyed the lives of our people.

15. He sends armies to attack and kill us.

16. He has sent Indians to attack our homes.

legislate for us in all cases whatsoever. He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people. He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation. He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands. He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose know rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.	

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.	**After all of these abuses, we have asked the King repeatedly to stop, to which he only answers with more punishments.** **The King is a cruel ruler and unfit to rule a free people.** **We have asked, begged, and pleaded but the King does not listen.**

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought 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; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.	**We the people of the United States of America do declare that these united colonies are FREE and INDEPENDENT States. We are not loyal to the British Crown and have no connection with Great Britain anymore.** **As a free and independent country we have the power to do all the things a country can do like wage war, work with allies, and buy and sell goods.** **We pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.**