

**CURRICULUM**

History

**MATERIALS**

Fact sheet; The Story of the Declaration of Independence fact sheet, news release fact sheet.

## The Cultural Olympiad and the Declaration of Independence

The Olympics are not just about sports! In ancient times, a celebration of the arts accompanied athletic competitions. In the modern era, the Cultural Olympiad is a required component of the Games. During the Olympic Winter Games of 2002, people will not only watch Olympians compete but they will also have the opportunity to attend world class cultural events that include: visits to art galleries, dance, symphony and choir concerts, plays, rodeos, quilt displays and Native American crafts. The 2002 Cultural Olympiad is especially proud to bring an original copy of the Declaration of Independence to Utah for display during the Games. Few people have the chance to view this important document! Use the coming of the Declaration of Independence as an opportunity to review history of great importance to our country.

### Objectives: STUDENTS WILL

- ▶ Read and discuss an authentic press release
- ▶ Recognize the Declaration of Independence as a document of supreme importance
- ▶ Become familiar with the history surrounding the Declaration of Independence
- ▶ Write their own press release about the document

### Introduction:

Explain to students that during the Olympic Winter Games there will be many things to do and see. Each Olympic Winter Games has a "Cultural Olympiad," which is a festival of the arts. As part of the 2002 Cultural Olympiad, Utahns will be able to view an original copy of the Declaration of Independence.

### Activity:

#### 1. PASS OUT THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE PRESS RELEASE

Explain that a press release is an announcement made to news organizations explaining information that might be of interest to citizens. This press release was sent to news organizations to announce the coming of the Declaration of Independence to Utah.

- ▶ As a class read and discuss the press release
- ▶ Review or teach "reporter questions:" who, what, where, how, when and why. Ask students to identify information relating to each "reporter question."
- ▶ Ask: Why is this document important and why are the people of Utah lucky to have it for display?

**2. PASS OUT THE STORY OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**

- ▶ Read the story as a class. Look up the meaning of the bold-face words.
- ▶ Define the words: Declaration and independence. Why was independence important for the new country? Discuss the history surrounding the declaration. Who were the people involved, what were their goals? Why was a declaration important? How does this document still affect us today?
- ▶ Study the history of the American Revolution and the great men who risked their lives so that we might have a free country.

**3. ASSIGN STUDENTS TO WRITE AN INFORMATIONAL PRESS RELEASE:**

- ▶ Declaration of Independence.  
Students will provide background information about the document. They will explain where the document will be displayed, when it can be seen and why people should view it. Review the official press release and The Story of the Declaration of Independence for details.
- ▶ Signing of the Declaration of Independence  
Students will write about the signing as if it had not yet taken place. They will give background information on the situation surrounding the signing and the people who are involved.

- 4. Use the student press release to advertise the coming of the Declaration of Independence for school and community newsletters.

## Extensions:

- ▶ Use new words in the document as vocabulary words
- ▶ Discuss and role-play concepts involving freedom and independence
- ▶ Identify the original thirteen colonies on a map
- ▶ Discuss ways to show patriotism for the United States of America
- ▶ Read copies of the Declaration of Independence
- ▶ Visit the Utah State Capitol Building and view the document

## The Story of the Declaration of Independence

A COPY OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE WILL BE IN UTAH DURING THE GAMES. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THIS DOCUMENT?



Thomas Jefferson

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The United States of America is the most powerful nation on earth today. This makes it hard to imagine that in the 1700's America consisted of only thirteen **colonies**.

Although the colonies were settled by Great Britain, England was not the only country interested in the new land. In 1756, France fought Great Britain over control of North America.

The war was won at great expense. Since British soldiers fought to protect American **colonists**, the **British Parliament** decided to tax the colonies to pay for the war. This made the people very mad. They were not allowed to elect **representatives** to **Parliament** but were asked to accept laws that seemed unfair. The colonists, who disagreed with the British government, were called **patriots**. Patriots were so angry over the new tax, that British troops, called **redcoats**, were sent to protect tax collectors.

The situation continued to grow worse. In 1770, the redcoats killed five patriots. In 1773, British tea was dumped into the Boston harbor to protest the tax on tea. In response, King George III and Parliament closed down the Boston port. The American Revolution began April of 1775 when English troops fired at armed colonists. **Representatives** from each of the thirteen colonies were asked to come to Philadelphia. There they formed the **Continental Congress** and tried to convince King George to end the conflict peacefully. The king ignored their requests and accused the colonies of open rebellion. By January 1776, British forces attacked three colonial towns. By this time, many patriots wanted to break away from Great Britain. The citizens

were asked to voice their opinion and most called for independence from British rule.

In June 1776, the Continental Congress asked a five-member committee to draft a declaration explaining why the colonies wanted their **independence**. Thomas Jefferson was asked to write the document.

Jefferson wrote his **draft** in a few days. He studied ideas about government and used wording from declarations written by other countries. Jefferson wrote that "all men are created equal" and that King George had done many things that were unfair and harmful to the colonies. The draft said that the people of the colonies had a right to create a new national government.

On July 2, 1776, representatives from each of the 13 colonies voted to become an independent country called the "United States." They then spent two days revising the important document. On July 4, 1776, the edited version of the Declaration of Independence was accepted, signed and printed, so that copies could be sent throughout the colonies. Church bells rang, and many cities and towns read the declaration publicly. In August 1776, a special handwritten copy was created on **parchment** and signed by representatives of the new states. It is on display at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

Although Congress voted for independence on July 2, 1776, we celebrate the 4th of July because that is the day that the Declaration of Independence was first signed. Americans still honor this document and see the Declaration of Independence as an important statement of the country's most important ideas.

## NEWS RELEASE

TITLE: **Declaration Of Independence Comes To Salt Lake As Part Of Cultural Olympiad**      DATE: **07/06/2001**      CATEGORY: **Olympiad Arts and Culture**

## Declaration of Independence Comes To Salt Lake as Part of Cultural Olympiad

*Document Will Be Displayed at Utah's State Capitol During 2002 Olympic Arts Festival*

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah—One of the 25 surviving original copies of the Declaration of Independence will be exhibited as part of the 2002 Cultural Olympiad, the Olympic Arts Festival of the 2002 Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Winter Games. The document will be on display at the Utah State Capitol rotunda February 1, through March 15, 2002, from 9:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. Admission to the exhibit is free.

The Declaration of Independence was drafted by Thomas Jefferson and is a cherished symbol of liberty in the United States. The document for the exhibition comes to the Olympic Arts Festival through the Declaration of Independence Road Trip, a not-for-profit corporation founded by Norman Lear, with the goal of bringing the "People's Document" directly to the American people.

"We want to use the document as a lighting rod to inspire people to develop an idealism and passion for civic involvement," said Norman Lear. "I am pleased the document can 'kick up its heels' at the Olympics in Salt Lake."

The document is believed to be one of only four in private hands. In June 2000, Norman and Lyn Lear and David and Storey Hayden purchased the document for \$8.14 million. The document is in near mint condition and is one of the three best preserved of the 25 original surviving copies.

"I am delighted the document will have a world wide audience during the Olympic Winter Games," said Raymond T. Grant, director of the Cultural Olympiad.

Following the Olympic Winter Games of 2002 exhibition, the Declaration will tour the Carter, Bush and Truman Presidential Libraries.

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*For more information, contact Nancy Volmer in SLOC Media Relations at (801) 212-3786. A complete archive of SLOC news releases is available at [www.saltlake2002.com](http://www.saltlake2002.com).*