**The American Declaration of Independence**

*A “Dear John” Letter to the British King*

The term “Dear John Letter” refers to a letter written by a woman to her husband or boyfriend, in which she informs him that their relationship is over.

*Dear John,*

 *When two people have lived together for as long as you and I, and one of them decides to split, it’s only decent to take a little time and understand the reasons for that break-up.*

 *I’ve always believed that a good relationship is a mutual relationship. People in a relationship are equals who support each other, share equally the daily tasks, and help each other grow and change.*

*But you and I are not equals. You never take out the garbage despite all our agreements to the contrary. Whenever it is your turn to clean up, you get help from someone else. When it is your turn to cook, you order pizza, and I’m really sick of pizza now. Last year when I got the promotion to vice-president, you sulked for a month because I was finally making a little more money than you were. Whenever I try to discuss our problems, you shake your head and change the channel on the TV!*

 *For this and 100 other reasons, I am forced to leave you. I will miss you. I will be lonely, but I will also be free.*

 *Good luck,*

 *Marcia*

This letter has a certain structure:

* An opening statement for the reason for the letter: “When two people…”
* A statement of general principles: “I’ve always believed…”
* A long list of complaints: “But you and I are not equals…”
* It closes with a look to the future: “I will also be free.”

The **Declaration of Independence** is written in similar format:

* A Preamble explaining the document: “When in the course of human events…”
* A statement of the principles of Natural Rights: “We hold these truths to be self-evident…”
* A List of Grievances: “…let Facts be submitted to a candid world…”
* A Resolution for Independence: “…the United Colonies are… free and Independent States… we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.”

**YOUR ASSIGNMENT**:

Imagine you are an American colonist in the year 1776, You have learned and been inspired by Enlightenment thinkers, and you have been taxed without representation. Using the Declaration of Independence in your textbook, as well as what you have learned about the Enlightenment, the French and Indian War, and other background you have, write a “Dear John letter” to King George III. This means you have to put the Declaration of Independence into your own words, as a break-up letter.

You may begin however you like: “Dear King George”, “Your Majesty”, “Boy, Bye”, but it has to have all 4 components of the Declaration of Independence (see above). Your letter must include a preamble, statement of natural rights, list of grievances (choose 5 of the actual grievances written by Jefferson), and a resolution for independence.

For extra help:

[www.sparknotes.com/history/american/declaration](http://www.sparknotes.com/history/american/declaration)