

Two Declarations



Directions: Read the excerpts from the Declaration of Independence and South Carolina's Declaration of Secession, and discuss the questions that follow.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (1776)	DECLARATION OF SECESSION (1860)
<p>1 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the purpose of this document?	<p>And now the State of South Carolina having resumed her separate and equal place among nations, deems it due to herself, to the remaining United States of America, and to the nations of the world, that she should declare the immediate causes which have led to this act.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the purpose of this document?
<p>2 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• According to this document, when are a people justified in getting rid of one government and starting another one?	<p>We maintain that in every compact between two or more parties, the obligation is mutual; that the failure of one of the contracting parties to perform a material part of the agreement, entirely releases the obligation of the other; and that where no arbiter is provided, each party is remitted to his own judgment to determine the fact of failure, with all its consequences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• According to this document, who decides if one party in a contract has broken the terms?

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<p>3 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.</p> <p>He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. [The Declaration here lists twenty-seven grievances against the King.]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the purpose of this section of the Declaration of Independence?	<p>We affirm that these ends for which this Government was instituted [described in the Preamble] have been defeated, and the Government itself has been made destructive of them by the action of the non-slaveholding States. Those States have assumed the right of deciding upon the propriety of our domestic institutions; and have denied the rights of property established in fifteen of the States and recognized by the Constitution; they have denounced as sinful the institution of slavery; they have permitted open establishment among them of societies, whose avowed object is to disturb the peace and to eloign [take away] the property of the citizens of other States. They have encouraged and assisted thousands of our slaves to leave their homes; and those who remain, have been incited by emissaries, books and pictures to servile insurrection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the purpose of this section of the Declaration of Secession?
<p>4 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the purpose of this section of the document?	<p>On the 4th day of March next, [the Republican] party will take possession of the Government. ...The guaranties of the Constitution will then no longer exist; the equal rights of the States will be lost. The slaveholding States will no longer have the power of self-government, or self-protection, and the Federal Government will have become their enemy. Sectional interest and animosity will deepen the irritation...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What time period does this section of the document reference?

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DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (1776)

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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 the 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 do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.

- What kind of association have the United States formed with this Declaration?

DECLARATION OF SECESSION (1860)

We, therefore, the People of South Carolina, by our delegates in Convention assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, have solemnly declared that the Union heretofore existing between this State and the other States of North America, is dissolved, and that the State of South Carolina has resumed her position among the nations of the world, as a separate and independent State; with 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.

- What status does South Carolina claim to be reverting back to with this Declaration?