

The background of the slide is a photograph of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C. The memorial is a white, neoclassical building with a prominent dome and a portico supported by columns. It is situated on the edge of the Tidal Basin, and its reflection is clearly visible in the calm water in the foreground. The sky is a clear, light blue, and the overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

**THE DECLARATION OF
INDEPENDENCE
&
THE ARTICLES OF
CONFEDERATION**

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.

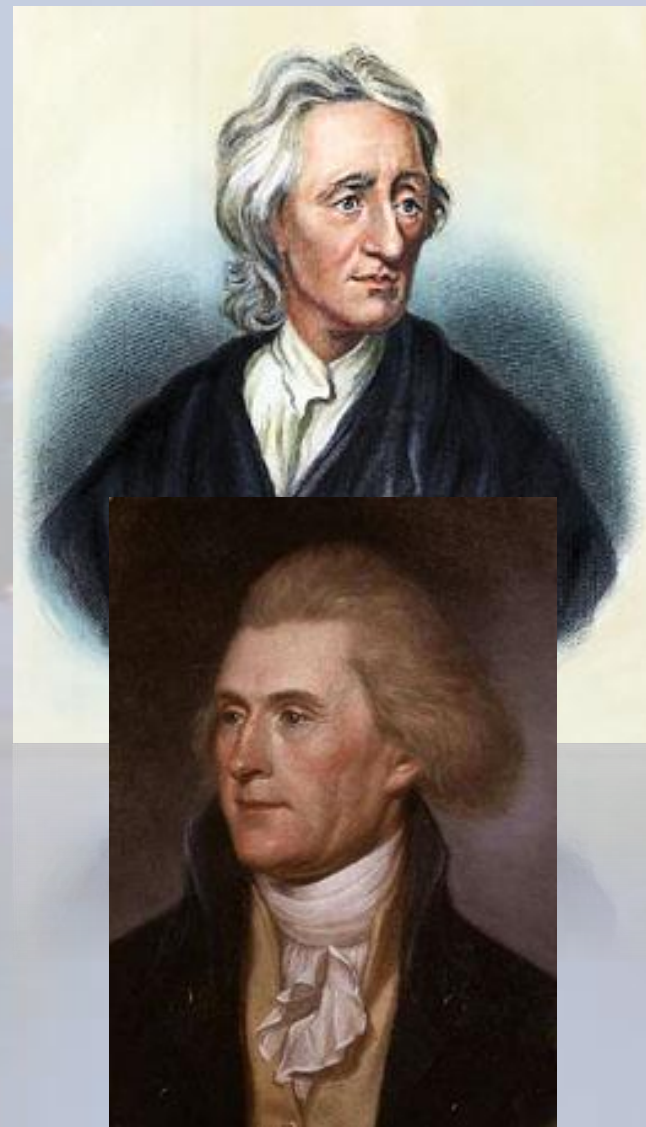
- Thomas Jefferson, *The Declaration of Independence* (1776)

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

- So what does the D.O.I. say to us?
- People are...EQUAL (“all men are created equal”)
- All people have...RIGHTS (“certain unalienable rights”)
- Purpose of government is...TO PROTECT THOSE RIGHTS (“to secure those rights...governments are instituted”)
- Government authority comes from...THE PEOPLE (“deriving their powers from the consent of the governed”)

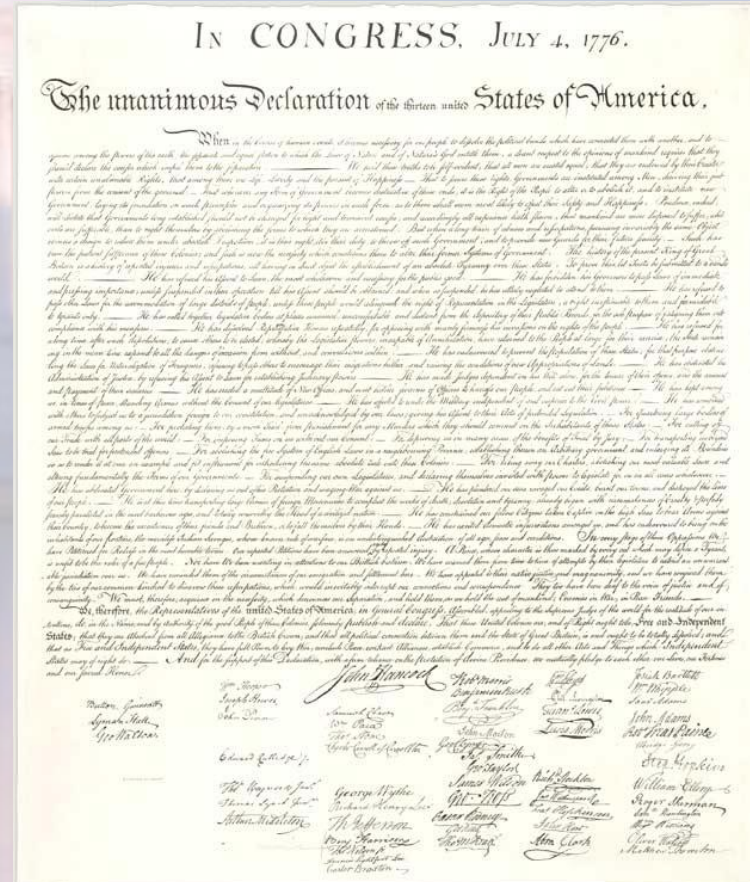
THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

- The Enlightenment philosopher John Locke wrote – all people have the right to “Life, liberty and property.”
- Thomas Jefferson – “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”
- Why the change?
- We’ve “used” the D.O.I. to...explain our rights, help write the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, & make government more accountable to the people



STRUCTURE OF THE DECLARATION

- The D.O.I. reads like a break-up letter between the American colonies and England, specifically King George III
- In the D.O.I. we find:
 - Introduction: What’s the problem?
 - Grievances: A list of the things that are wrong.
 - History: How have we tried to fix the problems?
 - Action Steps: What we are going to do about the problems.
 - Support: A list of people who support our decision.



2) State Legislatures
Most states formed a bicameral legislature
(two houses)

3) Need for Cooperation
Even though the states wanted independent state governments, there were some things they couldn't do alone (like raising a large army to battle the British)

1) State Constitutions
In 1776 New Hampshire became the first colony to form a state government with a written constitution → a detailed, written plan for government

4) What is a confederacy?
So the 13 states formed a confederation → a group of individuals (or individual states) who band together for a common purpose.

The Articles of Confederation

- In 1776 the new states formed a national government
- The states feared strong central leadership after their experience with King George III so the new national government was very weak
- The A.o.C. was ratified (approved) in 1781
 - No executive (president)
 - No national courts (Supreme Court)
- Legislature (Congress) with one house (unicameral)

Pros & Cons of the A.o.C.

Strengths of the Articles

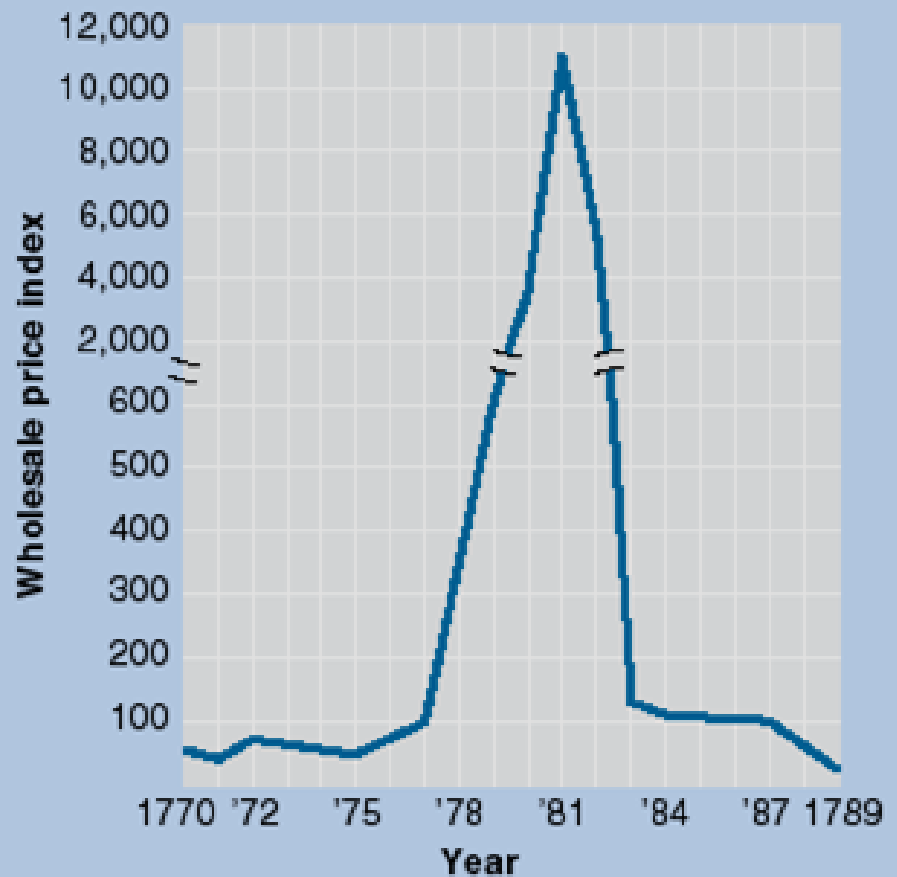
- Congress could
 - Borrow \$
 - Request \$ from states
 - Conduct foreign affairs
 - Maintain an army & navy

Weaknesses of the Articles

- Congress could not
 - Collect taxes*
 - Regulate commerce
 - Establish a draft
 - Force states to comply with national laws
 - A.o.C. could be amended (changed) but needed all 13 states to agree

Wholesale Price Index (1770-1789)

Prices skyrocketed as Congress and the state governments printed huge amounts of paper money to cover the costs of the war and as the British blockage reduced the supply of goods. The resulting inflation was the worst in U.S. history.



Note: 1850-1859 = 100

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Shays' Rebellion

- A Massachusetts veteran who could not pay his state taxes
- Shays led a rebellion of 2500 veteran farmers to protest the Mass. taxes → other states did not help put down the rebellion
- Shays exposed the weakness of the A.o.C. and the need for a stronger national government



Shays' Rebellion – Aftermath

“There could be no stronger evidence of the want of energy in our governments than these disorders.”

- George Washington