

Study Guide for
Social Studies Ch. 6 Lesson 5
"Declaring Independence"

resolution - a formal group statement

declaration - an official statement

independence - the freedom to govern themselves

grievances - complaints

"Common Sense" - a pamphlet written by Thomas Paine; it gave reasons the colonies should be their own country

Thomas Jefferson was asked to write a declaration to the king. In it he

- explained why the declaration was needed (this was in the preamble).
- explained the equality and rights of all people

The delegates made a dangerous decision by signing the Declaration because

1. It could cost them their lives and fortunes
2. They would be considered traitors if the British won the war.

John Hancock was the first to sign the Declaration. He signed his name very large because he wanted the king to be able to read it without his glasses.

After the Declaration had been read in public:

- Pictures of the king were removed and statues of him torn down
- Bells were rung and songs sung, and cannons were fired

Articles of Confederation was the first plan of government for the United States.

Its weaknesses were:

- It left most power with the states (most colonists were afraid of a strong national government because they feared it would threaten their freedom).
- Congress did not have the power to enforce (carry out) the law
- Congress could not collect taxes or provide soldiers

Congress could declare war, make treaties, and borrow money.