

The **Declaration of Independence** is the document that announced that the American colonies were breaking away from Great Britain and explained why.

Equality is the state of having the same rights and privileges as others.

A **militia** is a body of mostly untrained part-time soldiers who did required military service and were available for full-time paid duty when needed.

A **minuteman** was a Patriot volunteer who was paid and trained to be ready to fight at a minute's notice.

The **Second Continental Congress** was the meeting of delegates from the American colonies that began in Philadelphia in 1775 and did the following:

- organized the colonies for war against the British, forming an army and navy
- chose George Washington to lead the new army
- decided to officially declare independence from Great Britain
- acted as the colonies' government during the American Revolution

Thomas Paine: Author of “Common Sense”, a booklet that convinced many colonists to support independence.

George Washington: Patriot chosen to be the leader of the Continental army.

Thomas Jefferson: Continental Congress delegate from Virginia who drafted the Declaration of Independence

John Adams: Continental Congress delegate from Massachusetts who helped revise the Declaration of Independence but thought he was too unpopular and obnoxious, and not a good enough writer to draft it.

Ben Franklin: Continental Congress delegate from Pennsylvania who helped create and present the Declaration of Independence, and who stated, “We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately.”

John Hancock: President of the Continental Congress who thought he should be chosen to lead the Continental army and signed the Declaration of Independence first, writing his name in large bold letters.