

# THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE: FOURTEEN HUNDRED WORDS OF FREEDOM



## Characters

<b>Narrator</b>	<b>Thomas Jefferson</b>
<b>Benjamin Franklin</b>	<b>William McHart</b>
<b>John Hancock</b>	<b>John Dunlap</b>

## Setting

This reader's theater takes place during the Second Continental Congress held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This story is based on actual events.



Benjamin Franklin

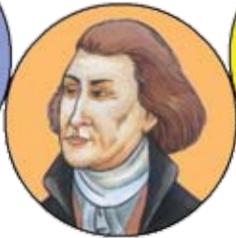


John Dunlap



John Hancock

## Act 1



Thomas Jefferson



William McHart

**Narrator:** Congress meets in the State House. Some of the men want to break free of British rule. Others say that they should try talking to King George.

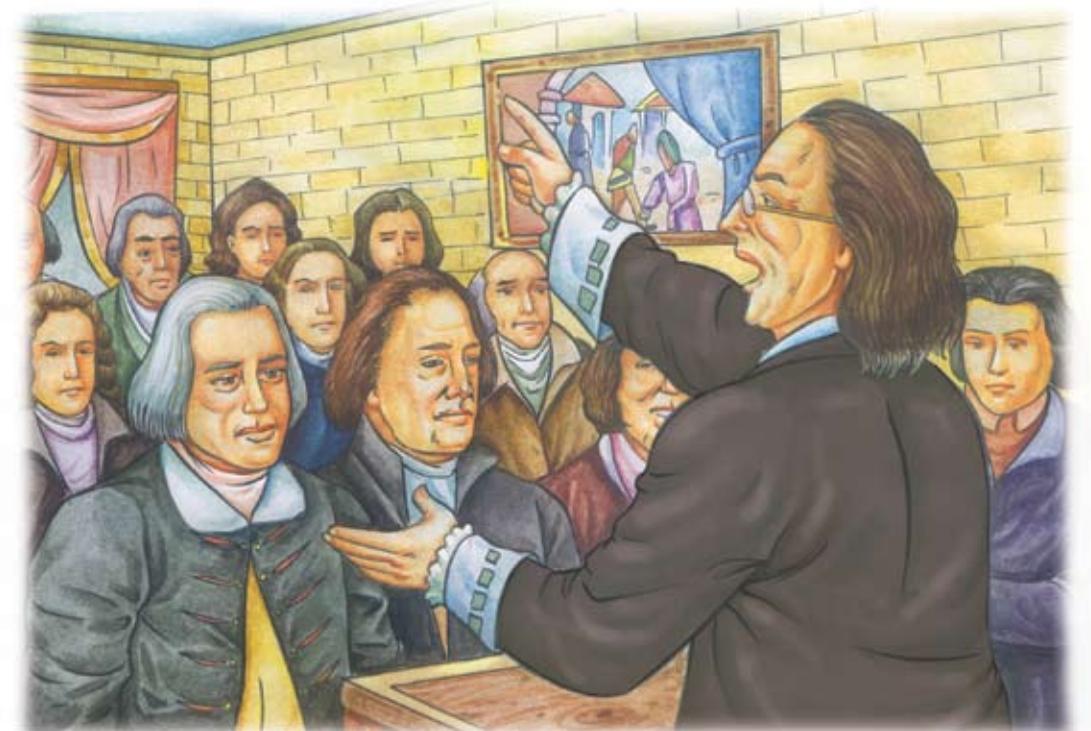
**Franklin:** I spent years in Britain. I tried to make the king understand our concerns. He doesn't care! He'll keep taxing us to pay for his war with France.

**Hancock:** The king already ignored other men and their pleas last summer.

**Jefferson:** It's too late! We have been at war with Great Britain for more than a year.

**Franklin:** We must be our own nation! That's the only way that we can make sure our rights are protected.

**Hancock:** We need a government that will serve us—the people.



**Jefferson:** I am tired of being ruled by a king who has never even seen this land. What does he know of the New World?

**Franklin:** Exactly. We are well within our rights to overthrow a king who doesn't respond to our needs.

**Hancock:** We must make these 13 colonies free and independent of Great Britain!

**Jefferson:** Yet, we are British subjects. It is treason for us to talk of independence. If we lose the war, the king will hang us.

**Franklin:** True. But as our friend Patrick Henry said—"Give me liberty or give me death!"

**Narrator:** A boy listens at the door as the men continue to discuss the issues.

## Act 2

**Dunlap:** Young man, what are you doing here in the hallway?

**William:** They're in there talking about breaking all ties with Great Britain!

**Dunlap:** Yes, I know. And they have good reasons. I just hope they can come to an agreement.

**William:** Aren't you one of the delegates, sir?

**Dunlap:** No. I'm John Dunlap, the printer. My print shop is just around the corner.

**William:** I think I want to become a printer, too—just like Benjamin Franklin.

**Dunlap:** Well, it's hard work and requires long hours. You should come visit my shop to see for yourself.

