

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE: FOURTEEN HUNDRED WORDS OF FREEDOM



Characters

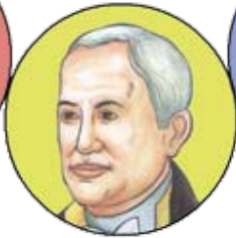
Narrator	Thomas Jefferson
Benjamin Franklin	William McHart
John Hancock	John Dunlap

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.

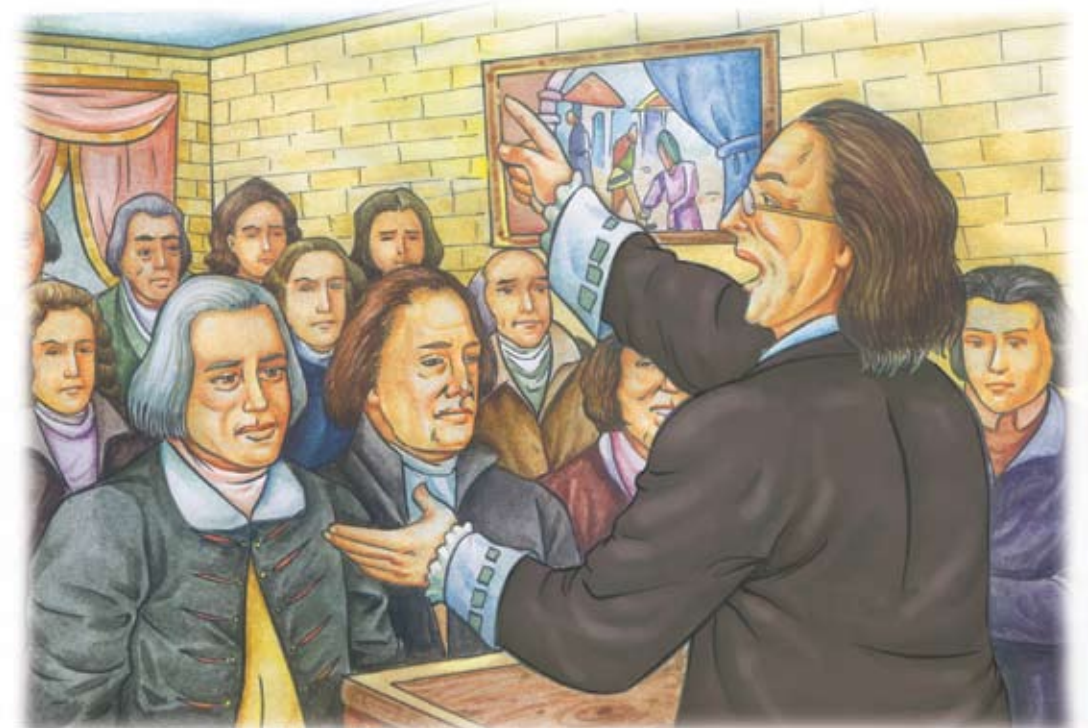
Franklin: I spent years in Britain. I tried to make the king understand our concerns. He doesn't care! He'll keep taxing us to pay for his war with France.

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.

