Moving Toward Independence

Chapter 5, Section 4
**Have you ever read the Declaration of Independence?
“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.”
You have read about how colonial leaders met in Philadelphia in 1774 and established the First Continental Congress.
Today, we will focus on how the Second Continental Congress declared that the colonies were free and independent of Britain.
Key Terms

- Petition- formal request

- Preamble– Introduction to the Declaration of Independence. (page 151)
1. The Second Continental Congress met for the first time on May 10, 1775.
2. The delegates included:

- John Adams
- Samuel Adams
- Patrick Henry
- Richard Henry Lee
- George Washington
- Ben Franklin
- John Hancock
- Thomas Jefferson
3. The Second Continental began to govern the colonies.

1. It **authorized the printing of money**.
2. It **established the first post office**.
3. It **established committees to communicate with Native Americans and other countries**.
4. It **created the Continental Army**.
4. **John Hancock** was a wealthy merchant that funded many Patriot groups, including the Sons of Liberty. The delegates chose him as President of the Second Continental Congress.
George Washington was chosen as Commander of the Continental Army.
Hoping to avoid all-out war, Congress sent a formal request to King George III, called the Olive Branch Petition.
5. The Olive Branch Petition was a formal request asking for peace and the protection of the colonists' rights.

King George said NO.
Shortly after the Battle of Bunker Hill, General Washington began to organize and train the army.
6. When the Patriots learned that the British troops intended to invade New York, they decided to strike first and attacked Montreal and Quebec.
7. **Benedict Arnold** led the failed attempt to capture Quebec.
8. George Washington’s troops were jubilant on March 17, 1776 because the Patriots defeated the redcoats in Boston.
9. In January 1776, **Thomas Paine** wrote and published *Common Sense*, a pamphlet that persuaded thousands of colonists that the Patriots’ fight for freedom was important and worthwhile.
Thomas Paine called for Complete independence from Great Britain.
10. The Second Continental Congress debated many issues. The most important issue was whether the colonies should declare their independence or stay under British rule.
Richard Henry Lee proposed a resolution for independence at the Second Continental Congress.
11. Thomas Jefferson was chosen to write the Declaration of Independence.
12. What did he mean by unalienable rights?

- Rights that cannot be taken away.
  - Life
  - Liberty
  - Pursuit of Happiness
On July 2, 1776, twelve colonies voted in favor of Richard Henry Lee’s proposal to cut all political ties with Great Britain.
13. The delegates made a few changes to Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence and approved it on July 4, 1776.
The first delegate to sign the Declaration was John Hancock.

He remarked that he had signed his name large enough for King George to read his signature without using his glasses.
14. The Declaration has 4 sections: The Preamble states

- That people who wish to form a new country should explain their reasons for doing so.

- The next two sections list the rights the colonists believe they should have and their complaints against Britain.
15. The final section proclaims:

- The existence of a new nation!
16. “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.
Abigail Adams wrote to her husband, John, and said, “I long to hear that you have declared an independency... I would desire that you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable toward them than your ancestors.”