



## Exploring the Writing Process with Primary Source Materials

Lesson Topic: Revision

### Lesson Plan Created By:

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### Grade Levels:

6th - 8th, High School

### Primary Source:

Thomas Jefferson, June , *Rough Draft of the Declaration of Independence*. -06, 1776. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mtjbib000156/>.

### Compelling Question:

Why is revision important to the writing process?

### Supporting Question:

How do writers utilize revision to improve their writing?

### Objective:

In this 45-60 minute lesson, students will examine an early draft of the Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson to further understand the revision stage of the writing process.

### Standards - Common Core:

#### Lesson Standards 6th - 8th

##### Literacy: Writing

Production and Distribution of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-8.5: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

#### Lesson Standards 9th - 10th

##### Literacy: Writing

Production and Distribution of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing

what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

### Reading

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.9: Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (e.g., Washington's Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech, King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail"), including how they address related themes and concepts.

### **Lesson Standards 11th - 12th**

#### Literacy: Writing

Production and Distribution of Writing:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

### Reading

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.9: Analyze seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (including The Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address) for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features.

### Lesson Activity Instructions

#### **Lesson Activity One: Introduction (15 - 20 minutes)**

Provide students with access to the source. Ask students to read and analyze the first page of the source. For students who may struggle with cursive, a transcription of the first page of the source is provided in this document.

As a class, have students identify different examples of revision. Examples can include scratched out lines, scribbles, and additional phrases or sentences included with ^ marker.

Next, break the students into smaller groups. Assign a revision example to each group. Have students discuss the following questions:

1. Why do you believe the author revised or changed the draft this way?
2. How did this revision affect the draft? What would the draft be like if the revision was not made?

#### **Lesson Activity Two (15 - 20 minutes):**

Provide students with a copy of the final version of the Declaration of Independence. A free and accessible transcription is available at Archives.gov, provided here:

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

Ask students to compare the draft to the final source. Students will look at the first page of the primary source and compare it to the first two paragraphs of the final version, starting with “The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America” and ending with “To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.”

In their groups, have students discuss the following questions:

1. Does the final version contain the revisions we as a class previously identified? If not, what changed? Why do you think that is?
2. Along with the revisions to the draft/primary source, what *additional* changes have been made from the draft to the final version? Why do you think those changes were made? How do you think these changes affected the document?
3. How did the revisions change the draft? How is the final version different from the earlier draft?

### **Closing Discussion (5 - 10 minutes)**

As a class, ask the students the following questions:

Thinking back on what we discussed today, why is the revision step necessary in the writing process? How can you use revision to improve your writing?

**Materials:** Student handouts, if desired, are provided in the document below.

### **Credits**

The creation of this lesson plan was funded by a grant from the Library of Congress *Teaching with Primary Sources* program.

## Transcription for Page 1 of Primary Source

The following transcription was performed by AWM staff. To preserve the spirit of the source, edits and revisions were included in transcribed. Before administering the lesson in your classroom, please review the transcription alongside the source.

A Declaration by the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA in General Congress assembled.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for (SCRATCHED OUT)^one people [dissolve the political bonds which have () them with another and to] as (?) among the powers of the earth the ^separate and equal station to which the laws of (native or nature?) and of nature's god entitle them, a decent respect to the opinion of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to (scribble) separation.

We hold these truths to be ^self -evident; that all men are created equal (SCRATCHED OUT) that (scratched) they are endowed by their creator with an (SCRATCHED) [inherent &] inalienable ^rights; that among ~~which~~^these (SCRATCHED LINE) life, (SCRIBBLE) liberty, & the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these (SCRATCHED OUT)^rights, governments are inherited among men; deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government (SCRATCHED OUT) becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, & to institute new government, laying it's foundation on such principles & organising it's powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness. Prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established should not be (BLOTTED OUT) for light & transient causes: and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed, but when a long train of abuses & usurpations [begun at a distinguished period &]pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to (SCRATCHED OUT) reduce them (SCRATCHED OUT)^ under absolute Disposition, it is their right, it is their duty to throw them off such provide new guards for their future security, such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; & such is now the necessity which constrains them to [expunge]^alter their former systems of government. The history of (SCRATCHED OUT)^ the present (SCRATCHED OUT)^ King of Great Britain is a history of [unremitting]^repeated injuries and usurpations, [among which (SCRATCHED OUT)^ appears no solitary fact to contradict the uniform of the rest ~~all of which~~^ [have]^having in direct object the establishment of an absolutely tyranny over theses states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid word, [for the truth of which we pledge a faith yet unsullied by falsehood.]

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## EXPLORING THE WRITING PROCESS WITH PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIALS



**Lesson Topic:** Revision

**Primary Source:** *Thomas Jefferson, June , Rough Draft of the Declaration of Independence. -06, 1776. Manuscript/Mixed Material.*

<https://www.loc.gov/item/mtjbib000156/>.

## Part One

Revision Example:

1) Why do you believe the author revised or changed the draft this way?

2) How did this revision affect the draft? What would the draft be like if the revision was not made?

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## Part Two

After reading the final version of the Declaration of Independence, answer the following questions:

1) Does the final version contain the revisions we as a class previously identified? If not, what changed?

2) Along with the revisions to the draft/primary source, what *additional* changes have been made from the draft to the final version? Why do you think those changes were made? How do you think these changes affected the speech?

### **Part Three**

1) Thinking back on what we discussed today, why is revision a necessary and helpful part of the writing process? How can you use revision to improve your writing?