



The Impure Promise

WisdomForge Booklet — Adult

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About This Book

If the high booklet is a course of study, this one is civic literacy for rooms where nobody grades you except the people who live with what you said. The sitting map is the same six beats. The sentences you owe are the same. The Practice is not.

You are not asked to worship 1,337 words. You are asked to know what they were for, who was locked out of making them, which silences still load-bear, and which later voices used the leftover width. Teaching the Declaration as sacred makes the picnic easy and the contradiction invisible. Teaching it as a wartime brief that became a measuring stick makes it possible to defend without lying.

No legal advice. No household grades. No family names.

Civic rooms this booklet is for: a holiday table, a school board comment, a book club, a workplace argument that lasted too long, a church coffee hour, a vote you actually cast. Practice items below send you into those rooms, not into an Archive scavenger hunt. The high booklet did the hunt. If you have not read the enrolled text this year, read it once before Chapter 5. Then come back to the rooms.

What silence still load-bears: the cut slave-trade paragraph; the slur in the last grievance; the franchise 1776 did not give you. What leftover width later voices used: Douglass, Lincoln, Stanton, King. You do not get to launder the authors. You do not get to retire the lever. Teaching 1776 as sacred makes the picnic easy and the contradiction invisible. Teaching it as a wartime brief that became a measuring stick makes it possible to defend without lying.

Chapter 1: Philadelphia as a Coalition, Not a Miracle



Illustration for Chapter 1

The room is the Pennsylvania State House, June–July 1776. It is not a nation. It is a convention of colonies already at war since April 1775. They vote independence on 2 July.

They adopt words on 4 July. They sign a shrine later. Maier is the book that will save you from arguing with a mural at a picnic.

Adams's 3 July letter is the adult tell. He understood the act. Culture chose the text. You can keep the picnic and still say the clock. Adults who cannot hold both will either sneer at their neighbors or lie to their children. The letter, not a caption:

The Second Day of July 1776, will be the most memorable Epocha, in the History of America. — I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more. — John Adams to Abigail Adams, 3 July 1776 (Massachusetts Historical Society)

You will think me transported with Enthusiasm but I am not. — I am well aware of the Toil and Blood and Treasure, that it will cost Us to maintain this Declaration, and support and defend these States. — same letter

A table that cannot say both paragraphs will either sneer or lie. Read them before the meal. Then sit down.

Paine made independence speakable. The cry is not a caption either:

*Every thing that is right or natural pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, 'TIS TIME TO PART. Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America, is a strong and natural proof, that the authority of the one, over the other, was never the design of Heaven. — Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, January 1776*

Tavern English is not a brief. A brief is not tavern English. Adults who want only one speaker will not understand 1776.

The Committee of Five is a coalition technology: Virginia's pen, Massachusetts's drive, Pennsylvania's fame, Connecticut's sense, New York's hesitation. Livingston does not sign. Dickinson will not. Sherman signs four papers and still loses the portrait. Jefferson writes in a rented room and then watches Congress cut a quarter of his draft, including the only direct attack on the slave trade. He mails the draft to friends. Pain is not the same as being the sole author.

1763–1775 is the invoice: debt, taxes without consent, troops, a wrecked Massachusetts charter, a shot at Lexington. Paine makes independence speakable. May 15 makes new governments under the people a congressional instruction. July is the brief to mankind because France and the hangman both require an explanation.

Congress cannot tax. That weakness is a theory of safety. It later fails as a government. The Constitution is the later machine. Do not thank 1776 for 1787's Senate. Do not blame 1776 for 1787's three-fifths. Different papers. Several men signed both. Biography is not identity of texts.

After the words: New York falls, Philadelphia falls, an army nearly dissolves, France enters after Saratoga, Paris 1783 recognizes the states. Adults who stop at the picnic skip the winter. Adults who skip the picnic to perform gloom skip the neighbors. Maier plus Middlekauff is enough winter. Keep both books off the pedestal.

Myths that waste adult conversation: the Liberty Bell as a Fourth soloist; a unanimous quill circle; fireworks in the chamber while exhausted men danced; Jefferson as lone author; "Scotch brethren" remaining in the text (Congress cut the ethnic blast). File 5.2 and 5.4 exist so you can end those threads in thirty seconds and get back to the coalition price.

The Dunlap broadside is the first public form. Twenty-six known. The parchment is the shrine tourists photograph. The journal is the act. If you only know the shrine, you are still a tourist. Tourism is allowed. Teaching from tourism is not.

If the high booklet made you outline a mandate memo, this chapter asks you to stop performing the outline at dinner. Say the clock. Sit down. Pass the dish.

The Big Idea

Independence was a counted coalition in a war already underway. The holiday remembers a text. Adults owe the count.

Practice

1. At a table this week, say July 2 and July 4 in one sentence without performing superiority. The sentence should name a vote and a text. If you cannot say it without a smirk, you are still performing the high-school outline. Pass the dish after the sentence. 2. Name one signer who would not sign (Dickinson) and one who signed late. If you cannot, you are still in the mural. Do this from memory at the table, then check Maier later. Memory first is the adult tell: you either know the coalition or you are reciting a painting. 3. Read Adams to Abigail, 3

July 1776 — both the festival paragraph and the toil-and-blood paragraph — before you argue about fireworks. If you quote only bells, you have cut the letter. If you quote only gloom, you have cut the neighbors. 4. When a recap video says “they all signed that day,” close it. Do not comment. Closing is the civic act. Commentary is how the mural comes back.

Reflect

What does your town’s ritual need from you: a better myth, or one true clause added to the existing myth? Adams wanted pomp and named a cost. Maier named a clock. A third camp names the public reading. You will not replace the picnic. You might add July 2, or toil and blood, or who was not in the room. Write the clause. Then ask whether neighbors can still pass a dish. If they cannot, you wrote a lecture, not a clause.

Chapter 2: Theism Without a Test, Reason Without a Sneer

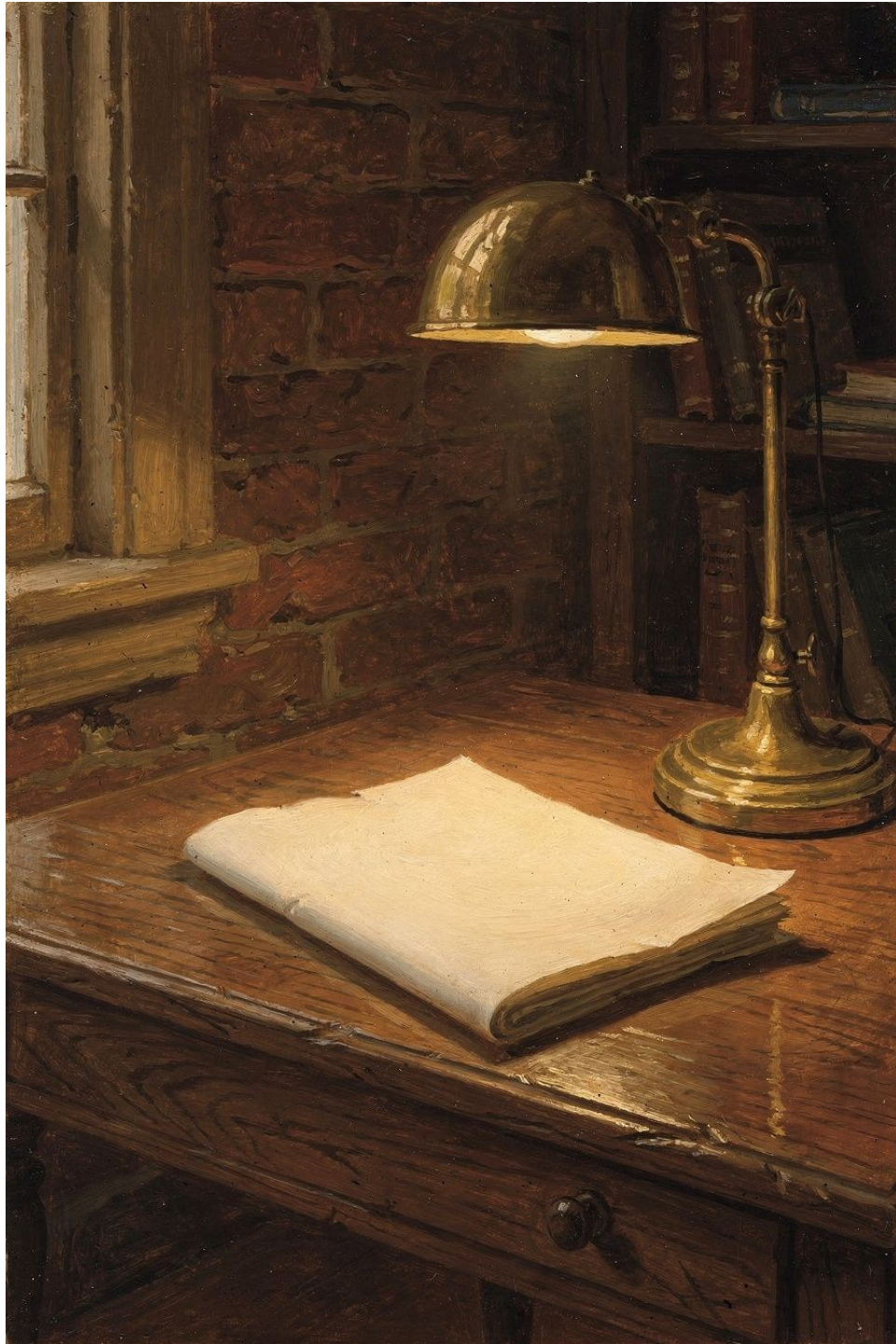


Illustration for Chapter 2

Franklin's "self-evident" is how the brief travels. Sacred would have packed a pew. Self-evident packs a world — or claims to. The Creator remains in the next clause. Rights are not

Parliament's stationery. Nature's God, Supreme Judge, and Providence keep the paper theistic. Christ is absent. That absence is data, not a victory lap for your side of the cable.

Adults who need the Declaration to prove a Christian nation will over-read four phrases. Adults who need it to prove a secular nation will under-read them. The honest reading you can use at work without starting a fight you cannot finish is broad theism, reason as recognition, and a culture still soaked in churches.

The four phrases are not a vibe. They are enrolled words. Copy them from an Archives tab before you enlist.

Nature's God, in the opening, is natural-theology language — a moral order you can argue about with a foreign court without handing them a catechism:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

Necessity. One people. Higher law. Audience. If you start at equality you have skipped the frame. Decent respect is foreign policy and moral psychology. You explain yourself because mankind is watching and because you will need ships. A feed is not mankind. A court wants a clause. A pew may hear Creator and miss self-evident, or the reverse.

Creator, in the rights sentence, is a source-clause, not a test for office:

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.

Supreme Judge, in the closing act, is a courtroom metaphor for men about to commit treason:

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States...

Divine Providence, in the pledge, is an eighteenth-century reliance word, not a denomination:

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Four rooms, four jobs. Natural theology. Source of rights. Judgment. Governance of events. Zero Christs. Zero verses. Zero churches named. If you cannot place the four, you are arguing a poster.

Harry 7.3, at a table, not as a scoreboard. Hall's maximalists have a culture, a natural-law genealogy that runs through Aquinas and Hooker as well as Cicero, and orthodox signers — Witherspoon the Presbyterian minister, Samuel Adams the serious Calvinist, Sherman the devout Congregationalist. They are not inventing pews. Gaustad's minimalists have the page: Nature's God, Creator, Supreme Judge, Providence; no Christ; no verse; Franklin's self-evident; Jefferson's cut miracles; Adams's Unitarianism; Washington leaving before communion; a Constitution eleven years later that does not name God at all. They are not inventing absences. The design is travel. You may belong to a church. You may not. The paper was written to be readable in both rooms. Adults who turn the four phrases into a cable victory have left the sentences. Copy them. Then stop talking if you have only a team.

The sacred-to-self-evident hinge is the adult tell. Jefferson drafted "sacred and undeniable." Franklin marked "self-evident." Sacred locates authority in holiness. Self-evident locates it in recognition. Euclidean axioms were the period's school metaphor. Reid's common-sense philosophy is the Scottish candidate. Locke's demonstrative natural law is the English candidate. Wills overweights Scotland. Bailyn overweights the pamphlet environment. Allen reads the syntax as public reason. You need friction among them, not a mascot. If your table can only say "Enlightenment" or only say "Christian nation," you have skipped the hinge.

Adams's letter is culture, not a creed. The festival paragraph wants devotion as well as bells. That is evidence Hall can use. It is not a verse.

The Second Day of July 1776, will be the most memorable Epocha, in the History of America. — I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more. — John Adams to Abigail Adams, 3 July 1776 (Massachusetts Historical Society)

Devotion to God Almighty is how a Massachusetts Unitarian thought a continent should keep a day. It does not put Christ in the enrolled text. It does not erase Nature's God. Adults who quote only bells have cut the letter. Adults who quote only devotion to prove a denomination have cut the paper.

Mason's first article, adopted 12 June, is the colonial cousin on the desk two weeks before Congress voted the text. It talks nature, inherent rights, and a compact you cannot use to strip posterity. It does not name a church.

That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety. — Virginia Declaration of Rights, art. 1 (National Archives transcription)

"By nature" is the same family as Nature's God: a moral order prior to a king. Virginia's "state of society" lock is how a planter convention kept the equality sentence from freeing people held in slavery. That lock is politics. It is not theology. Adults who mash Mason into a Sunday-school poster have skipped the lock. Adults who skip Mason because he is not Jefferson have skipped the desk.

Locke is in the library, not on the altar. Chapter 9 says why anyone leaves the state of nature:

*The great and chief end, therefore, of men's uniting into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property. — *Second Treatise*, ch. 9, §124*

Property in Locke includes life and liberty, not only land. That is a theory of government as security, not a psalm. Jefferson still swapped the named head. The swap is the American accent. "Lockean" as a personality type is how a book club skips the chapter.

The honest middle is not a tie. It is a design: broad theism that can travel. Nature's God is natural-theology language. Creator is a source-clause for rights, not a test. Supreme Judge is a courtroom metaphor. Divine Providence is a reliance word. The paper is compatible with Christianity, Deism, and any theism that will let reason recognize a moral order. It does not prove a Christian nation. It does not prove a secular nation. Meacham's *American Gospel* is a usable public book for that middle. Hall 2019 and Gaustad 1987 will not share a conclusion. Your job at a table is not to pick their team. Your job is to read the four phrases before you enlist.

Jefferson's private Bible cuts miracles and leaves moral teaching. That is ethics, not a church. Adams is Unitarian. Washington's communion habits are a historiographical fight; the safer sentence is that he talked Providence more than Christ in public paper. Witherspoon signs as a minister. Sherman signs as a devout Congregationalist. A paper can be written in a Christian-majority culture and still refuse a creed. Both facts can sit on one table. If either fact makes you sneer, you are still performing.

Decent respect named mankind. A coworker is not mankind. A pew is not mankind. A court is not mankind. Each room hears a different phrase first. Your adult work is to keep the other three in your mouth so the first one cannot become a weapon.

Allen is the close reader. Wills is the Scottish enthusiast. Bailyn is the pamphlet weather. Read past the title of each. Then sit down.

The American mind, in Jefferson's own late sentence, is a library, not a church and not a lone marble man. He told Henry Lee he was not aiming at originality of principle or sentiment, nor copying any particular writing:

This was the object of the Declaration of Independence. Not to find out new principles, or new arguments, never before thought of, not merely to say things which had never been said before; but to place before mankind the common sense of the subject, in terms so plain and firm as to command their assent, and to justify ourselves in the independent stand we are compelled to take. Neither aiming at originality of principle or sentiment, nor yet copied from any particular and previous writing, it was intended to be an expression of the American mind... All its authority rests then on the harmonizing sentiments of the day, whether expressed in conversation, in letters, printed essays, or in the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, &c. — Thomas Jefferson to Henry Lee, 8 May 1825 (Founders Online)

Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney. Harmonizing sentiments. Concealment is plagiarism's core. He named the library. Adults who need the paper to be a sermon will be angry that Locke sits beside Cicero. Adults who need the paper to be a secular memo will be angry that a Creator still endows. Both angers skip the list.

Paine made independence speakable in tavern English. Heaven is in his mouth too, and still not a creed:

Every thing that is right or natural pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, 'TIS TIME TO PART. Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America, is a strong and natural proof, that the

*authority of the one, over the other, was never the design of Heaven. — Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, January 1776*

The Almighty and Heaven are Paine's weather. They are not Christ's name. They are not a verse. Adults who want only tavern English will not get Jefferson's brief. Adults who want only the brief will not get how independence became speakable. You need both speakers. About 120,000 copies in three months in a population of about 2.5 million. That is how a pamphlet changed what a Congress could count. It is not how a church wrote a nation.

The Constitution, eleven years later, does not name God at all. That is Gaustad's cleanest exhibit. It is not a repeal of Nature's God. It is a different paper with a different job. Adults who mash 1776 and 1787 into "the founding" will pick a God-count from the wrong sheet. Ask which paper. Then sit down.

The Big Idea

The paper asks any thinking person to see the truths and still talks as if a Creator endowed them. Holding both is adult work.

Practice

1. Copy the four God-phrases from an Archives tab. Do not quote from a meme. Then say them once in a room that is not a classroom — a car, a walk, a kitchen. If you cannot remember four, you are still arguing a poster. 2. Explain "self-evident" to someone who thinks it means "obvious to my team." Use a geometry axiom or a playground fairness, not a sermon. If they walk away angry, ask whether you explained or enlisted. 3. When a coworker says "the founders were all Deists" or "all Christians," ask which four words they mean. If they cannot name Nature's God, Creator, Supreme Judge, and Providence, the sentence is over. You do not have to win. You have to end the false binary. 4. Read the opening sentence aloud once, slowly, without commentary. Decent respect is a job. Commentary is how you skip the job. Then sit down.

Reflect

Which audience are you writing for when you quote 1776 — a pew, a classroom, a court, or a feed? Decent respect named mankind. A feed is not mankind. A court wants a clause. A pew may hear Creator and miss self-evident, or the reverse. Copy the four God-phrases before you enlist. Then stop if you have only a team. Holding both — reason and endowment — is the adult work of Chapter 2.

Chapter 3: Width You Did Not Earn



Illustration for Chapter 3

You did not write “all men are created equal.” You inherited a sentence used as a lever by people the authors excluded. The adult vice is to spend the width as if it were family silver. The other vice is to throw the sentence away because the authors were enslavers. Douglass refused both vices in 1852. That is the standard for this chapter.

At least 41 of 56 signers held people in slavery. Jefferson's household is Gordon-Reed's subject, not a rumor. The cut paragraph named the trade as a war against human nature and then vanished to keep a coalition. Lincoln's maxim is aspirational without being mush: a standard constantly approximated. King's promissory note is finance language for a moral debt. Stanton's remix is how movements steal forms.

Hypocrisy reading vs aspiration reading: keep both. A lie that later people used as a tool is still a tool. A hymn that covered a market in persons is still a cover. Adults who pick only one are choosing comfort.

Harry 7.2, both columns, at adult length. Gordon-Reed's household is not a rumor: Jefferson enslaved more than six hundred people; at least forty-one of fifty-six signers held people in bondage. Finkelman is the founders-and-slavery file. Davis is the age-of-revolution file. The hypocrisy column is true: the room did not mean the fields. Douglass used that column in 1852 without letting it eat the speech. The aspiration column is also true: the words have no racial adjective; later readers refused the operating meaning. Lincoln's maxim is the adult grammar of that column. A paper that is only a lie cannot explain "saving principles." A paper that is only a hymn cannot explain the cut paragraph. Comfort is picking one.

Douglass, as a block, because a caption is how the Fourth stays easy:

The principles contained in that instrument are saving principles. Stand by those principles, be true to them on all occasions, in all places, against all foes, and at whatever cost. — Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?", 5 July 1852

Lincoln, 1858:

They meant to set up a standard maxim for free society, which should be familiar to all, and revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence, and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people of all colors everywhere. — Abraham Lincoln, Lincoln–Douglas debates, 1858

Gettysburg's first sentence, because the cemetery points at 1776:

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. — Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, 19 November 1863 (Avalon)

King, promissory note and insufficient funds, because one sentence without the other is a greeting card:

When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men — yes, black men as well as white men — would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check that has come back marked “insufficient funds.” — Martin Luther King Jr., “I Have a Dream,” 28 August 1963

Seneca Falls, form-sentence, sitting created-equal:

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. — Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls, 19–20 July 1848

These speakers are not a choir. Putting them in one chapter is an adult study move, not a claim they agreed. The high booklet asked you to color-code Douglass for a teacher. This chapter asks you to read him when no teacher is coming.

Douglass will not let you rest in the fathers. He also will not let you throw the instrument in the fire. That double refusal is rarer than either pose. Garrison’s fire is a historical fact; it is not this booklet’s assignment. King’s check is finance because moral language had already been spent. Stanton’s “and women” is a theft you should admire as craft.

You will meet people who use 1776 to end a conversation. You will meet people who use 1776 to start a war of words that never reaches a fact. The adult move is shorter: who was in the room, what the sentence says, who picked it up later, what remains unpaid. Then stop talking if you have nothing further to pay.

The high booklet asked for a color-coded Douglass extract. This chapter asks you to read him when no teacher is coming. If you only meet Douglass as a caption, you are still at the picnic.

The Big Idea

The sentence is impure and productive. You do not get to launder the authors or to retire the lever.

Practice

1. Read ten minutes of Douglass 1852 before a holiday weekend. Not a quote-card. Minutes. If you only meet him as a caption, you are still at the picnic. Mark once where he praises the instrument and once where he will not let you rest. 2. Say out loud who was not in the room: women, enslaved people, Indigenous nations, often the unpropertied. Keep the list concrete. If you soften it to “lots of people,” you have skipped the chairs. 3. When someone says “they didn’t mean you,” answer with Lincoln’s maxim or with Douglass’s “saving principles,” not with a shrug. If you cannot remember either sentence, you are not ready for that fight. Go read. Then come back. 4. If you teach children, do not skip the empty chairs to save the cake. The elementary booklet already has the chairs. Your job is not to re-teach the story. It is to not hide the table.

Reflect

What width of the sentence are you currently spending that you did not pay for? Douglass would not let you rest in the fathers. He also would not let you throw the instrument away. If you spend the width as family silver, you are in the vice he refused. If you retire the sentence because the authors were enslavers, you are in the other vice. Name the width. Name the payment. If you cannot name a payment, stop spending.

Chapter 4: What You Cannot Sell



Illustration for Chapter 4

Unalienable is a claim about persons, not a mood about preferences. Life, liberty, pursuit of happiness — among these, not only these. Locke's property is in the ancestry. Mason's longer list is on the desk. Jefferson's substitution is the American accent. Courts will still want the Constitution. Do not walk into a hearing with a manifesto and call it a holding.

Mason, as a block:

That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety. — Virginia Declaration of Rights, art. 1 (12 June 1776)

Virginia's "state of society" lock is how a planter convention kept the equality sentence from freeing people held in slavery. Jefferson dropped property as a named head and opened the list. Two papers, two weeks, two locks. Adults who say "Lockean" as a personality have not opened a chapter.

Locke, ch. 9:

*The great and chief end, therefore, of men's uniting into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property. — *Second Treatise*, ch. 9, §124*

Locke, ch. 19:

*...whenever the legislators endeavor to take away and destroy the property of the people, or to reduce them to slavery under arbitrary power, they put themselves into a state of war with the people, who are thereupon absolved from any farther obedience... — *Second Treatise*, ch. 19, §222*

The enrolled rights sentence, unalienable and among these:

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.

Harry 7.1, 200–250 words, not a stamp. The plagiarism charge has evidence: the lists sit beside each other; consent sits beside consent; dissolve-the-trust sits beside alter-or-abolish. It fails on four changes. Genre: treatise for 1688 versus a public act with a pledge. List: property became pursuit of happiness. Authority: demonstration became self-evident. Function: fiduciary theory became a declaration of independence with facts attached. Jefferson told Henry Lee in 1825 he was not aiming at originality of principle or sentiment, nor copying any particular writing; he meant an expression of the American mind, resting on harmonizing sentiments — Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney. Concealment is plagiarism's core. He named the library. Adults in a book club who say "he stole Locke" without those four changes are still in the outline the high booklet was written to kill. Your job in a

meeting is different: specify the harm without pretending Jefferson already voted, and without using “Lockean” as a type.

Happiness as flourishing is how you talk about a life without making the state the author of joy. Happiness as appetite is how the phrase dies in advertising. Adults who work, parent, sicken, and die already know the difference. The paper does not.

Happiness as flourishing is how you talk about a life without making the state the author of joy. Happiness as appetite is how the phrase dies in advertising. Adults who work, parent, sicken, and die already know the difference. The paper does not.

The open list is why later dignity claims keep knocking. It is also why every knock can be called mush. Your job in a meeting is to specify the harm without pretending Jefferson already voted.

The Big Idea

Rights in 1776 are a system: not issued by government, not for sale, secured by government, not exhausted by three nouns. Practice is how you find out whether you believe it.

Practice

1. Name one thing at work that is treated as alienable that should not be — a body, a vote, a conscience, time that is not overtime. Say it once in a meeting or to yourself after. If you cannot name one, you do not yet believe unalienable except as a holiday word. 2. Read Locke ch. 9 and ch. 19 before you say “Lockean” in a book club. If you say the type without the chapters, you are the outline. The high booklet already assigned the translation. This room assigns the refusal of the type. 3. Keep “among these” in your mouth when someone says the list is closed. The list is examples. Closed lists are easier to police. You still do not walk into a hearing with a manifesto. File 4.1: courts want the Constitution. Say the limit as well as the door. 4. Separate “I want” from “this is unalienable.” The first is ordinary. The second is a high claim. If you use the second for a preference, you have cheapened the word the slaveholding congress already cheapened by writing it. Do not add to the cheapening.

Reflect

If a right can be unprotected for a century, what is the word unalienable doing besides accusing? Accusing is a job. Lever is another. Neither is a holding. File 4.1 will send you to the Constitution if you walk into a hearing with a manifesto. Write the third job, if any, without the word sacred. If there is no third job, accusing-plus-lever is still more than a mood. Do not cheapen it into a preference.

Chapter 5: Doors, Votes, and Misuse



Illustration for Chapter 5

The last door is for tyranny with a pattern, not for a policy you lost. Prudence is in the text. The People, not a faction. A new government, not a bonfire. The Confederacy used 1776 to defend a property in persons. That is a rejection of the manifesto, not an application.

Lincoln's first inaugural is the adult text. Shays and Whiskey show the new governments did not intend to be altered by tax anger.

Quote the lock before you quote the door. The paper does.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and 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.

Light and transient is the adult word for a lost election, a tax you hate, a court you lost. Sufferable is the adult word for a grievance that still has a next November. If you cannot find prudence, you are quoting a poster.

The door itself is not a tantrum. It is a sequence: ends, People, pattern, replacement.

That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Destructive of these ends — rights-ends, not team-ends. The People, not a faction with a flag. Institute new Government — a form, not a bonfire. Adults who quote abolish and skip institute have already left the paper. A riot is not a founding. A founding is a new form. 1787 is the later machine. 1776 is not a costume for a riot.

The pattern clause is the one posters skip:

But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

Long train. Same Object. Absolute Despotism. New Guards. Four locks in one sentence. A feeling about a count is not a train. A policy you lost is not Despotism. New Guards is the replacement duty people skip when they only want the throw.

Locke is the ancestor, not a warrant for your crowd. Chapter 19 is the dissolution engine:

*...whenever the legislators endeavor to take away and destroy the property of the people, or to reduce them to slavery under arbitrary power, they put themselves into a state of war with the people, who are thereupon absolved from any farther obedience... — *Second Treatise*, ch. 19, §222*

That is the trustee who becomes a thief. Jefferson's list still swapped the named head. The American accent is a public act with facts attached, not a personality type called Lockean. Adults in a book club who say "he stole Locke" without the four changes — genre, list, authority, function — are still in an outline. Your job in a room is different: the last door is residual, not recreational.

Adams already named the cost of keeping a declaration. The toil paragraph is the adult hedge on enthusiasm:

You will think me transported with Enthusiasm but I am not. — I am well aware of the Toil and Blood and Treasure, that it will cost Us to maintain this Declaration, and support and defend these States. — John Adams to Abigail Adams, 3 July 1776 (Massachusetts Historical Society)

Toil, blood, and treasure are what a last door costs when it is real. Adults who quote only bells have cut the letter. Adults who quote only gloom have cut the neighbors. Adults who analogize a modern crowd to 1776 without a war already on, without a long train, and without a new form in mind, have borrowed Adams's festival and skipped his invoice.

The pledge is the risk clause. Treason's penalty was death.

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Honor here is not a greeting card. It is a word men used when the penalty was a rope. Five signers were captured at some point. Houses were looted. Most signers also survived and later held office. Two became presidents. Courage and career can share a biography. Adults who only martyr them are as false as adults who only picnic them. Adults who skip the pledge to quote only equality have hidden the brief's end. Adults who quote only the pledge to skip the empty chairs have hidden the brief's width.

Harry 7.5, at adult length, as two rooms that must both stay open. Residual-last-resort says the right of revolution sleeps while elections, courts, and amendment work, and wakes only when those channels are destroyed — a long train, not a tantrum. Extinct-because-elections says a working franchise is the institutionalization of consent, so revolution-talk against it is a category error. Prudence is the paper's own evidence for last-resort. The enrolled sequence is purpose, origin, then door: governments instituted to secure rights; just powers from consent; alter or abolish when destructive of those ends. Consent in 1776 was narrow — property-owning white men in most places. The 15th, 19th, and 26th widened who may say yes. Widening the roll is not the same as unlocking the last door. A larger franchise

makes revolution against a certified count harder to justify under the paper's own prudence, not easier.

You live in a franchise that 1776 did not give you. Amendments did. If the channels work — elections, courts, lawful speech — the Declaration's own hedges tell you the door stays shut. This booklet will not flatter the pretense otherwise. Do not add a current crowd as a case study. Name the locks. Sit down.

Shays (1786–87) invoked revolutionary feeling against debt and tax in Massachusetts. The new state crushed it. The episode helped scare a class of men into Philadelphia in 1787. It is not 1776. It is what a new government does when it does not intend to be altered by tax anger. The Whiskey Rebellion (1794) met Washington and about 13,000 men. Hamilton wanted a demonstration that the machine could collect. Washington went. The door did not open. Neither case is a colonial war against a distant sovereign who would not seat your people. Both cases are Americans using 1776-feeling against Americans who had just written a machine. Adults who collapse them into “the spirit of '76” have skipped the locks.

The Confederacy claimed 1776 to keep a property in persons. That is a rejection of equality, not an exercise of the last door. The “right” they named was the right to deny rights. Lincoln's first inaugural is the adult text because it loves 1776 without handing secession the manifesto:

Plainly, the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it does, of necessity, fly to anarchy or to despotism. — Abraham Lincoln, First Inaugural Address, 4 March 1861

He can still love 1776 because 1776 named equality and consent, not a right to destroy other people's rights. He also named the ordinary channel in the same address: weary of the existing government, amend it. The revolutionary right he names in passing is not this booklet's assignment. The assignment is the lock. A majority held in restraint by checks, always changing with opinion, is the adult translation of consent once a franchise exists. Fly to anarchy or despotism is the adult translation of skipping the lock.

Jefferson's cut paragraph belongs in this chapter because the Confederacy's misuse is the mirror of the silence. The draft named a market in persons as a war against human nature. Congress cut it to keep South Carolina and Georgia. The manifesto still said all men. The later rebellion said some men as property. You do not get to use the last door to keep the market the preamble already condemned in principle and the draft already named in fact.

He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought & sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce. — Jefferson's original Rough draught, Library of Congress

Stretch: the colonies used the market. Moral force: slavery named as a war against the same rights the preamble proclaims. Coalition: South Carolina and Georgia. Invoice: a war. Knowing is not paying. Adults who quote the last door to defend a property in persons have left the paper. Adults who skip the cut paragraph to keep a clean poster have left the paper the other way.

Mason's lock is the colonial cousin of this chapter's lock. Virginia said inherent rights cannot be bargained away for posterity, then added "when they enter into a state of society" so equality would not free people held in slavery. Two papers, two weeks, two locks. The last door in 1776 is not a tool for keeping those locks against the people they injured. It is a tool against a king who would not seat your assemblies. Mixing those jobs is how 1861 stole 1776.

The grievances are exhibits, not the whole brief. Twenty-seven, mostly "He has," King George as defendant. Clusters: political interference, judicial control, military and economic coercion, charter-stripping, then the last grievance that slurs Native nations. Shame is not optional. The list is evidence. The principles are the law of the brief. Without both halves you have a sermon or a complaint. Adults at tables tend to quote one half. Your job is to notice which half is missing and add it in one sentence, then pass the dish.

Hobbes gave consent once, then obey. Locke let you dissolve a trustee who destroys property or reduces you to slavery. The Declaration lets a people alter or abolish a form destructive of rights-ends, with prudence. Rousseau's general will is not this paper's engine. The remaining tension is majority versus unalienable: can a majority consent to take a minority's rights? The philosophy says no. American practice often said yes. Equal Protection is a later legal no. Neither is automatic in a kitchen. If you cannot say the tension, you are quoting a costume.

Consent versus rights remains the tension in every majority that wants a minority smaller. Unalienable is the philosophy's no. Equal Protection is the later legal no. A working vote is the ordinary form of consent. The manifesto is not a costume for a riot. If someone asks you

to coach extra-legal force against a working franchise, the answer is no. That is not a political team. It is the paper's own hedges.

Arendt *On Revolution* and Buchanan *Secession* are the comparative and the analytic. This booklet will not become their seminar. Steelman residual-last-resort in one paragraph. Steelman extinct-because-elections in one paragraph. Then write which reading you can steelman that you do not hold. If you cannot steelman the other, you are not done. This booklet will not assign you a current crowd. It will assign you the locks.

When someone analogizes a modern crowd to 1776, ask for the long train. Require a list of abuses toward despotism, not a feeling about an election. If they cannot list, the analogy is vanity. Distinguish civil disobedience aimed at cashing a promissory note from force aimed at stopping a count. King is the first. A riot against a certified franchise is not. If you mash them, you have left the last-door debate.

You will meet people who use 1776 to end a conversation. You will meet people who use 1776 to start a war of words that never reaches a fact. The adult move is shorter: who was in the room, what the locks say, whether the channels work, what remains unpaid. Then stop talking if you have nothing further to pay.

Lincoln named the ordinary channel in the same inaugural, before anyone borrows him for a door they have not earned:

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it. I cannot be ignorant of the fact that many worthy and patriotic citizens are desirous of having the National Constitution amended... — Abraham Lincoln, First Inaugural Address, 4 March 1861

Constitutional right of amending it comes first in the adult mouth. Revolutionary right is named so it cannot be pretended he never heard of 1776. This booklet will not coach the second against a working franchise. Read the order. Then sit down.

He also refused the magic of a single ballot as a destruction license, in the perpetual-union frame:

I hold that, in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution, the Union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. It is safe to assert that no government proper ever

had a provision in its organic law for its own termination. — Abraham Lincoln, First Inaugural Address, 4 March 1861

Perpetual is not a hymn. It is a claim that a working machine is not a long train. Adults who hate that sentence still owe the prudence sentence. Adults who love that sentence still owe the equality sentence. Both debts sit on the same table.

Lee's resolution is the act. The last door is not a substitute for a counted vote already taken:

That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved.

That is 7 June introduced, 2 July voted. Jefferson's draft is the explanation filed with mankind. Dunlap is the first public form. Parchment is the shrine. Do not let a later crowd use the explanation as if it were a second vote.

The closing act is the prayer for relief. Principles without it are a sermon. It without principles is a secession note. The brief is both.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States...

If you can recite abolish and cannot place this paragraph, you have the costume. If you can recite this paragraph and cannot place prudence, you have the shrine. The adult room needs the lock and the prayer in the same breath.

King's finance language remains the other door — reform aimed at cashing a note, not a last door:

When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men — yes, black men as well as white men — would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a

check that has come back marked “insufficient funds.” — Martin Luther King Jr., “I Have a Dream,” 28 August 1963

King is not 1776’s revolution clause. He is the second life trying to cash what the first life wrote and did not pay. Keep that distinction in your mouth when someone mashes a Mall speech into a last door. *Letter from Birmingham Jail* reaches for natural law: an unjust law is not rooted in eternal law. That is reform. It is not a warrant to stop a count.

Exhibits, not a sermon. The last door is argued with facts the paper actually lists. A sample from the enrolled text, so a table cannot pretend the grievances are a mood:

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent.

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

The last enrolled grievance includes a slur against Native nations. Name it. Do not chant it. Shame is part of the close reading. Adults who skip it to keep a clean poster are doing the picnic’s other job: hiding the price. Adults who start a last-door argument without a single exhibit have a costume, not a brief.

The Big Idea

Revolution language without the locks is vanity. A working vote is the ordinary form of consent. The manifesto is not a costume for a riot.

Practice

1. Quote the prudence sentence before you quote alter-or-abolish. If you cannot find prudence, you are quoting a poster. Adults who start with the door have already left the locks. 2. When someone analogizes a modern crowd to 1776, ask for the long train. Require a list of abuses toward despotism, not a feeling about an election. If they cannot list, the analogy is vanity. This booklet will not assign you their crowd. It will assign you the question. 3. Read Lincoln's first inaugural on secession. One page of notes, no social post. Copy the anarchy sentence. Then write why he can still love 1776 (equality and consent, not a right to destroy others' rights). If you post it, you have skipped the room. 4. Distinguish civil disobedience aimed at cashing the promissory note from force aimed at stopping a count. King is the first. A riot against a certified franchise is not. If you mash them, you have left the last-door debate.

Reflect

Where, in your actual life, is consent real — and where is it a form? A working vote is realer than a slogan. A workplace yes that can be punished is a form. A family yes that cannot be refused is a form. The paper's consent is the origin of just powers, not a mood about being asked. If the channels work, the last door stays shut. If you cannot tell a channel from a door, you are quoting a costume.

Chapter 6: The Bill You Did Not Pay, the Stick You Still Use



Illustration for Chapter 6

The first life ends in 1783. The second life is the unfinished standard. Silence about slavery was a coalition price. The Civil War is the later invoice. You do not get to be surprised.

Jefferson's draft, full Harry 1.3 block, so silence has a text:

He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought & sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce. — Jefferson's original Rough draught, Library of Congress

Stretch: the colonies used the market. Moral force: slavery named as a war against the same rights the preamble proclaims. Coalition: South Carolina and Georgia. Invoice: a war. Knowing is not paying.

The enrolled closing act, as a block:

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States...

Harry 7.4, kept as a Constitution fight that drags 1776 as atmosphere. Original public meaning may treat 1776 as politics, not a clause. Living constitutionalism borrows the width. Declarationists want the manifesto in the air as Lincoln's maxim. This booklet will not become a courtroom. Adults drag 1776 into the fight because the manifesto feels like moral oxygen. Say that. Then go back to the enrolled text and the cut draft. Oxygen that never meets a fact becomes perfume.

Lincoln points a cemetery at 1776. Douglass will not let the Fourth be easy. King cashes a check at the Mall. Armitage's cousins — France, Haiti, UDHR — are how you see that the language traveled and that travel is not innocence. The French Terror is not a reason to hide rights language. It is a reason to remember machines.

Original meaning vs living reading is mostly a Constitution fight. Adults drag 1776 into it because the manifesto feels like moral oxygen. Say that. Then go back to the enrolled text and the cut draft. Oxygen that never meets a fact becomes perfume.

The French Declaration of the Rights of Man is a sibling that meets Terror. Haiti hears liberty and pays in blood. The UDHR (1948) is a later decent-respect filed with a different

mankind. Armitage is the map. Do not use the map to wash 1776. Do not use 1776 to wash the map.

File 4.2 is the civil-rights chain in Harry's pack. File 7.2 is the contradiction. File 6.2 is manifesto versus machine. If you can keep those three files distinct in a conversation, you are done with this chapter. If you mash them into "America," you will say something true and unusable.

High school asked you for a research prompt at the Library of Congress. Adult life asks you not to fake having gone. If you have not seen the draft, say you have not seen the draft. Then go, or be quiet about Jefferson's feelings.

The Big Idea

The Declaration is the most important impure document in American politics: a promise written by people who did not keep it, in words too wide to stay theirs.

Practice

1. Keep a two-column holiday card: Act (1776–1783) / Standard (still). Five dates on the left. Five users on the right. Fireworks are not a date. If you cannot fill the right without a caption, you have not met Douglass, Lincoln, Stanton, or King except as merch. 2. Read Jefferson's draft paragraph on the trade. Do not perform disgust as a substitute for history. Name the stretch (blaming the king) and the moral force (war against human nature) in two sentences. Then stop performing. 3. If you vote, name one live inequality the sentence still accuses. If you cannot name one, you are using 1776 as perfume. The accusation is the word's remaining job. It is not a court order. 4. Refuse to say "the founding" as if 1776 and 1787 were one object. Manifesto versus machine. Several men signed both. Biography is not identity of texts. If someone says "the founding" at a table, ask which paper. Then sit down.

Reflect

What would it mean, this year, to approximate the standard without pretending you have arrived? Lincoln's maxim is the grammar: constantly labored for, never perfectly attained. King's check is the finance: insufficient funds is not bankruptcy if you still demand cash. Name one approximation you will actually do. If you cannot name one, you are using 1776 as perfume. Perfume is not a standard.

For the Grown-Up Reader

Same six sittings as the other bands. Practice items are civic rooms, not Archive scavenger hunts. Quotes on the page are real: Adams to Abigail, 3 July 1776 (festival and toil); Paine, *Common Sense*; Mason, Virginia Declaration of Rights, art. 1; Locke, *Second Treatise* §§124 and 222; enrolled unalienable rights, among these, prudence, long train, pledge, and closing act; Jefferson to Henry Lee, 8 May 1825; Jefferson's draft slave-trade paragraph (Library of Congress); Douglass 1852; Lincoln 1858 maxim; Gettysburg Address; Lincoln First Inaugural, 1861; King, promissory note and insufficient funds, 1963; Seneca Falls, 1848. No invented sayings. No family names. No legal, medical, or pastoral advice. No instruction to rebel against a working franchise.

About WisdomForge

WisdomForge turns founding documents and great thinkers into booklets for every age. Each figure or document gets four booklets: ages 5–10, 11–14, 15–18, and adults. The same text, told at the right depth. Because the Declaration is not a costume of liberty. It is a coalition, a brief, and a measuring stick. Read the 1,337 words. The National Archives keeps a public text. Use it.

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