Second Grade

DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



Foundations of Religious Liberty: Understanding Faith, Freedom, and the Constitution

LITTLEPATRIOTS

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Key Themes

- The Legacy of Religious Freedom
- Religious Freedom vs. Religious Uniformity
- What is "Separation of Church and State"?
- Thomas Jefferson's Role in Religious Liberty



Core Values

- Community
- Life
- Faith
- Liberty

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Explain what it means to show honor and respect during the Pledge of Allegiance, including proper posture and behavior.
- Describe the meaning of "One Nation Under God" and explain how unity brings people together despite differences.
- Define religious freedom (freedom of religion) as the right to believe, worship, and practice faith freely.
- Explain the idea of "Separation between Church and State" by describing how the government and religion have different roles.
- Identify that the Constitution and the Bill of Rights protect freedom of religion, allowing all people to worship without the government telling them what to believe.

Key Terms

01 **citizens:** people who belong to a country.

02 **Declaration of Independence:** an important document that declared the colonists' independence in 1776.

03 **faith:** belief in someone or something even when it can't be seen.

04 **First Amendment:** part of the United States Constitution which guarantees that the government cannot create an official religion or stop people from practicing their faith.

05 **Founding Fathers:** the leaders who helped create the United States of America.

06 **government:** a system of rules and leaders that help keep people safe and make sure everyone is treated fairly.

07 **honor:** to show great respect for something.

08 **individual freedom:** the right to make your own decisions and choose what to believe and how to worship.

09 **natural rights:** special freedoms that belong to you just because you are a human being.

10 **opportunity:** having the chance to do something or achieve something.

11 **religious freedom:** the right to practice your faith however you choose.

12 **unity:** coming together as one, despite our differences.

13 **worship:** showing respect and honor to God, often by praying, singing, or attending church.

Introduction

TELL Students 📷🔑

Hello, little patriots! Today, we're going to start by talking about the Pledge of Allegiance. When we say the Pledge, we stand tall, place our right hand over our heart, and look at the flag to show respect for our country. **Honor** means showing deep respect for something. **[Reference Salute Image]** We honor our country because it provides freedom, safety, and the opportunity, or chance, to grow. **Opportunity** means having the chance to do something, like learning new things, trying different activities, and becoming the best version of ourselves. In our country, we have many opportunities. That is why we honor our country by standing, putting our hand on our heart, and saying the Pledge together. Now, let's honor our country together. [Recite the Pledge of Allegiance with the class.]

ASK Students

Have you ever thought about what it means when we say we are "One Nation Under God"?

TELL Students 📷🔑

"One Nation Under God" means that our country is united under the protection of God. **Unity** means coming together as one, despite our differences. Even though we may look different, speak differently, or believe in different things, we can still work together, help each other, and care for one another. **[Reference Unity Image]** When we are united under God, we are stronger and more capable of achieving great things, just like a family or a group of friends who work together toward a common goal. Unity is important because it allows us to support one another in building a better world. When we say "One Nation Under God," it reminds us that we are united by something greater than ourselves—God.

ASK Students

Did you know that the words "under God" were added to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954 when Dwight D. Eisenhower was president? The change was made to emphasize that the United States believed in God, while communist countries were atheist.

TELL Students 📷🔑

This was done to remind us that our country is built on faith and freedom. Faith and religious freedom are at the heart of who we are as Americans.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

These two ideas are different, but they are closely connected. **Faith** is a belief in someone or something, even when it can't be seen. **Religious freedom** means that you have the right to practice your faith in any way you choose. This could mean praying, going to church, or reading a holy book like the Bible. **[Reference Bible Image]** Religious freedom is important because it allows people to fully express and practice what they believe, without fear.

ASK Students

Why is it important that we have religious freedom in our country?

TELL Students 📷🔑

Imagine believing in something but not being able to discuss it with anyone. You would still believe in your heart, but it would be hard to practice your faith. Sadly, in some countries today, people are not allowed to discuss their beliefs freely. But here in the United States, we have the special freedom to express our beliefs. This freedom is one of the natural rights we have in our country. Remember from our earlier lesson that **natural rights** are special freedoms that belong to every person simply because they are human. Our **Declaration of Independence**, a very important document that said the colonists were no longer controlled by Great Britain, says that every person has the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. **[Reference Declaration of Independence Image]** The **Founding Fathers**—men like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson who helped create the United States of America—believed that God is the source of these rights. **[Reference Washington, Jefferson Images]**

ASK Students

Why do you think it's important that everyone has the right to practice their faith freely? How does this make our country special? Please turn to your neighbor to discuss. [Give students three minutes to discuss with their neighbor and then discuss as a class.]

TELL Students 📷🔑

Religious freedom is one of the most important natural rights we have in our country. It means that each person has the right to choose and practice their own religion. This could mean praying, going to a church or synagogue, or reading a holy book like the Bible. **[Reference Bible Image]**

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

In the United States, we have the freedom to worship the way we choose. **Worship** means showing respect and honor to God, often by praying, singing, or attending church.

ASK Students

Why do you think the Founding Fathers believed that everyone should have the freedom to make their own decisions and practice their faith?

TELL Students

The Founding Fathers believed that faith and religious freedom were very important. They also believed in **individual freedom**, which means that every person has the right to make their own decisions, choose what to believe, and decide how to worship. They wanted everyone to have the right to choose their own beliefs and practice their faith. These freedoms were seen as the starting point for all the other rights we enjoy today. That's why religious freedom is often called "America's first freedom"—it was one of the most important rights the Founding Fathers wanted to protect. **[Reference Founding Fathers Image]** It means people have the right to openly follow their faith, without anyone telling them what to believe or how to worship. Let's watch a Star Spangled Adventures cartoon to learn more!

WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon
Ep. 40: Thomas Jefferson/Religious Liberty

Lesson

TELL Students

Now let's talk about what we saw in the cartoon today. Liberty the Eagle begins by introducing an idea called "Separation between Church and State." This idea is connected to religious liberty, or freedom of religion, but it is often misunderstood. The idea of "Separation between Church and State" is even misunderstood by some grown-ups! But it is an important idea that we all need to understand. Let's take a closer look so we can understand it clearly!

ASK Students

What does it mean to separate two things?

TELL Students 📷🔑

That is right! When you separate things, you take them apart. Have you ever argued with your brother or sister? If you have, your parents probably separated you so you could calm down! You may have also separated items into groups. When I eat Skittles, I like to separate the green ones from the rest of the bag and eat those last because they are my favorite. Now that we understand what it means to separate two things, let's talk about what the word "State" means. When we say "State" here, we are not talking about one of the 50 states or another place on a map. This State means the **government**, the leaders who make rules and laws for our country. These are people like the president, governors, and judges. **[Reference Government Image]**

ASK Students

What terms and phrases are we learning about today?

TELL Students 📷

Great job! Today, we are learning about religious freedom, or freedom of religion, and something called the "Separation between Church and State." Now let's talk about what "Church" means. In this phrase, Church does not just mean a building you go to on Sundays. It means people—people who believe in God and gather together to worship, and the people who organize that worship. Worship includes things like praying, reading a holy book like the Bible, singing, donating money or time, and learning about our beliefs. It also includes people of different religions who meet and worship in their own ways. **[Reference Religions Image]**

Lesson

TELL Students
This is important because religious freedom means everyone is free to believe and worship according to their own faith. So when we talk about "Church," we are really talking about people and their faith—and how they are free to follow God in the way they believe is right. We are also talking about the people who run formal churches and congregations: the rabbis, priests, ministers, deacons, and elders who help us all worship together.

ASK Students
What does "Church" mean in this phrase?

TELL Students 📷
That's right! It means people who worship—and it includes all religions. Now let's put it all together. "Separation between Church and State" means that the government and religion each have their own important jobs. The government does not tell people what to believe, and the Church does not control the government. They can't tell each other what to do! And here is why this matters: it protects our freedom of religion. Freedom of religion means you are free to believe, worship, and live out your faith in the way that is right for your family. **[Reference Family Image]** It does not mean freedom from religion—it means freedom for religion! Freedom from religion would mean that religion is taken out of public life. But that is not what our Founding Fathers wanted to do. They believed that faith was important and that it had an important place in our country.

ASK Students
Why is it important that people are free to worship in their own way?

TELL Students
It is important for people to be free to worship in their own way because our faith is important, and it is something between us and God. In the cartoon, we saw leaders from the Danbury Baptist Church called elders. They were upset because the government in their home state of Connecticut was making people give money to a church—the Congregationalist Church—even if they didn't attend it. Giving money to a church is a form of worship.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)
When the state of Connecticut told the Danbury Baptist Church members to give money to the Congregationalist Church, they were telling the Danbury Baptist Church members how to worship.

ASK Students
Was that freedom of religion?

TELL Students 📷
That is not freedom of religion! Remember, freedom of religion means people choose how to worship—the government can't tell them what they can or cannot worship, or even where or how to worship. The Danbury Baptist leaders decided to write a letter to President Thomas Jefferson. They wanted help protecting their freedom of religion. **[Reference Thomas Jefferson Image]** President Jefferson was an important Founding Father and the main author of the Declaration of Independence. He was President of the United States of America when the Danbury elders wrote their letter.

ASK Students
Who did President Jefferson talk to about the letter?

TELL Students 📷
He talked with James Madison, another important Founding Father. Together, they discussed the Bill of Rights. **[Reference James Madison Image]** The Bill of Rights is a special part of the United States Constitution. It is made up of the first 10 amendments, or rules, that were added to the Constitution to protect our most important freedoms. One of those freedoms is freedom of religion. Remember, the Declaration of Independence declared our freedom, and the United States Constitution is the roadmap for staying free. We must follow the Constitution if we want to keep our freedom. **[Reference United States Constitution]** The Bill of Rights protects freedom of religion. This means the government cannot make you go to a certain church, believe a certain way, or worship in a certain way. You and your family are free to follow your faith. President Jefferson responded to the Danbury Baptist Church and explained that there is a "wall" between church and state. Remember, this means the government cannot control religion, and it cannot force people to believe something.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)
This "wall" helps protect our religious freedom so that everyone can worship freely.

ASK Students
What did President Jefferson mean by that wall?

TELL Students
That's right! He meant the government cannot force people to attend or support one church, and one church does not get to control the government. And here is something that is often misunderstood: this does not mean faith is not important. It does not mean we hide our faith. It means we are free to live it out! Even today, we say in the Pledge of Allegiance that we are "one nation under God." That reminds us that faith has always been important in our country. So remember:

- Freedom of religion means you are free to believe.
- Freedom of religion means you are free to worship.
- Freedom of religion means you are free to live out your faith every day. And that is a very special freedom!

ASK Students
What do you think the Founding Fathers believed about religious freedom and the unity we talked about at the beginning of our lesson?

TELL Students 🔑
The Founding Fathers believed that religious freedom would bring peace and unity to the country. They knew that if the government forced everyone to follow the same religion, it could lead to disagreements and conflict. Instead, they believed true unity happens when people are free to choose their faith and live according to their beliefs while respecting others. To protect religious freedom, the Founding Fathers created the First Amendment, which is part of the United States Constitution—the highest law in the country. Remember, this amendment is part of the Bill of Rights. The **First Amendment** guarantees that the government cannot create an official religion or stop people from practicing their faith. This means that every person has the right to worship in their own way, whether by praying, attending church, or reading religious texts.

Lesson

ASK Students

What did the Founding Fathers create to protect religious freedom in the United States?

TELL Students

The Constitution was written by the Founding Fathers to create a government that protects the rights of the people. It was designed to make sure that the freedoms given to us by God, like religious liberty, could not be taken away by anyone, including the government. Because of the Constitution and the First Amendment, America became a place where people of different religions could live together peacefully, share their beliefs, and worship freely. Religious freedom is one of the most important values in our country today. In America, **citizens**—people who belong to the country—have the right to choose their faith and worship without fear. This is one of the things that makes America special. **[Reference American Flag]** It allows people to live peacefully and support one another, no matter what they believe. This is why the phrase "One Nation Under God" is so important. It reminds us that, no matter where we come from or what we believe, we are all part of the same country, united in freedom under God's protection.

Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down Worksheet

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Directions: Read each statement carefully. If the statement is true, circle the thumbs up icon. If the statement is false, circle the thumbs down icon.

1. The Pledge of Allegiance is a way to show respect and honor for our country.



2. We say the Pledge of Allegiance by standing, placing our left hand over our hearts, and looking at the flag.



3. "One Nation Under God" means that our country is united and trusts in God's protection.



4. The words "under God" were added to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954 by President Abraham Lincoln.



5. Religious freedom means that everyone has the right to choose and practice their faith freely.



Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down Worksheet

6. The Declaration of Independence says that people have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.



7. The Founding Fathers believed that our natural rights come from the government.



8. A community is a group of people who live together, share common interests, and help one another.



9. Religious freedom is called "America's first freedom" because it helps protect all of our other rights.



10. "One Nation Under God" reminds us that we are all different and should not work together.



Bonus Question:
Why do you think religious freedom is important in our country?

_____

_____

_____

Answer Key: Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down Worksheet

1. The Pledge of Allegiance is a way to show respect and honor for our country. 👍 (True)
2. We say the Pledge of Allegiance by standing, placing our left hand over our hearts, and looking at the flag. 👎 (False – We place our right hand over our hearts.)
3. "One Nation Under God" means that our country is united and trusts in God's protection. 👍 (True)
4. The words "under God" were added to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954 by President Abraham Lincoln. 👎 (False – They were added by President Dwight D. Eisenhower.)
5. Religious freedom means that everyone has the right to choose and practice their faith freely. 👍 (True)
6. The Declaration of Independence says that people have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. 👍 (True)
7. The Founding Fathers believed that our natural rights come from the government. 👎 (False – They believed our rights come from God.)
8. A community is a group of people who live together, share common interests, and help one another. 👍 (True)
9. Religious freedom is called "America's first freedom" because it helps protect all of our other rights. 👍 (True)
10. "One Nation Under God" reminds us that we are all different and should not work together. 👎 (False – It reminds us that we are united in faith and freedom.)

Bonus Question:
Why do you think religious freedom is important in our country? (Answers will vary but should reflect an understanding that religious freedom allows everyone to practice their faith without fear and is a key part of what makes America unique.)



Symbols of Faith in Our Country

Objective

Second-grade students will learn that the United States government was founded on Judeo-Christian beliefs while also respecting freedom of religion. They will examine symbols in the U.S. like currency, the national motto, the Declaration of Independence, and the Pledge of Allegiance, which include references to God, to understand how faith was an important part of our country's foundation.

Materials Needed

- Copies of the U.S. money (paper or digital images)
- Copies of the Pledge of Allegiance and the national motto ("In God We Trust")
- Excerpts from the Declaration of Independence
- Chart paper and markers
- Stickers or colored pens
- Whiteboard or large paper for group work

Step 1: Introduction to Symbols

Start by explaining to the students that freedom of religion means that everyone can choose what to believe and how to worship. But even though people are free to practice any religion, the United States was built on values that came from Judeo-Christian beliefs (beliefs from both Judaism and Christianity). Explain briefly:

- Judeo-Christian beliefs: Beliefs based on the Bible that come from both the Jewish faith and the Christian faith. These ideas have shaped how our country started.
- Freedom of Religion: This means you can choose what you believe in and practice freely.

Step 2: Look at Symbols in the U.S.

Activity Steps:

1. Examine the Symbols: Show students pictures of the following symbols:
    - U.S. Money: Point out the phrase "In God We Trust" written on the back of U.S. coins and paper money. Explain that this is a reminder of the importance of God in our country.
    - National Motto: Explain that "In God We Trust" is not only on our money but is also the official motto of the United States. It reminds everyone that the country was built on beliefs about God.



- Declaration of Independence: Share with students a portion of the Declaration of Independence where it says: "We are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable Rights." Explain that "Creator" refers to God, showing that our country's leaders believed our rights came from God—and were given to us right from the beginning.
- Pledge of Allegiance: Look at the phrase "One Nation Under God." Explain that this part of the Pledge shows we are a country that believes in God.

2. Group Work:

Break the students into small groups. Give each group a sheet of chart paper and markers. Have them draw or write:

- A symbol they recognize from our country (currency, the motto, Pledge of Allegiance, or Declaration of Independence).
- A brief explanation of what that symbol means (for example, "In God We Trust" means we believe in God as a country).

3. Group Presentation:

Ask each group to share their symbol and explain what it means. Guide them to understand how each of these symbols reflects the Judeo-Christian values that helped shape the United States.

Step 3: Discuss Freedom of Religion

After looking at the symbols, ask the students:

- "What do you think it means when we say 'In God We Trust' on our money and in our motto?"
- "How do these symbols show that our country was built with God in mind?"
- "Why do you think the Founding Fathers included references to God in important documents like the Declaration of Independence and the Pledge of Allegiance?"
- "What does 'freedom of religion' mean to you?"

Explain that freedom of religion means everyone has the right to believe in what they choose, but the United States was founded on values that recognize God's role in our country's creation.

Step 4: Reflection and Wrap-Up

Have students take a moment to reflect on what they've learned. Ask them to think about the symbols that represent freedom of religion and how these symbols also show that our country was built with faith in mind.



Reflection Prompt:

- "Why do you think it's important that we have freedom to believe in what we want, but also that our country was founded on faith?"

Extension

For additional learning, students can:

- Create a class book with each page dedicated to one of the symbols (currency, motto, Pledge, Declaration of Independence), with a drawing and explanation of the symbol.
- Write or draw about how they practice their faith at home, connecting it to the idea of freedom to choose their religion.

Resources

- https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-01-02-0057
- https://minio.la.utexas.edu/webeditor-files/coretexts/pdf/163020model20of20christian20charity.pdf
- https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%205%3A13-15&version=KJ21 https://www.history.com/news/pilgrims-puritans-differences
- https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/church-of-england-in-virginia/
- https://www.history.com/news/religion-13-colonies-america
- https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/gods-mosaic/
- Thomas Jefferson, "Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom," The Jefferson Monticello, https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/virginia-statute-religious-freedom/.
- United States Supreme Court, "Reynolds v. United States (1879)," Library of Congress, https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/usrep/usrep098/usrep098145/usrep098145.pdf.
- James Madison, "From James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 22 January 1786," National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-08-02-0249.
- Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to Margaret Bayard Smith, 6 August 1816," National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-10-02-0186.

Images

Salute



Credit: Canva Pro

United



Credit: Canva Pro

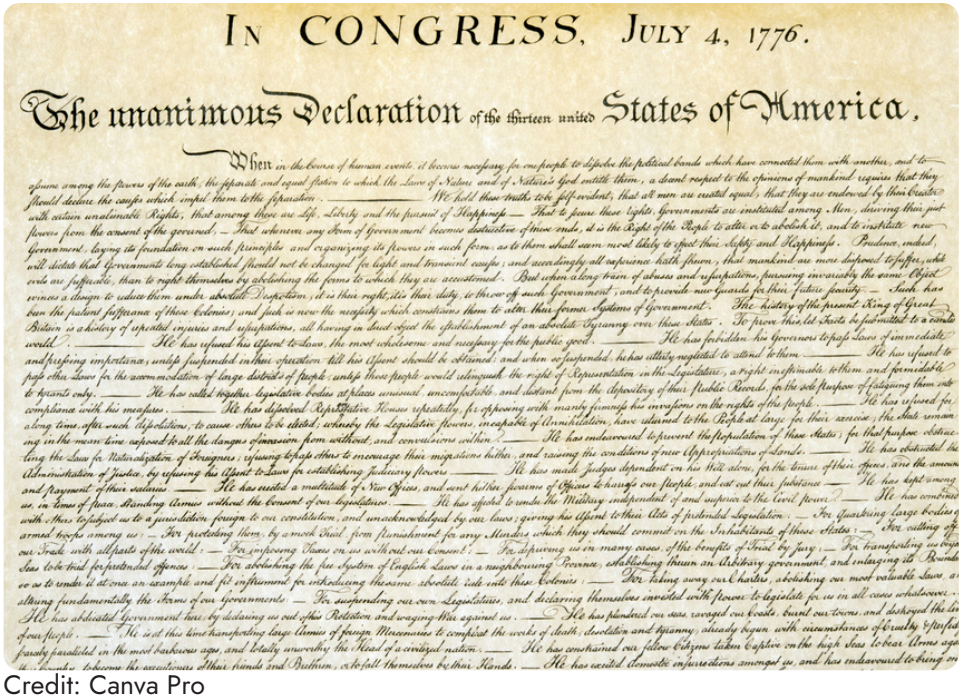
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Bible



Credit: Canva Pro

Declaration of Independence


IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

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. — 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, — 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. 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. 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. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world. — He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. — He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them. — He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only. — He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures. — He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people. — He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within. — He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands. — He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers. — 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 erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their substance. — He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our Legislatures. — He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power. — He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended legislation: — For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us: — For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States: — For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world: — For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent: — For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by jury: — For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences: — For abolishing the free system of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies: — For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments: — For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever. — 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. — He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & Perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation. — He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands. — He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on

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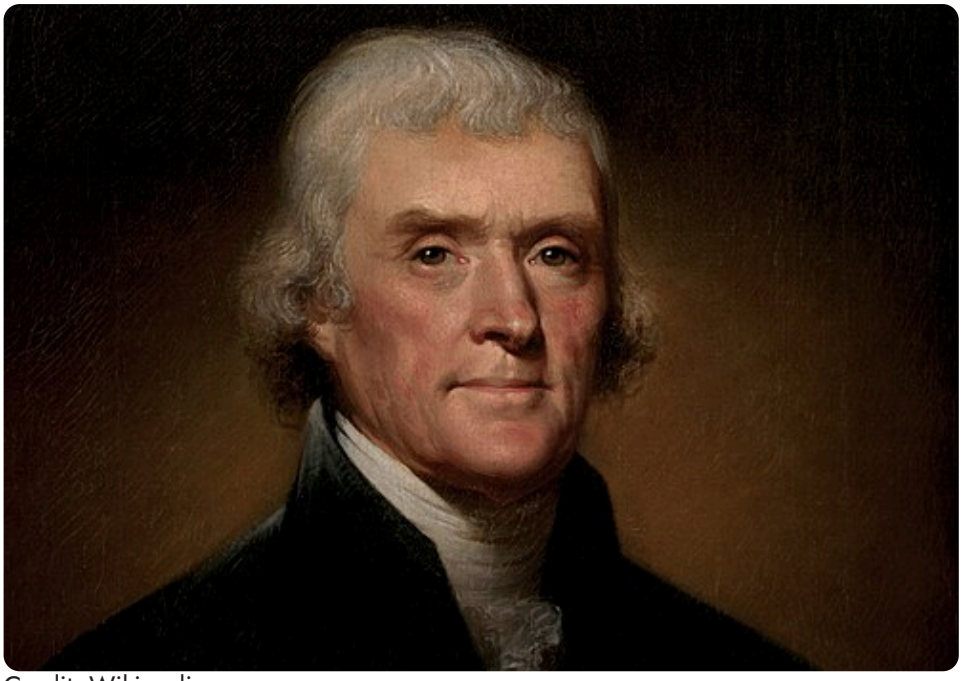
Images

George Washington



Credit: Canva Pro

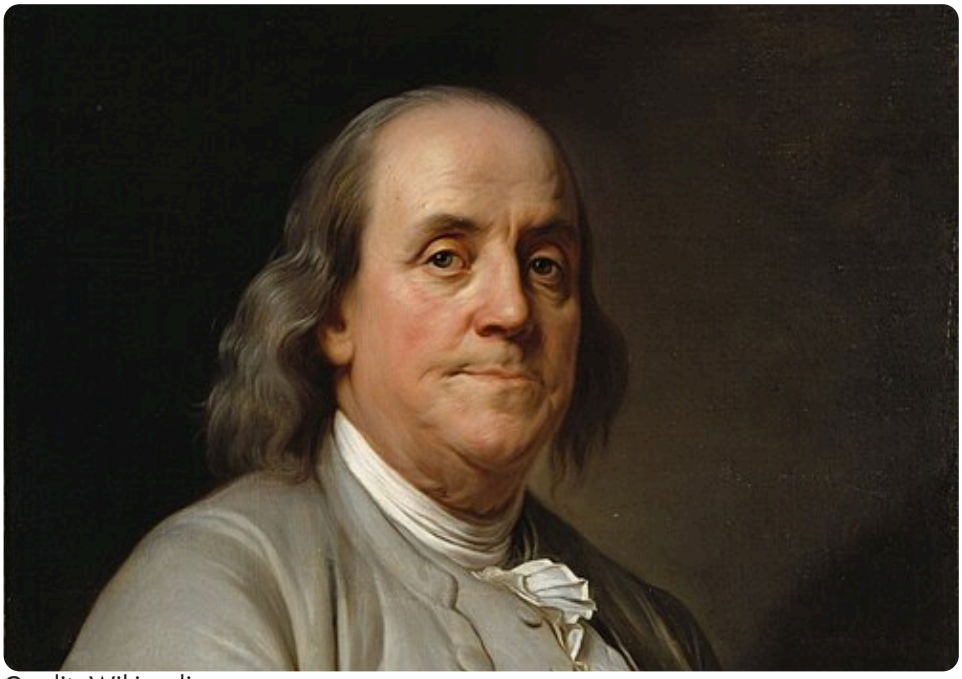
Thomas Jefferson



Credit: Wikipedia

Images

Benjamin Franklin



Credit: Wikipedia

Government



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

Religions



Credit: Canva Pro

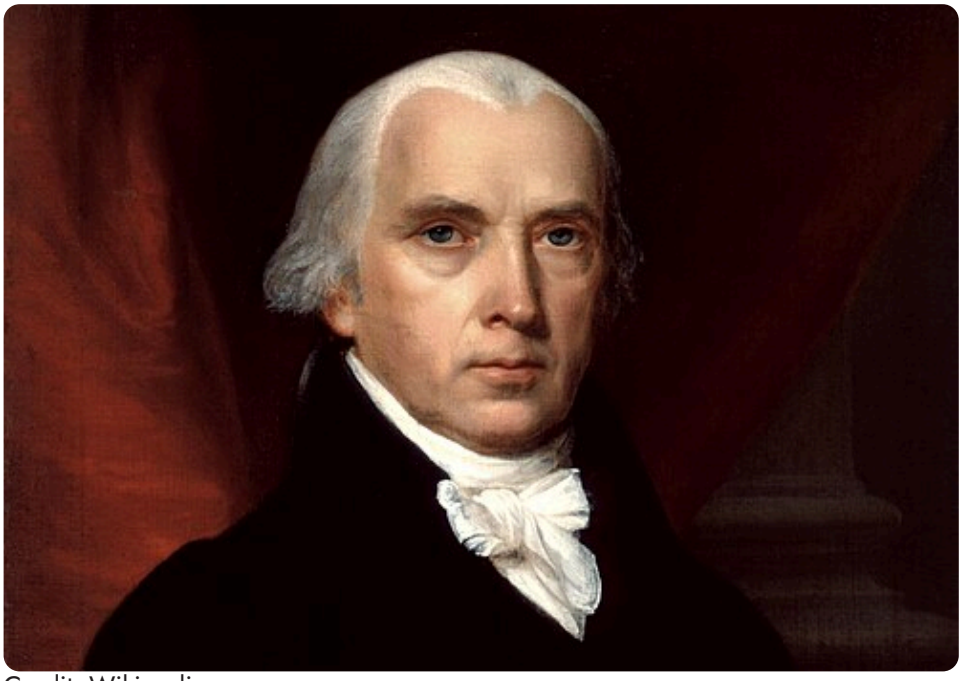
Family



Credit: Canva Pro

Images

James Madison



Credit: Wikipedia

United States Constitution



Credit: Canva Pro

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American Flag



Credit: Canva Pro

Notes