**Benjamin Banneker,** the son of former slaves, was a farmer, astronomer, mathematician, surveyor, and author. In 1791 he wrote to Thomas Jefferson, framer of the *Declaration of Independence* and secretary of state to then-President George Washington.

Sir, suffer me to recall to your mind that time in which the arms and tyranny of the British Crown were exerted with every powerful effort in order to reduce you to a State of Servitude, look back I entreat you on the variety of dangers to which you were exposed; reflect on that time in which every human aid appeared unavailable, and in which even hope and fortitude wore the aspect of inability to the conflict and you cannot but be led to a serious and grateful sense of your miraculous and providential preservation; you cannot but acknowledge that the present freedom and tranquility which you enjoy you have mercifully received and that it is the pecular blessing of Heaven.

This sir, was a time in which you clearly saw into the injustice of a state of slavery and in which you had just apprehensions of the horrors of its condition, it was now, sir, that your abhorrence thereof was so excited, that you publickly held forth this true and 20 valuable doctrine, which is worthy to be recorded and remembered in all succeeding ages. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

Here, sir, was a time in which your tender feelings for yourselves had engaged you thus to declare, you were then impressed with proper ideas of the great allow valuation of liberty and the free possession of those blessings to which you were entitled by nature; but, sir, how pitiable is it to reflect that although you were so fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father of mankind and of his equal and impartial distribution of those rights and privileges which he had conferred upon them, that you should at the same time counteract his mercies in detaining by fraud and violence so numerous a part of my brethren under groaning captivity and cruel oppression, that you should at the same time be found guilty of that most criminal act which you professedly detested in others with respect to yourselves.

Sir, I suppose that your knowledge of the situation of my brethren is too extensive to need a recital here; neither shall I presume to prescribe methods by which they may be relieved, otherwise than by recommending to you and all others to wean yourselves from those narrow prejudices which you have imbibed with respect to them and as Job\* proposed to his friends, “put your souls in their souls stead,” thus shall your hearts be enlarged with kindness and benevolence towards them, and thus shall you need neither the direction of myself or others, in what manner to proceed herein.

\*In the Bible, Job is a righteous man who endures much suffer

**Thomas Jefferson** was an American Founding Father and the principal author of the *Declaration of Independence*. He was elected the second Vice President of the United States, serving under John Adams and in 1800 was elected the third President. On July 4, 1776, he is credited with the following remarks:

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.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

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; 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; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. 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.

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Frick

**Revolutionary Writers**

**Instructions:** First read and annotate BOTH passages. Next, take the assigned Revolutionary Writer \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ assigned to *you and your partner*, and create a three-slide presentation. Slide #1 is your Title Slide (Revolutionary Writer) with the names of both partners. Slide #2 should cover your answers for questions 1-3 (Inductive Reasoning), while Slide #3 should cover your answers for questions 4-6 (Deductive Reasoning). Use bullet points, include an appropriate picture for each slide. When you are finished, share your presentation to [frick\_david@svvsd.org](mailto:frick_david@svvsd.org). Then answer the Exit Ticket, and hand-in this sheet.

**Jefferson:**

1. What is this about (Summary)?
2. What really stands out (Paraphrase)?
3. When does it take place, where is it, and who is involved (Provide context)?
4. Background Knowledge: Apply any historical understanding you may already have:
5. How do you think these famous words shaped the country moving forward?
6. Why do Jefferson’s words matter / do not matter to you today?

**Banneker:**

1. What is this about (Summary)?
2. What really stands out (Paraphrase)?
3. When does it take place, where is it, and who is involved (Provide context)?
4. Background Knowledge: Apply any historical understanding you may already have:
5. How do you think these not-so-well-known words shaped the country moving forward?
6. Why do Banneker’s words matter / do not matter to you today?

**Exit Ticket:** Analyze three rhetorical strategies Banneker uses to argue against slavery (Use the back if necessary):