

THE SINGING REVOLUTION



Subjects: History / Cultural Studies / English Language Arts

Freedom Calling

Aim / Essential Question

How are freedom and sovereignty common themes in the Declaration of Independence and Tiit Madisson's speech?

Overview

This lesson looks at the idea of sovereignty—freedom from external control—as it relates to the Declaration of Independence and Estonian freedom fighter Tiit Madisson's speech at Hirve Park in 1987. Both texts employ arguments to advance the cause of liberty. Tiit Madisson, as did Thomas Jefferson more than 200 years earlier, airs grievances to jump-start the march toward freedom.

Materials & Technology

- *The Singing Revolution* (Chapter 5)
(from Disc One / Chapters)
- Class-set of the Declaration of Independence
(below)
- Tiit Madisson's Hirve Park speech
(below)
- Question-answer sheet handout
(below)
- Any DVD-compatible player that will allow distinct chapters to be shown
- A television or video projection unit

Lesson Time: One 50-minute class period.

Objectives

Students will:

- Compare the texts of the Declaration of Independence and Tiit Madisson's Hirve Park speech.
- Examine how both Thomas Jefferson and Tiit Madisson lay out a litany of grievances to advance their argument for freedom and sovereignty.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the grievances laid out in both texts.

Instruction

Opening: Bell Ringer / Do Now

In four to six sentences, respond to the following question: When, why, and how should authority be challenged?

Have several students read their responses to the class.

Activities

1. Distribute copies of questions that accompany video clip of *The Singing Revolution*.
2. Tell students that, as a primer, they will watch a short video clip from chapter five of *The Singing Revolution*, a documentary about Estonia's non-violent movement that led to its independence from the Soviet Union.
3. Play the video clip Disc 1, chapter 5 (37:41-40:28).
4. Distribute copies of the Declaration of Independence, Tiit Madisson's Hirve Park speech, and a question sheet that compares both texts.
5. Tell students that although these texts are separated by more than 200 years, both urgently question and denounce external control or occupation by another nation.
6. In groups, students should compare excerpts from both texts provided on question sheet.
7. On separate paper, students should answer the questions that follow the excerpts. Have students turn in their answers at end of period.

Close: Application/Summary

Call on a student to ask and then answer the aim.

Appropriate answers may include:

1. Both the Declaration of Independence and the Hirve Park speech chronicle grievances carried out by foreign occupiers; and
2. the Declaration of Independence challenges British subjugation, while Tiit Madisson's Hirve Park speech contests the Soviet Union's occupation of Estonia.
 - Call on students to provide new information they have learned. Appropriate answers may include the vast amount of carnage and disruption suffered and endured by the tiny nation of Estonia.
 - Lastly, ask students how the idea of sovereignty connects to current affairs. Answers may include a brief discussion about how the U.S. has been accused of violating Pakistan's sovereignty after the U.S. successfully carried out a secret mission to kill Osama bin Laden within Pakistan's borders.

Homework

In three paragraphs, compare and contrast the style of each text. By style, focus in on word choice, phrasing, and sentence length. Cite evidence to support assertions.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE: IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America

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

6 We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their
7 Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of
8 Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just
9 powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes
10 destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new
11 Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to
12 them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that
13 Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly
14 all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to
15 right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of
16 abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under
17 absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide
18 new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and
19 such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The
20 history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all
21 having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let
22 Facts be submitted to a candid world.

23 He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.
24 He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless
25 suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly
26 neglected to attend to them.

27 He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those
28 people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and
29 formidable to tyrants only.

30 He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the
31 depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his
32 measures.

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

35 He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected, whereby the
36 Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise;
37 the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and
38 convulsions within.

39 He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws
40 for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and
41 raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

42 He has obstructed the Administration of Justice by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing
43 Judiciary Powers.

44 He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and
45 payment of their salaries.
46 He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people
47 and eat out their substance.
48 He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.
49 He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.
50 He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and
51 unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:
52 For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:
53 For protecting them, by a mock Trial from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on
54 the Inhabitants of these States:
55 For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:
56 For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:
57 For depriving us in many cases, of the benefit of Trial by Jury:
58 For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:
59 For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an
60 Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit
61 instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies
62 For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws and altering fundamentally the
63 Forms of our Governments:
64 For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for
65 us in all cases whatsoever.
66 He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.
67 He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.
68 He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death,
69 desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & Perfidy scarcely paralleled in
70 the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.
71 He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their
72 Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their
73 Hands.
74 He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of
75 our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished
76 destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

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

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

88 We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled,
89 appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and
90 by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these united
91 Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States, that they are Absolved from all

92 Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great
93 Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full
94 Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts
95 and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the support of this Declaration,
96 with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our
97 Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

THE RALLY AT HIRVE PARK IN TALLINN, AUGUST 23, 1987

The rally at Hirve Park was a bold statement as Estonians publicly contested the validity of the Soviet occupation itself. The event was held on August 23, 1987, the 48th anniversary of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (MRP).

The rally began at Harjumäe by the statue of Linda, and was led by the chairman of the MRP-AEG initiative group Tiit Madisson. The names of the rest of the members of the group were announced: Heiki Ahonen (Tallinn), Ilse Heinsalu (Pärnu), Mati Kiirend (Tallinn), Lagle Parek (Tartu), Jan Kõrb (Riga). Wreaths and flowers were placed by the statue of Linda, and the crowd moved on to Hirve Park, where Tiit Madisson gave the opening speech.

Tiit Madisson's Speech

1 Dear compatriots!

2 Today is a noteworthy day, as well as the anniversary of a sad and shameful event.
3 According to Soviet jurisprudence, national sovereignty represents the supreme power of a
4 nationality, its political freedom, its real potential to fully direct its own fate, and above all its
5 right to self-determination, including its right to secede and to create an independent state.
6 National sovereignty can neither be abolished nor given away, but it can be either violated or
7 restored.

8 Dear participants! Let us go back 48 years in history. On August 23, 1939, a treaty of
9 cooperation and non-aggression was concluded between the German Reich and the Soviet
10 Union. A top-secret protocol was added to the treaty, dividing Eastern Europe into so-called
11 spheres of influence. Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Bessarabia and North
12 Bukovina were the subjects of the secret talks between the People's Commissar of Foreign
13 Affairs of the Stalin regime Vyacheslav Molotov and Hitler's Foreign Minister Joachim von
14 Ribbentrop. According to the secret deal, Estonia, Latvia and Finland fell into the U.S.S.R.'s
15 sphere of influence; Lithuania went to Germany. According to a new German-Soviet
16 friendship and border agreement signed on September 28, Lithuania was finally "trusted" to
17 the U.S.S.R. Poland was to be divided between the two powers. World War II began with
18 Fascist Germany's attack on Poland on September 1, 1939. On September 17, the already
19 battered Poland was attacked by the Soviet Union. Poland was divided between the two
20 great powers. The 10,000 Polish officers captured by Soviet forces during the so-called
21 "Polish campaign" were murdered on Stalin's orders in Smolensk in March of 1940. This
22 fact has been revealed to the Polish people by the official Polish press, with the permission
23 and approval of the current Soviet leader M. Gorbachev. But what about the crimes
24 committed against us -- the Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians? When will they be made
25 public?

26 On September 28, 1939, a mutual cooperation and defense treaty was concluded between
27 the U.S.S.R. of Stalin and the Independent Republic of Estonia -- whose independence had
28 been guaranteed forever by Vladimir Lenin in the 1920 Peace Treaty of Tartu. Within a
29 month, 25,000 Soviet troops were brought into Estonia. They were to defend us against a
30 supposed attack by Germany. And yet a year later, in 1940, Stalin drank to the health of the
31 "Great Leader of Germany -- the Führer" at a reception. It seems that one month before the
32 signing of the Estonian-Soviet treaty, our homeland had already become small change in a
33 deal between two larger powers. These are the historic facts. Such is the fate of small
34 nations.

35 On June 21, 1940, a new government was formed in Estonia, in response to an ultimatum
36 from the U.S.S.R. Additional Soviet troops had marched into Estonia a few days earlier. The
37 government of Estonia had allegedly not fulfilled its agreements with the U.S.S.R., but rather
38 had schemed with Latvia (population two million) and Lithuania (population three million) to
39 attack the U.S.S.R.

40 These days there's a lot of discussion about the "blank spots" in our recent history. These
41 "blanks" must be filled in! But who will fill them? Historians such as Gustav Naan, who
42 rewrote our history in the early fifties? /long applause, shouts of "Bravo!"! We've started to
43 discuss the mistakes that have been made, including the crimes of the Stalinists. This is
44 undoubtedly a big step forward, thanks to the democratization process started by Mikhail
45 Gorbachev (long applause). But is the whole truth being revealed about all of the Stalin
46 decades? "There is no such thing as a half-truth, just as there is no such thing as half pregnant"
47 (applause, laughter) -- in the words of a Russian man of letters.

48 The topics of articles and discussions publicized before the current era have been limited to
49 the crimes committed by the Stalinist clique against "honest and passionate Communists,"
50 who became victims of undeserved repression. But don't the so-called simple people, the
51 non-members of the Communist Party, deserve to be talked about, to be remembered as
52 well? How many of our native sons and daughters did our people lose between 1940-1953?
53 Those numbers have never been officially disclosed.
54 Mass arrests had already begun in Estonia in June 1940. By August 7th, 7,043 persons had
55 been arrested. They were regarded as enemies of the new order and supporters of the
56 independent Republic of Estonia. To what can we compare this great number? During the
57 so-called "bourgeois dictatorship," as the independent Estonian nation state is called today,
58 there were only 258 political prisoners in the space of 20 years -- 27 times less than were
59 imprisoned or sent to concentration camps during the first two months of Soviet rule.
60 June 14, 1941 was a black day for the Estonians and the other Baltic peoples: 10,156
61 persons were deported to Siberia from Estonia alone. Men were separated from their wives
62 and children. After the war, about 3,000 of them returned to Estonia. Siberia became the
63 grave for the rest. These days we can read about the "mistakes" that were made: that
64 innocent people were sent away, and that some people opposed to Soviet rule had
65 remained in Estonia. Some memoirs give you the impression that Stalin did not believe until
66 the last minute that his recent ally would attack him. Our historians and other ideologists
67 have labeled the June 14 campaign "purging the home front" before the attack by Fascist
68 Germany. Their argument is unconvincing.

69 The war began. The 33,303 men mobilized in Estonia during the summer of 1941, along
70 with those who had fought in the Territorial Corps, were sent to the logging areas of
71 Archangelsk, Perm and Chelyabinsk. One year's extremely hard labor and starvation rations
72 sent one-fourth of our Estonian men to their death. Why weren't all the mobilized Estonians
73 sent immediately to the front in 1941, when every bayonet was sorely needed, instead of
74 letting them perish in the logging camps?

75 The Fascist occupation of Estonia began. Between 1941-44, Fascist terror claimed tens of
76 thousands of victims of many nationalities in Estonia, including many Estonians. Monuments to
77 the murder victims have been erected at Klooga, at Kalevi-Liiva, at the Tartuantitank ditch, by
78 Lake Viljandi and elsewhere. Today we commemorate them too. They are the victims of a
79 totalitarian state. Unfortunately, monuments for the victims of Stalinist terror have not yet been
80 erected. For this reason we are here today, by the crying figure of Linda, mourning her Kalev.
81 Linda symbolizes the mother of Estonia.

82 Between August 1944 and September 1945 in Estonia, 373 Estonians were sentenced to
83 death, and 2,078 to long terms in forced labor camps. Between September 1945 and April
84 1953, 3,796 persons were sentenced to terms of 10-25 years. Once more, the trains
85 headed east -- to the extermination camps of Siberia and Perm.

86 In 1944, about 70,000 Estonians fled to the West. In no way had the majority of the
87 refugees compromised themselves by collaborating with the Germans. They were driven by
88 fear... fear that the events of June 14, 1941 would be repeated. Indeed, they were repeated
89 -- and on an even grander scale than in 1941....

90 On March 24, 1949, 63,796 persons were deported from their Estonian homes to Siberia. Just
91 recently, this action against our people was referred to as "the liquidation of the kulaks as a
92 class." 20,000 Estonian farmsteads were left empty.

93 This casts serious doubts on the ideals in whose name so much blood has been shed and so
94 much suffering has been caused.

95 A nation that doesn't know or remember its history has no future (long applause). The
96 Hitlerites' crimes against humanity have been condemned, and the murderers have been
97 allotted due punishment. The poet August Sang wrote: "Nothing in the world will change, if
98 we won't change it. You must do all you can, even if it's not a lot."

99 We must disclose honestly the history of our people. Many things must be re-evaluated in
100 the process. All crimes against humanity must be resolutely condemned. Stalinist
101 executioners, many of whom are collecting a government pension today, must be put on
102 trial! (very long applause. Shouts of "Bravo!") Only then can we be sure that all this will never
103 be repeated.

104 The secret deals of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, 1939 must be publicized!
105 (Applause).

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Period _____

Teacher _____

The Singing Revolution

Task: Compare the following excerpts from the Tiit Madisson's Hirve Park speech in 1987 and the Declaration of Independence. Answer the questions on separate paper. Make sure to use the accompanying full texts to help you understand the context of the excerpts.

Tiit Madisson's Speech

- 1) "But what about the crimes committed against us -- the Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians? When will they be made public?" (23-25).
- 2) "Once more, the trains headed east -- to the extermination camps of Siberia and Perm" (85-86).
- 3) "On June 21, 1940, a new government was formed in Estonia, in response to an ultimatum from the U.S.S.R" (35-36).
- 4) "Additional Soviet troops had marched into Estonia" (36).
- 5) How many of our native sons and daughters did our people lose between 1940-1953?" (52).

Declaration of Independence

- 1) "[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." (20-22).
- 2) "[T]ransporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences" (58).
- 3) "For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever" (64-65).
- 4) "[King George] has kept among us... Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures" (48).
- 5) "Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States" (53-54).

Questions to be answered on separate paper:

- 1) Why do the authors of both texts believe that, as pointed out in their respective first entries, past crimes need to be publicized? What purpose does that serve?
- 2) How are the third and fourth entries of both texts examples of violations of sovereignty?
- 3) The above entries are examples of grievances, i.e., wrongs and resentments considered as grounds for complaints against unjust acts. Below cite three additional grievances from each text. Make sure to provide line numbers.

Tiit Madisson's Speech

Declaration of Independence

- 4) How do the grievances bolster the argument for independence? Explain.