

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,⁸ and destroyed
80 the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign **mercenaries** to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and **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 insurrection amongst us,⁹ and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule
90 of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

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 our attentions to our British 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
100 kindred, to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. **E**

They, too, have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity.¹⁰ 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. **F**

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 the 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
110 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. **G**

abdicate (ăb'dĭ-kāt') v. to give up responsibility for

mercenary (mûr'sə-nĕr'ĕ) n. a professional soldier hired to fight in a foreign army

perfidy (pûr'fĭ-dĕ) n. treachery

redress (rĭ-drĕs') n. the correction of a wrong; compensation

E GRAMMAR AND STYLE

Reread lines 98–101. Notice how Jefferson uses a **compound-complex sentence**, which has two or more independent clauses and one or more subordinate clauses, in order to show the complex relationships between ideas.

F ARGUMENT

What objections does Jefferson appear to be anticipating and refuting with **counterarguments** in lines 102–104?

rectitude (rĕk'tĭ-tōōd') n. morally correct behavior or thinking

G TEXT STRUCTURE

What purpose does the final paragraph serve?

8. **plundered . . . our towns:** American seaports such as Norfolk, Virginia, had already been shelled.

9. **excited . . . amongst us:** George III had encouraged slaves to rise up and rebel against their masters.

10. **deaf to . . . consanguinity:** The British have ignored pleas based on their common ancestry with the colonists.