

LITERARY ANALYSIS: ARGUMENT

Jefferson's emphasis in the Declaration of Independence was on the logical argument to be made for independence. An **argument** expresses an opinion on an issue and supports it with reasons and evidence. Three important parts of an argument are

- **the claim:** the writer's position on an issue or problem
- **support:** reasons and evidence provided to prove a claim
- **counterargument:** arguments to answer opposing views

As you read, look for these elements of an argument.

READING SKILL: ANALYZE TEXT STRUCTURE

The Declaration of Independence has four main parts:

1. a **preamble**, or **foreword**, that announces the reason for the document
2. a **declaration** of people's natural rights and relationship to government
3. a long **list** of complaints against George III, the British king
4. a **conclusion** that formally states America's independence

As you read, use a chart such as the one shown to indicate the line numbers for each part, as well as a brief summary of each.

Part	Summary
1 Preamble lines 1–6	When one group of people have to form their own government, it is necessary to explain why.

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Match each vocabulary word in the first column with the word or phrase in the second column that is closest in meaning.

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|----------------|------------------|
| 1. abdicate | a. correction |
| 2. arbitrary | b. integrity |
| 3. despotism | c. treachery |
| 4. impel | d. abandon |
| 5. mercenary | e. drive |
| 6. perfidy | f. erratic |
| 7. rectitude | g. a taking over |
| 8. redress | h. hired soldier |
| 9. unalienable | i. tyranny |
| 10. usurpation | j. unchangeable |

Explore the Key Idea

When is **REBELLION** justified?

KEY IDEA Many young people harbor a spirit of **rebellion**—against parents, teachers, bosses, rules, or any situation that “just isn’t fair!” But how often do you attempt to explain your rebellion logically? In June of 1776, Thomas Jefferson and other colonial leaders had decided to rebel against British rule. But they needed to justify their dangerous action—to themselves, to the king, and to the world.

DISCUSS In a small group, think of several situations in which an individual or a group rebelled against a perceived injustice. The situations could be any of the following:

- local—an incident in your school or community, for example
- global—such as demonstrations against global trade policies
- historical—such as the American, French, or Russian revolutions

Then, as a group, evaluate the reasons for each rebellion and explain which ones you think are justified.

