

## ■ The Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress

**Date:** October 14, 1774

**Author:** First Continental Congress

**Genre:** political tract

*“In the course of our inquiry, we find many infringements and violations of the foregoing rights . . . which demonstrate a system formed to enslave America.”*

### Summary Overview

The Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress was drafted in response to restrictive laws that the British Parliament had imposed on the colonies. These laws included import and export taxes on goods shipped through American ports, expanded jurisdiction of the British court system, and forced extradition to Great Britain for trial on certain legal matters. The colonies formed the First Continental Congress to issue a formal complaint about these laws, arguing that Britain’s increasingly harsh control violated their rights as British subjects.

### Defining Moment

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Britain’s control over its American colonies was declining rapidly. The colonies’ initial charters had allowed them significant autonomy in managing day-to-day affairs, but officially the colonists were still British subjects. They were required to remain loyal to the British monarch, and Parliament had the authority to pass and enforce laws within the colonies, even without the support of the local governments.

Over time, the colonies grew to resent being controlled from afar, particularly since they were not represented in Parliament. Colonists protested new laws as they were created—beginning with taxes imposed on the colonies to help Britain recover from the Seven Years’ War (1756–63), such as the Stamp Act of 1765—

though efforts to preserve their autonomy often caused Parliament to impose even more restrictions. Colonists believed Britain was overstepping the bounds of its own constitution by making unilateral decisions about colonial leadership and its court system. They wanted to fight back against this control and were determined to keep their protests as peaceful as possible, for as long as possible.

The Declaration and Resolves was drafted at a critical point in the relationship between Britain and its American colonies. The colonists had attempted peaceful reconciliation on several prior occasions by convening assemblies of representatives to draft formal documents expressing their grievances. However, they grew frustrated that their concerns were being largely ignored. The First Continental Congress, formed in 1774 as another attempt of the colonists to be heard, argued against the increasingly heavy-handed control over the colonies by citing Britain’s own laws and principles. The congress also reassured the Crown that American colonists remained loyal British subjects—for now.

### Author Biography

The First Continental Congress was an assembly formed by delegates of the colonial governments in an attempt to peacefully address the increasingly tense situation between the American colonies and the British government. The congress consisted of appointed representatives of twelve of the thirteen American

colonies: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Only Georgia refused to participate. Much of what is known about the First Continental Congress, particularly the unofficial information, originates from the detailed diaries of Massachusetts delegate John Adams.

The First Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on September 5, 1774. At the outset, the congress suffered from a number of logistical difficulties, including disagreements about where to convene, how voting should proceed, and who should be the official leader of the assembly. More substantially, the representatives were divided between those who favored a more conservative approach to reconciliation with Britain, and those who were prepared to push for American independence if their concerns were not addressed.

The congress first discussed a number of preliminary issues as a unified group. Some noted points of debate were whether arguments should cite natural law as an authority for establishing fair and just treatment, or whether they should limit their discussion to the British constitution and colonial charters. Also at issue was

if the congress should concede to any Parliamentary power over the colonies, and if so, how much and in which situations.

The congress then divided into two sections to draft different portions of the document that eventually became the Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress. One committee prepared a statement of the colonies' rights and the specific ways Britain had violated those rights. They then proposed methods of restoring those rights. The other committee reported on imposed statutes that affected trade and manufacturing within the colonies. These two committees united to draft the final document, which was written on October 14, 1774. The First Congressional Congress officially adjourned itself on October 26, with the promise that another congress would convene in Philadelphia if their grievances were not addressed by May 1775.

Despite the agreeable tone the Declaration and Resolves adopts toward reconciliation with Britain, John Adams recorded in his diary that, throughout the proceedings, there were rumblings among delegates of what a future American congress might look like. Even as the First Continental Congress attempted to restore good relations, independence was not far from the delegates' minds if demands for justice remained unmet.

## HISTORICAL DOCUMENT

### IN CONGRESS IN PHILADELPHIA

*October 14, 1774*

**Whereas**, since the close of the last war, the British parliament, claiming a power, of right, to bind the people of America by statutes in all cases whatsoever, hath, in some acts, expressly imposed taxes on them, and in others, under various pretences, but in fact for the purpose of raising a revenue, hath imposed rates and duties payable in these colonies, established a board of commissioners, with unconstitutional powers, and extended the jurisdiction of courts of admiralty, not only for collecting the said duties, but for the trial of causes merely arising within the body of a county:

**And whereas**, in consequence of other statutes, judges, who before held only estates at will in their

offices, have been made dependent on the crown alone for their salaries, and standing armies kept in times of peace:

**And whereas** it has lately been resolved in parliament, that by force of a statute, made in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of King Henry the Eighth, colonists may be transported to England, and tried there upon accusations for treasons and misprisions, or concealments of treasons committed in the colonies, and by a late statute, such trials have been directed in cases therein mentioned:

**And whereas**, in the last session of parliament, three statutes were made; one entitled, "An act to discontinue, in such manner and for such time as are therein mentioned, the landing and discharging, lading, or shipping of goods, wares and merchandise, at the town, and within the harbour of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts-

Bay in New England; —and another entitled, “An act for the better regulating the government of the province of Massachusetts-Bay in New England; —and another entitled, “An act for the impartial administration of justice, in the cases of persons questioned for any act done by them in the execution of the law, or for the suppression of riots and tumults, in the province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New England; —and another statute was then made, “for making more effectual provision for the government of the province of Quebec, etc. —All which statutes are impolitic, unjust, and cruel, as well as unconstitutional, and most dangerous and destructive of American rights:

**And whereas**, assemblies have been frequently dissolved, contrary to the rights of the people, when they attempted to deliberate on grievances; and their dutiful, humble, loyal, and reasonable petitions to the crown for redress, have been repeatedly treated with contempt, by his Majesty’s ministers of state: The good people of the several colonies of New-Hampshire, Massachusetts-Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Newcastle, Kent, and Sussex on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina and South-Carolina, justly alarmed at these arbitrary proceedings of parliament and administration, have severally elected, constituted, and appointed deputies to meet, and sit in general Congress, in the city of Philadelphia, in order to obtain such establishment, as that their religion, laws, and liberties, may not be subverted: Whereupon the deputies so appointed being now assembled, in a full and free representation of these colonies, taking into their most serious consideration, the best means of attaining the ends aforesaid, do, in the first place, as Englishmen, their ancestors in like cases have usually done, for asserting and vindicating their rights and liberties, **DECLARE**,

**That the inhabitants of the English colonies in North-America**, by the immutable laws of nature, the principles of the English constitution, and the several charters or compacts, have the following **RIGHTS**:

*Resolved, N.C.D. 1.* That they are entitled to life, liberty and property: and they have never ceded to any foreign power whatever, a right to dispose of either without their consent.

*Resolved, N.C.D. 2.* That our ancestors, who first settled these colonies, were at the time of their emigration from the mother country, entitled to all the rights, liberties,

and immunities of free and natural-born subjects, within the realm of England.

*Resolved, N.C.D. 3.* That by such emigration they by no means forfeited, surrendered, or lost any of those rights, but that they were, and their descendants now are, entitled to the exercise and enjoyment of all such of them, as their local and other circumstances enable them to exercise and enjoy.

*Resolved, N.C.D. 4.* That the foundation of English liberty, and of all free government, is a right in the people to participate in their legislative council: and as the English colonists are not represented, and from their local and other circumstances, cannot properly be represented in the British parliament, they are entitled to a free and exclusive power of legislation in their several provincial legislatures, where their right of representation can alone be preserved, in all cases of taxation and internal polity, subject only to the negative of their sovereign, in such manner as has been heretofore used and accustomed: But, from the necessity of the case, and a regard to the mutual interest of both countries, we cheerfully consent to the operation of such acts of the British parliament, as are bonfide, restrained to the regulation of our external commerce, for the purpose of securing the commercial advantages of the whole empire to the mother country, and the commercial benefits of its respective members; excluding every idea of taxation internal or external, for raising a revenue on the subjects, in America, without their consent.

*Resolved, N.C.D. 5.* That the respective colonies are entitled to the common law of England, and more especially to the great and inestimable privilege of being tried by their peers of the vicinage, according to the course of that law.

*Resolved, N.C.D. 6.* That they are entitled to the benefit of such of the English statutes, as existed at the time of their colonization; and which they have, by experience, respectively found to be applicable to their several local and other circumstances.

*Resolved, N.C.D. 7.* That these, his Majesty’s colonies, are likewise entitled to all the immunities and privileges granted and confirmed to them by royal charters, or secured by their several codes of provincial laws.

*Resolved, N.C.D. 8.* That they have a right peaceably to assemble, consider of their grievances, and petition the

king; and that all prosecutions, prohibitory proclamations, and commitments for the same, are illegal.

*Resolved, N.C.D. 9.* That the keeping a standing army in these colonies, in times of peace, without the consent of the legislature of that colony, in which such army is kept, is against law.

*Resolved, N.C.D. 10.* It is indispensably necessary to good government, and rendered essential by the English constitution, that the constituent branches of the legislature be independent of each other; that, therefore, the exercise of legislative power in several colonies, by a council appointed, during pleasure, by the crown, is unconstitutional, dangerous and destructive to the freedom of American legislation.

All and each of which the aforesaid deputies, in behalf of themselves, and their constituents, do claim, demand, and insist on, as their indubitable rights and liberties, which cannot be legally taken from them, altered or abridged by any power whatever, without their own consent, by their representatives in their several provincial legislature.

In the course of our inquiry, we find many infringements and violations of the foregoing rights, which, from an ardent desire, that harmony and mutual intercourse of affection and interest may be restored, we pass over for the present, and proceed to state such acts and measures as have been adopted since the last war, which demonstrate a system formed to enslave America.

*Resolved, N.C.D. 11.* That the following acts of parliament are infringements and violations of the rights of the colonists; and that the repeal of them is essentially necessary, in order to restore harmony between Great Britain and the American colonies, viz.

The several acts of Geo. III. ch. 15, and ch. 34.-5 Geo. III. ch.25.-6 Geo. ch. 52.-7 Geo.III. ch. 41 and ch. 46.-8 Geo. III. ch. 22. which impose duties for the purpose of raising a revenue in America, extend the power of the admiralty courts beyond their ancient limits, deprive the American subject of trial by jury, authorize the judges certificate to indemnify the prosecutor from damages, that he might otherwise be liable to, requiring oppressive security from a claimant of ships and goods seized, before he shall be allowed to defend his property, and are subversive of American rights.

Also 12 Geo. III. ch. 24, entitled, “An act for the better securing his majesty’s dockyards, magazines,

ships, ammunition, and stores, —which declares a new offence in America, and deprives the American subject of a constitutional trial by jury of the vicinage, by authorizing the trial of any person, charged with the committing any offence described in the said act, out of the realm, to be indicted and tried for the same in any shire or county within the realm. Also the three acts passed in the last session of parliament, for stopping the port and blocking up the harbour of Boston, for altering the charter and government of Massachusetts-Bay, and that which is entitled, “An act for the better administration of justice, etc. —

Also the act passed in the same session for establishing the Roman Catholic religion, in the province of Quebec, abolishing the equitable system of English laws, and erecting a tyranny there, to the great danger (from so total a dissimilarity of religion, law and government) of the neighboring British colonies, by the assistance of whose blood and treasure the said country was conquered from France.

Also the act passed in the same session, for the better providing suitable quarters for officers and soldiers in his majesty’s service, in North-America.

Also, that the keeping a standing army in several of these colonies, in time of peace, without the consent of the legislature of that colony, in which such army is kept, is against law.

To these grievous acts and measures, Americans cannot submit, but in hopes their fellow subjects in Great Britain will, on a revision of them, restore us to that state, in which both countries found happiness and prosperity, we have for the present, only resolved to pursue the following peaceable measures:

1. To enter into a non-importation, non-consumption, and non-exportation agreement or association.
2. To prepare an address to the people of Great-Britain, and a memorial to the inhabitants of British America: and
3. To prepare a loyal address to his majesty, agreeable to resolutions already entered into.

Signed, PEYTON RANDOLPH, President.

## GLOSSARY

**arbitrary:** tyrannical

**bonfide:** bona fide; made in good faith, sincere

**constituent:** resident of a district who is represented by an elected official

**grievance:** official complaint about an action believed to be wrong or unfair

**immutable:** incapable of change

**indemnify:** protect or exempt from liability

**indubitable:** unquestionable

**misprision:** misconduct by an official

**redress:** set right

**statute:** written law passed by a legislative body

**subvert:** overthrow; destroy

**vicinage:** a particular district or neighborhood

**vindicate:** justify; defend

### Document Analysis

The Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress begins with a series of declarations that describe the specific laws and policies at issue. The first declaration addresses the taxes Parliament imposed on goods imported to and exported from the colonies. These taxes placed a significant financial burden on the colonists and interfered with their trade relationships with other nations. In addition, Britain seized control over enforcement of this law by unilaterally appointing its own commissioners to oversee the collection of these taxes and by granting jurisdiction of any disputes to the admiralty court. This was significant because, while regular colonial courts required trial by a jury of one's peers, admiralty court decisions were made entirely by the sitting judge.

### Additional Declarations of Injustice

The second declaration points out that, by virtue of other statutes, many judges were paid entirely by the British government, which raised questions about their impartiality. This was a very serious concern, especially as

the jurisdiction of the admiralty courts grew. The third declaration addresses the policy of extraditing anyone accused of “treasons or concealment of treasons” for trial in Britain. The more restrictive the laws became, the more Britain removed the colonists’ ability to protest against them. The colonists were alarmed by this trend.

The fourth declaration addresses three laws specifically directed at the Massachusetts Bay Colony. These laws—part of the Coercive Acts, or Intolerable Acts—were passed in 1774 in response to the Boston Tea Party, which was a protest of the Townshend Acts of 1767, an earlier set of laws taxing certain goods shipped to American ports, including tea. These laws led to protests in all of the colonies: some refused to allow ships to dock at all, while others allowed the ships unload cargo but forbade the sale of the goods to the public. Parliament, in response, withdrew all parts of the Townshend Acts—except for the tea tax. In the fall of 1773, British merchants sent several ships of tea to Massachusetts Bay, sparking arguments about whether the ships should be allowed to unload their cargo. The issue became moot on December 16, when about fifty

colonial men wearing Mohawk Indian-style disguises boarded the ships and threw all of the tea into the Boston Harbor. In response, Parliament passed the Coercive Acts, closing all of the ports in Massachusetts Bay. The laws also granted jurisdiction over violations of import and export controls to the admiralty courts, where cases would be decided by a Crown-appointed judge rather than a jury of colonists.

In 1769, Parliament also revived the Treason Act of 1543, a long-ignored law that allowed Britain to require that colonists accused of treason be transported to Britain for trial, rather than allowing the colonies to handle the matter themselves. Relying on this law, Parliament granted the British court jurisdiction in cases of law enforcement intervening in “the suppression of riots and tumults,” according to the Declaration and Resolves. The implication was that, if British military stationed in the colonies used excessive force to quell any actual, potential, or suspected rebellion, any impropriety on the part of the military would be conveniently overlooked by the British court.

The fourth declaration also mentions a law that recognized the legitimacy of the Roman Catholic religion within the colony of Quebec, which Britain had captured from the French in 1759 with the help of the American colonists. Colonists suspected that the law was intended to encourage the Québécois to encroach on American territory, thereby pressuring the colonists to comply with Britain’s heavy-handed rules in exchange for protection. It is unknown whether this was truly the motivation, but the First Continental Congress interpreted it as such and thus included it in the Declaration and Resolves.

In the final declaration, the First Continental Congress calls out Britain’s habit of dissolving any assembly that raised grievances with the Crown. On several past occasions, colonial assemblies had met to draw up similar formal responses to Parliament’s restrictive acts and to request that those laws be repealed. However, since many of the colonies’ top-level leaders were appointed by the monarch rather than popularly elected, those leaders would simply dissolve the assembly and revoke its authority as a governing body. The colonists believed that this was an egregious offence in violation of the British constitution; thus, it was fundamentally unjust.

#### **Resolutions of the Colonists**

In their declaration, the First Continental Congress expresses its frustration that attempts to address

their grievances had been “repeatedly treated with contempt, by his Majesty’s ministers of state.” They declare that the immutable laws of nature, the principles of the English constitution, and the several charters or compact” granted to the colonists a series of rights that could not be subverted by Parliament, and issue a series of resolutions, or “resolves,” defining their position.

From the outset, the first resolution (Resolved, N.C.D. 1) establishes that the colonists were entitled to “life, liberty and property,” and that they never gave their consent to be deprived of these rights. The second resolution elaborates that the original colonial settlers were entitled to “all the rights, liberties, and immunities” afforded by Britain at the time that they initially immigrated. The third resolution further insists that these original settlers had not “forfeited, surrendered, or lost” any of those rights when they immigrated, and that their descendants who make up the current population of the American colonies are still entitled to those same rights.

The next several resolutions define the specific rights that the First Continental Congress believed Britain violated through its restrictive statutes. The fourth resolution addresses the lack of representation of the colonies within Parliament and argues that the foundation of free government is “a right in the people to participate in their legislative council.” This right was violated every time a new law was imposed upon the colonies, as they were not allowed to participate in the Parliamentary proceedings that established the new laws. This principle was also violated every time the British government dissolved a colonial assembly for attempting to address a grievance to the Crown regarding violation of these rights.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh resolutions list additional rights that the First Continental Congress believed the colonists continued to share with their fellow British subjects. These include the right to be tried by a local judge and jury of their peers, the right to the benefit of the British statutes that were in effect at the time of the colonies’ founding, and the right to “all the immunities and privileges granted and confirmed to them by royal charters.” The colonists believed that, as loyal British subjects, they should retain the rights they had when their ancestors agreed to settle North America on behalf of the Crown.

The eighth resolution states that the colonists must have the right to peacefully assemble and to petition



the king to address any grievances. This resolution declares any interference with this right to be illegal, including the prosecution of those who make grievances and the prohibition or dissolution of any assembly gathered for this purpose. The colonists frequently found themselves unable to take formal, peaceful action against British control because their assemblies would be dissolved by their local Crown-appointed leadership if they dared to speak out. Often they would continue to meet in secret or establish special assemblies such as the First Continental Congress, but there was serious concern that Britain was systematically disempowering any official channels the colonists had to protest peacefully.

The ninth resolution concerns Britain's maintenance of a standing army in the colonies, even though there was no war. This active military was stationed to enforce Parliament's more unpopular acts and to stop any rebellions that might result, but their continued presence only further strained the relationship between Britain and the American colonists. This was demonstrated on March 5, 1770, by the Boston Massacre, when an exchange of insults between American colonists and British soldiers ended with soldiers killing five colonists and injuring six others. The incident united the colonists and fueled their desire for rebellion against Britain's oppressive treatment. The colonists were also required to provide housing and other resources to the British soldiers whenever ordered to do so; since the soldiers' presence was already unwelcome, this demand only further added to the tensions.

The tenth resolution addresses Britain's practice of appointing colonial leadership rather than allowing local popular elections. The Declaration and Resolves observes that an independent legislature was not only "indispensably necessary to good government," but was also required by the British constitution. The Crown's practice of appointing committees at its pleasure to overrule the local, popularly elected legislatures was "unconstitutional, dangerous and destructive to the freedom of American legislation," and impeded the colonies' ability to protest unjust laws through peaceful and orderly means. The final resolution calls upon Parliament to repeal specific recently enacted laws and end their oppressive treatment of the American colonies.

After drafting and passing their Declaration and Resolves, the First Continental Congress sent them to Britain. The document, as a whole, demands that

these laws be repealed and makes it clear that Americans would not honor unjust laws regardless of what the Crown decided. The perceived lack of basic rights and freedoms was a sore issue for the colonists. They felt that their families had settled North America on behalf of their mother country and at great risk to themselves, and now their descendants were being denied the fundamental rights they would have enjoyed had they remained in Britain.

Despite this, the colonists frequently reinforced their loyalty to the Crown and acknowledged their role as British subjects. In the Declaration and Resolves, they state that they would "cheerfully consent" to acts of Parliament that regulated colonial commerce, if legitimately established and beneficial to both Britain and the colonies. However, the elected colonial leadership would not consent to taxing the colonists for the sole purpose of raising money for Britain, particularly when colonists were entirely excluded from the decision—a denial of their rights as British subjects.

The colonists also resented that Britain treated them as subjects when imposing taxes and restrictions, but quickly denied them rights whenever they feared American autonomy might jeopardize British dominance. The First Continental Congress went so far as to describe Britain's most recent actions as a series of "acts and measures as have been adopted since the last war, which demonstrate a system formed to enslave America." Given the rising tensions, it was only a matter of time before the Crown's habit of ignoring the colonists' peaceful airing of grievances turned into a bloody battle.

The British were not happy with the Declaration and Resolves and did not honor the resolutions of the First Continental Congress. This led Britain and its American colonies one step closer to war. The declaration makes clear that the colonies would no longer abide by Britain's domineering policies, and Britain was not going to simply hand the control of the American colonies over to the popularly elected leadership.

### Essential Themes

As British control over its American colonies slipped during the eighteenth century, Parliament responded by imposing increasingly restrictive laws on the colonists. Some of these laws were passed for the benefit of Britain, such as the imposition of import and export taxes on certain goods passing through American ports. However, some of Parliament's actions were specifi-

cally designed to restrict the colonies' ability to protest against these very laws. Britain sought to circumvent the American court system by placing colonial judges on Britain's payroll, expanding the jurisdiction of the admiralty court to prevent trials by local jury for violations of Parliamentary orders, and granting British court jurisdiction over situations in which its military officers intervened in alleged rebellions.

The colonists were further alarmed by the growing practice of Crown-appointed local leadership dissolving colonial assemblies that attempted to address grievances to the monarch. Essentially, Britain sought to shut down any official, peaceful channels for protest in hopes of forcing the colonists to comply. Finally, the colonists were concerned about Britain's maintenance of a standing army within the colonies during peacetime, as this practice greatly increased the tensions between the colonies and their motherland.

The Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress was issued in protest of these laws. It was among the final peaceful attempts the colonies made to resolve their disagreements with Britain. In the document, the First Continental Congress notes that the American colonists were first and foremost British subjects, and they were therefore entitled to the same rights as those British subjects living in Great Britain. They cite Britain's own constitution to argue that the colonists had the right to peacefully assemble, to run their own legislatures, to have their grievances acknowledged and addressed, and to retain jurisdiction over legal disputes that arose within the colonies. However, despite repeated efforts by the colonists to address their grievances through formal

declarations and resolves such as these, peaceful attempts at reconciliation eventually gave way to the American Revolution.

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- Wood, Gordon S. *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different*. New York: Penguin, 2006. Print.

### **Additional Reading**

- Ellis, Joseph J. *American Creation: Triumphs and Tragedies at the Founding of the Republic*. New York: Knopf, 2007. Print.
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## LESSON PLAN: The First Continental Congress at Work

Students analyze a declaration by the First Continental Congress and a background document written by Thomas Jefferson to explore the political and ideological origins of the American Revolution.

### Learning Objectives

Identify each document's purpose and point of view; compare and contrast each document's set of ideas; evaluate Jefferson's summary as the antecedent of the declaration.

**Materials:** The Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress (1774); Thomas Jefferson, "A Summary View of the Rights of British America" (1774).

### Overview Questions

What charges and resolutions does First Continental Congress make in the Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress? To what extent is its content based on the guidelines offered by Jefferson in his "A Summary View of the Rights of British America"? Which of the documents is more radical in its content and point of view?

### Step 1: Comprehension Questions

What charges does the congress make against the British government in its declaration? Which echo complaints are raised by Jefferson in the summary document he prepared to guide the delegates? Which charges directly result from the Coercive Acts?

- **Activity:** Call on students to identify and read aloud passages in the Jefferson document that can be linked to specific charges made by the congress in its Declaration and Resolves.

### Step 2: Comprehension Questions

Which of the eleven "resolves" appear to be based on arguments that Jefferson makes in his "Summary View"? What passages in the Jefferson document inspire each of the resolves you have identified?

- **Activity:** Select some of the first ten resolves; discuss with students how each reflects prevailing views on natural or "inalienable" rights and the colonists' views about their rights as Englishmen.

### Step 3: Context Questions

What events precipitated the calling of the First Continental Congress? For what reasons was it convened? Do you think that the Declaration and Resolves fulfilled the congress's mission and purpose? Why or why not?

- **Activity:** Have students link the acts cited and described in Resolved, N.C.D. 11. to the names by which they were commonly known.

### Step 4: Historical Connections Questions

What actions does the First Continental Congress announce it is taking at the conclusion of the Declaration and Resolves? How does this concluding statement compare with the tone with which Jefferson concluded his preliminary document?

- **Activity:** Point out that many delegates to the Continental Congress dismissed Jefferson's summary at the meeting's outset as too radical for their liking. Have students discuss whether the Declaration and Resolves is more or less radical a document than the one Jefferson prepared.

### Step 5: Response Paper

Word length and additional requirements set by Instructor. Students answer the research question in the Overview Questions. Students state a thesis and use as evidence passages from the primary source document as well as support from the secondary historical document/s assigned in the lesson.