

Imagine Getting *This* "Peer" Review?!

The Court of King George III
London, England

July 10, 1776

Mr. Thomas Jefferson
c/o The Continental Congress
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Jefferson:

We have read your "Declaration of Independence" with great interest. Certainly, it represents a considerable undertaking, and many of your statements do merit serious consideration. Unfortunately, the Declaration as a whole fails to meet recently adopted specifications for proposals to the Crown, so we must return the document to you for further refinement. The questions which follow might assist you in your process of revision:

1. In your opening paragraph you use the phrase "the Laws of Nature and Nature's God." What are these laws? In what way are they the criteria on which you base your central arguments? Please document with citations from the recent literature.
2. In the same paragraph you refer to the "opinions of rankind." Whose polling data are you using? Without specific evidence, it seems to us the "opinions of mankind" are a matter of' opinion.
3. You hold certain truths to be "self-evident." Could you please elaborate. If they are as evident as you claim then it should not be difficult for you to locate the appropriate supporting statistics.
4. "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" seem to be the goals of your proposal. These are not measurable goals. If you were to say that "among these is the ability to sustain an average life expectancy in six of the 13 colonies of at least 55 years, and to enable newspapers in the colonies to print news without outside interference, and to raise the average income of the colonists by 10 percent in the next 10 years," these could be measurable goals. Please clarify.
5. You state 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 a new Government." Have you weighed this assertion against all the alternatives? What are the trade-off considerations?
6. Your description of the existing situation is quite extensive. Such a long list of grievances should precede the statement of goals, not follow it. Your problem statement needs improvement.
7. Your strategy for achieving your goal is not developed at all. You state that the colonies "ought to be free and Independent States," and that they are "Absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown." Who or what must change to achieve this objective? In what way must they change? What specific steps will you take to overcome the resistance? How long will it take? We have found that a little foresight in these areas helps to prevent careless errors later on. How cost-effective are your strategies?
8. Who among the list of signatories will be responsible for implementing your strategy? Who conceived it? Who provided the theoretical research? Please submit an organization chart and vitas of the principal investigators.
9. You must include an evaluation design. We have been requiring this since Queen Anne's War.

10. What impact will your problem have? Your failure to include any assessment of this inspires little confidence in the long-range prospects of your undertaking.

11. Please submit a PERT diagram, an activity chart, itemized budget, and manpower utilization matrix.

We hope that these comments prove useful in revising your "Declaration of Independence." We welcome the submission of your revised proposal. Our due date for unsolicited proposals is July 31, 1976. Ten copies with original signatures will be required.

Sincerely,

Management Analyst to the
British Crown