



# The Annotated U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence

*By Jack N. Rakove*



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**The Annotated U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence** By Jack N. Rakove

Here in a newly annotated edition are the two founding documents of the United States of America: the Declaration of Independence (1776), our great revolutionary manifesto, and the Constitution (1787–88), in which “We the People” forged a new nation and built the framework for our federal republic. Together with the Bill of Rights and the Civil War amendments, these documents constitute what James Madison called our “political scriptures” and have come to define us as a people. Now a Pulitzer Prize–winning historian serves as a guide to these texts, providing historical contexts and offering interpretive commentary.

In an introductory essay written for the general reader, Jack N. Rakove provides a narrative political account of how these documents came to be written. In his commentary on the Declaration of Independence, Rakove sets the historical context for a fuller appreciation of the important preamble and the list of charges leveled against the Crown. When he glosses the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the subsequent amendments, Rakove once again provides helpful historical background, targets language that has proven particularly difficult or controversial, and cites leading Supreme Court cases. A chronology of events provides a framework for understanding the road to Philadelphia. The general reader will not find a better, more helpful guide to our founding documents than Jack N. Rakove.



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