

Dare to Declare!

Conversation Cards
That Will Inspire Your
Revolutionary Spirit

Use these cards to ask yourself what the key ideas of the Declaration of Independence mean to us today, 250 years after this founding document was first written. Once you've explored the contemporary meanings of the Declaration, Dare to Declare! challenges you to stand up and take bold action in your community so that everyone can fully realize their rights to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.



This deck of cards was created by PHILADELPHIA250, the nonprofit leading and inspiring Philadelphia's celebration of the 250th anniversary of independence in 2026.

www.philadelphia250.us

Box and card design: Creative Repute
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illustrations © Elaine Knox, Yannick Lowery,
Cindy Lozito, Jaz Morse, Keisha Whatley

Dare to Declare © USA250



Shared Prosperity



Revolutionary Actions



People's Histories



The Pursuit of Happiness



After you're done,
share with us how this
experience has inspired
you to DARE TO
DECLARE - take bold
action to make our
communities better for
everyone!

Share your words, photos,
drawings, or clips to
any of our platforms
and make sure you follow
along to find out
what everyone else is
saying and doing.

@PHILADELPHIA250
#DaretoDeclare



Read Me First!

What
are
THESE

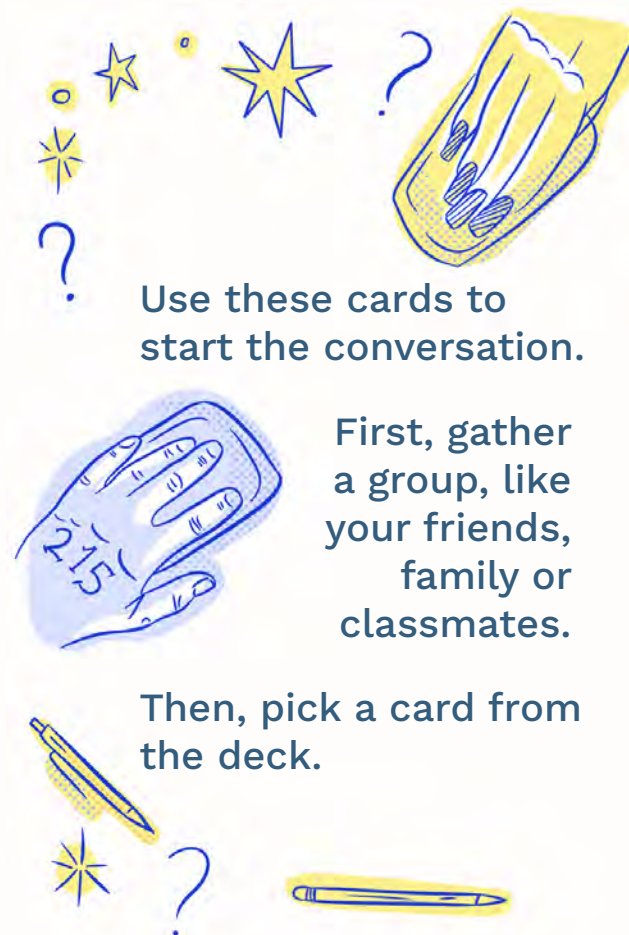
CARDS
FOR?



The Declaration of Independence turns 250 years old in 2026. This revolutionary document created a new form of government - by the people, for all people.



Maybe you're thinking...
OK, but what does that mean for me?
For us? Today?



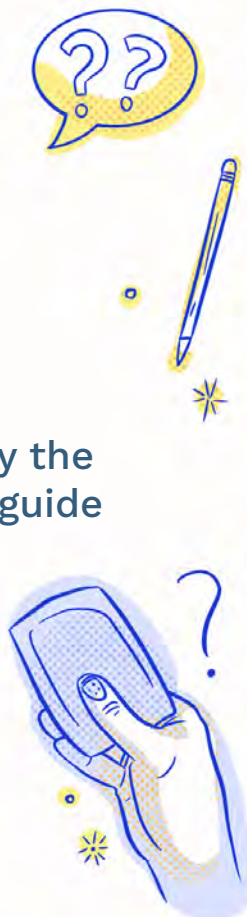
Use these cards to start the conversation.

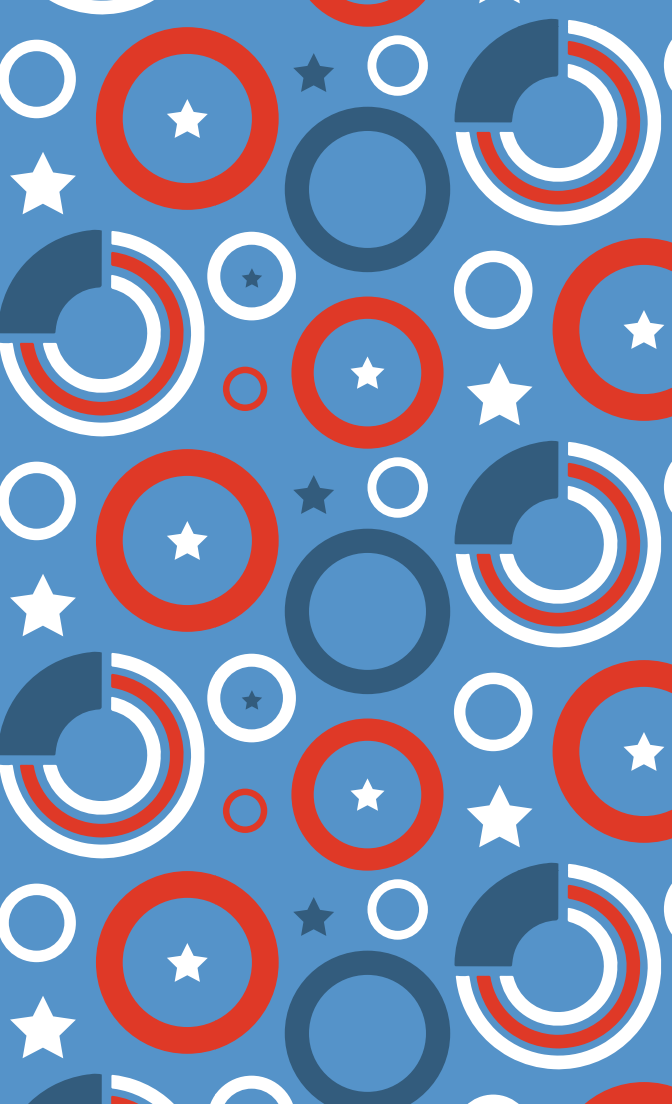
First, gather a group, like your friends, family or classmates.

Then, pick a card from the deck.

Each card has an open-ended question for you to discuss together.

Each question is based on an idea, inspired by the Declaration, to guide the debate and discussion about the meaning and importance of this 250-year-old document.





Dare to Declare!



Our country's 250th anniversary is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for all of us to declare a stronger and more inclusive future, in the city where the Declaration of Independence was written in 1776.

What does the Declaration mean to us, 250 years later? Why is it still important today?

We've designed these cards to help you answer these important questions, and to help you **DARE TO DECLARE** the bold actions you will take in your community so that everyone can fully realize their rights to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.



PHILADELPHIA250 is leading and inspiring Philadelphia's celebration of the 250th anniversary of independence in 2026. "By the People, For ALL People" is more than just our tagline, it's our focused approach. By centering our work around this promise, we intend to create the most inclusive and transformational anniversary in our country's history.

By the people means we are designing 250th activities with a bottom-up approach in which we listen to the people. Together, we will create exciting and meaningful events and activities in all the neighborhoods of Philadelphia where people work and play.

For all people means everyone is invited and that the impact of our 250th activities matter to the future of our city.

Learn more at www.philadelphia250.us

What Does the Declaration Say?



“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal...”

Read all 1,337 words in our founding document and you will see that it marked a revolutionary shift in how people viewed their leaders. It called for a new system of government of, by and for the people.

Think about the aspirations of the authors and signers of the Declaration – the members of the Continental Congress. Pay attention to the grievances against King George III – which drove the colonists to take action. And consider the people who were not included in this vision for a free and independent United States.

Read the full text of the Declaration by scanning this QR code.



Breaking the Ice!



Before diving into the themes and ideas of the Declaration, try these easy conversation starters to kick things off.

What is a 250th anniversary officially called?

(Answer: “Semiquincentennial”)

Who can spell “semiquincentennial”?

Can anyone remember the last anniversary, the 1976 Bicentennial?

Can anyone recite the first line of the Declaration of Independence?

What are you hoping to get out of the conversation today?

The Pursuit of Happiness



PHILADELPHIA250 stands for each and everyone's right to their own #PursuitOfHappiness and to their personal pursuits to find purpose, enrichment, and meaning in their lives and communities.

“My illustration explores the ability to grow with happiness and not be restricted by life’s difficulties. It depicts a person’s potential through a flourishing burst of life and energy that defies containment.”

– Elaine Knox, © 2022

By the people ★ For all people

Revolutionary Actions



PHILADELPHIA250 stands for #RevolutionaryActions that push boundaries and bring about ground-breaking positive change.

“I chose to highlight African-American activist Caroline Le Count. Le Count was defiantly riding street cars and filing petitions to have laws against Black riders revoked, decades before Rosa Parks refused to move her seat. The crowd gazes at her, encouraging the viewer to follow her example of revolutionary action.”

– Yannick Lowery, © 2022

By the people ★ For all people

People's Histories



PHILADELPHIA250 stands for an inclusive telling of all our #PeoplesHistories as a necessary step toward creating more complete and truthful historical narratives.

“I wanted to paint a broader picture of people’s stories: to explore what we aren’t learning in school and how we are impacted by having stories told only from a certain perspective. The mystical approach reflects the idea that storytelling is not always linear, and to suggest the circularity of time.”

– Jaz Morse, © 2022

By the people ★ For all people

Shared Prosperity



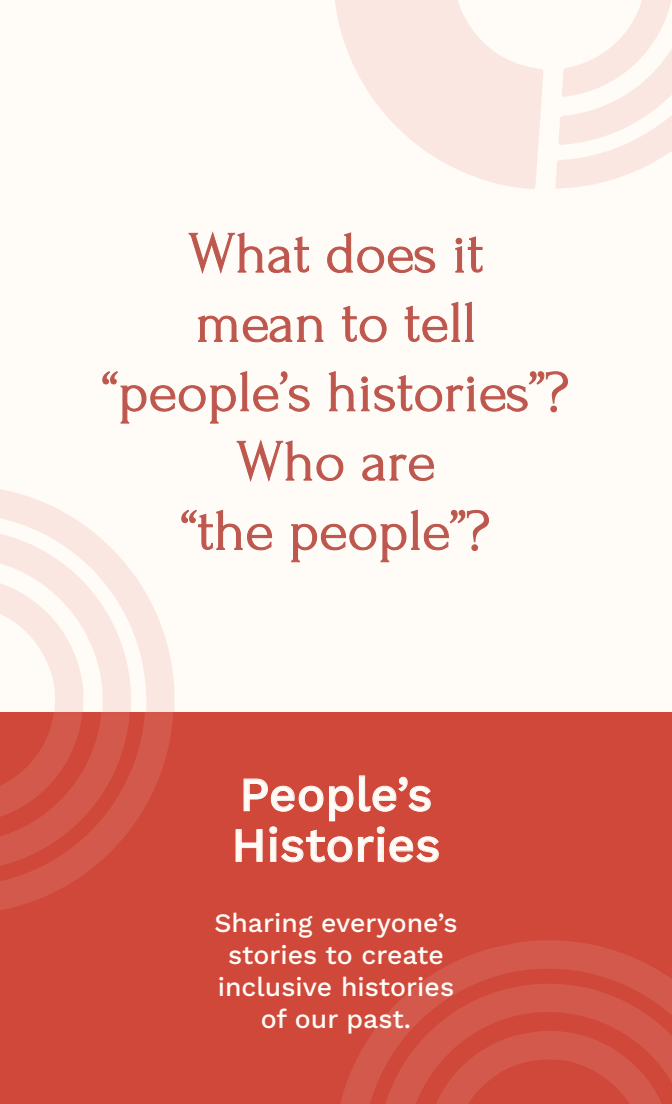
PHILADELPHIA250 stands for a #SharedProsperity that brings sustainable growth for our communities, with a focus on racial, social, and economic justice and equity.

“This illustration depicts a community brimming with vitality and wellness: with housing, food, knowledge, ideas and love. It extends the idea of prosperity beyond money into something everyone can participate in.”

– Keisha Whately, © 2022

By the people ★ For all people

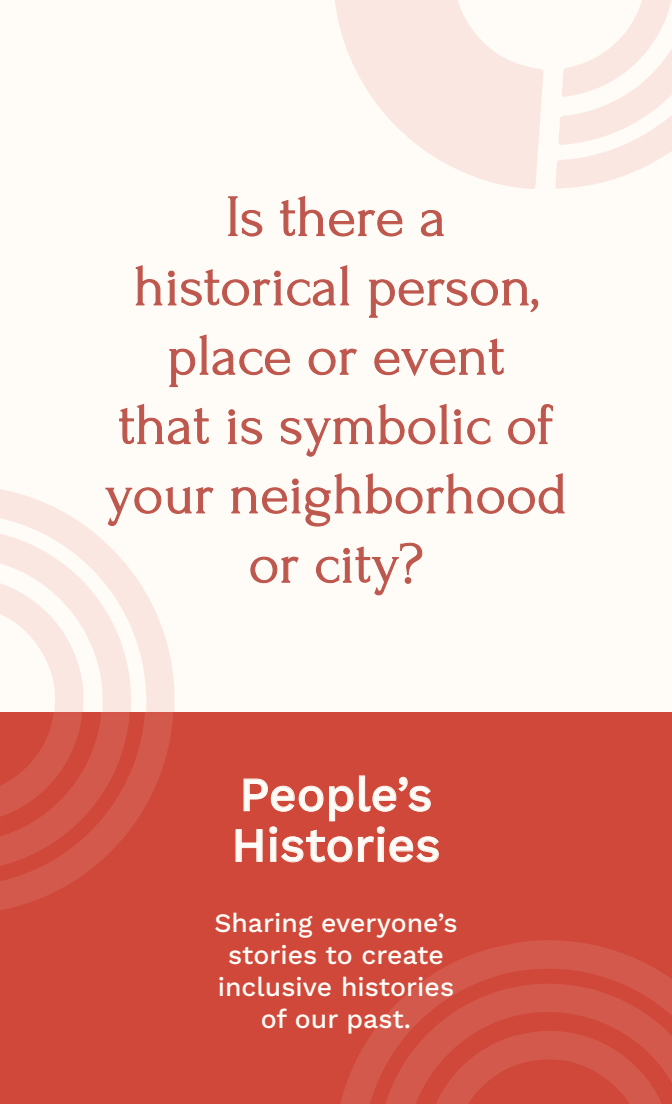




What does it
mean to tell
“people’s histories”?
Who are
“the people”?

People’s Histories

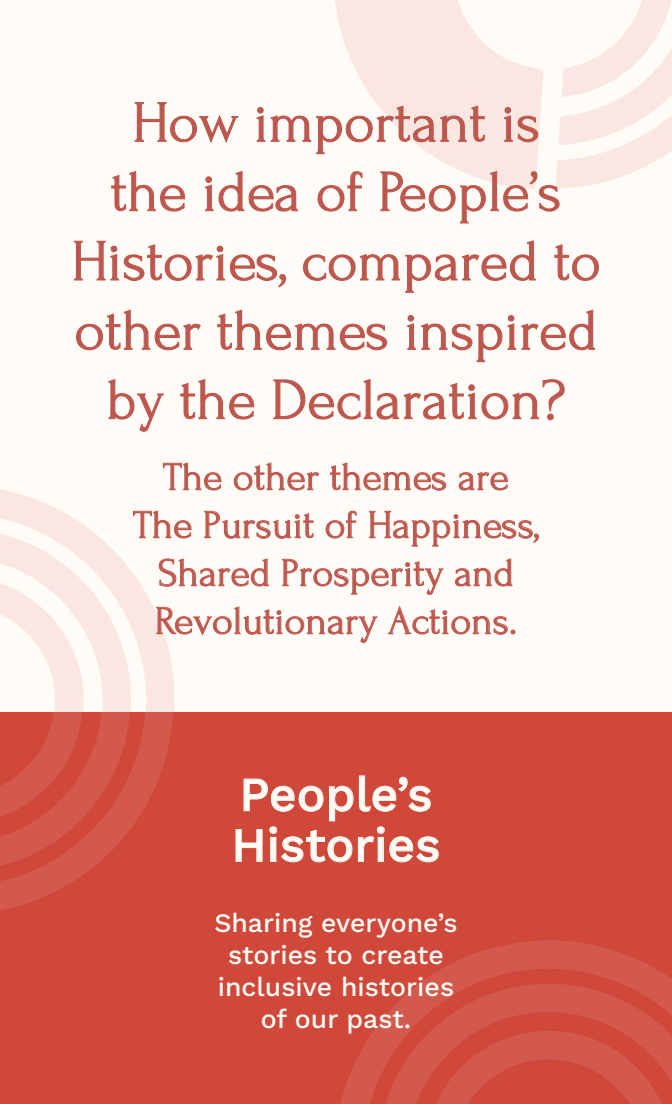
Sharing everyone’s
stories to create
inclusive histories
of our past.



Is there a
historical person,
place or event
that is symbolic of
your neighborhood
or city?

People's Histories

Sharing everyone's
stories to create
inclusive histories
of our past.



How important is
the idea of People's
Histories, compared to
other themes inspired
by the Declaration?

The other themes are
The Pursuit of Happiness,
Shared Prosperity and
Revolutionary Actions.

People's Histories

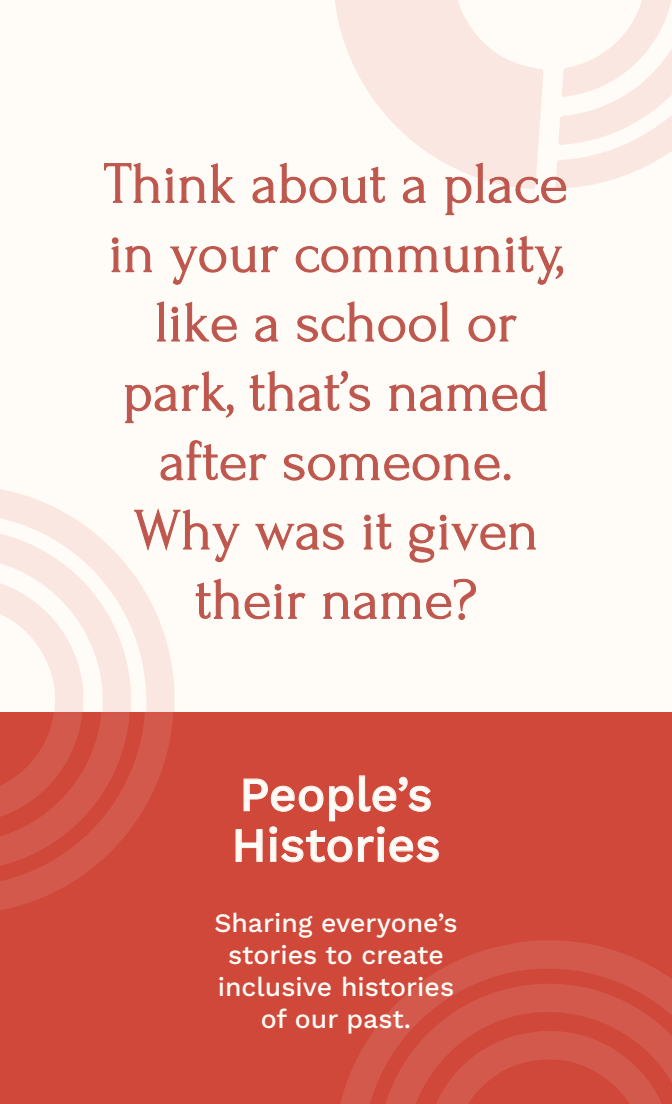
Sharing everyone's
stories to create
inclusive histories
of our past.



What stories about
your community
– about a person,
place or event –
are important
to share with
a new neighbor
or visitor?

People's Histories

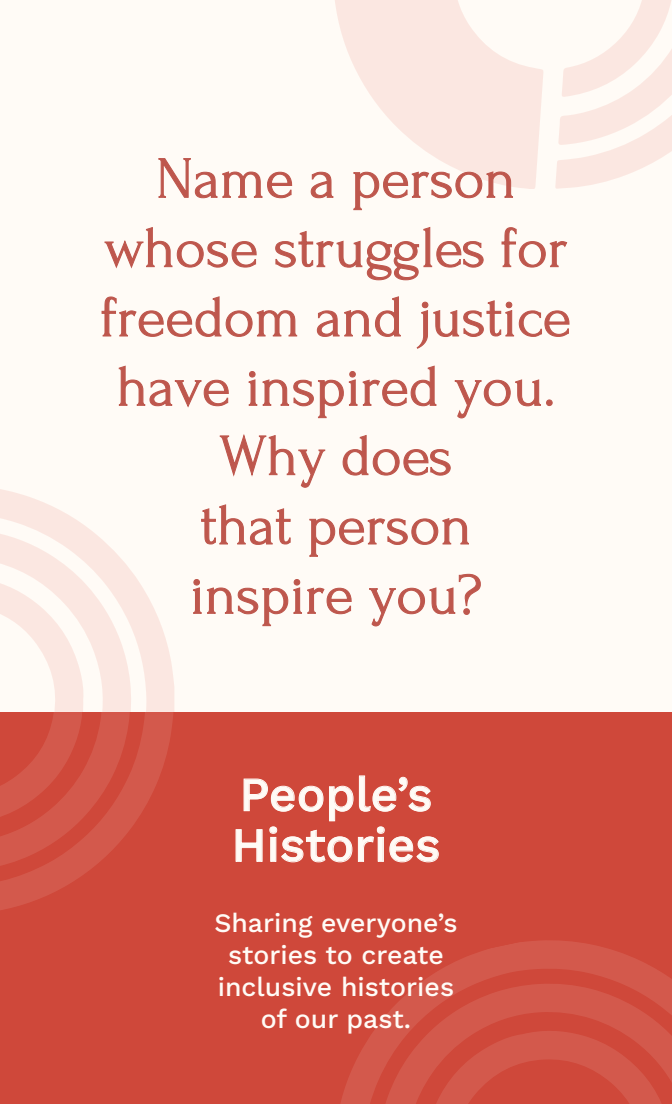
Sharing everyone's
stories to create
inclusive histories
of our past.



Think about a place
in your community,
like a school or
park, that's named
after someone.
Why was it given
their name?

People's Histories

Sharing everyone's
stories to create
inclusive histories
of our past.



Name a person
whose struggles for
freedom and justice
have inspired you.

Why does
that person
inspire you?

People's Histories

Sharing everyone's
stories to create
inclusive histories
of our past.



Who are the
important
storytellers in
your community
and how do you
know about them?

People's Histories


Sharing everyone's
stories to create
inclusive histories
of our past.



What stories about
your community or
city should be
better known?
What people or
places have been
overlooked?

People's Histories


Sharing everyone's
stories to create
inclusive histories
of our past.



Are there any
monuments or
memorials in your
neighborhood or
city that seem
wrong to you?
Any that are
missing?

People's Histories


Sharing everyone's
stories to create
inclusive histories
of our past.



Imagine you're
creating a museum
about your
neighborhood's
history. List three
stories that you
would want to make
sure are included.

People's Histories


Sharing everyone's
stories to create
inclusive histories
of our past.



Do you see yourself
or hear the voices of
your own community
fully represented
in the local news,
on social media, TV,
newspapers or
the radio?

People's Histories

Sharing everyone's
stories to create
inclusive histories
of our past.




Dare to Declare:
What will you
do to make sure
the important
stories about your
family, friends or
neighborhoods are
not forgotten?

People's Histories

Sharing everyone's
stories to create
inclusive histories
of our past.



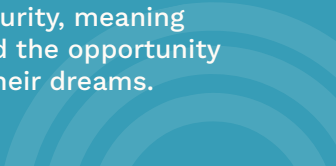



What do you
think it
means to
“pursue
happiness”?



The Pursuit of Happiness

Ensuring everyone has
a life with security, meaning
and purpose, and the opportunity
to pursue their dreams.



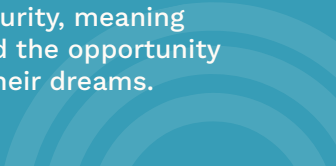


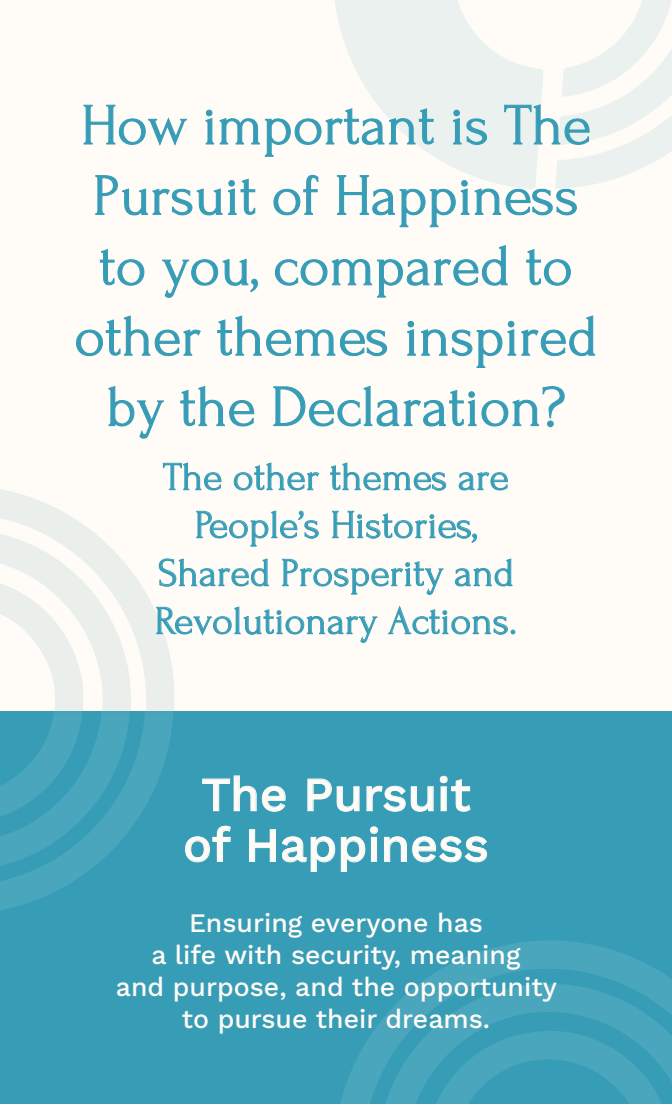
Describe what
happiness
looks and
feels like
to you.



The Pursuit of Happiness

Ensuring everyone has
a life with security, meaning
and purpose, and the opportunity
to pursue their dreams.



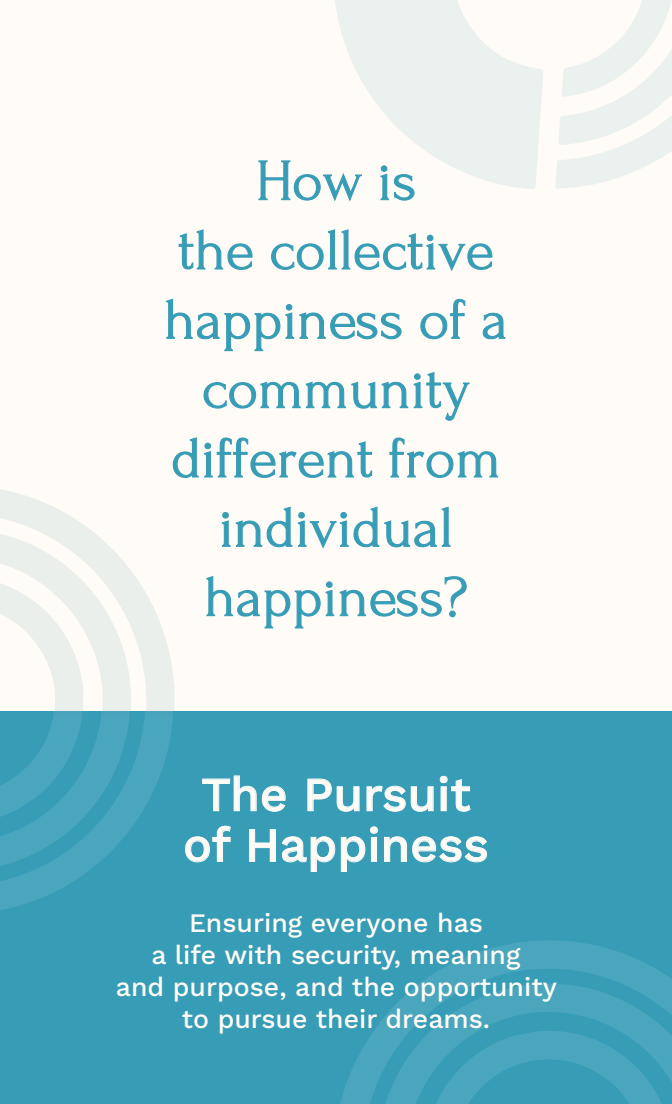


How important is The Pursuit of Happiness to you, compared to other themes inspired by the Declaration?

The other themes are People's Histories, Shared Prosperity and Revolutionary Actions.

The Pursuit of Happiness


Ensuring everyone has a life with security, meaning and purpose, and the opportunity to pursue their dreams.



How is
the collective
happiness of a
community
different from
individual
happiness?

The Pursuit of Happiness

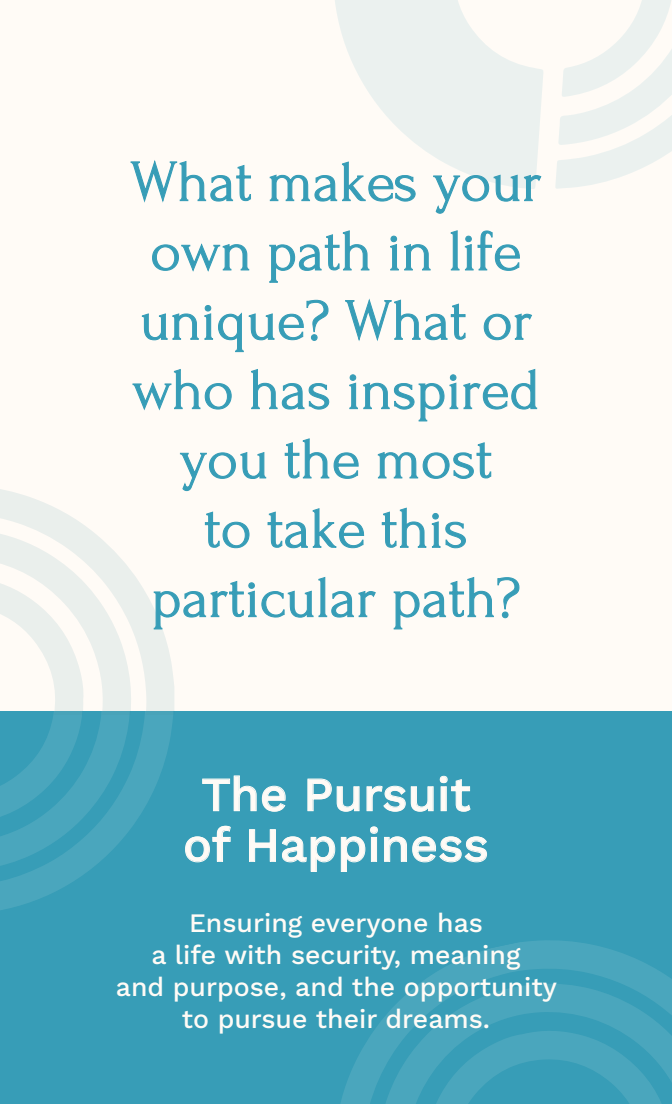
Ensuring everyone has
a life with security, meaning
and purpose, and the opportunity
to pursue their dreams.



What are you
most passionate
about? What do you
do each day,
week, or month
to fulfill this
passion?

The Pursuit of Happiness

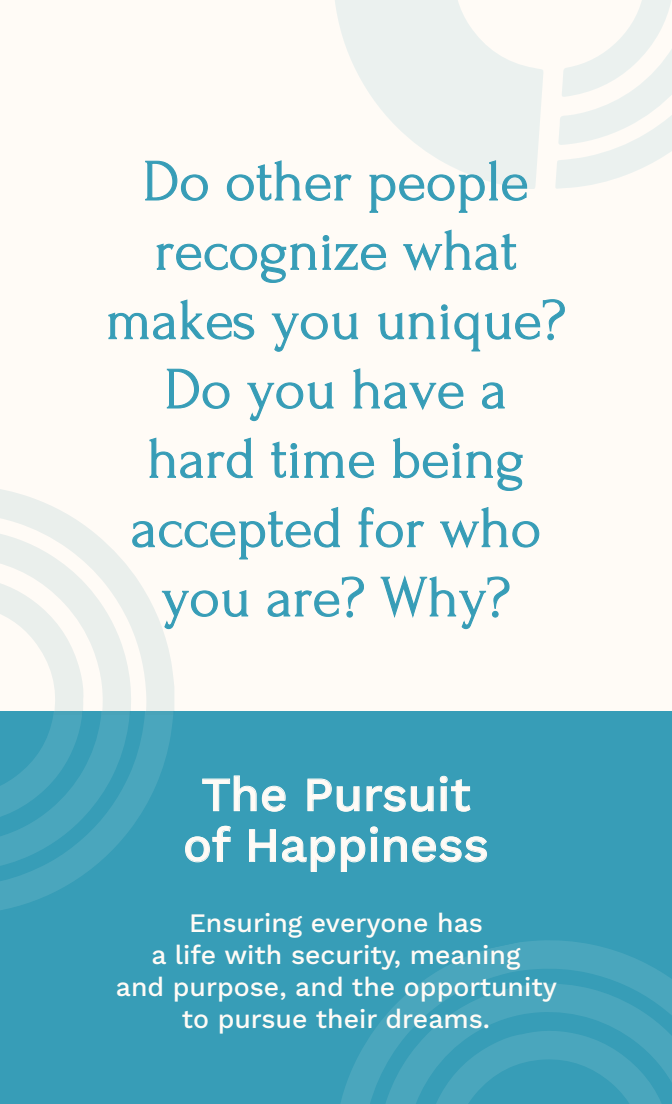
Ensuring everyone has
a life with security, meaning
and purpose, and the opportunity
to pursue their dreams.



What makes your
own path in life
unique? What or
who has inspired
you the most
to take this
particular path?

The Pursuit of Happiness

Ensuring everyone has
a life with security, meaning
and purpose, and the opportunity
to pursue their dreams.



Do other people
recognize what
makes you unique?

Do you have a
hard time being
accepted for who
you are? Why?

The Pursuit of Happiness

Ensuring everyone has
a life with security, meaning
and purpose, and the opportunity
to pursue their dreams.

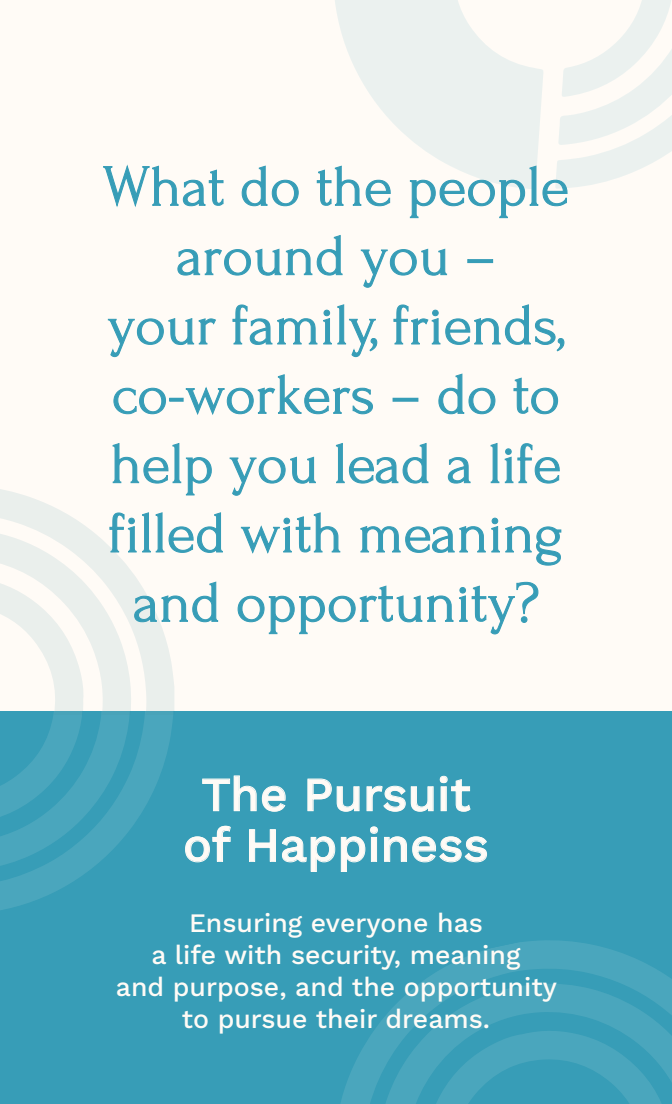


What freedoms are
most important
to you?

How do those
freedoms help
you live out
your dreams?

The Pursuit of Happiness

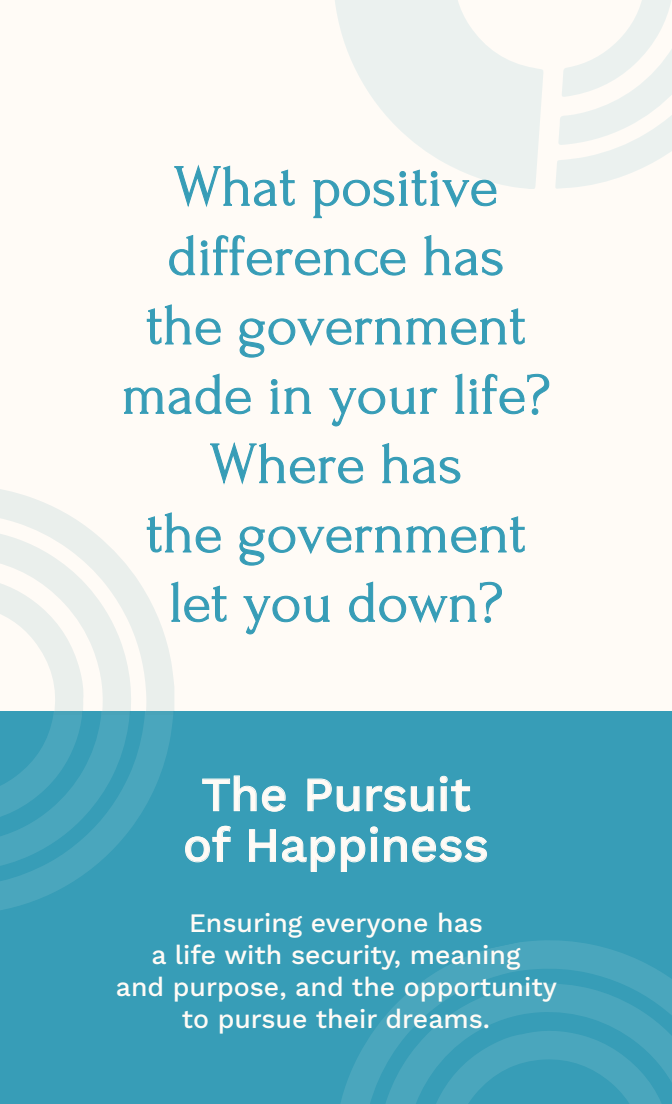
Ensuring everyone has
a life with security, meaning
and purpose, and the opportunity
to pursue their dreams.



What do the people
around you –
your family, friends,
co-workers – do to
help you lead a life
filled with meaning
and opportunity?

The Pursuit of Happiness

Ensuring everyone has
a life with security, meaning
and purpose, and the opportunity
to pursue their dreams.

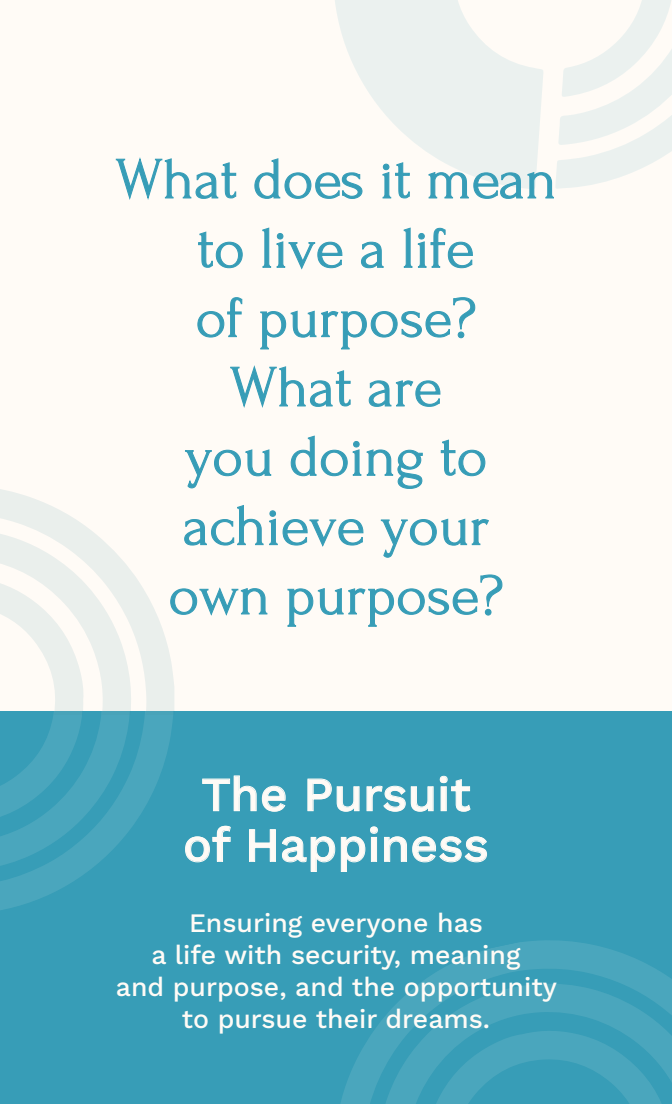


What positive
difference has
the government
made in your life?

Where has
the government
let you down?

The Pursuit of Happiness

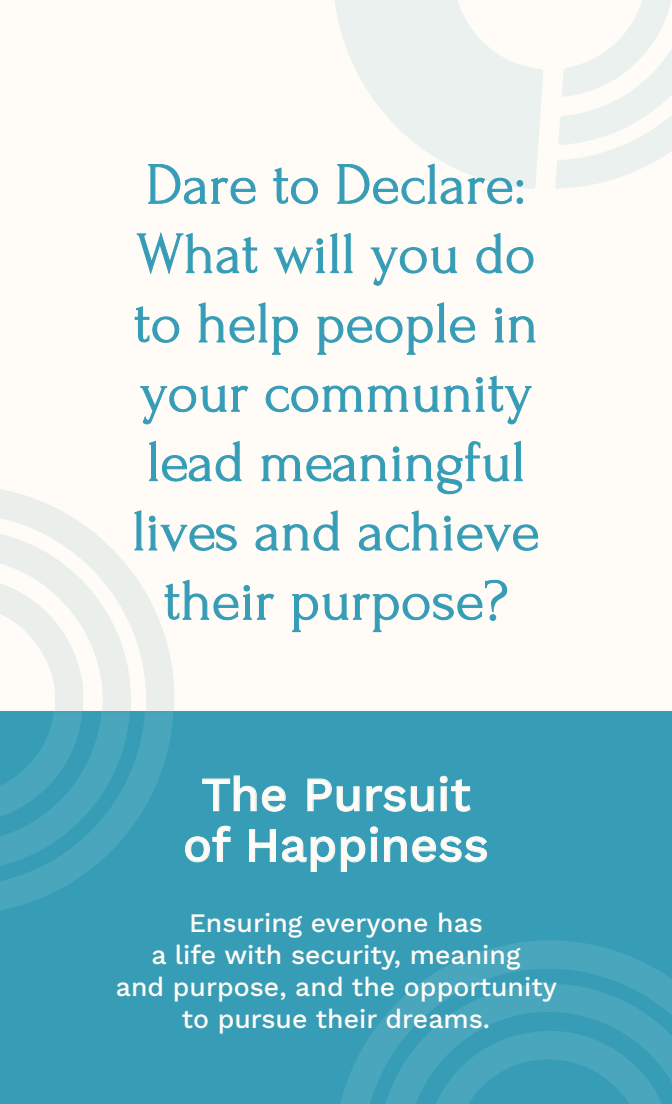
Ensuring everyone has
a life with security, meaning
and purpose, and the opportunity
to pursue their dreams.



What does it mean
to live a life
of purpose?
What are
you doing to
achieve your
own purpose?

The Pursuit of Happiness

Ensuring everyone has
a life with security, meaning
and purpose, and the opportunity
to pursue their dreams.

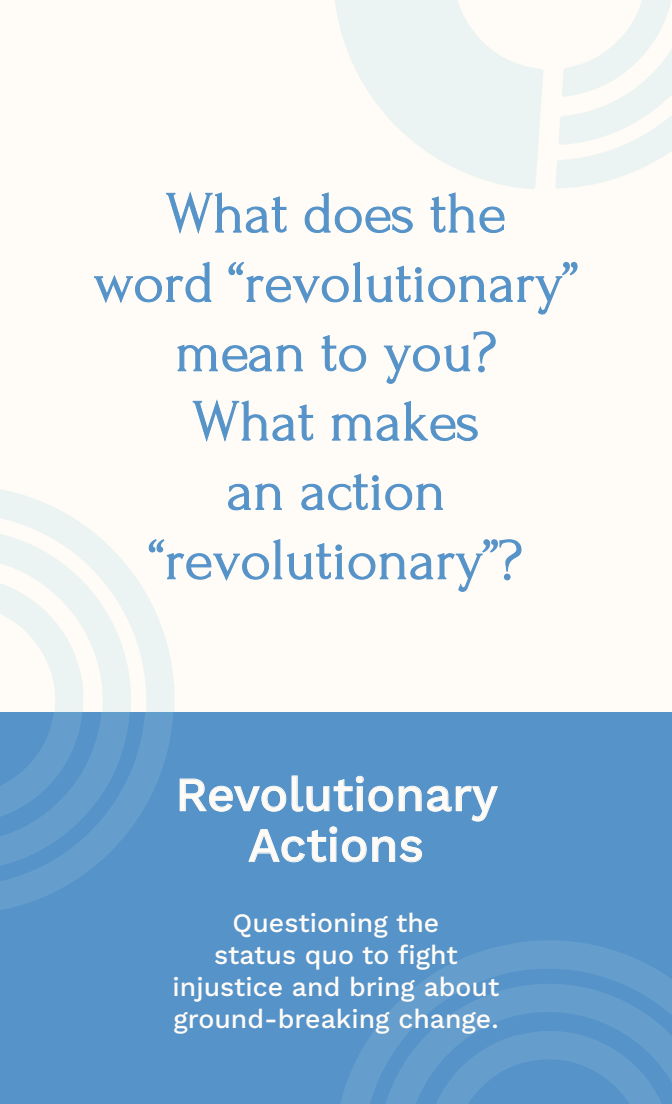


Dare to Declare:
What will you do
to help people in
your community
lead meaningful
lives and achieve
their purpose?

The Pursuit of Happiness

Ensuring everyone has
a life with security, meaning
and purpose, and the opportunity
to pursue their dreams.

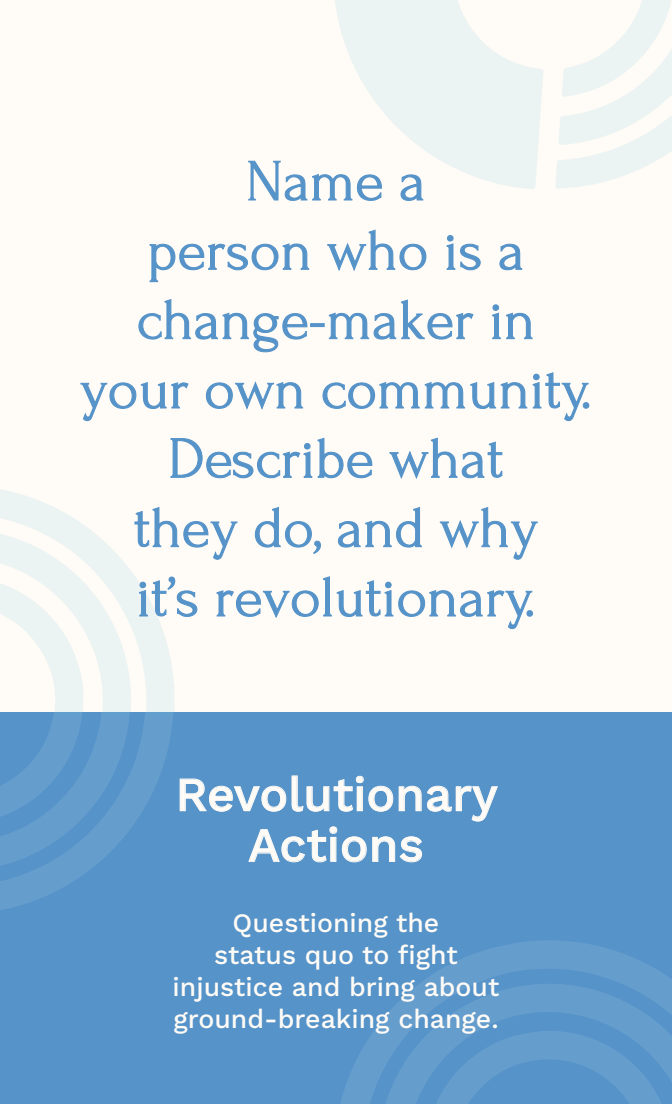




What does the
word “revolutionary”
mean to you?
What makes
an action
“revolutionary”?

Revolutionary Actions

Questioning the
status quo to fight
injustice and bring about
ground-breaking change.



Name a
person who is a
change-maker in
your own community.

Describe what
they do, and why
it's revolutionary.

Revolutionary Actions

Questioning the
status quo to fight
injustice and bring about
ground-breaking change.

How important is the idea of Revolutionary Actions, compared to other themes inspired by the Declaration?

The other themes are
People's Histories,
The Pursuit of Happiness
and Shared Prosperity.

Revolutionary Actions


Questioning the
status quo to fight
injustice and bring about
ground-breaking change.



Describe an
inspiring story
you've recently
read or heard about.
Why did it
inspire you?

Revolutionary Actions

Questioning the
status quo to fight
injustice and bring about
ground-breaking change.



What issues in
your community
or in the country
are currently in
most need of
Revolutionary
Actions? Why?

Revolutionary Actions

Questioning the
status quo to fight
injustice and bring about
ground-breaking change.

Do you believe just
one person can
change the world?
Or are groups of
people more powerful
and effective in
creating real change
together?

Revolutionary Actions

Questioning the
status quo to fight
injustice and bring about
ground-breaking change.

Do you think that
participating in politics
– voting, campaigning
for a candidate or
running for office –
is an effective way to
change things?
Why or why not?


Revolutionary Actions

Questioning the
status quo to fight
injustice and bring about
ground-breaking change.

Think about an issue
that is important
to you. Now imagine
you meet someone
who disagrees
with you. How would
you persuade them
to join your side?

Revolutionary Actions

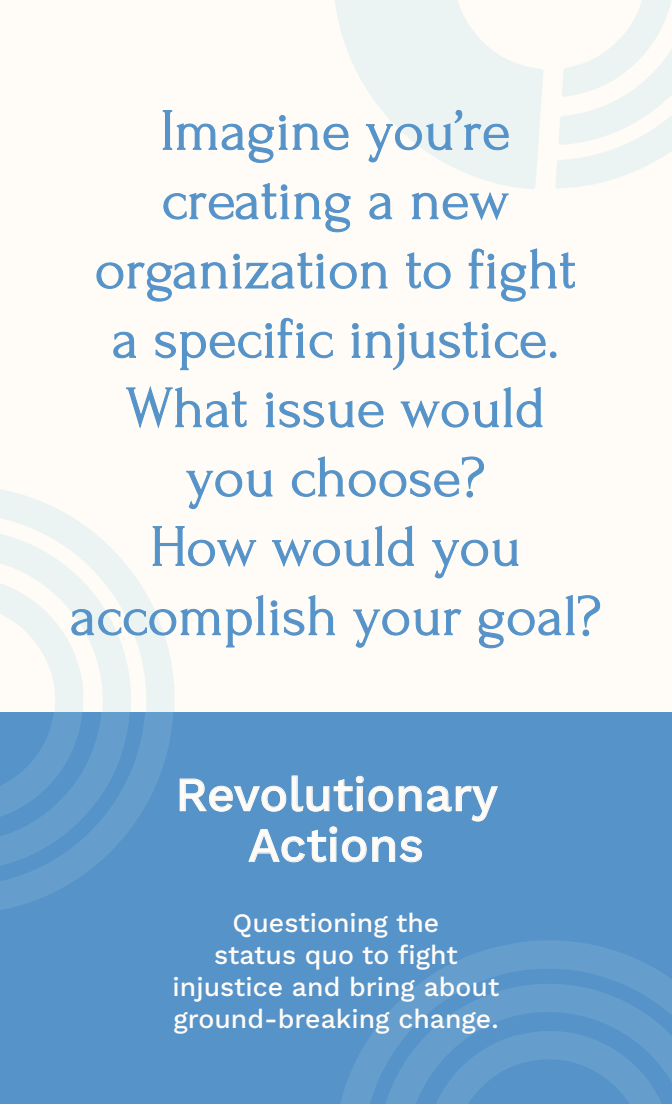
Questioning the
status quo to fight
injustice and bring about
ground-breaking change.



Give a specific
example of a
Revolutionary Action
you've seen,
witnessed, or
taken part in.

Revolutionary Actions


Questioning the
status quo to fight
injustice and bring about
ground-breaking change.



Imagine you're
creating a new
organization to fight
a specific injustice.
What issue would
you choose?
How would you
accomplish your goal?

Revolutionary Actions

Questioning the
status quo to fight
injustice and bring about
ground-breaking change.





Who is more
powerful,
the people or
the government?
Why?



Revolutionary Actions

Questioning the
status quo to fight
injustice and bring about
ground-breaking change.






Dare to Declare:
What
Revolutionary Actions
will you take
to fight injustice?




Revolutionary Actions

Questioning the
status quo to fight
injustice and bring about
ground-breaking change.








What is
prosperity?
What is
Shared Prosperity
and what makes
it unique?

Shared Prosperity


Promoting sustainable, equitable
growth for all communities,
with a focus on racial, social,
and economic justice.



Can you name
a place, organization,
or community that
represents the idea
of Shared Prosperity?
Describe how
they do this.

Shared Prosperity

Promoting sustainable, equitable
growth for all communities,
with a focus on racial, social,
and economic justice.




How important is
the idea of Shared
Prosperity, compared to
other themes inspired
by the Declaration?

The other themes are
People's Histories,
The Pursuit of Happiness
and Revolutionary Actions.

Shared Prosperity


Promoting sustainable, equitable
growth for all communities,
with a focus on racial, social,
and economic justice.



Why do you
think some
neighborhoods
are more
prosperous
than others?

Shared Prosperity

Promoting sustainable, equitable
growth for all communities,
with a focus on racial, social,
and economic justice.



What do safe
and thriving
neighborhoods look
like and feel like to the
people who live there?
What do they look and
feel like to the people
who visit them?


Shared Prosperity

Promoting sustainable, equitable
growth for all communities,
with a focus on racial, social,
and economic justice.

What opportunities
are open to you for
getting an education,
earning money
or finding a job?
What opportunities
are closed off
to you? Why?

Shared Prosperity


Promoting sustainable, equitable
growth for all communities,
with a focus on racial, social,
and economic justice.



What does
the phrase
“racial, social and
economic justice”
mean to you?

Shared Prosperity


Promoting sustainable, equitable
growth for all communities,
with a focus on racial, social,
and economic justice.



Have you
personally
experienced the
impact of racism?
What can you do
to fight racism or
educate others?

Shared Prosperity

Promoting sustainable, equitable
growth for all communities,
with a focus on racial, social,
and economic justice.



Whose
responsibility
is it to help
people who need
food, healthcare,
or a place to live?

Shared Prosperity

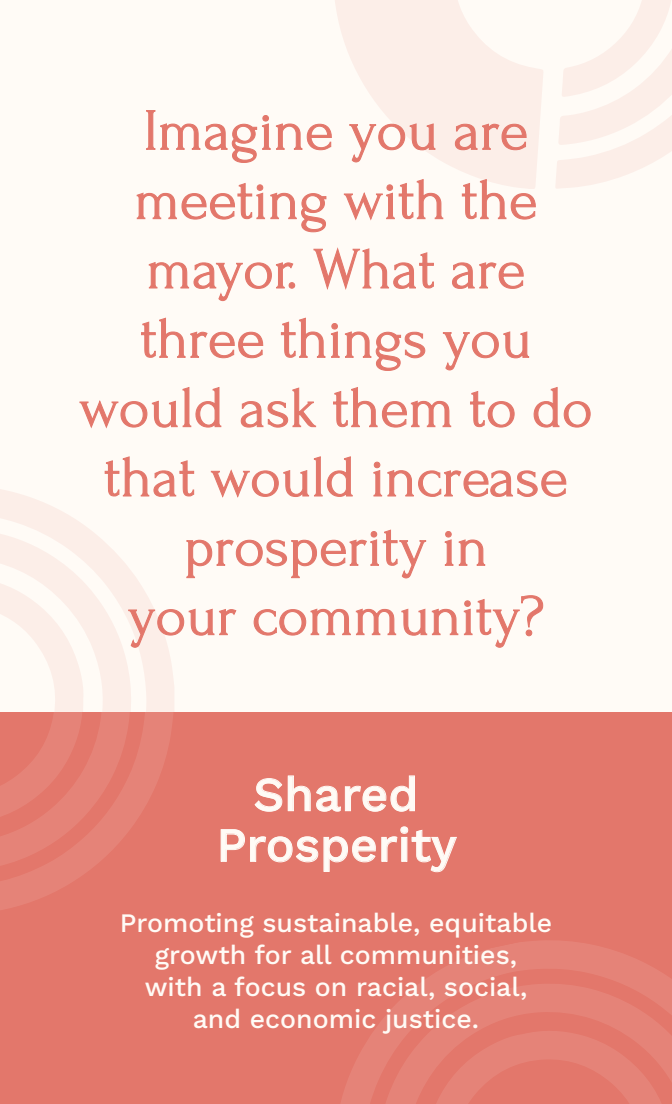
Promoting sustainable, equitable
growth for all communities,
with a focus on racial, social,
and economic justice.



Philadelphia has
museums, universities,
tech companies, sports
teams, and more.
Have these businesses
brought jobs and
prosperity to
your community?

Shared Prosperity


Promoting sustainable, equitable
growth for all communities,
with a focus on racial, social,
and economic justice.



Imagine you are
meeting with the
mayor. What are
three things you
would ask them to do
that would increase
prosperity in
your community?

Shared Prosperity

Promoting sustainable, equitable
growth for all communities,
with a focus on racial, social,
and economic justice.



Dare to Declare:
What can you
do to expand
Shared Prosperity
to everyone in your
neighborhood
or community?

Shared Prosperity

Promoting sustainable, equitable
growth for all communities,
with a focus on racial, social,
and economic justice.