

SELF-EVIDENT
The Truths That Built a Nation
Young Explorers Edition • Grades Three through Six

LESSON TWO
“Self-Evident”

The Words We Are Studying

“... we hold these truths to be self-evident ...”

The Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776

The Big Idea

Some truths are so clear that you can see them right away, without anyone having to prove them to you. The Founders said their most important truths were like that.

Words to Know

Self-evident. So clear and obvious that you can see it is true the moment you understand it.

Prove. To show that something is true by giving reasons. Some things are so clear they do not need proving.

Conscience. The voice inside you that helps you know right from wrong.

What It Means

The Founders said their truths were self-evident. That is a big word that means: so clear you can see it right away. You do not need a long argument to prove it.

Think about this: the whole is bigger than one of its parts. A whole pizza is bigger than one slice. Nobody has to prove that to you with a big lecture. You just see it. That is what self-evident means.

The Founders were saying that some truths about people, like the truth that every person matters, are just as clear as that. You do not have to argue about it. An honest person can see it.

A Picture to Help You Remember

Imagine someone hands you a flashlight in a dark room and turns it on. You do not need anyone to prove that the light is on. You can see it with your own eyes.

Self-evident truths are like that light. Once you understand them, you just see that they are true. The Founders believed that the truth about how special every person is shines just like that light.

What a Founder Said

“Facts are stubborn things.”

— John Adams, during a trial, 1770

In plain words: The truth does not change just because we want it to. Facts stay the same, like a stubborn friend who will not budge.

Why It Matters for You

Sometimes people will try to tell you that nothing is really true, or that you can make up your own truth. But some things are true for everybody, like the fact that every single person is valuable.

Learning to see what is really true, even when others cannot, is one of the most important things you can learn.

Let’s Talk About It

1. What does self-evident mean in your own words?
2. Can you think of something that is so true you do not need anyone to prove it?
3. Why is it important that some truths are the same for everybody?
4. What helps you know when something is really true?

Try This

Go around the room and have each person name something that is self-evident (so clear it does not need proving), like “the sun gives light” or “two cookies are more than one cookie.” See how many you can find!

A Verse to Remember

*“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”
(Psalm 19:1)*