“Time has been given for the whole People, maturely to consider the great Question of Independence, and to ripen their judgment, ① dissipate their Fears, and allure their Hopes, by discussing it in Newspapers and Pamphlets, by debating it in Assemblies, Conventions, Committees of Safety and Inspection, in Town and County Meetings, as well as in private Conversations, ② so that the whole People, in every Colony of the thirteen, have now adopted it as their own Act. This will cement the Union . . . .”

—John Adams, Philadelphia, 3 July 1776

“I long to hear that you have declared an independency—and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and ③ favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If [particular] care and attention is not paid to the [Ladies] we are determined to foment a [Rebellion], and ④ will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.”

—Abigail Adams, Braintree, 31 March, 1776

Analyzing Primary Sources

Cite specific evidence from the letters to support your answers.

1. **Determine Author’s Point of View** How does John Adams think that the colonists can form a unified opinion on the question of declaring independence from Britain?

2. **Determine Author’s Purpose** What was Abigail’s purpose in writing to her husband while he was a member of the Continental Congress?

3. **Draw Conclusions** What happened in 1776 that may have sparked Abigail’s interest in women’s rights?