

Name _____

Date _____

INDEPENDENCE DAY

History of Independence Day

Independence Day in the United States of America is also known as The Fourth of July. It became a paid federal holiday in 1938, but the celebration of Independence Day goes back to the passage of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.



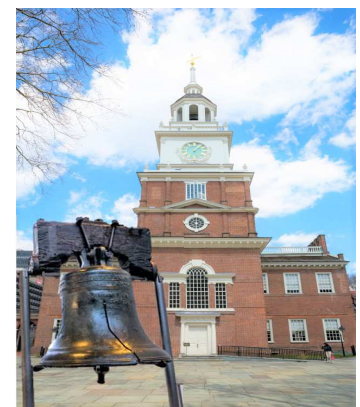
When the United States was first formed, it was under the rule of England. By 1776, the 13 colonies no longer wanted to have England controlling them. The Second Continental Congress, the Founding Fathers of America, appointed a committee of five members to write a statement to present to the world declaring that the colonies would be an independent nation. The members of the committee were John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, Robert R. Livingston, and Thomas Jefferson. The document was presented to the Continental Congress, a few changes were made, and it was officially adopted on July 4, 1776.



The final document is known as the Declaration of Independence. John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, was the first person to sign the document. He signed it with large, bold strokes. It has been said that this was to allow the king of England to be able to read

it easily without glasses. This is where the expression, “sign your John Hancock” when someone is asking for your signature, comes from.

On July 8, 1776, the first public reading of the Declaration was held in Philadelphia's Independence Square to the ringing of the Liberty Bell and band music.



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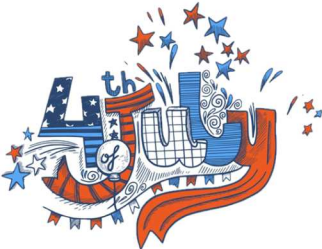
Birthday of America's Independence Celebrations

Since 1776, July 4th has been celebrated as the birth of American independence, with festivities ranging from fireworks, parades, and concerts to family and friends gatherings and barbecues.



Setting off fireworks as part of the 4th of July celebration, began one year after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. On July 4, 1777, Philadelphia remembered Independence Day with celebrations that included a ship's cannon firing a 13-

gun salute honoring the 13 colonies and an amazing exhibition of fireworks that began with thirteen rockets and ended with another thirteen rockets. Fireworks were also set off in Boston.



Interesting Facts and Trivia

- * John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were the only two men who signed the Declaration of Independence and later became presidents.
- * John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on July 4, 1826—the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.
- * Only John Hancock signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. The other members of the Continental Congress signed it later.
- * The White House held its first Fourth of July party in 1801.
- * The biggest parade is held in Washington DC.

