

Freedom's Feast INDEPENDENCE DAY

On-line resources to get the most out of your AMERICAN holiday Celebrations.



★ CELEBRATING LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS ★

A Quick History Lesson

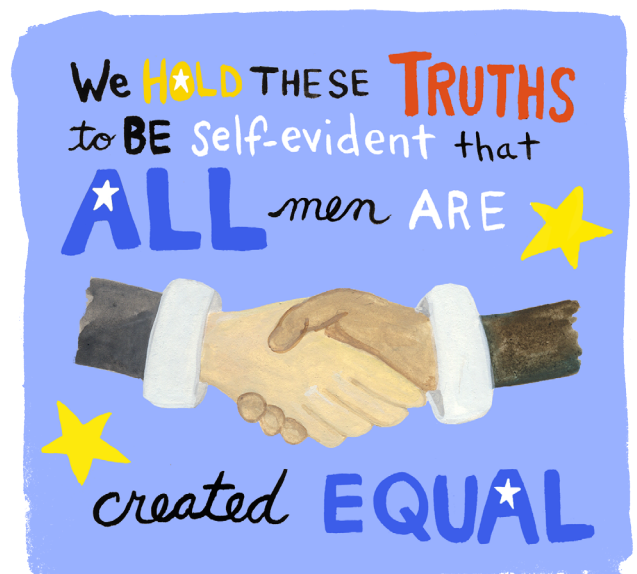
On Independence Day, celebrated on July 4, we commemorate the day the wording of the Declaration was approved by Congress—the birthday of the United States of America.

The United States **Declaration of Independence** is a statement adopted by the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, which announced that the thirteen American colonies then at war with Great Britain, were now independent states, and thus no longer a part of the British Empire. Written primarily by Thomas Jefferson, the Declaration is a formal explanation of why Congress had voted on July 2 to declare independence from Great Britain, more than a year after the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War.

Although the Declaration has no effect of law, it identifies the ideals that serve as our nation's core beliefs. It was a statement that set us apart from all other nations at the time and charted the path for our independence and our form of government. Most notably, the Declaration declares all men are created equal, and asserts certain natural rights—including those of *life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness*.

When the Declaration was signed, however, the confederation of thirteen colonies, the original United States of America, did not include the rights of all people. At that time, Native Americans, African Americans forced into slavery and women were not granted these same rights. It has taken many years of struggle to gain full rights and equal representation for all in the U.S. Just as Americans during the colonial period and centuries after struggled to ensure that the promises of the Declaration included all citizens, today we must continue to take responsibility for understanding, respecting and protecting these rights.

Independence Day is a day of parades, cook-outs, get-togethers of all kinds and fireworks! It's also a great time to share memories about past July 4th celebrations and what life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness mean to your family or gathering. Here are some suggestions to help get the conversation started. Please adapt them for your setting and enjoy the exchange of stories and ideas.



You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us, and the world will live as one.

JOHN LENNON

Ours is the only country deliberately founded on an ideal.

JOHN GUNTHER

For what avail the plough or sail, or land or life, if freedom fail?

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Yes, we did produce a near perfect Republic. But will they keep it? Or will they, in the enjoyment of plenty, lose the memory of freedom?

THOMAS JEFFERSON

You have to love a nation that celebrates its independence every July 4, not with a parade of guns, tanks, and soldiers who file by the White House in a show of strength and muscle, but with family picnics where kids throw Frisbees, the potato salad gets iffy, and the flies die from happiness. You may think you have overeaten, but it is patriotism.

ERMA BOMBECK

LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS CONVERSATION STARTERS

Please share your Fourth of July memories with me:

How did you celebrate July 4th when you were my age?

Did you spend time with your family? If so, what kinds of things did you do?

Do you have a favorite July 4th memory?

Life

When and why did our family come to America?

What was it like growing up when you were a child?

What was similar and what was different from how my life is today?

Is there a favorite family story about being Americans that you would like to share with me?

Do you have any photos, post cards or belongings from your parents or previous generations that you can show me?

Liberty

What freedoms did you or another member of our family seek in coming to the United States?•

What freedoms have you/do you continue to fight/advocate for?

What freedoms do you want the most for me (and my generation) in the future?

Pursuit of Happiness

What does the American Dream mean to you?

What are your hopes and dreams for what the future holds for me?

What do you dream for the future of our family? What do you dream for our country?

What does happiness mean to you? Why should we pursue it?

Try our American Family Dream Quilt craft project at www.freedomfeast.us/independence-day/documents/FamilyDreamQuiltExerciseFinal2011.pdf

Thanks to our partner CMOM: The Children's Museum of Manhattan for their year-round collaboration on **Raising Citizens**.

Please visit us on **Facebook** to share your experiences and visit Freedom's Feast again on **Labor Day** at www.freedomfeast.us/labor-day

Enjoy.



People who disagree have an argument, but people who dissent have a quarrel...Disagreement is the lifeblood of democracy; dissension is its cancer.

DANIEL BOORSTIN

Patriotism is easy to understand in America—it means looking out for yourself by looking out for your country.

CALVIN COOLIDGE

We must be free not because we claim freedom, but because we practice it.

WILLIAM FAULKNER

America was established not to create wealth but to realize a vision, to realize an ideal—to discover and maintain liberty among men.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

The universe is made of stories, not atoms.

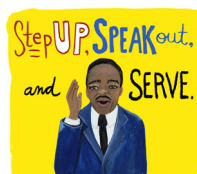
MURIEL RUKEYSER



LABOR DAY



THANKSGIVING



MLK DAY



PRESIDENTS' DAY



MEMORIAL DAY