The background of the entire page is a vibrant image of the Statue of Liberty. She is shown from the waist up, holding her torch aloft in her right hand and a tablet in her left. The statue is set against a backdrop of a large American flag, with the stars and stripes clearly visible. The scene is filled with a multitude of colorful fireworks exploding in the night sky, creating a festive and celebratory atmosphere. The colors of the fireworks range from bright yellows and oranges to deep blues and purples.

Let's Celebrate **America!**

by Tracie Heskett

M

Amplify Atlas™

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It's the Fourth of July. Colorful fireworks burst in the sky. Why does America have a party on this day? We are celebrating the day in 1776 when our country was born.

In the year 1776, America did not have a president. It did not have fifty states, as it does today. Instead, America was made up of 13 **colonies**. It was ruled by Great Britain.

The people in the colonies were fighting with Great Britain. They wanted to be free from the rule of its king. The king didn't let them vote. He made them pay extra money, or taxes, on the things they bought.

Amplify Atlas™

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Let's Celebrate America!

Level M

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A group of leaders from the colonies met. Some of them wrote an important paper. It said that the people of America were ready to be free from Great Britain.

The leaders voted to declare freedom on July 2, 1776. Two days later, the group said their paper was final. They called it the **Declaration of Independence**.

People chose that day, July 4, to honor America's birth.

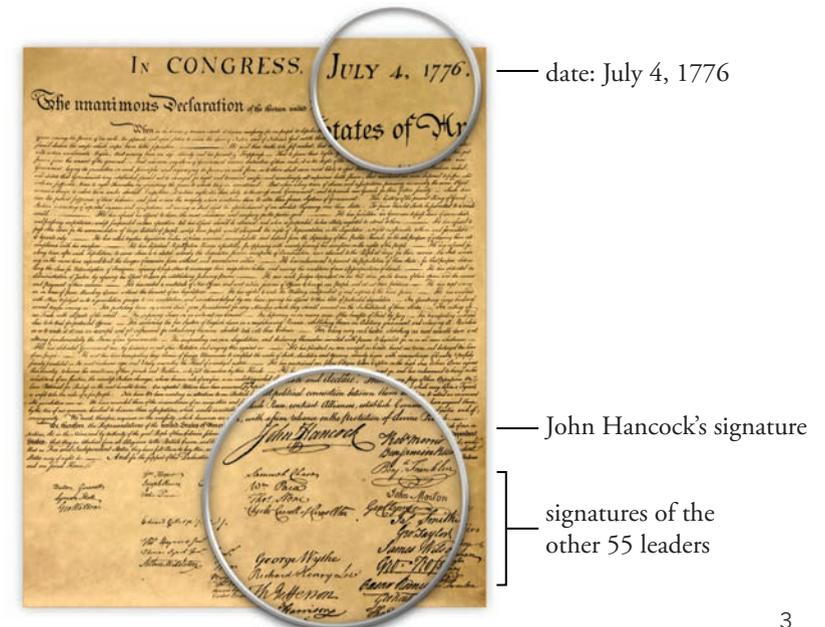
The Declaration of Independence said that all people are "created equal." It also said that all people have **rights**. People should be able to have "life, liberty, and the **pursuit** of happiness." *Liberty* means freedom.

The paper was signed by 56 leaders. The first and biggest **signature** was that of John Hancock, the group's president.

Today people in all fifty states celebrate the Fourth of July. Some people like to watch a parade in their town. They might see fire trucks and people carrying American flags.

Some people like to get together and cook food over a grill. Others might have a picnic.

The Declaration of Independence



Some towns also hold games and contests on the Fourth of July. People might play softball or run in a race.

Many towns and cities have a fireworks show. Firefighters light the fireworks. They know just what to do to keep everyone safe.

We celebrate the Fourth of July to show that we are proud to live in America!

A Fourth of July parade



Glossary

colonies (n.): groups of people living in lands that are ruled by another country

declaration (n.): the announcement of something

independence (n.): freedom

pursuit (n.): an attempt to find or get something

rights (n.): things that every person should have, such as freedom

signature (n.): a person's name written in his or her own handwriting

Level M

Informational

Let's Celebrate America!

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