

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: You will listen to an article about the Fourth of July. The article is a little more than 5 minutes long. Listen only, and don't worry about understanding everything.

Step 2: Look at the questions. Read and understand them, then listen again. As you are listening, try to answer the questions in your head. Don't write the answers yet. Next, listen again and write the answers this time. Compare your answers with a partner.

Step 3: Look at the article, which has missing phrases. Try to write any info that you remember from the listening. Listen once more, and write the missing phrases.

Step 4: Read the article. Check in your dictionary any unknown words. Now listen again. Can you understand more?

Step 5: Listen! Listen! Listen! Listen to the article on the train or in your free time. Each time you listen, you will slowly improve!

QUESTIONS

Answer the questions to check comprehension. If you don't know an answer, don't worry. Skip it. Then listen again.

1. What is the Fourth of July?

2. How many of the original thirteen colonies do you remember from the article? Can you name them?

3. Why did the colonies rule themselves in the 17th and 18th centuries?

4. What changed in the 1750s?

5. What did Parliament do from the 1750s?

6. What did the colonists increasingly believe?

7. What did the document list?

8. Why is the Declaration considered to be the birth of America?

the ARTICLE



Americans celebrate their country's birth on July fourth every year. Independence Day, as it is officially recognized as, or more commonly the "Fourth of July," 1) _____
_____. This was back in 1776, and they did so with a document called the Declaration of Independence.

The original colonies consisted of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. For much of their history during the 17th and 18th centuries, the British government paid little attention to their territories across the Atlantic. The people more or less ruled themselves, because the colonies were deemed unprofitable. There

weren't any precious metals such as gold and silver, which had made Spain rich and powerful in the New World. There were also many problems in Europe, which diverted the attention of the British government. 2) _____, and with little support.

But by the 1750s, it dawned on many in Britain just how much could be had from those distant shores. Natural resources could be shipped to factories and craftsmen in the home country, while finished goods could be sent to the eager hands of the colonists. Parliament began to take firmer, more direct control in governing the thirteen colonies, and the change in policy wasn't well received. What's more, the colonists had no representatives in Parliament, 3) _____
_____. More and more, they believed themselves unfairly taxed and oppressed.

Several attempts were made to present and discuss the grievances of the colonies to the King. Yet little progress was made, 4) _____. The colonists revolted.

The first fighting began at Lexington and Concord, two towns in Massachusetts, in April, 1775. 5) _____
_____, the colonists didn't require many more excuses to rise up. It finally came when the British intended to seize a cache of weapons, and arrest prominent local leaders. As they marched to the two towns, American minutemen attacked.

It wasn't until 1776 that 6) _____. Leaders and men of importance from the colonies signed the Declaration of Independence. The document listed numerous grievances against the British King, legislature, and population as a whole, providing impetus to declare that the King had forfeited his right to rule the American colonies.

7) _____, and the actual establishment of the United States of America, the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776 is viewed as the birth of the American nation. Without the Declaration, the United States of America and its founding on freedom, equal rights, and the pursuit of happiness, couldn't exist.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (optional)

1. Which paragraph was the easiest to listen to? Which paragraph was the most difficult? Look at the vocabulary and sentence structure, then think why one paragraph was easy and another difficult.

2. Listen for these words, understand the context, then try to repeat the information from the sentence:
 - officially (paragraph 1)
 - more or less (paragraph 2)
 - dawned on (paragraph 3)
 - grievances (paragraph 4)
 - official declaration (paragraph 6)
 - without it (paragraph 7)

3. Listen once more, and take a few notes on the key information. Summarize the article in your words.

ANSWERS

QUESTIONS
1. It's the birth of America.
2. The thirteen colonies were New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.
3. The colonies were deemed unprofitable, and there were also many problems in Europe.
4. Many in Britain realized just how much could be had from those distant shores.
5. Parliament began to take firmer, more direct control in governing the thirteen colonies.
6. The colonists believed themselves unfairly taxed and oppressed.
7. The document listed numerous grievances against the British King, legislature, and population as a whole.
8. The United States of America and its founding on freedom, equal rights, and the pursuit of happiness, couldn't exist.
FILL IN THE BLANKS
1. marks the day when the thirteen colonies officially declared themselves free of Great Britain
2. Instead private companies and religious leaders founded colonies with the government's permission
3. which meant they had no legal means to dispute laws, policies, or taxes
4. and new intolerable laws continued to be passed
5. After twelve years of increasingly bitter disagreements
6. an official declaration was written, signed, and sent to King George III in England, though
7. Although it would take another thirteen years before the United States Constitution was drawn up