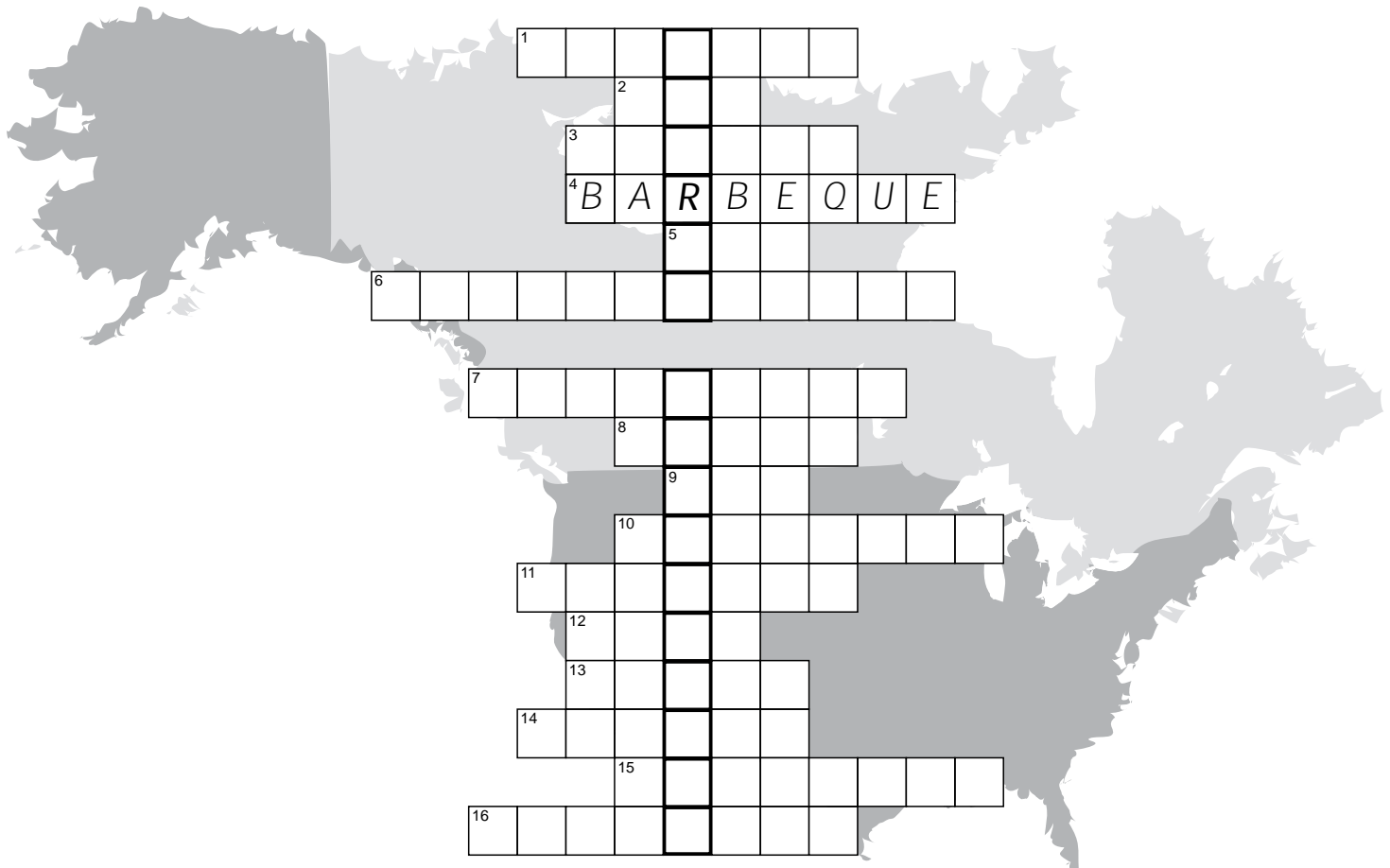


# The United States

*Land of the free, home of the brave*

Independence Day is a national holiday in the United States of America. It commemorates the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, 1776.

1. Look at the puzzle below. Complete as much of it as you can before you read the text. Find the name of an important person in American history in the centre boxes.



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Americans buy almost five billion of these every year.             | 9. He is America's favourite uncle.                                       |
| 2. It was a tax on this which began the final fight for independence. | 10. The number of colonies at the time of independence.                   |
| 3. The chocolate chip variety is one of America's favourites.         | 11. The American flag is the <i>Stars and _____</i> .                     |
| 4. The traditional evening meal on Independence Day. <i>Barbeque</i>  | 12. The number of colonies which voted for independence.                  |
| 5. American English for petrol.                                       | 13. The length in years of the War of Independence.                       |
| 6. The city where the Declaration of Independence was signed.         | 14. Fifty of these are represented by the stars on the American flag.     |
| 7. Traditional entertainment on Independence Day.                     | 15. This was invented by an 11-year-old in 1905.                          |
| 8. The American flag must never touch this.                           | 16. The brothers who opened their first food stall in California in 1948. |

2. Check your answers and complete the puzzle by reading worksheets B and C.

## The Story of Independence

In 1607, English settlers first arrived in America. Despite having left England to flee religious persecution and seek a better life, the colonists soon found themselves under British rule once again. The British government seemed to have little interest in the welfare of the colonists and, as the colonists had no representation in England and no say in the way they were governed, they struggled for independence and autonomy for many years. The turning point came in 1767 when the British government placed a tax on all the tea entering the country. Protests grew and in 1773, a number of colonists dressed as Native Americans boarded English merchant ships and threw 300 chests of tea into the Boston Harbour. This became known as the Boston Tea Party and the first steps on the road to freedom had been taken.

In 1776, a formal declaration of independence was composed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and a vote was taken late in the afternoon of July 4th. Of the thirteen colonies, nine voted in favour and the Declaration of Independence was signed. The War of Independence had begun. The Commander in Chief of the American Army at the time was George Washington. He led his people to freedom from the British eight years later, before going on to become America's first president in 1789.

## Flag Facts

- The United States' flag is known as the *Stars and Stripes*.
- The flag has thirteen stripes representing the original thirteen colonies. The 50 white stars on the blue background in the top left corner represent the states.
- There is no official designation or meaning for the colours of the flag, but it is thought that white represents purity and innocence, red is for valour and blue symbolises vigilance, perseverance and justice.
- The flag should never touch the ground or water.
- Worn out and damaged flags should be destroyed by burning.
- The flag is only usually flown from dawn to dusk. However, it may be flown for 24 hours if illuminated during the hours of darkness.
- If the flag is flown upside down it signals distress.



## Uncle Sam

We've all heard of him, but who is this symbol of the United States government? The favourite theory is that Uncle Sam was named after entrepreneur Samuel Wilson, who in the latter stages of the War of Independence provided large quantities of meat for the United States Army. The shipments were stamped 'U.S.'. It is thought someone referred to the stamp as 'from Uncle Sam Wilson' and this eventually came to represent the government. Cartoonists of the 1940s created the white-bearded, star-spangled Uncle Sam that we all know today.

## Party time

The first Independence Day celebration took place the year after the Declaration of Independence. By the early 1800s, the tradition of parades, picnics, and fireworks was established as the way to celebrate America's birthday. Today, it's also a time when families get together, fly the American flag and perhaps watch a game of baseball before finishing the day off with a barbeque.

### All-American Edibles

No Independence Day celebration would be complete without the following all-American edibles.

#### The hamburger

In the early 19th century, German immigrants brought a recipe for 'Hamburg Style Steak' to the United States. Bread was added to create a sandwich and the modern-day hamburger was born. In 1948, Maurice and Richard McDonald opened their first food stall in California and the rest, as they say, is history. Today, Americans buy almost five billion burgers a year, accounting for seventeen percent of all meals eaten outside the home. That's an average of three burgers per person per week.

#### Coca-Cola

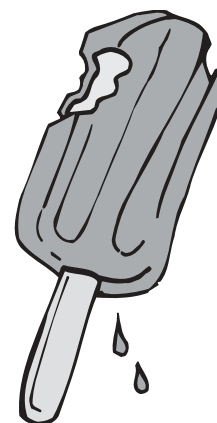
In 1886, while creating a remedy to cure headaches, John Pemberton, a pharmacist from Atlanta, mixed coca leaves and cola nuts. When carbonated water was accidentally added, Pemberton decided to market his creation as a drink rather than a medicinal cure. In desperate need of money, Pemberton sold his rights to the formula in 1887. He died penniless a year later.

#### Chocolate Chip Cookies

This American favourite was created in the 1930s in Whitman, Massachusetts when, one day, restaurant owner Ruth Wakefield ran out of chocolate powder. She decided to chop a chocolate bar into small pieces and then added the pieces to the mixture instead. Within days they had become so popular that she couldn't make enough of them.

#### Popsicle (iced lolly)

One day in 1905, an 11-year-old boy named Frank Epperson mixed a drink of soda powder and water. He left the mixture with the stirrer in it overnight on the porch and in the morning it was frozen. About 20 years later, he started selling his creation in several fruit flavours. The name came from his children, who called them 'Pop's icicles'.



### American English

3. Match the British English words on the left with their U.S. equivalents.

British English	American English
a. biscuit	1 sidewalk
b. trousers	2 cab
c. pavement	3 vacation
d. rubbish	4 gas
e. petrol	5 check
f. bill	6 sweets
g. taxi	7 first floor
h. car park	8 movie
i. ground floor	9 cookie
j. lift	10 parking lot
k. holiday	11 chips
l. crisps	12 fries
m. chips	13 garbage
n. candy	14 elevator
o. film	15 pants

4. In small groups discuss the questions.

- Have you ever visited the United States? Would you like to?
- How does the United States differ from your country?
- Would you like to live in the United States?
- What other all-American items or images can you think of?
- Do you know any other American English words?
- What do you know about the origin of your country? Did it gain independence from another country?
- Does your country have a national day of celebration?
- What is the biggest celebration in your country? How do you celebrate?
- What images and items best represent your country?

# Teacher's notes

---

## Tasks

- To find out about US Independence Day and other American traditions by reading a text.
- To complete a puzzle using student's own information and information from the texts.
- To discuss related issues about the student's own country.

## Preparation

One copy of worksheets A, B and C for each student.

## Procedure

1. Elicit from the students the significance of 4th July in America. If necessary, inform the students that 4th July is American Independence Day and elicit or brainstorm a few facts about this and about the United States in general.
2. Give the students a copy of worksheet A and ask them to do the puzzle in (1). They could discuss this in pairs or small groups.
3. Give the students a copy of worksheets B and C and ask them to read the text to check their answers. This can be done individually or in pairs. Note that the questions do not follow the same order as the text.
4. Check the answers with the whole class.

### Answers

1 burgers 2 tea 3 cookie 4 barbeque 5 gas 6 Philadelphia 7 fireworks 8 water 9 Sam  
10 thirteen 11 stripes 12 nine 13 eight 14 states 15 Popsicle 16 McDonald  
Hidden name – George Washington, America's first President and leader during the War of Independence against the British.

5. At this point you could ask the students to read in more detail, underlining any vocabulary or language they do not understand. Then check this with the whole class. You could ask further questions to check comprehension. For example,  
*What was the Boston Tea Party?*  
*What does it mean if the American flag is flown upside down?*  
*How did Uncle Sam originate?*  
*Which sport do people traditionally watch on Independence day?*
6. Ask the students, working individually or in pairs, to do the British / American English matching exercise.

### Answers

a 9 b 15 c 1 d 13 e 4 f 5 g 2 h 10 i 7 j 14 k 3 l 11 m 12 n 6 o 8

7. The students then discuss, in pairs or small groups, the questions in (4). Ask the students to report back anything interesting from their discussions.

## Websites

For more information about the United States and Independence Day and its celebrations, visit the following websites:

<http://www.holidays.net/independence/>

<http://wilstar.com/holidays/july4.htm>

<http://www.usis.usemb.se/Holidays/celebrate/independ.html>

<http://usacitylink.com/usa/>