

Webquest: Independence Day

by Karen Kovacs

Level: Intermediate–Advanced

Target age: Teenagers / Adults

Time needed: 60 minutes +

Key skills: Reading, speaking

Materials: One copy of worksheet 1 per student; one copy of worksheet 2A for half the class and one copy of worksheet 2B for the other half

Perhaps the most famous independence day is that of the United States of America on 4 July. However, many other countries celebrate their own independence days. In the first activity, your students will investigate Independence Day in the United States. In activities 2 and 3, they will learn about the independence days of some other countries.

Activity 1: Timed treasure hunt

The treasure hunt introduces how this holiday is celebrated in the United States. Students search for the answers to the questions on two websites. They have 15 minutes to find the answers. When they have finished, have groups exchange answer sheets and mark each other's answers as you go over the answers with the class. Collect in the scores and announce the winners of the treasure hunt.

Ask students to hide their answer sheets and see what they can remember by summarizing orally with a partner the most common ways Independence Day is celebrated in the United States. Alternatively, students can produce a written summary for homework.

Key:

1. *The Second Continental Congress approved a resolution declaring independence from Britain.*

2. *The Declaration of Independence was printed.*

3. *2 August, 1776*

4. *Thomas Jefferson and John Adams*

5. *Philadelphia*

6. *Addison, Texas, because its massive fireworks display rivals that of major cities*

7. *in Key Biscayne in Florida for the best float*

8. *Las Vegas; Clubs host big-name DJs, drink specials and even topless pool parties.*

Activity 2: More independence days

In this activity, students will learn about other countries' independence days. Put students in pairs. Hand out worksheet 2A to half the pairs and worksheet 2B to the other half. Each pair researches their three countries and completes the tables. Students then go and sit with a pair who researched the other set of countries and exchange information.

Remind students to try to make their informal presentations interesting for the other pair – there are some tips for this on the worksheets.

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Key for group A:

country	independence day and year	independence from	celebrations
Mexico	16 September (1810) date marks when the war for independence began	Spain	(the day before) the president rings a bell, makes a cry of patriotism and honours war heroes; people sing the national anthem; (on the day) parades, marching bands, concerts
Ghana	6 March (1957)	Britain	fireworks, parades, marches
South Korea	15 August (1945)	Japan	hanging flags on their houses, making public museums free of charge to descendants of independence activists, singing the official 'Restoration of Light' song

Key for group B:

country	independence day and year	independence from	celebrations
Chile	18 September (1810)	Spain	food, music, parades, historical reenactments, national parties that can last for weeks
India	15 August (1947)	Britain	flag-hoisting, parades, patriotic songs, kite flying
Greece	25 March (1821)	the Ottoman Empire	religious and secular parades and festivals

Activity 3 (optional): Further research

Students research the independence day celebrations of one of the countries from the last activity in greater detail, using other websites. Alternatively, they can research their own country's independence day. In either case, they should make notes on when and how independence came about and what events will mark the day this/next year.