Independence Day

Pre-reading
Questions:
• What do you know about Independence Day?
• When is it?

Definitions:
• Revolution – the overthrow of a government in order to set up a new government
• Declaration – a formal statement or announcement often in written form
• Festive – joyful and happy
• Canopy – a high covering

Reading
Independence Day is July 4th. Another name for this holiday is the Fourth of July. This national holiday is an important one in the history of the United States. It is a day to remember and celebrate the first Independence Day on July 4, 1776.

The Revolutionary War began in 1775. The 13 colonies wanted to separate from England. They wanted their independence. The 13 colonies were angry with England. They were tired of paying taxes to King George. They also wanted freedom to make laws.

In 1776, leaders from the 13 colonies met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They talked about freedom from England. Thomas Jefferson wrote a paper about subjects of that meeting. This document was the Declaration of Independence. It said the colonies were “free and independent states”. The leaders signed it on July 4, 1776.

People in the 13 colonies were very happy about the Declaration of Independence. They made a lot of noise with bells, drums, and guns. People today still make noise on Independence Day. Most people are in a fun, festive mood!

Because the Fourth of July is a national holiday, most people do not go to work. Families and friends get together outdoors for picnics and barbecues. A popular Fourth of July meal is grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, potato salad, baked beans, potato chips, and watermelon. Some people also make red, white and blue desserts.

You see patriotic colors everywhere on Independence Day. Many people put American flags outside their homes or businesses. Some even fly small flags on their cars. Others wear shirts or hats with flags on them. You may see some people wearing blue shirts with white stars or red and white striped shorts.

Fourth of July parades are a fun event for communities and families. Children like to see the fire trucks and clowns. Adults shake hands with the politicians walking in the parade. Everyone likes to try and catch a lot of candy and hear the bands play patriotic songs. Don’t forget to smile and wave at the queens riding on the floats.

Independence Day evening is a time of beautiful fireworks. Fireworks create colorful canopies in the sky along with loud noises. Many cities have fireworks displays. Trained staff ignite these fireworks. Cities have safe fireworks for everyone to enjoy. In most states individuals cannot buy fireworks. Fireworks are dangerous. People can get hurt trying to light and handle fireworks.

Independence Day is a holiday to think about freedom. It is a day to remember the Declaration of Independence. It is also a festive time of food, fun, friends, and fireworks!
Understanding

1. What does **independence** mean? ____________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

2. Why is Independence Day on July 4th? _________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________

3. How do people celebrate this holiday? ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________

4. What does **patriotic** mean? _________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Why did the Revolutionary War take place? _____________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________

6. What does the word **ignite** mean? __________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________

7. How many years have Americans celebrated Independence Day? ________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________

Writing

**Option A:** What did you learn about Independence Day?

**Option B:** What do you do on this holiday?

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