

# Declaration of Independence

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The United States of America was formed from a document called the Declaration of Independence. A declaration is a public statement of an idea. Independence is freedom from rule. In 1774, colonial leaders met in Philadelphia at the Continental Congress. They sent a protest letter to Great Britain. Later, tensions increased. In April 1775, the first shots of the American Revolution were fired at Lexington and Concord.

At the Second Continental Congress, the members appointed a committee of five people to draft a statement declaring the independence of the thirteen colonies. They wanted independence from the British. The leader of this group was Thomas Jefferson. He was a lawyer from Virginia. Jefferson was the main writer of the document. He had help from John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Livingston, and Roger Sherman. The committee had some debate over the exact wording of the text. Next, the Continental Congress approved the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. Citizens of the United States of America recognize this day as Independence Day.

The first part of the Declaration told the British why the colonists were doing what they were doing. Thomas Jefferson pointed out that all men were created equal. He stated that colonists were entitled to rights that can never be given up or taken away. He believed in "life, liberty, and happiness," which means that everyone has the right to live, be free, and lead a life that makes them happy. Jefferson also added that people should make the laws of their government. He mentioned that the government only has power because of the citizens.

The second part of the Declaration made a list of all of the unfair actions of King George III. Colonists blamed King George III for trying to rule with tyranny. Tyranny means that citizens are under the rule of an unfair person or people.

The last part of the Declaration of Independence explained that the colonists had tried peaceful ways to present bring their complaints to the government of England. It was stated that the colonists now wanted to be a self-governing people. They wanted to become independent from England.

Which document did colonists use to declare independence from England?

- a. Articles of Confederation
- b. Declaration of Independence
- c. American Revolution
- d. Second Continental Congress

2. When were the first shots fired in the American Revolution?

- a. 1774
- b. 1775
- c. 1776
- d. 1773

3. How many were appointed to the committee to write the Declaration of Independence?

- a. four
- b. one
- c. five
- d. six

4. What was the author trying to do in writing this passage?

- a. Entertain the reader by telling of stories about Thomas Jefferson.
- b. Inform the reader about the Declaration of Independence.
- c. Entertain the reader by making jokes about King George III.
- d. Persuade readers that the United States is the best country.

5. Which definition matches the definition of tyranny?

- a. A public statement of an idea.
- b. Freedom from rule.
- c. "Life, liberty, and happiness"
- d. Citizens are under the rule of an unfair person/people.

# The War of 1812

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The United States faced many obstacles in the beginning. The country had a difficult time with other countries. Presidents had to make difficult decisions. Many of them regarded other countries. France and England were often at war with one another. President John Adams and Thomas Jefferson had difficulty staying neutral in the conflicts. Neutral means to not choose sides in a war. Some of the main causes of the war were because of disagreements over shipping and trade. British ships honored the Treaty of Paris. This recognizes American independence from England. British ships were still attacking American ships at sea. The War of 1812 was a war designed to end all major conflicts between the two countries. The war lasted for two and a half years. It ended up not accomplishing much. April of 1813 brought American troops to Toronto in the Battle of York, which was won by the Americans. American soldiers burned the city and gained momentum. September 1814 brought British bombs on Fort M'Henry in Baltimore. Francis Scott Key wrote a song titled "The Star Spangled Banner." This song is now the national anthem sang at schools, major sporting events, and patriotic holidays. The British would attack Washington D.C., which was the capital of the United States. The White House and the Capitol building were burned in this attack. Dolley Madison, the First Lady, is credited in saving a valuable portrait of the first president, George Washington. The British finally believed that they could not dedicate enough soldiers to the war in America and the war against France. The Treaty of Ghent officially ended the war, and decided how much influence the United States would have in the war.

1. The country had a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ time with other countries.

- a. neutral
- b. difficult
- c. easy
- d. A lot of

2. Where did the Battle of York take place?

- a. Baltimore
- b. Toronto
- c. Washington D.C.
- d. France

3. Who wrote "The Star Spangled Banner."

- a. Dolley Madison
- b. Thomas Jefferson
- c. Francis Scott Key
- d. George Washington

4. What was the author trying to do in writing this passage?

- a. Entertain the reader by telling of stories about the Treaty of Ghent.
- b. Entertain the reader by making jokes about France.
- c. Persuade readers that the war lasted too long.
- d. Inform the reader about the War of 1812.

5. What was the position of Dolly Madison as listed in the passage?

- a. singer
- b. First Lady
- c. president
- d. soldier

# Bill of Rights

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The Bill of Rights is incredibly important. Every person living in the United States has the protection of these rights. The Bill of Rights is another name for the first ten amendments of the United States Constitution. The Bill of Rights guarantees a number of personal freedoms. They limit the government's power. Many were against signing the Constitution without including the Bill of Rights.

James Madison introduced the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution to the First Continental Congress. They were adopted by the House of Representatives in August of 1789.

The First Amendment gives citizens in the United States freedom of religion. It also gives citizens the right to free speech. It also allows people to meet peacefully in groups. The Second Amendment guarantees the right to bear arms by citizens. It allows people to carry guns to hunt. It also allows people to defend themselves. The Third Amendment guarantees that no soldier can room in a person's home. They have to have their permission given first. Amendment Four guarantees the freedom from searches that do not make sense. Government agencies have to obtain a warrant, a document provided by a judge, permitting search of property, to search a person's possessions. The Fifth Amendment states clearly that you cannot go to court for the same crime twice. A person can refuse to answer a question if it will get them into trouble. The Sixth Amendment states that if you commit a crime and are arrested, you have the right to have representation, which is a lawyer. The Seventh Amendment guarantees someone that if they have committed a crime, they can have a trial that has a jury, a group of people who hear the case. The Eighth Amendment guarantees that someone will not get cruel and unusual punishment if they are convicted, or proven guilty, of a crime. The Ninth Amendment means that nothing written in the Constitution can be used to cancel amendments to it. The Tenth Amendment means that anything the Constitution does not mention can be considered by states as part of their powers if they wish to do so.

1. Which amendment states that the same crime cannot be twice?

- a. First
- b. Fourth
- c. Fifth
- d. Tenth

2. Which amendment states no soldier can room in a house without permission?

- a. First
- b. Third
- c. Fifth
- d. Tenth

3. Which amendment gives freedom of religion?

- a. First
- b. Fourth
- c. Fifth
- d. Tenth

4. What was the author trying to do in writing this passage?

- a. Entertain the reader by telling of stories about James Madison.
- b. Entertain the reader by making jokes about citizens' rights.
- c. Persuade readers that citizens do not need rights.
- d. Inform the reader about the Bill of Rights.

5. Which amendment guarantees the right to bear arms to citizens?

- a. Second
- b. Fourth
- c. Fifth
- d. Tenth

# Constitutional Convention

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The citizens of the United States were not comfortable with the Articles of Confederation. This was four years after the American Revolution. The purpose of the Constitutional Convention was to amend, or change, the Articles of Confederation. The Constitutional Convention of May 1787 was held in the city of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania. The state of Rhode Island would not send a delegate. It was afraid of losing its rights as a state. The delegates worked for four months. They worked behind closed doors of the State House. They would draft a new document known later as the Constitution.

More than fifty delegates from twelve of the original thirteen colonies met to begin writing the Constitution of the United States. These delegates were selected by their states. They were educated and patriotic. They were also experienced men. They ranged in ages of forty to eighty years old. Benjamin Franklin was the oldest delegate at eighty-one years old. Jonathon Dayton was the youngest at twenty-six. George Washington was elected President of the Convention. Some men were landowners, some were lawyers or judges. James Madison was the only delegate to attend every proceeding. Madison also took detailed notes of everything said. All of the delegates held at least one public office. This group is sometimes called the "Founding Fathers." They were no women present!

A highlight from the Constitutional Convention was the Great Compromise. This was an agreement between the states that the legislature would have two parts. The two parts would be the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate would have an equal number of representatives from each state. This agreement would satisfy the states with smaller populations. The House of Representatives would include one representative for each thirty thousand individuals in a state. The more states with larger populations satisfied.

Slavery was an important issue at the Constitutional Convention. The debate as to if or how much slaves would be counted in representation was debated.

The agreement was that the country would move from a loose confederation of thirteen states. The new Constitution would be created by "We, the people of the United States." The Constitution would not contain a Bill of Rights at this time. The Constitution, as it was written, would be important because it was created "of the people, for the people, by the people." The final draft was signed at the Convention on September 17, 1787.

1. Which would could mean the same as amend?

- a. change
- b. light
- c. blue
- d. state

2. Which delegate attended each meeting at the Constitutional Convention?

- a. Jonathon Dayton
- b. Benjamin Franklin
- c. George Washington
- d. James Madison

3. How many women were present at the Constitutional Convention?

- a. Thirteen
- b. Twelve
- c. Zero
- d. Fifteen

4. What was the author trying to do in writing this passage?

- a. Entertain the reader by telling of stories about the Convention
- b. Entertain the reader by making jokes about James Madison
- c. Persuade readers that the Constitution Convention lasted too long.
- d. Inform the reader about the Constitutional Convention.

5. What was the position of George Washington as listed in the passage?

- a. President of the United States
- b. President of the Constitutional Convention
- c. delegate
- d. note taker

# French & Indian War

The French and Indian War was a conflict between England and France over territory in North America. The war lasted from 1754 to 1763. American Indians fought on both sides of the war.

England and France had colonies in North America years ago in the 1750s. England wanted to settle (live) in the Ohio River Valley and trade with the Native Americans who lived there. The French did not like this at all. Both countries had claimed the same land. The French had warned England to stop trading with the Indians on their land. Not many French lived in North America. There were fewer than one hundred thousand French living in North America at the time. The French constructed forts (buildings) to make sure that their trade with the Indians was safe. Trade with the Indians brought goods and money. In 1754, the governor of Virginia sent the military to move the French out of Western Pennsylvania. The Governor sent George Washington to lead an army against the French. He was defeated. England and France began sending supplies and soldiers to North America.

England declared war on France. The war for control of the valley was called the French and Indian War. Most American Indians in the region were friends or allies of the French because the French treated them with respect. The American Indians liked the French because they treated them as trading partners and not with disrespect.

A congress of the British colonies met in Albany, New York in 1754. Benjamin Franklin, a public leader, thought the colonies should work together to defeat France. He tried to persuade the public that each colony would still have its own government. They would also create one government together to decide important issues. The colonists did not like his idea. They did not want to join together with one government.

England sent more soldiers to North America in 1757. By England sending more soldiers, this helped defeat the French in Canada. The British would capture Quebec, a major city in Canada, and then Montreal. In 1763, Britain and France ended the war and signed the Treaty of Paris. France would then give England the control of Canada and most of the land east of the Mississippi River.

To avoid more conflict with American Indians, England issued the Proclamation of 1763. It officially recognized Indians' right to the land. It ensured that colonists could not settle (or live) in any place west of the Appalachian Mountains. Upon learning about this, the colonists were now furious. Colonists wanted to settle on the land.

To pay for the French and Indian War, England forced colonists to pay taxes to pay off its war debt. The colonists did not have any representation in England's government. They did not like this. They became so enraged that they started a revolution known as the American Revolution. This war eventually gave colonists their independence from England.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Which country did NOT have a part in the French and Indian War?
  - a. Russia
  - b. France
  - c. England
  - d. all of them did
2. What was the name of the person sent by the Governor of Virginia?
  - a. George Washington
  - b. John Adams
  - c. King George III
  - d. Ponce de Leon
3. Which is one of the reasons that the British were able to defeat the French?
  - a. They received more supplies.
  - b. They were sent more soldiers to help fight.
  - c. The Native Americans got angry.
  - d. George Washington gave up.
4. What was the author trying to do in writing this passage?
  - a. Entertain the reader by telling of stories about French soldiers
  - b. Entertain the reader by making jokes about the British
  - c. Persuade readers that French people fought the Indians
  - d. Inform the reader about the French and Indian War
5. Why were colonists mad that they had to pay taxes to England?
  - a. They didn't agree with the war.
  - b. They had no say in England's government.
  - c. They did not like the French.
  - d. The Indians were stealing their money.