BY THE TEACHER

Franklin John Trumbull's painting, Declaration of Independence, depicting the five-man drafting committee of the Declaration of Independence presenting their work to the Congress. The painting can be found on the back of the U.S. $2 bill. The original hangs in the U.S. Capitol rotunda.

Discover...

BY THE STUDENTS

- The origins of the independence
- The American Revolutionary War
- The Constitution of the USA
- Special Interviews: George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, & Thomas Jefferson
- The role of France during the Revolutionary War
- The role of natives Americans and Afro-Americans
- The foundation of Washington D.C.
- The memory of the independence today.

Statue of Liberty

Liberty Enlightening the World
Discover the story of the Boston Tea Party.

The Boston tea party took place in Boston in the Massachusetts on December the 16th in 1773. It was a political act of revolution against the « tea Act » of May and mercantilism organized by the Sons of Liberty. The « Tea Act » proclaimed that the colonists had to pay taxes on tea exportations whereas the british were allowed to sell tea without paying. Protesters destroyed the cargo from Great Britain and threw all of the tea chests overboard, into the water. The Boston Harbour had became a giant cup of tea ! Some people were disguised as American Indians.

We managed to find an extract of an old testimony of a member of a Sons of Liberty. He tells us the story of the Boston Tea Party day. « [...] We were in Boston Harbor today. We act to resist against the British taxes. Today 342 chest of tea, from the East India company, were discharged in the sea. I was part of the men who did that ! Like my friends, I dressed myself in native to do it. It took 3 hours to destroy all that expensive tea [In fact, 1 million dollars of tea end up in the bay]. All the people were thrilled, as if it was a giant party. It was our act of independence. We want to be free and will do anything to achieve this goal, from now on, drinking tea is an unpatriotic deed [...] »

However, not everyone was happy with this situation, the British government responded harshly and this event became a main event for the American revolution and the independence of America.
The American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), also known as the American War of Independence, was a war between the Kingdom of Great Britain and thirteen British colonies on the North American continent.

WHAT?
The war was the culmination of the political American Revolution, whereby the colonists overthrew British rule.
The war of American independence could be summed up as a civil war fought on foreign soil. Until early in 1778 the conflict was a civil war within the British Empire, but afterward it became an international war when France (in 1778) and Spain (in 1779) joined the colonies against Britain.

Cause
In 1773 Great Britain adopted a new law named the Tea Act which was a tax on colonists when they exported tea in England. But it was inequal, so as a revolt the colonists dressed like native Indians and threw the British tea in the port.
They tried to discuss of the situation but finally the war broke out.

WHO?
Name of famous General:
-George Washington (American) led the American army during the war.

-Charles Cornwallis (British)

CONTEXT
In 1775, the Revolutionaries take control of the 30 colonial government. They set up the Second Continental Congress, and formed a Continental Army.
And in 1776, they declared their independence as a new nation, USA.
In early 1778, after an American victory at Saratoga, France join the war against Britain.
Spain and the Netherlands joined as allies of France during the next two years.
Then, due to the large size the British could not control colonies by force because of a lack of manpower. This manpower shortage became more critical after Spain and France joined the war.
Moreover, the British also had a difficult task of retaining the allegiance of Loyalists while they were fighting at the war. Loyalist support was very important because the goal of this war for them was to keep the colonies in the British Empire, but this imposed numerous military limitations.
This combination of factors finally led to the downfall of British rule in America and the rise of the revolutionaries' own independent nation, the United States of America.

HOW DID IT END
On October 1781, the war came to an end with the battle of Yorktown where the British general Cornwallis was surrounded by 16,000 American soldiers. French soldiers took Chesapeake's port and as a result the British could not escape. Cornwallis was forced to give up the British position at Yorktown in Virginia.
Two years later, the Treaty of Paris made official the Independence of America.

Sources
-myrevolutionarywar.com
-britannica.com: American Revolution event, prelude to war
-wikipedia.org: American Revolutionary War

made by Chancia and Manon
The United States Constitution is the highest law of the United States of America. It was signed on September 17, 1787 by the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Constitution defines the principal organs of government and their jurisdictions and the basic rights of citizens.

What?

The Constitution of the United States of America is the fundamental text of law of the U.S. federal system of government. The purpose of the Constitution is to limit the power of the government such that the rights of the citizens are protected from government abuse.

What is new since its creation?

Since its creation, the constitution of the USA has been changed 27 times, each time improving the life quality of their citizens:

For example, the first amendment (1791) guarantees freedoms, concerning religion, expression, assembly and the right to petition.

What about power separation?

The separation of powers (executive, legislative and judiciary)

The U.S. Constitution establishes three separate but equal branches of government:
- the legislative branch (makes the law),
- the executive branch (enforces the law),
- and the judicial branch (interprets the law).

The separation of powers, therefore, refers to the division of government responsibilities into distinct branches to limit any one branch from exercising the core functions of another. The intent is to prevent the concentration of power and provide for checks and balances.

By who?

There are two major actors of the constitutions, both with very different ideas and convictions.

The Antifederalists

Led by Thomas Jefferson, wanted an only strong government that ruled the entire country.

Thomas Jefferson is the main author of the Declaration of Independence (July 4th 1776)

The Federalists

The federalist led by Alexander Hamilton fought for a power divided in each state of the country, that would all unite the state as one big and powerful country.

Alexander Hamilton is a delegate to the constitutional Convention (1787)
By Lin, Yanis & Axelle

1732-1799

GEORGES WASHINGTON

The special interview of Georges Washington's grandson

When was born your grand-father?
And in which country?
"He was born the February 22 of 1732 in Virginia."

Who was your grand-father?
"He was an American political leader, military general, statesman"

What is the date of his dead? Do you remember this day?
"It was the 14 December of 1799. I remember, a cold day, my parents were devastated but it's too far. So I don't remember every details."

Tell me more about your family.
"His father's name was Augustine Washington and his mother Mary Ball. My grand-father got married with Martha Dandridge. Together, they adopted my father Jhon Parke Curtis."

"Which events made him famous?
"During the American revolution, he led the colonial forces to victory over the British and became a national hero. At 20, he became head one of the best Virginia estates. After these accomplishments, he became the first president of US (from 1789 to 1797), he was elected president of the convention that wrote the US constitution."

When your grand father appeared on the banknotes?
"He appeared on 1 dollar banknote in 1776 thanks to his victories. It represent 41% of the all banknotes of the country"
INTERVIEW OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Submitted By: Ellie, Arthur, Sam
Subject: Benjamin Franklin

Who are you?

I was one of the most famous character of the American History. Indeed, I was both a man on litterature, a scientist, a great inventor and last but not least, the first ambassador of the United States and one of the instigator of it's independence.

What about your childhood?

I was born in Boston, the 17th of January 1706. I was apprentice with a printer in Philadelphia, then, I traveled to London and found an employment in the printing business. Then I came back to Philadelphia in 1726.

What do you think about colonisation?

Well, some people would say I'm the first american, but in facts, I'd be more like the last colon! Most of my life, I wanted to be part of the British Empire. Until I left my job of representative of colonies, I was loyal to the English Crown, I spent plenty of time in Europe. I started to fight for the American nation since 1775.

Abolition of slavery

I am celebrated as an abolitionnist, because for exemple, I forced my daughter Sarah to free her slaves, otherwise, she would be disinherited. But I was myself a slave owner, and I free them in the early 1770's.

What have you done for the American revolution

When I came back to Philadelphia the fifth of May 1775, some kind of revolution had already started. The New England militia had forced the main British army to remain inside Boston. And so, in June 1776, I was appointed as a member of the Committee of Five that drafted the Declaration of Independance. I made small but important changes to the original text I got from Thomas Jefferson.

Sources

Wikipedia, L'Internaute, benjamin-franklin-history.org, history.com
And Benjamin Franklin himself ;)

In Congress Jun 4, 1776
The unanimous declaration of the thirteen States of America.
Thomas Jefferson

For Thomas Jefferson's 278th birthday we interviewed Lynn Jefferson, his great-great-great granddaughter.

Name: Thomas Jefferson
Birth: April 13, 1743
Death: July 4, 1826
Nationality: American

Who was Thomas Jefferson?

Lynn Jefferson: Thomas Jefferson was one of the authors of the Declaration of Independence of the United States. He was a well-qualified man, he did several jobs like diplomat, lawyer, architect or philosopher. He also knew several languages.

What about his family?

He married his first wife, Martha Jefferson, in 1772. They had six children: Martha, Jane, Peter, Mary, Lucy Elisabeth and Lucy Elisabeth II. But five of them died in their early life, only Martha survived. Then, he had four children with my great-great-great grandmother: Sally Hemings, one of his slaves.
What about his political career?

He began his political career in 1775 as one of the youngest delegates to the Second Continental Congress. He then drafted the Declaration of Independence of the United States in 1776 which separated the 13th Great Britain’s colonies and unified the whole country. He supported the colonists that’s why he motivated them against the British Kingdom.

He became the second governor of Virginia from 1779 to 1781, that’s why he did so much for this state, like founding the university of Virginia.

From 1790 to 1793 he was the first Secretary of State under George Washington. In 1796 he became the second Vice-President under John Adams.

He won the presidential election in 1801 and became the third President of the United States for 8 years.

He founded the Democratic-Republican political party with James Madison (the fourth President of the US).

In 1803, Thomas Jefferson agreed on the Louisiana Purchase. The US bought the entire French Territory for $15 million. It doubled the size of the country and secured the Mississippi trade route.

On March 2, 1807 he signed an act which prohibited the importation of slaves. It stated that no new slaves were permitted to be imported into the US.

We took these pieces of information on:
- en.wikipedia.org : "Thomas Jefferson"
- www.britannica.com : "Louisiana Purchase"
- diplomacy.state.gov : "Thomas Jefferson"
- www.thomasjefferson.net : "Louisiana Purchase"
- en.wikipedia.org : "Sally Heming"
- en.wikipedia.org : "John_E._Ferling"
France in the American War of Independence

After the Seven Years' War, France wanted to take revenge against Britain, so France supported the American War of Independence. Historians believe that because of financial difficulties caused by the participation of France, it caused the French Revolution of 1789.

Entry into the war

From 1776, before France openly joined the war, the French secretly gave supplies, arms, ammunition and volunteers to the American rebels. In 1777, France acknowledged the United States as an independent country, and wanted to form an alliance. Vergennes, the French foreign minister, quickly created the alliance with America because he feared that they might reconcile with the British.

Strategy

France's help did not affect the war that much, it was in 1779 that Spain's entry into the conflict made the Allies' forces a lot stronger than the British Royal Navy. Spain join the American side thanks to France who signed the "Treaty of Alliance" with Spain.
The Revolutionary War did not only determine the future of the American colonies, but it also shaped the future of the Native peoples who lived in and around them. Native Americans were not passive observers in the conflict. Native Americans and blacks fought on both sides during the American Revolution. While most Native communities tried to remain neutral in the fighting between the British and its colonists, as the war continued many of them had to make difficult decisions about how and when to support one side or the other.

Even before the outbreak of war, the colonists were angered by the ways that the British government tried to manage the relationship between its colonists and Native Americans. The British were concerned by violence between white settlers and Native peoples on the frontiers and attempted to keep the two groups apart. The Proclamation of 1763 reserved the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains for Native Americans, which the colonists resented.

Another grievance in the Declaration of Independence was that the King and his government had "endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages." Many rebel colonists assumed that Native Americans would naturally be allied with the British. But most Native communities tried to avoid getting involved in the problems between the King and his subjects. But both the British and the Americans sought out Native allies throughout the conflict. Officers in both armies, including General George Washington, had fought in the French and Indian War.

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America's black soldiers
Between 8,000 and 10,000 blacks served in the Continental army, comprising about a quarter of America's armed forces. When the army was disbanded in 1783, about 5,000 so-called free blacks were told they could return home. In reality, some of the 5,000 were slaves, but the need for soldiers had been so critical that they asked slaves to join the military. After Congress set quotas, some slaves were bought and freed by states that could not meet their quotas; they were then sent to serve with white soldiers in the Continental army. Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island met their quotas by buying and freeing slaves and forming all-black units.
WASHINGTON


THE NAME OF WASHINGTON IS USED FROM SEPTEMBER 9 OF THE SAME YEAR, WHILE THE OFFICIAL NAME "DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA" IS NOT CONSECRATED UNTIL 5 YEARS LATER, ON MAY 6, 1796. NOW WE CALL THIS CAPITAL "WASHINGTON DC" IN ORDER TO NOT CONFUSE IT WITH THE STATE OF WASHINGTON, LOCATED AT THE OPPOSITE, ON THE EAST COAST OF THE UNITED STATES.

HISTORY & POLITIC

During the War of 1812, British and Canadian forces were ordered to burn down public buildings in Washington DC. At this moment, the city had about 8,000 inhabitants. The buildings of the Senate, the House of Representatives, the Treasury were demolished, as was the interior of the Library of Congress. Some people reported that the fire was even visible from Baltimore (a city in central Maryland district).

The occupation of Washington ends when British troops are sent against Baltimore. The reconstruction of the Capitol began in 1815 and was completed fifteen years later.

The city's growth was very modest during the first decades of the 19th century. It was the Civil War of America (1861-1865) that gave it its legitimacy as a Federal capital. From the start of the conflict, black slaves fled from the plantations of the Southern States, towards the north, some of them settling in barracks in Washington. When the war ended, Washington gained residents, but also a special place in the hearts of Americans. It is the symbol of the rediscovered unity.

The city's growth has continued, helped by the two world conflicts which strengthen its national and international power, and bring more inhabitants. The population, which reached a historic high of nearly 900,000 inhabitants during the Second World War, then lost inhabitants to the benefit of the suburbs. In 1957, the majority of the population was black. Today, the proportion of African-American inhabitants has stabilized at around 65%.

Washington in the XVIIIe century

Washington D.C 's plan

He Based His Design On Plans Of Cities Such As Paris, Amsterdam, Karlsruhe, And Milan, That Thomas Jefferson Had Sent To Him. L'Enfant's Design Also Envisioned A Garden-Lined "Grand Avenue", Approximately 1 Mile In Length And 400 Feet Wide, In The Area That Is Now The National Mall. President Washington Dismissed L'Enfant In March 1792 Due To Conflicts With The Three Commissioners Appointed To Supervise The Capital's Construction.

The District Is Divided Into Four Quadrants Of Unequal Areas: Northwest, Northeast, Southeast, And Southwest. The Axes Bounding The Quadrants Radiate From The U.S Capitol Building As Versailles Does. All Road Names Include The Quadrant Abbreviation To Indicate Their Location, And House Numbers Are Assigned Based On The Approximate Number Of Blocks Away From The Capitol. In Most Of The City, The Streets Are Set Out In A Grid Pattern With East-West Streets Named With Letters And North-South Streets With Numbers. Washington Has Been Built Around The Capitol, Represented As The Heart Of The City!

SOURCES

-WASHINGTON CITY WEBSITE
-FRENCH DISTRICT
-WIKIPEDIA

Timéo LUCAS, Anaïs LAMBERT, Anouk DOULIN
USA's independence: what about today?

The 4th of July 1776, the USA were finally independant. Still today, this success is commemorated in a lot of ways.

- The must know date of independance is obviously the 4th of July, which is celebrated all around the country. On a private point of view, this is the perfect moment to have family reunions and commemorate the independance. Whereas, on a more politic and public point of view, there are always fireworks, parades and political speeches. Moreover, it's a federal national paid day so everyone is happy to celebrate it. It's also an occasion to praise the nation's heritage, laws, history, and republic.

The memory of independence is everywhere.

- A lot of buildings were created, as Benjamin Franklin's museums: in memory of a main actor of the independence. Moreover, we can find a tomb of the unknown American revolution soldier, in Virginia (figure 3). In order to remember others main figures of the revolution there are many elementary schools and universities (Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology for example). Americans also created patriotic songs as their national anthem that commemorates independance.

On the international scale, a lot of commemoration are created too. We know the international freedom festival (figure 1). Moreover, the statue of the liberty is an important representation of liberty and independence (figure 2).

Sources:
- https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/july-4th

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