



Every year on July 4th, America celebrates its independence. Independence means to be free.



America celebrates its freedom from a country called England. England was ruled by a king named King George.



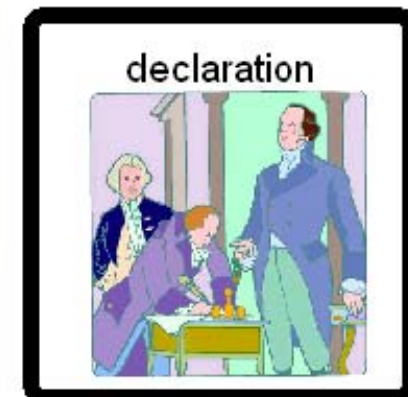
America originally had thirteen colonies. Colonies are groups of people who live together that are ruled from somewhere else.



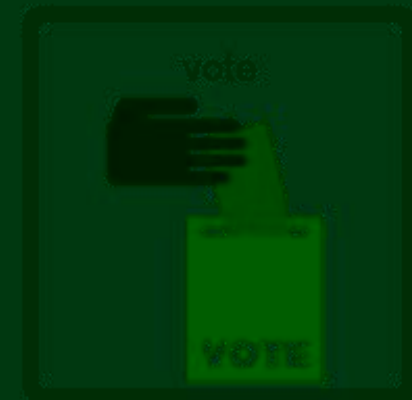
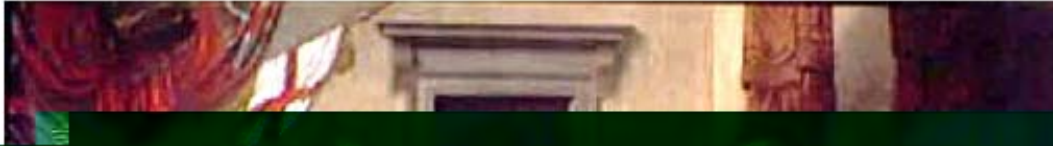
The colonies in America were ruled by King George of England.



In June 1776 a group was formed to write a declaration of independence to give to the King of England. A declaration is a way of saying something important. The colonies wanted to be free.



On June 28, 1776 Thomas Jefferson, an important leader, gave the declaration to congress. Congress is a group of people who get together to make laws.



On July 4, 1776 a vote was taken late in the afternoon. The thirteen colonies had declared themselves free from England!



John Hancock

John Jay

Benj. Franklin

John Adams

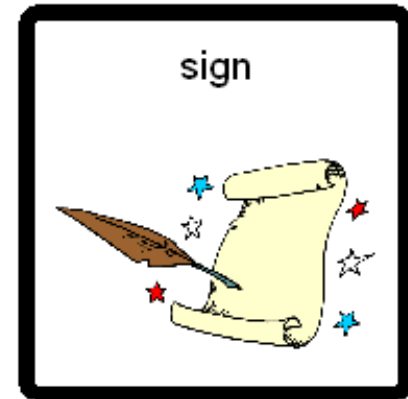
Phil. Livingston

Charles Carroll of Carrollton

Richard Henry Lee

Robt Morris

Step. Hopkins



John Hancock was the first to sign the Declaration of Independence. He signed his name with big letters and said, "King George can read *that* without his glasses!"

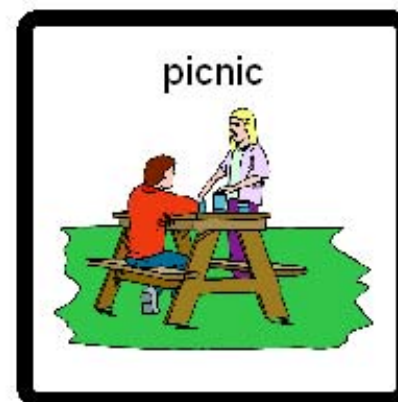




There are many things Americans do to celebrate July 4th.



Government offices like the Post office are closed.



Families get together and have picnics outside.



Many people make barbeques  
with friends and family.



At the end of the day, most cities  
have a beautiful fireworks display!



July 4th is an important holiday to celebrate and remind us how important freedom is.