



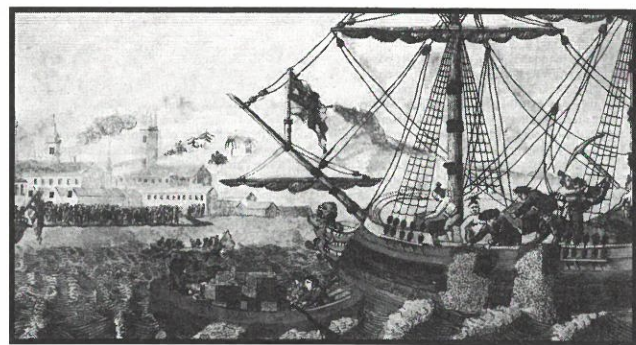
# July 4 Independence Day USA



## Great, Great, Great Britain

Once upon a time Britain was enormous. It had colonies all over the world: India, Australia, Africa and America were all part of Britain. People used to say that the sun never set on the British empire - it was always daytime somewhere in the British colonies.

All these countries had to fight for their freedom from Britain. And one of the first to fight was the USA.



## The Boston Tea Party

An early protest against the British happened in Boston. The British wanted Americans to pay tax on the tea that ships brought to America. A group of

Boston men were angry with this. One night they crept on board three British ships in Boston harbour. Then they threw 342 boxes of tea into the water.

The British wanted payment for the tea and closed Boston harbour. They also sent soldiers to Boston. This didn't help. A few years later 13 American states got together and declared themselves independent. The date, July 4, is celebrated everywhere in America.

## A High Price

What happened to the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence? They paid a high price for freedom:

- ★ Five were captured by the British.
- ★ Twelve had their homes burned down.
- ★ Two lost their sons in the war with Britain.
- ★ Nine died in the war with Britain.

## Birth of a Nation

Here are some ways American children celebrate the birth of their nation:

### ★ COSTUME PARTY ★

The day before Independence Day there was a party at our school. We all dressed up as people from 1776. That was the year we got independence. I was a soldier. Unfortunately 16 other students came as soldiers too!  
(Stacy Allard, 16)

### ★ PARADE ★

In our town there is a big parade down the main street. There's an army band that leads the way. Last year there was a problem, though. So many people started following the parade that there was hardly anybody left to watch it.  
(Steve Ryder, 13)

### ★ PICNIC ★

The big tradition in our family is the Independence Day argument. Every year we have a picnic and every year mom and dad argue. They argue about where to go, who will drive, what to eat and so on. I'm looking forward to my own Independence Day - the day I'm independent from my parents!  
(Jamie Weiss, 15)

### ★ FIREWORKS ★

There is a big firework display in the park near us. It's cool but it's noisy. A couple of years back I took my sister to see it. She's four. When it started she grabbed my leg and shouted: "Amy, who's shooting at us?"  
(Amy Gibson, 18)



## August The Eisteddfodd OF WALES

### Dungeons and Dragons

Wales. A land of legends and magic. Walk over the misty mountains. See the ancient castles with their windswept towers and their dark dungeons. It is easy to believe that magicians and heroes, dwarves and monsters once walked here. No wonder the symbol of Wales is a dragon!

### Battle of the Poets

A thousand years ago minstrels walked through this landscape. They could sing, tell stories and see into the future. They were popular people.

So popular, that every king wanted to have one. But how do you get the best minstrel? Answer: Have a tournament where all the minstrels in the area fight it out. Poem against poem. Song against song. The winning minstrel lived in the king's household for a year. Good food. Fine clothes. Warm fire. Until next year's tournament anyway.

You can still see these tournaments, or Eisteddfods in Wales today. In early August thousands of artists - poets, musicians and dancers - from all over the world try to become "chief bard".

The opening ceremony is dramatic. On stage are people dressed in the white robes of the ancient Druid priests. One man turns to the crowd. He wears copper armour. He draws his sword.

"IS THERE PEACE?" he asks.  
"THERE IS PEACE," the crowd answers.  
The sword is put away and the Eisteddfod can begin.