Name_____

Independence

The thirteen colonies wanted independence from British rule. Although the colonists had valid reasons for wanting their freedom, they understood that the act would be considered treason to the crown. Thomas Paine wrote a pamphlet called *Common Sense* that attempted to explain the common-sense reasons why the colonies should no longer belong to England. He felt England was a part of Europe and that the land across the Atlantic Ocean should have no hold over those in America.

The Patriots had already been fighting the British for nearly a year before the document now known as the Declaration of Independence was drafted. The Continental Congress agreed a formal piece of writing was needed to declare the independence of the colonies to British rulers. Thomas Jefferson was chosen to pen the words that would declare the colonies' freedom. July 4, 1776 is the date that the Continental Congress approved Jefferson's document, and thus, the date is the one celebrated each year as the country's Independence Day.

George Washington became the military leader of the Patriots. Believing the Americans could win, the French would eventually join the side of the Patriots and help to win the cause by providing much needed supplies. The war would continue until 1781. The Battle at Yorktown was the victory that gained the final surrender of British troops and gained the colonists their freedom. The original thirteen colonies were now thirteen independent states. The road to a united country would be rocky, but the independent states would eventually form one united country.

Text Questions

1. The first paragraph states the colonists had "valid" reasons for wanting their freedom. Which statement below would be an example of a "valid" reason?
   a. The colonists did not like being in North America.
   b. The colonists did not like being ruled by a country that was not even on the same continent.
   c. The colonists did not want England to have other colonies.
   d. The colonists wanted to be under French rule.

2. How did the French help the colonists win their independence?
   a. by sending threatening letters to the British forces
   b. by giving passage to colonists back to Europe
   c. by giving the Patriots much needed supplies
   d. by providing guards to help protect George Washington

3. Once the colonies won their independence, what happened next?
   a. The colonies became the United States of America.
   b. The colonies turned themselves over to French rule.
   c. The colonies fought amongst themselves and started a Civil War.
   d. The colonies became thirteen independent states.

4. To the original colonists, why was the Declaration of Independence an important document?
   a. The document was written by the famous politician Thomas Jefferson.
   b. The document was the first written work agreed upon by the entire Continental Congress.
   c. The document declared the colonies' wish to be independent from British rule and the reasons for this desire to be free.
   d. The document was used to persuade the French to help the colonists win the war.

5. Which paragraph in the text best explains the reasons the colonists wanted to be free from British rule?
   a. first paragraph
   b. second paragraph
   c. third paragraph
   d. none of the paragraphs

LIVEWORKSHEETS