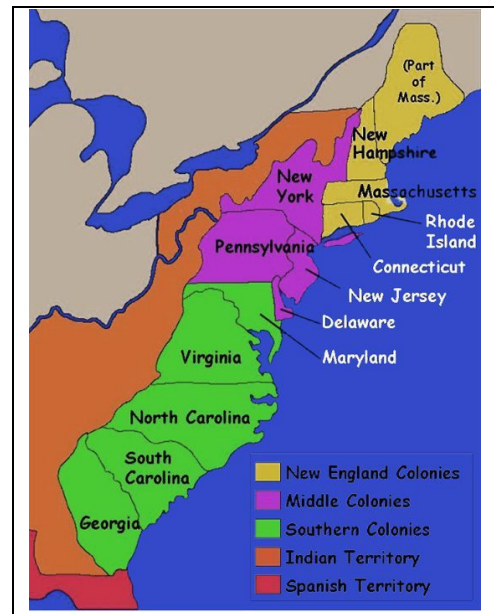


## Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness

Many European people came to live in America since it was discovered in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. A big group of these people were British and the part of the country where they lived – the colonies<sup>1</sup> – were ruled by the British. On July 4, 1776 the thirteen British American colonies declared<sup>2</sup> that they were no longer part of the British Empire. They were now independent<sup>3</sup>. This is why the birthday of the United States of America – Independence Day - is celebrated on July 4<sup>th</sup>.



The men who signed the Declaration of Independence are called the founding fathers. Thomas Jefferson was the principle author. With the Declaration of Independence the Americans decided what life in the USA should be like and what is important to Americans: Being free from any interference<sup>4</sup> of the government<sup>5</sup> and taking the opportunity to make the best out of one's life. Everybody should have the chance to follow his dreams. Later on this would be called the American Dream. From the Declaration of Independence this quote was taken: Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

### Tasks:

1. Read the text and underline keywords.
2. Take notes and get to know the content of the text.

<sup>1</sup> colony: a country controlled by a more powerful and often distant country

<sup>2</sup> to declare: to announce something publicly

<sup>3</sup> independent: not influenced by other people

<sup>4</sup> to interfere: to involve yourself in a situation when your involvement is not wanted

<sup>5</sup> government: who officially controls a country

## Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness

The quote “Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” was taken from the Declaration of Independence<sup>1</sup> and is often used to describe the American Dream. Although the meaning of the American Dream has changed over time, there are some basic elements. A government<sup>2</sup> of the people, by the people and for the people guarantees<sup>3</sup> liberty. There are different symbols for liberty, like the eagle or the statue of liberty. Many people from different nationalities and religions come to the USA and form a new nation. That is why it is often called the melting pot<sup>4</sup>. Also, the idea that there are always new obstacles<sup>5</sup> to overcome and borderlines to cross is expressed by the word “pursuit”. Another element of the American Dream is the belief that everyone should have the opportunity to make the best out of one’s life.



Success is something that everyone can achieve, if he tries hard enough. Success and happiness are nowadays often equalled with wealth. A famous slogan which expresses this idea is “From rags<sup>6</sup> to riches”.



### Tasks:

1. Read the text and underline keywords.
2. Take notes and get to know the content of the text.

→ Explain the concept of the American Dream!

<sup>1</sup> On July 4, 1776 the thirteen American colonies announced that they were no longer part of the British Empire.

<sup>2</sup> government: who officially controls a country

<sup>3</sup> to guarantee: a promise that something will be done or will happen

<sup>4</sup> melting pot: container to melt metal

<sup>5</sup> obstacle: something that blocks you so that movements are impossible

<sup>6</sup> rags: clothes that are old and torn