

Patriotic Holidays



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Introduction

America – a word that thrills my heart when it is mentioned, a name that we should all hold dear in our hearts – and remember what it really is to be an **AMERICAN!** Our country has been through so much in recent years, threatened by dark forces across the globe, and rising to face and challenge these threats time after time. We have so much to be thankful for, and so many opportunities to show our thanks and display our patriotism. With four American patriotic holidays, we've got wonderful opportunities to share this pride and knowledge of American history with our children – the future of America.

Written with this in mind, *Patriotic Holidays* uses a unit study approach to simplify the concepts while exposing the students to so many important ideas from American history. Covering Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, and Veterans Day, each holiday study takes one week and can involve the whole family.

In all of my travels and talks with families and children across the country, I have noticed that many of our children have never been exposed in a memorable way to the idea of patriotism — of pride in our country. Many families today don't make a regular practice of flying the American flag on special American holidays.

So many of the children that I talk to don't know how to honor the American flag, not knowing that our flag should never touch the ground or that there are special rules for displaying the flag. When I think of all of the stories that I've heard over the years about our flag and what it has meant to our soldiers in battle, I am saddened to see that the younger generation is unaware of what the flag means or, thanks to those soldiers, what freedoms we enjoy in America.

As a parent, I want to make sure that we teach our children about these important things — about the honor and the sacrifice of others in generations past and in those currently serving in the military, who purchased our freedoms and then protected them with their own lives. I want to renew our love of country, appreciate all of the freedoms that we enjoy, and remember the price that has been paid by brave Americans in generations past and present.

These four studies have been created to do just that in an enjoyable and interesting format. For the week before each holiday, the family can work together -- learning and reading and sharing. By the time each holiday arrives, it should have a whole new meaning, and family memories can be made that will last a lifetime.

While preparing for these special days through this study, you and your family will learn more about American history in a lively and interesting way. Here are some of the things covered in the studies:

- Overview of American history — the wars and events that have created and protected our independence
- Study the lives of the patriots and founding fathers — using their biographies to better understand the times, the issues surrounding their battles for freedom, and their sacrifices
- Gain a better understanding of our freedoms and rights — guaranteed in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights as written by our founding fathers
- Learn about our country's patriotic symbols and their history
- Appreciation of God's gifts and blessings on our country

In this day and age, there are so many children who are unaware of the real meaning of these holidays. They think that Memorial Day marks the beginning of summer, and many are even unaware of Flag Day or Veterans Day. These young Americans need to know the reasons for these holidays that were created by Americans for Americans to remember their history and their heroes. We need to bring back the patriotic holidays, celebrate them, and remember their true meanings.

We'll be learning all about America's history and patriots, her founding fathers and brave soldiers, her flag and her heroes — remembering that we are, indeed, "One Nation Under God."

Come along and join us on the journey, and may God continue to bless America!

Blessings,
Amanda

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Memorial Day

Memorial Day, a day when we take time to remember all of the people that have given their lives for American freedom. They gave up promising futures, families, hopes, and dreams — for all of us. Let us use this day as an opportunity to honor them, remember them, and learn more about their sacrifices.

Looking back on my childhood days, I recall that Memorial Day used to be called Decoration Day. This was a day when families would gather, clean the cemetery plots of family members, plant flowers, and place small flags on the graves of those family members that had died defending America. People would “decorate” their graves, to honor their memory. This was also a time for a family picnic and a parade in town. It was a family time — a treasured time.

When we saw flags waving in the breeze all over the neighborhood, we were proud to be Americans. I would like for American children to experience this same pride and appreciate what it has taken to keep that flag flying.

As time has gone by, these traditions have often been left behind and forgotten. Now, if you ask many children what Memorial Day is about, they remark, “The day the pool opens!” or “The beginning of summer!” It is high time that we reclaim the memorial — the remembrance of those who fought so proudly so that we can be free to enjoy our precious God-given liberties.

With that in mind, let’s work on bringing the focus back to the intent of this holiday. We can do this in a way that will open the children’s eyes to the liberties that they enjoy and show them that these liberties have been protected at all costs. We will briefly learn about the history of the holiday, some of the wars that Americans have fought in, and ways that we can honor the great people who lost their lives defending our lives and liberty.

Take a moment and make sure that you can find your family flag. Try to fly it for each day of this week as you learn about and CELEBRATE these patriots. Let’s put MEMORIAL back in Memorial Day, a family holiday!



MEMORIAL DAY SALUTE

Memorial Day – Day One

LOWER LEVEL

Today's Quote

Copy today's quote into your **Patriotic Journal**:

"I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

Nathan Hale, 1776, right before his execution

Words of Wisdom (WOW Words)

Look up the following words in the dictionary and write the words and their definitions in your **Patriotic Journal**. **Website suggestions:** [Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#) and [Word Central](#)

soldier
defend
honor
patriot

Patriots

Using an encyclopedia or Internet site, look up the American patriot, **Nathan Hale**. Why is he considered an American patriot? Write or narrate a paragraph about Nathan Hale for your Patriotic Journal. **Website suggestions:** [Nathan Hale's Biography](#), [Nathan Hale](#), and [One of America's First Spies](#)

Read and Discover

Look up **Memorial Day** in an encyclopedia, book, or Internet site, then answer these questions. **Website suggestion:** [Origins of Memorial Day](#)

1. Read and discuss the beginnings of this holiday. Notice that the holiday was originally called Decoration Day. Why?
2. There are many towns & people that claim to have started the tradition — which one was given "official credit" for being the first?
3. Did you read about the first "official" Memorial Day? Where and when was it held?

Resources

Here are a few books that explain Memorial Day and its origins. Check with your local library to see what is available in your area. They are all very basic, explaining the origins of Memorial Day and today's holiday.

[Memorial Day \(Carolrhoda on My Own Books\)](#), by Geoffrey Scott.

[Memorial Day \(National Holidays\)](#), by Helen Frost.



Memorial Day – Day One

UPPER LEVEL

Today's Quote

Copy today's quote into your Patriotic Journal:

**“Stand your ground. Don't fire unless fired upon;
but if they mean to have a war, let it begin here!”**

John Parker, April 19, 1775, to his Minute Men at Lexington

Words of Wisdom (WOW Words)

Look up the following words in the dictionary and write the words and their definitions in your Patriotic Journal. **Website suggestions:** [Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#) and [Dictionary.com](#)

**sacrifice
liberty
protect
patriot**

Patriots

Using an encyclopedia or Internet site, look up the American patriot, **Nathan Hale**. Why is he considered an American patriot? Summarize your answer in a paragraph in your Journal. **Website suggestions:** [A Time for Heroes](#), [Nathan Hale's Biography](#), [Nathan Hale](#), and [One of America's First Spies](#)

Read and Discover

Using library books, encyclopedias, or Internet sites, find the answer to these questions and record your answers in your Journal, along with the source of your information (book, encyclopedia, web site). **Website suggestions:** [Origins of Memorial Day](#), [Memorial Day](#), [History of Memorial Day](#), and [Memorial Day](#)

1. What towns or people claim to have held the “first” Decoration (Memorial) Day? Find at least two towns and describe their claim.
2. Why was the holiday originally called Decoration Day?
3. Where and when was the first “official” Memorial Day observation held?

Flag Day

Red, white and blue — when you hear those words stated together, we automatically think of our flag! It is a patriotic symbol of America, fought for and died for, cared for and appreciated. It is important that we continue to share this knowledge with generations to come, just as it was shared with us. This flag represents the people, places, beliefs, and ideals that this country was founded upon, and all that we aspire to. We need to remember what the flag represents and the people that have risked everything to keep it flying.

What does your child know about the flag? Ask them before you begin this study and then ask them again after Flag Day! I hope that they learn about the history of the flag, Betsy Ross, and Francis Scott Key. Did you know that Mr. Key was an attorney and the father of eleven children? Does your child know why there are fifty stars, and can they say the Pledge of Allegiance?

As a child, I remember flags flying on most homes on Flag Day. Today, in many neighborhoods, Flag Day is forgotten. I would like to see that changed and raise the awareness of this holiday. Did you ever go to a parade as a child and receive a small flag to wave from the sideline? I remember seeing that field of flags being waved up and down the parade route — what a pretty site that was! That was a very special time, and we were very proud to hold those flags. If you haven't done so yet, consider getting your own family flag and putting it on display as frequently as possible. Flag-flying in a neighborhood can be a contagious thing, and it is great to look down our neighborhood now and see Old Glory on many homes.

With this holiday, let's bring the flags out of the back of the coat closet. Let's care for the flag and teach these same concepts to our children. Let's make Flag Day a special day to remember how far this country has come — from thirteen stars to fifty stars, from an upstart young country to a world power. The flag has been there through it all, lifting the spirits of our soldiers and brightening our darkest days with hope. It is now the next generation's responsibility and our patriotic duty to protect this flag. We should all fill with pride when our flag goes by! God bless America!



Flag Day – Day Three

LOWER LEVEL

Today's Quote

Copy today's quote into your Patriotic Journal:

“Equal and exact justice to all men.”

Thomas Jefferson, 1801

Words of Wisdom (WOW Words)

Look up the following words in the dictionary and write the words and their definitions in your **Patriotic Journal**. **Website suggestions:** [Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#) and [Word Central](#)

pledge
divide
nation
all

Patriots

Using an encyclopedia or Internet site, look up the American patriot, **Thomas Jefferson**. Why do you think that he is considered an American patriot? Write or narrate a story about Thomas Jefferson in your Patriotic Journal. **Website suggestions:** [Thomas Jefferson](#) and [Biography of Thomas Jefferson](#)

Read and Discover

Follow the directions and make sure to write or narrate your answers in your Patriotic Journal.

1. Using an encyclopedia or book, look up **Pledge of Allegiance**. You can also see an article that describes the pledge at the following Internet site: [Our Pledge](#)
2. Do you know the Pledge of Allegiance? Here are the words — copy them neatly into your Patriotic Journal and then see if you can memorize it!
**“I pledge allegiance to the flag, Of the United States of America;
And to the Republic for which it stands, One Nation Under God,
Indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.”**

Resource

[Flag Education](#)

Flag Day – Day Three

UPPER LEVEL

Today's Quote

Copy today's quote into your Patriotic Journal:

“The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of good government.”

Thomas Jefferson, 1809

Words of Wisdom (WOW Words)

Look up the following words in the dictionary and write the words and their definitions in your Patriotic Journal. **Website suggestions:** [Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#) and [Dictionary.com](#)

allegiance
indivisible
pledge
republic

Patriots

Using an encyclopedia or Internet site, look up the American patriot, **Thomas Jefferson**. Why is he considered an American patriot? Summarize your answer in a paragraph in your Journal. **Website suggestions:** [Thomas Jefferson](#) and [Biography of Thomas Jefferson](#)

Read and Discover

Using library books, encyclopedias, or Internet sites, find the answer to these questions and record your answers in your Journal, along with the source of your information (book, encyclopedia, web site).

1. Look up the **Pledge of Allegiance** in an encyclopedia or Internet site and answer these questions. **Website suggestions:** [Our Pledge](#) and [The Pledge of Allegiance](#)
 - a) Who is given credit for writing the Pledge?
 - b) When and why did he write it?
 - c) What changes were made to the original Pledge of Allegiance, and when were they made?
2. Where did the flag get the nickname “Old Glory?” **Website suggestion:** [Old Glory](#)

Resource

[Liberty - The Road to Revolution](#)

INDEPENDENCE DAY

This is it, the day has arrived — red, white, and blue abound! The children are already debating whose turn it is to sit on Dad's shoulders for fireworks, where we will sit for the parade, and of course, who will spit the watermelon seeds the farthest. What a day of fun, family, picnics, parades, and fireworks.

But wait — what are we celebrating? Summertime? The Fourth of July? We are actually celebrating Independence Day — the day that is dedicated to the celebration of our forefathers decision to claim independence from Britain's King George! Today we commemorate this step toward independence that happened hundreds of years ago.

In July 1776, the celebration was devoted to rejoicing, prayer, and thanksgiving, and we can do well by following their example and learning from their lessons. What a radical act of those patriots — to declare independence and break away from England? How could they even imagine they could be victorious? The King had more troops, money, weapons, and a naval force. American colonies just had . . . what? A commitment to their natural rights endowed by God, freedom of religion and speech — to name just a few. They were entirely devoted to a cause that they felt was God's will, and they were determined to follow His lead.

When we read about the sacrifice and suffering, the people and places, and the price paid to obtain our independence, we should be humbled. Let us never again take such freedoms for granted — a great price has been paid for their purchase and protection. This week is going to be exciting, enlightening, and absolutely amazing. When you read about these patriots and how they planned and fought and wouldn't stop until they succeeded, you will never look at Independence Day in the same light again.

We've got quite a bit to cover this week, so let's dive in and begin! As you go through this week, take time to notice just how many freedoms you enjoy on a daily basis and be thankful for those radical patriots! Let's put the INDEPENDENCE back in this holiday, being thankful for and standing up for the many freedoms we enjoy!

Happy Independence Day!



Independence Day – Day One

LOWER LEVEL

Today's Quote

Copy the following quote into your Journal:

“Let independence be our boast, Ever mindful what it cost . . .”

Joseph Hopkinson, from *Hail Columbia*, 1798

Words of Wisdom (WOW Words)

Look up the following words in the dictionary and write the words and their definitions in your **Patriotic Journal**. **Website suggestions:** [Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#) and [Word Central](#)

celebrate
free
independence
choice

Patriots

Using an encyclopedia or Internet site, look up the American patriot, **John Hancock**. Why is he considered an American patriot? Write or narrate a paragraph about John Hancock in your Journal. **Website suggestions:** [John Hancock](#), [John Hancock](#), and [Can I Get Your Autograph, Mr. Hancock?](#)

Read and Discover

First, look up Independence Day in an encyclopedia, book, or Internet site. Then, answer these questions in your Patriotic Journal. The book, [The Liberty Tree: The Beginning of the American Revolution \(Picture Landmark Books\)](#) will be very helpful with these questions or you can visit the following web sites: [A Cry for Freedom](#), [Declaring Independence](#), and [American Revolution](#)

1. We celebrate our independence on the 4th of July. Why do we celebrate on that day, instead of the 3rd of July? What special event occurred on the 4th of July in 1776?
2. Name two reasons that the colonists wanted to be free of King George and Britain.
3. Write or narrate a short story about what you might have seen and felt if you were there when they declared independence. What would you hear and see on the streets?
4. Name two people that you might have seen on the streets of Philadelphia that day.

Resource

[Printable American Flag](#)

Independence Day – Day One

UPPER LEVEL

Today's Quote

Copy this quote into your Patriotic Journal:

“The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward and forevermore.”

John Adams, Letter dated July 3, 1776

Words of Wisdom (WOW Words)

Look up the following words in the dictionary and write the words and their definitions in your Patriotic Journal. **Website suggestions:** [Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#) and [Dictionary.com](#)

**independence
revolution
freedom
colonial**

Patriots

Using an encyclopedia or Internet site, look up the American patriot, **John Hancock**. Why is he considered an American patriot? Summarize your answer in a paragraph in your Journal. **Website suggestions:** [John Hancock](#) and [Can I Get Your Autograph, Mr. Hancock?](#)

Read and Discover

Using library books, encyclopedias, or Internet sites, find the answer to these questions and record your answers in your Journal, along with the source of your information (book, encyclopedia, web site). **Website suggestions:** [The Revolutionary Period](#), [American Revolution](#), and [A Cry for Freedom](#)

1. Why do we celebrate our independence on July 4th, instead of July 3rd or July 8th? What happened on the 4th that made it the chosen day of celebration? Website suggestion:
2. When did Independence Day become a national holiday?
3. Write a paragraph that describes some of the emotions that most colonists might have felt when hearing the news of independence for the first time.

VETERANS DAY

Veterans Day — what does it mean to you? The history of this holiday may be unknown to many of us, and yet it exists because of the strength and convictions of generations past that we should remember our veterans and their sacrifices for our peace and protection. There was a price paid for the freedom we enjoy, and this freedom still needs our protection.

While we enjoy peace, it is with an understanding that this peace has been bought with the efforts of our veterans, and this holiday can help us express our gratitude for their efforts and beliefs and sacrifices.

On this holiday, we honor our veterans — those in the military serve in all kinds of jobs — soldiers, doctors, nurses, pilots, engineers, astronauts, and so much more. They all work to protect and defend America, and we should be grateful.

I heard recently that there is a shortage of military buglers to play “Taps” at military funerals — because so many of our military veterans are passing away. While our children haven’t really been exposed to a “war” as we think of it, they do need an appreciation for those who have bravely served.

Use this week-long study to become familiar with veterans — their sacrifices and courage. Learn more about the American military system — how it protects us today and what is happening with our defense. Use this opportunity to learn more about the various organizations that help support our veterans — the Veterans Administration (VA), the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and Disabled American Veterans (DAV).

This holiday has special significance to many members of our families and friends. Though often quiet about their service, these people have a wealth of information that they might be willing to share with our students about their service, training, and ideas — if asked. By learning more about the people and their participation, we can carry on the tradition and remembrance with pride.

With this holiday, let’s bring out the flag and applaud our veterans. Let us teach these things to our children, so that we never take our freedom and liberty for granted. All of our veterans deserve our appreciation and remembrance. It is now the next generation’s responsibility to protect and defend our country, our God-given rights, and our freedoms.

VETERANS DAY – Day One

LOWER LEVEL

Today's Quote

Copy today's quote into your Patriotic Journal:

**“Let independence be our boast,
Ever mindful what it cost . . . ”**
Joseph Hopkinson, from “Hail Columbia,” 1798

Words of Wisdom (WOW Words)

Look up the following words in the dictionary and write the words and their definitions in your **Patriotic Journal**. **Website suggestions:** [Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#) and [Word Central](#)

veteran
defend
serve
soldier



Patriots

Using an encyclopedia or Internet site, look up the American patriot, **Theodore Roosevelt**. Why is he considered an American patriot? Write or narrate a paragraph about President Roosevelt in your Patriotic Journal. **Website suggestions:** [Theodore Roosevelt](#) and [Theodore Roosevelt](#)

Read and Discover

Follow the directions and make sure to write or narrate your answers in your Patriotic Journal.

1. Look up **military** and **veteran** in a dictionary. Read the definitions and talk about what a military veteran is in America.
2. Do you know a veteran? Is there someone in your family or perhaps a friend of your family that served in the American military? List these veterans in your Patriotic Journal.
3. Using an encyclopedia or book, find out what an American military uniform looks like. Draw one of these uniforms in your Journal and describe when this uniform was used. It can be an American Revolutionary uniform, a uniform of an American soldier in one of the World Wars, or any other American uniform. Color the uniform.

Resource

[The Teddy Bear Story](#)

VETERANS DAY – Day One

UPPER LEVEL

Today's Quote

Copy today's quote into your Patriotic Journal:

“The liberties of our country, the freedom of our civil constitution, are worth defending at all hazards; and it is our duty to defend them against all attacks. We have received them as a fair inheritance from our worthy ancestors: they purchased them for us with toil and danger and expense of treasure and blood, and transmitted them to us with care and diligence.”

Samuel Adams, 1771

Words of Wisdom (WOW Words)

Look up the following words in the dictionary and write the words and their definitions in your Patriotic Journal. **Website suggestions:** [Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#) and [Dictionary.com](#)

**veteran
service
military
commitment**



Patriots

Using an encyclopedia or Internet site, look up the American patriot, **Theodore Roosevelt**. Why is he considered an American patriot? Write your answer in a paragraph in your

Journal. **Website suggestions:** [Theodore Roosevelt](#) and [Theodore Roosevelt](#)

Read and Discover

Using library books, encyclopedias, or Internet sites, find the answer to these questions and record your answers in your Journal, along with the source of your information (book, encyclopedia, web site).

1. Write a paragraph that describes what an American military veteran is in your own words.
2. Who do you know that is a veteran? Ask your family and friends for their suggestions. Make a list of these veterans.
3. Develop a set of three interview questions that you would use when talking to a veteran about his or her service. What would you like to know?

Resource

[Biography of Theodore Roosevelt](#)