

America at 200

July 4, 1976, marked the 200th anniversary of America's experiment in self-government. For President Ford, the Bicentennial was a deeply moving experience, an invitation to reflect upon the course set by the nation's founders in 1776, and an opportunity to define the meaning of such abstractions as "freedom" and "liberty" for his fellow countrymen as they embarked upon their third century of independence. Americans across the country celebrated this momentous occasion with parades, fireworks, picnics, and by making a fantastic array of patriotic gifts and crafts for President and Mrs. Ford. Quilts, carvings, and other displays of patriotism arrived at the White House in large numbers during the 1976 celebrations.

"... We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness -- That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed."

Excerpt from the Declaration of Independence
July 4, 1776

It is from this document, written over 200 years ago, that we derive much of what we still cherish in this country ... and what is spelled out in the Core Democratic Values taught in many schools. Life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, representative government, individual rights and more are treasured as much today as they were on July 4, 1776.

In his inaugural address, Gerald Ford brought home the importance of the concepts outlined in both the Declaration of Independence as well as our Constitution, when he said, *"Our Constitution works; our great Republic is a government of laws and not of men. Here the people rule."*

Gallery Eight Activity

America at 200 Activity Description

METHOD

Divide students into small groups. Make two Cartoon Analysis Worksheets (located in the Appendix) for each group to use at the Museum. There are a number of Patrick Oliphant's original political cartoons in the Domestic Issues section of the America at 200 Gallery. Students can learn about these issues by reading through the exhibit and interpreting the cartoons.

SUGGESTED PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

- Have students bring a variety of cartoons to class. Brainstorm with the class what is humor and what is political. Compare and contrast political and non-political cartoons. Have the students group the cartoons into political and non-political cartoons. Use the Cartoon Analysis Worksheet included in the Appendix to help students interpret these cartoons.

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

- Have students create their own political cartoons. Provide students with current event topics and materials. There are four approaches for you to take:
 - Provide a caption and have students illustrate it.
 - Provide an illustration and have students write captions.
 - Have half the students draw and half write captions. Then have them switch to complete and compare interpretations.
 - Have students draw and illustrate their own cartoons.

Gallery Eight Activity

America's 200th Birthday Activity Description

METHOD

Have students view the Bicentennial celebration section of the America at 200 exhibit. While in the exhibit have students identify symbols of America and national pride: flags, eagles, fireworks, Statue of Liberty, etc... Have students complete a draft design for a patriotic quilt square.

SUGGESTED PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

- Read a book about American pride, symbols, or celebrations.

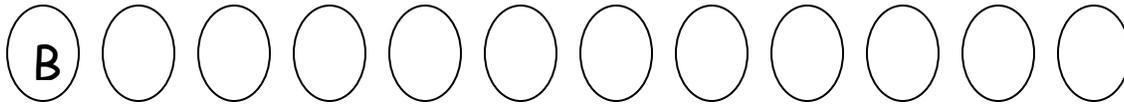
SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

- Use paper or fabric and have each student make their own quilt square. Piece the squares together and display your patriotic quilt at school.
- Have a quilter come to class to teach students about quilt making.

America at 200!

In 1976, the United States celebrated its 200th birthday. Unscramble the letters below to find another word for this celebration.

C T E E N L I I N B A N



On July 4, 1976, people celebrated all around the country. They had parades, they decorated their homes, they had picnics and much more. Some people made quilts and other gifts for President and Mrs. Ford. After looking at the Bicentennial exhibit, design your own patriotic quilt square.

