

Learning Objectives

- 1) Understand that there are eight national holidays, which honor the United States and its people. The federal government selects these holidays.
- 2) Know the date and significance of the eight national holidays.
 - a) Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is celebrated on the third Monday in January. The holiday honors Dr. King, who fought for equal treatment and liberty for all.
 - b) On the third Monday in February, President's Day honors two of the most famous American presidents, Washington and Lincoln. George Washington, the father of the U.S., fought in the American Revolution and became the first president. Today, the nation's capital is named after him. Abraham Lincoln is also honored on President's Day. Lincoln served as the sixteenth president and led the nation during the Civil War, when the southern states separated from the northern states. Lincoln is often referred to as the "savior of the union" because he reunited the nation.
 - c) Memorial Day is celebrated on the last Monday in May to remember those soldiers who died in war. Many people celebrate this holiday with picnics and barbecues.
 - d) Independence Day, held on the 4th of July, celebrates the birth of the nation. On July 4, 1776, the American colonies declared their independence from England. On this holiday, people celebrate their freedom with parades and fireworks.
 - e) The first Monday in September is Labor Day. This day honors those who work to provide the products and services people need.
 - f) Columbus Day is observed on the second Monday in October. Christopher Columbus was an explorer who sailed from Europe in search of a route to the

Indies. He ended up landing off the coast of mainland North America, becoming the first European to land in the Western Hemisphere. When he landed, he thought he had reached the Indies; therefore, he named the natives "Indians."

- g) Veterans Day is always celebrated on Armistice Day, November 11, the day that ended WWI. In addition to remembering this event, Veterans Day honors all U.S. soldiers who fought in war, especially those that died.
 - h) The fourth Thursday of November is the date designated to celebrate Thanksgiving. This holiday originated from the feast that was shared between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag Indian tribe, who were celebrating their harvest. Today, Thanksgiving is usually celebrated with family and friends who get together for a large dinner featuring turkey as the main course.
- 3) Realize that national holidays represent the ideas and beliefs that make this country great and honor the people that changed the nation.

Suggested Activities

- 1) *Before viewing the video*
 - a) Brainstorm on separate pieces of chart paper what students know about each of the eight-featured holidays (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, and Thanksgiving).
- 2) *After viewing the video*
 - a) Using a different color pen, record on previous charts additional information students learned from the video about each holiday.
 - b) Divide students into small groups of two to three. Assign a holiday to each group and have them design a poster about their holiday. When all the posters are completed, each group will present and

discuss their holiday. Display the posters in order according to the calendar year.

- c) Have students fold and cut a large piece of paper into eight rectangles. On each piece of paper, students will write the name of one holiday and a fact about that holiday. Glue the holiday papers in order on a paper strip.
- d) Display the holiday timeline strip (created above) on a bulletin board for older students and staple it around the students' heads like a headband for younger students.

Vocabulary

Liberty — the condition of being free; the power to do what one pleases

Colony — a distant territory belonging to or controlled by a nation.

Indies — the islands off the coast of Southeast Asia known for producing spices.

Veteran — a former member of the armed forces.

Pilgrims — the English colonists who founded the first permanent settlement in New England.

