

2. Where It All Began: 1776

- a) So now we know what makes modern American life different today from any other time. But *where does America come from in the first place?*
- b) The United States of America was born by the adoption of the “Declaration of Independence” by the “Founding Fathers” on the fourth of July, 1776.
- c) In the Declaration, its author Thomas Jefferson explained that the purpose of a proper government, is to secure the “unalienable” rights of every person to “*life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*”
- d) The Declaration of Independence is, of course, not the whole story. For now, however, we will use it to represent *the American Revolution.*



American artist John Trumbull captures the moment of Thomas Jefferson’s presentation of the *Declaration of Independence* to his fellow Founding Fathers on the 4th of July, 1776.

3. The Way America Originally Was: The Monroe Doctrine 1823

- a) America declared its independence in 1776 and detached itself from the rest of world, but the world is also the way it is because that America has become the leading nation in the world, fighting the “War on Terror.” What happened to change America from what it was originally into what it is?
- b) The key is that Americans once accepted a set of ideas known as the “Monroe Doctrine,” announced by president James Monroe in 1823. But they no longer do.
- c) Monroe said that America should maintain its political separation from the rest of the world. This included a warning to European empires to stay out of the Americas, and a promise by America to stay out of the wars of others.
- d) All the Founding Fathers followed this policy leading up to 1823. The acceptance of the Monroe Doctrine by early Americans and its abandonment by modern Americans is a fundamental reason why the world has taken the shape it has today.



Early America’s relationship to the world was governed by a set of ideas known as the “Monroe Doctrine.”