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NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

**Rob:** Welcome to 6 Minute English with me Rob...

**Neil:** ...and me Neil.

**Rob:** Today we're talking about national **independence** - that's when one nation is free from control by another country. Neil, can you think of any countries that have become independent?

**Neil:** Well, Scotland is talking a lot about this at the moment.

**Rob:** Yes, it is. It's a big political issue which we'll talk more about soon. And of course we'll be looking at some words related to independence. But let's start with a question. How well do you know your history? The Declaration of Independence was made by thirteen American colonies that were fighting for freedom from the British Empire. But do you know what year that **declaration** – or announcement – was made? Was it:

- a) 1776
- b) 1786
- c) 1796

**Neil:** I am pretty sure it's a) 1776.

**Rob:** You sound quite confident, don't you, but I'll let you know the answer later on. Let's talk more about independence. We often hear about groups of people **campaigning** or fighting for independence from the country that rules them.

**Neil:** Yes, like the Basque people in Spain, or the Kurds in Iraq. This is when a certain group of people want their own homeland to preserve – that's keep alive – their culture or beliefs.

**Rob:** And sometimes, a whole nation wants to break away from the country that rules it because it feels it would be better for its people. That's what's happening in Scotland right now, isn't it Neil?

**Neil:** Well, not quite. Not everyone in Scotland wants to break away from the United Kingdom. This is a plan suggested by the ruling political party in Scotland – the Scottish National Party. But they are asking people to vote on the decision.

**Rob:** And this vote on a single issue – or **referendum** – is happening in September. Politicians who want Scotland to be separate from the UK are

trying to persuade the public to vote **in favour of** independence. Other politicians are trying to persuade people to vote 'no'.

**Neil:** Independence would mean Scotland would be able to control things like its tax system, its immigration policy and people would have a Scottish passport.

**Rob:** Well, let's hear from Alex Salmond, the Leader of the Scottish National Party, talking when he first announced there would be a referendum. What words did he use to describe how he wanted the **debate** – or discussion – on independence to be?

**Alex Salmond, Leader of the Scottish National Party**

*Divergent views are the very essence of democracy; robust debate is part of what makes us Scottish. The exchanges, the criticism and the debate must be passionate – how else could it be in Scotland? But let these contributions be based on fact, reason, logic, rather than smears, or allegations or misinformation.*

**Neil:** Alex Salmond said **divergent views** are the very essence of democracy – so all different views are important and that is what makes a democracy. And he encouraged debate about independence.

**Rob:** Yes and he said the debate should be **robust** – so strong, firm and determined...

**Neil:** ...and it should be **passionate** – expressing powerful emotions.

**Rob:** But most importantly, the debate should be based on real information – facts – not misinformation or what he calls **smears** – in other words, lies.

**Neil:** Well, Scottish people will go to the ballot box in a few months' time to vote. And if they vote 'yes' for independence, we, Rob, might have to show our passports if we cross the border from England into Scotland.

**Rob:** Imagine that! And the Scottish people might lose the BBC – the British Broadcasting Corporation – and get their own smaller Scottish Broadcasting Corporation.

**Neil:** Of course, there's always been a – let's say – friendly **rivalry** between the two countries. And we are used to our nations competing independently in football and rugby tournaments.

**Rob:** Of course, being an Englishman I know who's best! But seriously, the idea of an independent Scotland isn't that strange. The Act of Union, which brought Scotland together with England and Wales, only came into being in 1707. Before that, Scotland was independent.

**Neil:** And only last century, Ireland fought for its independence from Britain.

**Rob:** And in 1947, India succeeded in becoming independent from British rule, a day that's now **commemorated** – or remembered – as a national holiday.

**Neil:** But, while some countries aim to have **self-rule** – another word for independent rule – others want to share things which are usually unique to a country. For example, the member states of the European Union work together in trade and some share the same currency – the Euro.

Well, this brings us back to your question Rob, when some American states declared independence from British rule.

**Rob:** Yes, that was the Declaration of Independence – but what year was it?

**Neil:** I said a) 1776.

**Rob:** And of course, you were right. It was 1776. This was the beginning of a new nation that became the USA – and Independence Day is now celebrated every year on the 4th of July. I wonder if Scotland will be celebrating its own independence day in just a few years' time? OK Neil, please could you remind us of some of the independence-related words that we've heard today.

**Neil:** OK, here we go:

**independence**  
**declaration**  
**campaigning**  
**referendum**  
**in favour of**  
**debate**  
**divergent views**  
**robust**  
**passionate**  
**smears**  
**rivalry**  
**commemorated**  
**self-rule**

**Rob:** Thanks Neil. We hope you've enjoyed today's 6 Minute English. Please join us again soon for another programme.

**Neil:** Goodbye.

**Rob:** Bye.

## Vocabulary and definitions

independence	(here) freedom from political control by another country
declaration	an official statement saying something is going to happen
campaigning	trying to persuade other people or the government to change something
referendum	a time when everyone in a country can vote on a particular issue
in favour of	supporting an idea
debate	a serious discussion of a subject in which many people take part
divergent views	different opinions
robust	(here) firm and determined
passionate	showing strong beliefs, enthusiasm or emotion
smears	lies that damage someone's reputation
rivalry	competing with each other
commemorated	remembered (a person or event)
self-rule	when people from a country or region choose their own government

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