

# American Revolution Unit Content: Important Phases and Turning Points in the American Revolution

## The British “Imperial” (Empire) System of Government

### I. What economic advantages did American colonists develop?

- a. American colonists had developed their own economic system within British mercantilism. The colonists still acknowledged they were under British law, and still proud to be “Englishmen”. English colonists had more advantages than French or Spanish colonists.
- b. American colonists benefited from “Salutary Neglect” until 1763 (after French and Indian War).
  - a. The Trade and Navigation Acts were not enforced
    1. Colonists caught smuggling were supposed to appear before the Vice Admiralty Court. This court does not become important until after 1763.
  - b. Smuggling and bribery of Customs Officers were common ways to get around Imperial laws.
    1. John Hancock was a wealthy shipping businessman, and he made the bulk of his money illegally by smuggling.
- c. Colonial goods were in high demand. There were four major wars between England and France in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century to compete for colony’s products.

### II. How and why did American colonists believe they had the same political rights as Englishmen?

- a. English History- The **1688 Glorious Revolution** established Parliament and deposed King James II. Queen Mary agrees to an English Constitution with a Declaration of Rights, which is an English Bill of Rights (like US Constitution’s first 10 Amendments.)

#### a. Components of the English Bill of Rights:

1. King could not suspend laws without Parliament.
2. Levying taxes without the consent of Parliament was illegal.
3. All subjects had the right to petition without prosecution.
4. The raising and keeping of a standing army in peace was illegal.
5. Freedom of speech in Parliament was protected.
6. No excessive bail, fines, or cruel and unusual punishment.
7. Trial by jury of peers is guaranteed.
8. Law enforcement officials must have a Writ of *Habeus Corpus*.

#### b. How these components relate to the crisis in America and the future shaping of American democracy:

Component 2: *No taxation without representation*. Colonists were not allowed in Parliament therefore they should only have to obey the laws they created for themselves in the colonies. This was a colonial tradition.

Component 3: Covered under US 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment

Component 4: Colonists pointed to this component after the Boston massacre in 1770. Again they are not being treated according to the English Bill of Rights.

Component 6: Covered under US 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment

Component 7: Covered under US 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment

Component 8: Covered under US 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment

- b. John Locke wrote about government as a social contract between the rulers and the people. Rulers protected the people, and in return the people are loyal, pay taxes, and obey laws.
- c. “*Life, Liberty, and Property*” were inalienable (natural) rights that could not be taken away from the people of Britain. The American colonists thought that some of these natural rights had been taken away from them, and they were not being treated as equal citizens to those living in Britain.
- d. **Power of the Purse:** The colonial legislators controlled money in the colony. The governors were paid salaries by the colonies. The colonies paid for their own government. This tradition of self government was altered when the Crown sent its own governors to govern the colonies without the colonist’s consent.

## Events leading to the Revolution

### I. 1761 Writs of Assistance

*“A man’s house is his castle; and whilst he is quiet, he is as well guarded as a prince in his castle. This writ, if it should be declared legal, would totally annihilate this privilege. Custom-house officers may enter our houses when they please; we are commanded to permit their entry. Their menial servants may enter, may break locks, bars, and everything in their way; and whether they break through malice or revenge, no man, no court may inquire.”*

- James Otis

The James Otis caption above was given February 1761 as part of a 5 hour speech to Parliament about the Writs of Assistance being a violation of the colonist’s natural rights.

### II. 1754-63 Results of the French and Indian War

#### 1. Treaty of Paris 1763- Britain and her colonies militia defeated France.

- a. Territorial changes-
  - i. Britain receives Canada from France.
  - ii. Britain receives Florida from Spain.
- b. Outbreak Indian violence-
  - i. Colonists believed they had the right to move west because they fought in the war. Westward expansion encroached on Native American land and created volatile situations.
  - ii. Pontiac raids- Pontiac’s War on the Frontier
- c. Quartering Act-
  - i. British garrisons were put into colonists’ homes.

#### 2. England reforms the Trade and Navigation Acts

- a. England buckled down on colonies to raise revenue. This put an end to the smuggling.
- b. Sugar Act- *Details in Section IV*
- c. Vice Admiralty Courts- *Details in Section V*

### III. 1763 British Proclamation of 1763

This Proclamation established a bounty line between the unclaimed Indian lands and those already claimed by the Europeans.

- 1. No settlers were allowed west of the line in order to keep them away from the Indians and close to the seaboard.
- 2. Colonists were irritated because soldiers were quartered in towns to prevent expansion.

### IV. 1764 Sugar Act (Revenue Act of 1764)

*Background to the 1764 Sugar Act:*

*The Molasses Act of 1733 had called for a tax of sixpence per gallon on non-British sugar and molasses imported into the North American colonies. Sugar growers in the British West Indies wanted*

*Parliament's assistance to force the colonies to buy their produce, not the less expensive sugar of the competing Spanish and French islands. The sixpence tax was high and, if strictly enforced, would have caused severe hardship for the New England distilleries and colonists. Smugglers and bribes prevented this Act from being enforced. The British knew about the smuggling, but chose not to enforce the Act in order to keep a positive relation with the colonies.*

In 1764, Prime Minister George Grenville needed a way to repay England's national debt from the French and Indian War. He revised the 1733 Molasses Act into the Sugar Act, which became a duty, or tax, on the import of rum and molasses from non-English areas. Grenville identified a ready source of revenue in the old Molasses Act and succeeded in changing its provisions to include the following:

1. The original tax of sixpence per gallon was cut in half, but the government fully intended to collect the three-pence duty.
2. The list of taxable items was expanded far beyond sugar — specified wines and cloth, coffee, tropical foods and silk were now subject to importation duties.
3. American exports, notably iron and lumber, were subjected to close supervision; shippers were required to complete a cumbersome bonding procedure before loading their cargoes.

This tax created immediate economic hardship in New England and the Middle Colonies. At this time the colonists did not object to Britain regulating trade, but did object to Britain taxing the colonies for fundraising purposes. The protest of “no taxation without representation” began at this time.

## V. 1764 Vice Admiralty Courts

Vice-Admiralty courts existed throughout the British Empire to resolve disputes among merchants and seamen. These courts were different from Common-Law courts, because they did not use a jury system. The judge heard all evidence and testimony, and then handed down a ruling.

The enforcement of the Trade and Navigation Act expanded the court's authority to include criminal charges for smuggling and other trade related issues. The Vice-admiralty courts started to takeover cases that would have gone to common law courts with a jury trial of peers for the accused. Colonists argued that the lack of a trial-by-jury was an infringement of their British "constitutional" rights. The Admiralty courts were biased against the colonists, and British officers could require anyone charged to be taken to Nova Scotia. The legal concept of the Vice-Admiralty courts was that a defendant was assumed guilty until he proved himself innocent. Failure to appear as commanded resulted in an automatic guilty verdict. Vice Admiralty Courts were located in Boston, New York, Charlestown, and Philadelphia.

## VI. 1765 Quartering Act

American colonists were forced to house British troops and provide them with food. Colonial legislatures worked to raise money for barracks for British troops. Soldiers in towns added to occurrences of fights with local colonists. This was punctuated in 1770 with what became known as the Boston Massacre.

The American colonists saw the Quartering Act as a violation of the British Bill of Rights. (*The raising and keeping of a standing army in peace is illegal.*) They concluded that they are not being treated as equal citizens. George Washington said, “Troops are just tax collectors in red coats.”

## VII. 1765 Stamp Act Crisis (Repealed)

The Stamp Act was a direct tax that the American colonists had no say in.

- A. The Stamp Act drew reactions from all colonial social classes.
  - a. Assemblies sent petitions about “no taxation without representation”
  - b. Patrick Henry at the House of Burgesses held the **Stamp Act Congress**. Committees of Correspondence were set up to circulate letters and propoganda across the colonies.
  - c. Violence from the Sons of Liberty
- B. Not 1 penny was collected on the Stamp Act and it was repealed.

- C. *Writs of assistance* were court orders that authorized customs officers to conduct general (non-specific) searches of premises for contraband. Americans felt this was a way for the British to steal their goods.
- D. Ben Franklin- Studied the Iroquois Confederation.
  - a. Join or Die 1754
  - b. Albany Plan of Confederation 1754 was the first step in uniting and organizing the colonies.
  - c. The colonial network of the French and Indian war was remembered.

## VIII. 1766 Declaratory Act

After the Stamp Act was repealed Parliament passed the Declaratory Act. This act gave Parliament the right to make laws for all colonies. It was passed in 1766, but was not enforced immediately. The enforcement came later in 1774 with what the colonists called the “Intolerable Acts”.

## IX. 1767 Townshend Acts

The Townshend Acts were an indirect tax on imported lead, paper, glass, paint, and tea. Import taxes were harder for colonists to boycott. The British plan for the Townshend Acts was to control the colonies by paying the salaries of royal governors to collect taxes and enforce the act.

### Townshend Act Crisis 1767-1770

Courts continued to uphold the constitutionality of writs of assistance into the 1770s to help enforce the acts. As time passed and the colonial outrage grew few officials had the courage to use them. The writs were one of a list of grievances that the Americans harbored against the Crown and contributed to the process of changing loyal colonists into advocates for independence.

### Massachusetts Circular Letter (government closes assembly)

Sam Adams, member of Massachusetts legislature, persuaded the legislature to write the **Circular Letter**. The circular letter said why colonists thought they should not have to pay the Townshend Acts. The plan was to send this letter to the 13 colonies. Before this can be done, the Royal Governor closed the Massachusetts legislature.

One of the components of the English Bill of Rights was that the *King could not close doors to Parliament*. Colonists believed the royal governor was threatening the liberty of Massachusetts.

### Committees of Correspondence

This was a major step towards intercontinental unity. These committees were set up by Samuel Adams in order to get around the legislature closedown. They sent information through the colonies, including propaganda, on horseback. The elite class (including Sam Adams) wrote and the artisan class (including Paul Revere) carried the letters between colonies. This was an illegal act.

## XI. 1770 Boston Massacre

Resentment over British troops being lodged in towns grew during the time after the Quartering Act was passed. This led to altercations between colonists and British troops. The most famous of these incidents happened on March 5, 1770. In front of a customs house a crowd of colonists started throwing snowballs and sticks at a squad of British soldiers. A British officer, Captain Thomas Preston, came out with additional soldiers and told them to prepare muskets. Soldiers fired into the mob, killing 3 on the spot (a black sailor named Crispus Attucks, a rope maker named Samuel Gray, and a mariner named James Caldwell), and wounding 8 others, two of whom died later (Samuel Maverick and Patrick Carr).

Speech-writers and patriots made this incident well-known in the colonies to incite public outrage. Samuel Adams has been credited with labeling the event the Boston “Massacre”. Paul Revere engraved a famous picture of this event. **The Townshend Acts were repealed but not the tax on tea.**

## XII. 1772 Gaspee Affair

The *Gaspee* was a British ship guarding against smugglers near the province of Rhode Island. On a stormy night the ship was run aground and the Sons of Liberty removed the Captain and the crew before

they burned the ship. The Sons of Liberty were charged with treason, but no one in the colonies revealed their identities. The Sons of Liberty remained united and were never brought to trial.

### **XIII. 1773 Tea Act Crisis**

Two reasons for the tax:

1. To get the colonies to submit to Parliament's right to tax.
2. To save the British East India Company. This company imported tea to London and was going bankrupt. The cost of the British tea tax was reduced, so the British were selling the cheapest tea.

Sam Adams reaction

“Swallowing submission to King and Parliament” what is next?!

Colonial Reaction

1. Tea Parties occur everywhere. Ships went to Charleston, but never made it to port, because the Sons of Liberty threatened fist fights.
2. **Boston Tea Party December 16, 1774-** Famous because of how it was carried out.
  - a. Three British ships get to the docks. Sam Adams called a meeting at Faneuil Hall to create *organized resistance*. A *pre-arranged* signal and costumes were planned. British officers and colonists watched as colonists dressed as Indians broke open and dumped 342 chests of tea into the harbor. \$800,000 worth of tea was dumped into the ocean, but no violence occurred.
  - b. **British Reaction to Boston Tea Party-** It took 6 weeks for news of the tea party to get back to Britain. In the minds of the British, the Tea Party was carried out by a dangerous, organized band of rebels. They felt that Massachusetts needed to be punished and passed the Coercive Acts.

### **XIV. 1774 Coercive Acts (Colonists called them the Intolerable Acts)**

AKA Force Acts

1. British General Gage was appointed the military governor of Massachusetts.
2. Port Bill (a harbor in Boston) as closed to punish the colony of Massachusetts.
3. Town meetings were cancelled by the British. The colonists feel this took away their liberty. Massachusetts charter is revoked—colonists are not regarded as English citizens
4. The new Quartering Act allowed for British military to be stationed in colonial homes.
5. Administration of Justice Act- This act allowed for the transfer of trials to England. If a British officer committed a capital crime he would be sent to England for trial.
6. The capture of rebels John Hancock and Samuel Adams is ordered.
7. Quebec Act- This act enlarged a Catholic Providence. Colonists were mostly Protestant and were angry that their rival Catholics were gaining more land.

-These acts are a reaction to the Tea Act Crisis and the Boston Tea Party of Dec. 1774

- “Obedience will be the best test of the Bostonians.” Lord North

-Americans know about this through letters of the Committees of Correspondence

### **XV. 1774 First Continental Congress**

September 1774- Representatives from 12 colonies met in Philadelphia to discuss the Intolerable Acts imposed on Boston. They agreed to send a petition to the King of England and to meet again in one year.

“I am not a Virginian, I am an American,” Patrick Henry (Piedmont lawyer)

**Declaration of Rights and Grievances – Petition to King of England**

1. Condemned Coercive (Intolerable) Acts
2. Demanded repeal of the Declaratory Act
3. Planned for economic retaliation through the *Continental Association*. This would include a boycott of British goods and non-consumption of tea.
4. States that standing armies, like the one in Boston, were unlawful.

## **XVI. 1775 Lexington and Concord (“the shot heard ‘round the world”)**

*“Stand your ground . . . if they mean to have a war, let it begin here!”*

- Captain John Parker, Lexington Militia

On April 15, 1775 British General Gage sent out 700 troops to seize military supplies of gunpowder and weapons being held by colonists in Concord. These troops were under the command of Lt. Col. Francis Smith and his second, Major John Pitcairn. On the evening of April 18th, Dr. Joseph Warren, President of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, sent Paul Revere and other messengers to Lexington to alert the patriots and minutemen.

On April 19, 1775 events quickly came to a stand-off on Lexington Green. The King’s troops had fixed bayonets and were walking towards the militiamen standing between them and the stockpile of supplies at Concord and hidden in neighboring towns. This type of stand off had occurred before, but this time a shot was fired. (It is uncertain who fired “the shot heard ‘round the world”.) After hearing the first shot, British troops began firing on the militia and quickly formed into ranks to continue a volley of fire. Major Pitcairn was able to get the British regulars to stop firing after a few minutes. As the British continued towards Concord, 8 dead and 9 wounded militiamen were left on Lexington Green.

One hundred and twenty British regulars were guarding a bridge outside of Concord. Four-hundred American militiamen marched towards the bridge. Again, both sides were ordered to wait for the other to fire first. After a few warning shots at the ground, the British fired into the oncoming militiamen, and began a retreat to Boston. As they returned to Boston, the British were under constant assault from Massachusetts militiamen, who inflicted 273 casualties. The American Revolution had begun before it was even organized.

*“Your letter accompanying those received from Major Pitcairn is just arrived: that officer's conduct seems highly praiseworthy. I am of his opinion that when once these rebels have felt a smart blow, they will submit; and no situation can ever change my fixed resolution, either to bring the colonies to a due obedience to the legislature of the mother country or to cast them off!”*

- Letter from King George III to Lord Sandwich July 1, 1775

## **XVII. May 1775, 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress met after Lexington and Concord and after two towns (Folmoth, Maine and Norfolk, Virginia) were fire bombed by the British. The Congress set up the **Continental Army** headed by George Washington, and developed **continental currency**, which was unfortunately worthless.

### **July 5, 1775 Olive Branch Petition**

This was the final effort to reconcile with Britain and end the fighting. John Dickinson wrote this appeal directly to King George III. He protested the Coercive Acts and criticized Parliament and some of the King’s governors, but the tone remained loyal to the King.

*Attached to your Majesty’s person, family, and Government, with all devotion that principle and affection can inspire; connected with Great Britain by the strongest ties that can unite societies, and deploring every event that tends in any degree to weaken them, we solemnly assure your Majesty, that we not only most ardently desire the former harmony between her and these Colonies may be restored, but that a concord may be established between them upon so firm a basis as to perpetuate its blessings, uninterrupted by any future dissensions, to succeeding generations in both countries, and to transmit your Majesty’s name to posterity, adorned with that signal and lasting glory that has attended the memory of those illustrious personages, whose virtues and abilities have extricated states from dangerous convulsions, and by securing the happiness to others, have erected the most noble and durable monuments to their own fame.*

The petition was sent July 5<sup>th</sup>, but by the time it reached England the King was in no mood to receive the petition. On August 23, George III proclaimed the American colonies to be in rebellion and urged that all efforts should be made “to suppress such rebellion, and bring the traitors to justice.”

## **XVIII. June 1776, Declaration of Independence**

### **A. Historical Background**

- 3 Crisis led to the Declaration: Stamp Act, Townsend Act, and Intolerable Acts.
  - John Locke- Enlightenment ideas were included in the Preamble of the Declaration of Independence just as they were in the English Bill of Rights.
- B. Why was the Declaration issued by Congress in July 1776?
1. Colonists needed to appeal for foreign aid. Benjamin Franklin went to France to get help
  2. The Declaration helped to consolidate the efforts of American patriots.
- C. Parts of the Declaration of Independence
1. **Preamble**- This was the summary of the rights that colonists believe they were entitled to.
  2. **27 Grievances** were listed against the King. The King was referred to as “he” in the Declaration.
    - Grievances Included:
    - British dissolved colonial representative powers and closed colonial legislatures.
    - British did not approve a necessary law that the colonials passed.
    - British taxed without colonial consent.
    - British cut off colonial trade.
    - British quartered troops in colonial homes.
    - \*Slavery was rejected as the 28<sup>th</sup> grievance and deleted from the Declaration.
  3. **Declaration of War**- The colonies’ plan to form a republic and use the term United States of America.
  4. **Signatures**- John Hancock was remembered for signing his name large enough for “King George to be able to see it without his glasses.”
- \*\*The Declaration of Independence was printed and distributed across the colonies.

## XVIV. 1776 January “Common Sense”

Maintaining “the cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind,” Thomas Paine passionately argued for independence from Great Britain and the ability of the young country to prosper unfettered by the oppressive and economically draining English. He warned that the alternative was for the colonists to become slaves to Britain.

### Why was Common Sense Revolutionary?

1. It appealed to all socio-economic classes.
2. **Idea:** It rejected “monarchy” as a form of government
  - This was a direct attack at the King.
3. **Idea:** A republic was the best form of government.
  - Representative government: (Not necessarily a democracy).
  - It proposed the first republic in modern times.
4. It eloquently described arguments for leaving Britain, “‘Tis time to part”.

## People Involved

### AMERICANS

#### George Washington, VA

Washington took command of the Continental Army in 1775 during the American Revolution, and was the first President of the United States of America.

#### John Adams, MA

John Adams was a second cousin to Samuel Adams. John was a delegate in the first and second continental congress, and he helped negotiate the peace treaty after the revolution. He was the first vice-president, and was the second President of the United States.

#### Thomas Jefferson, VA

His tombstone reads: “Author of the Declaration of Independence, of the State of Virginia for religious freedom, and Father of the University of Virginia”, just as he requested it to. He was also a member of the continental congress and the 3<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States.

#### Alexander Hamilton, NY

He was a New York delegate to the Constitutional Convention. As the first secretary of the treasury he helped get the new nation on solid financial footing. He advocated a strong central government, which put him at odds with Thomas Jefferson.

Hamilton's Battery was the 5<sup>th</sup> field artillery, and it became part of America's First Division in 1917 for WWI. It is currently the oldest active regiment in the army.

### Samuel Adams, MA

Samuel Adams was one of the original revolutionaries from Boston. He was upper class educated, but had little money. He believed ideas could change the world, and used his public speaking and writing skills to bring more colonists to the patriot cause. He played a large part in the Committees of Correspondence, and labeled the shooting outside the customs house on March 5, 1770 the "Boston Massacre."

### Benjamin Franklin, PA (born in Boston, MA)

Franklin was an American statesman, printer, scientist, and writer. He was the only American of the colonial period to earn a European reputation as a natural philosopher. Franklin negotiated the treaty to gain French help during the American Revolution.

### Patrick Henry, VA

He was most famous for ending a speech to the Virginia Assembly on March 23, 1775 with the resounding words: "...as for me, give me liberty or give me death."

### Nathan Hale, Conn.

Hale was a schoolteacher before the war. During the war he became Captain of a Connecticut Regiment, and volunteered for a dangerous mission to get information to Long Island. He was captured by the British and hanged as a spy without a trial. Hale is remembered for his last words at the gallows: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

### Captain John Paul Jones, VA (born in Scotland)

Battles were also fought on the water during the American Revolution. When the British called for Jones to surrender his ship he replied, "*I have not yet begun to fight!*" John Paul Jones ended up winning the battle by taking over the British ship before his doomed ship sank.

### Thomas Paine, PA (born in England)

He was born in Thetford in Norfolk, England and emigrated to America in 1774 after meeting Benjamin Franklin in England. Paine was a theorist and a writer. He wrote the extremely influential pamphlet *Common Sense* to explain why war with Britain was necessary to the American colonists.

### John Hancock, MA

Hancock was a member and president of the Continental Congress. His name appears first and largest on the Declaration of Independence.

### John Dickenson, PN

Dickenson was a conservative delegate of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress, and he authored the Olive Branch Petition.

### Nathanael Greene, RI

He was a Major General and one of the most trusted leaders of the Revolutionary army. Greene was the leader of the *Greene Mountain Boys*. This group was known for their effective guerilla fighting tactics during the Revolution. He was arguably the greatest strategist of the war.

### Sybil Ludington, Conn.

Sybil was known as the female Paul Revere. She was only 16 years old on April 26, 1777 when she heard that the British were burning the town of Danbury, Connecticut, which was only 25 miles away. Sybil's father was commander of the area militia, and his troops were scattered around the area in their homes. Sybil rode from 20-40 miles shouting, "*The British are burning Danbury--muster at Ludington's,*" to gather the militia at her father's house.

### Deborah Sampson Garnett, MA

(Dec. 17, 1760-April 18, 1827) Garnett was the first known American woman to impersonate a man to join the army and take part in combat. She went by the name Robert Shurtleff while in the army. Soldiers teased her about not having to shave, but assumed that "Robert" was too young to have a beard. She was injured in a battle near Tarrytown, and tended her own wounds to keep from being discovered. As a result, her leg never healed properly. A physician discovered she was a female while she was hospitalized with a fever in Philadelphia. She was sent back home. She spent the later years of her life giving lectures about her time in the military. After Paul Revere sent a letter to Congress on her behalf, she received a US military pension.

### Abigail Smith Adams, MA

She was the wife of John Adams, the 2<sup>nd</sup> President, and mother of John Quincy Adams, the 6<sup>th</sup> President. Abigail was active in her husband's career. She advocated for equal treatment for women and spoke out against slavery. She was considered the first "First Lady". *"If we mean to have heroes, statesmen and philosophers, we should have learned women."* –Abigail Adams *"If attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment our own rebellion."* – Abigail Adams

### Benedict Arnold, Connecticut

Arnold was a general, and early in the war he partnered with Ethan Allen to capture Fort Ticonderoga in May 1775 for the patriots. He continued to be a great aid to the patriots in the beginning of the war. As junior officers continued to get promoted over him, and his accomplishments were not appreciated by Congress, Arnold became bitter and eventually betrayed the Americans. His name became synonymous with "traitor".

### Thomas Hutchinson, MA

Hutchinson was an American governor in colonial Massachusetts, and was loyal to Britain. He believed in law and order, and enforced the Stamp Act in 1765. An angry mob in Boston attacked his home and he barely escaped.

### Sons of Liberty

Made signs and boycotted British imports. This group was responsible for the more violent demonstrations against the British.

### Daughters of Liberty

Patriot women did not want to be left out of the revolution. The daughters of liberty made homespun cloth and clothes rather than buy British imports, and stopped drinking tea.

## **BRITISH**

### Sir Thomas Gage, British General

Gage was the North American Commander and Chief for the British until 1775. He ordered the British troops to take the supplies from Concord, which led to the altercations at Lexington and Concord, and again at Bunker Hill.

### Sir William Howe, British General

Howe was opposed to the British coercion before the Revolution, but led the British troops at Bunker Hill after the fighting began. He replaced Gage in 1775. He evacuated Boston in March of 1776 after General Washington's "siege".

### Sir Henry Clinton, British General

When General Howe resigned in 1778 Clinton replaced him. He joined with General Cornwallis in the southern colonies and captured Charlestown in 1780. After that, Clinton and Cornwallis quarreled regularly.

### John Burgoyne, British General

General Burgoyne took back Ft. Ticonderoga in July 6, 1777. He was forced to surrender to American General Horatio Gates in the battle of Saratoga on October 17, 1777.

### Charles Cornwallis, British General

He was sympathetic to the American colonists' grievances and voted against the Declaratory Acts of 1766. Once the war began he led the British with great success against the colonists. On October 19, 1781 he was forced to surrender at Yorktown, which basically ended the war.

### Lord North, British Prime Minister

Lord North was the British Prime Minister during the American Revolution. He, along with King George III, failed to recognize the volatile situation developing in the colonies. He supported George III's American policies and took a hard line with the colonies. Lord North was forced out of office, resigning in 1782, upon the utter and total failure of his policies.

### King George III

King George III did not understand what the colonist's problems were. He was stubborn and would not give in to their petitions. A statue of him was placed in New York. In 10 years this statue was melted down and turned into bullets for patriots fighting in the Revolution.

## **FOREIGN AID**

### Casmir Pulaski, Poland “Father of the American Cavalry”

He was considered a military hero in Poland until he was wrongly accused of a plot to kill the King on Poland. After the accusation, Pulaski went to France where he heard about the American Revolution. He met Ben Franklin in France and was later introduced to Washington, Lafayette, and Hancock. In September 1777, Pulaski agreed to command a small, new cavalry detachment. After seeing his great success, Congress allowed Pulaski to recruit, equip, and train the colony’s first fully trained cavalry. *Casmir Pulaski Day* is the first Monday in March.

### The Marquis de Lafayette, France

In 1777, he went to America to help fight the British in the Revolution. Lafayette was an aid to Washington, and he helped train and lead the American army. He helped secure French aid for the American Revolution, which was instrumental in winning the war. Michael J. McCarthy announced at the Lafayette’s statue, “*Lafayette we are here*”, when he arrived with General Pershing and the 1<sup>st</sup> Division in France in 1917.

### Friedrich Von Stuben, Prussia

Von Stuben helped instill discipline in the Continental army through his drilling techniques during the harsh winter in Valley Forge. The Americans were dying from disease and starvation, but VonStuben’s drills raised morale and taught the colonists to be model soldiers. During that winter, he helped train 6,000-7,000 American soldiers. He commanded one of Washington’s army divisions at the siege of Yorktown.

## **War for Independence: 1775- 1781**

### **The British Campaign: 3 incorrect assumptions**

1. The British assumed the rebels could not stand up to a British assault.
2. The British assumed the American Rebellion would be just like European Wars.  
Differences between European Wars and the American Revolution include:
  1. The ground was more flat in Europe.
  2. In European wars the goal was to capture cities and not to occupy countryside.
  3. American civilians helped with the war effort against the British.
3. British assumed that one clear military victory would end the war and the English would regain colonial allegiance.

### **American Campaign: Major Needs**

1. Americans needed to create a professional United States army.
2. Americans needed to gain French and Spanish support.

#### Treaty of Commerce and Alliance, 1777:

France recognized the United States as an independent country. (When a major country, like France, recognizes the USA it adds legitimacy to the American Revolution.) This alliance allowed the US to trade with French colonies and the help of the French Navy under Admiral Dubua.

France also sent money, uniforms (France had blue uniforms, so that was what they sent to the Americans to fight in), muskets, Lafayette and other experience leaders to train our troops.

*In return France wants America as an ally if France went to war in the future.* Ben Franklin negotiated the treaty with France, so America does not have to ally with France in future conflicts. The United States stayed isolated until WWI.

### **Continental Army**

One of the reasons the Continental Congress chose George Washington to lead was because he was from Virginia. To this point not much direct conflict with the British had happened in the southern colonies. The Continental Congress hoped that appointing a man from the south to lead the army would make South Carolina a more active participant in the Revolution.

**Washington** accepted his position without pay. He was given the monumental task of creating a colonial army with few resources and almost no ammunition. The Battle of Bunker Hill occurred while he was on his way towards Boston.

### **Advantages and Disadvantages**

Unity-

*British* had Loyalist, some Native American, and some slave support. 25,000 Southern slaves were promised freedom if they helped the British. The British did NOT understand the American mentality or why the Americans were fighting.

*Americans* had Patriots devoted to George Washington, but they did not want any free blacks in the army.

### Funds-

*British* had unlimited funds.

*American* Congress had no power to tax in order to pay for the war. Individuals gave money to pay for the war, and Americans borrowed money from France and Spain.

### Experience-

*British* had 35,000 experienced soldiers plus the hired Hessian soldiers (German soldiers hired by Britain to fight in the American Revolution).

*Americans* knew the geography of the land, and had what in sports is called "home field advantage". George Washington had to start from scratch to organize and discipline the troops. Washington provided sashes to show rank. Washington started out by losing every battle, but he never gave up and learned on the job. The colonists received foreign help for experienced leaders like Pulaski, Lafayette and Von Stuben.

### Power-

*British* navy was able to blockade the American coast, and they has the advantage of a greater population. Their disadvantage was that they were also busy fighting wars in other parts of the world.

*Americans* had an advantage because the war was unpopular in Britain. A clear disadvantage was that the Americans troops were inexperienced.

## Weapons

### Bronze versus Iron-

A gun's power was determined by whether it was cast in iron or bronze. Iron guns were stronger and could withstand larger charges of gunpowder. The advantage of a bronze gun was that it was lighter than an iron gun of the same caliber. This made bronze guns preferred for campaigning. Another advantage of bronze was that when it became worn out the gun could be melted down and recast, whereas when an iron gun wore out it had to be scrapped. This difference had a large effect on battles at sea. If a ship was sunk, a bronze gun could be salvaged and used again very quickly, whereas if iron was in the seawater for even a short time it was unusable.

### Muskets-

Muskets were guns used in the American Revolution. Gunpowder and a small lead ball were put down the barrel of the musket, and then jammed down by a ramrod. The process to load the gun took so long that a person could only fire about 3-5 times in one minute. One of the most common muskets used by American colonists was called the *Brown Bess*. They were inaccurate and did not shoot very far.

### Bayonets-

Bayonets are knives that can be attached to the barrel of a gun. When the enemy gets too close to allow time for shooting and reloading, soldiers attach a bayonet to the gun to stab at the enemy. During the American Revolution bayonets were triangle shaped.

After the American Revolution, the Geneva Convention created rules of war and outlawed the use of triangle shaped bayonets. The Geneva Convention decided the fat triangle blade made wounds that were difficult to stitch back together, and too many soldiers died of infection. All bayonets have been flat like a knife since that decision.

### Cannons-

The cannons used by both sides in the Revolution were the standard smooth-bore muzzle loading gun that had changed very little over the past 200 years. They were cast of iron or bronze; loaded with a prepared cartridge of paper or cloth containing gunpowder, followed by a projectile. It was fired by igniting a goose-quill tube containing gunpowder, or "quickmatch," inserted into a vent-hole that touched the charge in the gun. When fired, the recoil threw the cannon backward, which required it being wrestled back into the firing position by the gun crew.

## Hamilton's Artillery

Alexander Hamilton is remembered for supporting a strong, central American government through the US Constitution, but his role as a founding father began before that. Hamilton was born on the West Indian island of Nevis. He immigrated to America and pursued his education with zeal. Hamilton learned

the art of war-making from a retired army officer, and formed an artillery regiment with classmates at King's College (now Columbia University).

Hamilton was only 19 when George Washington's army was retreating from the British, and in serious danger of being overrun and the Revolution being crushed. Hamilton positioned his Artillery at Harlem Heights, and shot down at the British to cover Washington's escape. This began a lasting friendship between Hamilton and Washington.

Hamilton's legacy continues through the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery (Hamilton's Artillery), which is the longest serving unit in the United States military and still currently active.

## Tories

### Who Were the Loyalists?

Loyalists were *Anglican Clergymen, wealthy merchants, and some small farmers on the frontier.* (The small farmers would side with the Tories because they did not like the tidewater aristocrats.) 100,000 men fought on the British side, and after the war they fled to Canada.

There were divisions of loyalties even in families. For example, the governor of New Jersey was Benjamin Franklin's son and he sided with the Tories.

### Argument/Reasoning of Loyalists

1. "Tis time to reconcile" Charles Inglis
2. England was our mother country.
3. The British navy was the most powerful in the world.
4. Colonies needed the commerce of Britain in order to survive.
5. Democracy was a dangerous concept and would lead to mob rule.
6. Americans needed British soldiers for protection (Carolina frontiers).

Not everyone was either a devoted Loyalist or Patriot. The rule of thirds often applies to American public opinion when the nation goes to war. 1/3 are for going to war, 1/3 are against going to war, and 1/3 were indifferent. Little of the Revolutionary fervor had reached the southern colonies.

# Important Battles

## The Battle at Bunker Hill

**June 17, 1775 Charlestown (now part of Boston, Massachusetts)**

This was the first large scale engagement of the American Revolution. The battle was over possession of Bunker Hill and Breeds Hill over Boston Harbor. (Bunker Hill is bigger, so the battle is most often referred to as *The Battle at Bunker Hill* even though it took place on both hills.)

British soldiers, supported by naval guns, attempted to march up Bunker Hill to take out cannons that Allen and Arnold put there. American Colonel Prescott issued the famous order, "Don't one of you fire until you see the whites of their eyes," to keep the colonists from wasting precious ammunition. The British soldiers tried to get up the hill 2 times and were beaten back by colonists.

On the third try the British succeed in taking both hills because the colonists had run out of ammunition. In the course of the battle 400 Americans were killed, wounded, or taken prisoner, and 1,000 British were killed or wounded. This battle was important because it was the first real battle of the Revolution and proved that the American colonists could fight.

## The Battle at Trenton

**December 26, 1776**

On Christmas Eve, the 2,400 men of Washington's Army crossed the Delaware River in the night. (A second American force under LT. James Ewing and a third force under Col. John Cadwalder were supposed to meet up with Washington, but failed to cross the icy river.) At 8:00 am Washington's troops surprised and defeated the Hessian garrison stationed there. This was the first American victory of the war, and helped to restore American morale.

## The Battle at Princeton

**January 3, 1777**

Encouraged by his success on December 26<sup>th</sup>, Washington was determined to make another attack. The serious problem was his lack of soldiers, because the men in his army were free to go back home on Dec.

31<sup>st</sup>. Washington gave an impassioned appeal to the patriotism of the men, supplemented by an offer of a \$10 bounty in hard money. He was able to persuade at least part of his old army to remain for six more weeks. With a force of around 5,000 Washington again crossed the Delaware on the night of January 1st. By this time Cornwallis had hastily gathered together the scattered British garrisons in New Jersey. He was convinced that he had the Americans in a trap, so he put off battle until the next day because of the exhausted state of his troops. In the night Washington slipped away, leaving campfires burning brightly to deceive the British. The next morning he struck another surprise blow at Princeton, inflicting heavy losses on two British regiments just leaving the town to join Cornwallis. Washington then went into winter quarters in the hills around Morristown, New Jersey. Cornwallis did not pursue. Howe drew in his outposts in New Jersey to New Brunswick and Perth Amboy.

Trenton and Princeton not only offset the worst effects of the disastrous defeats in New York but also restored Washington's prestige as a commander with friend and foe alike. In the execution of the two strokes east of the Delaware, Washington had applied the principles of offensive surprise and maneuver with great success and finally achieved stature as a military commander.

## **The Battle at Saratoga**

**October 17, 1777, New York**

British General Burgoyne's attempt to separate the rebellious New England colonies from the southern colonies failed horribly. The surrender of 6,000 British regulars at Saratoga shocked and embarrassed Britain. This battle was a major turning point in the war, because the French would not help the American colonists until they had a major victory. The victory at Saratoga convinces France to help the colonists. This battle also renewed Native American conflict between each other and against the settlers.

### **THE DEATH OF JANE MCCREA**

Jane McCrea was engaged to a Tory Lieutenant. At the Battle of Saratoga, British General Burgoyne had allied with the Wyandot Indian tribe. Members of this tribe shot and scalped Jane McCrea during this battle. Colonists were outraged that the British had allowed Indians in their service to violate a young, white girl. The story of her murder spread around the colonies and drew many colonists to fight for the patriots against the British. The horrible manner of her death was immortalized in a painting by John Vanderlyn in 1804. This story and painting was burned into the minds of all young Americans fighting for freedom. Scholars point out that those young Americans grew up to create laws to push Indians further west and were responsible for the Trail of Tears. The memory of this painting had lasting effects of American history.

## **Valley Forge- Winter of change for the Continental Army**

**December 1777 – “Winter Camp”**

*“These are the times that try men's souls...”* Thomas Paine

While the British occupied Philadelphia just 20 miles away, the Continental Army entered winter quarters at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. During the winter, supply arrangements improved and the Continental troops drilled and emerged as a more disciplined, unified fighting force.

*The Crisis* was a collection of articles written about an independent and self-governing America by Thomas Paine during the American Revolutionary War. General Washington found the first essay so inspiring he ordered it to be read to the troops at Valley Forge.

## **France enters War**

**February 1778**

## **The Battle at Cahokia-George Rogers Clark attacked the British in the Ohio country**

**May – December 1778**

With barely 150 men, Virginian George Rogers Clark captured several British posts in the Ohio Territory (present-day Illinois and Indiana) and convinced French-speaking inhabitants of Kaskaskia and Cahokia to support the patriot side. Although Indians continued to oppose white settlement for three decades, Clark's exploits paved the way for the expansion of the U.S. north of the Ohio River.

## **The Battle of Yorktown**

**October 1781, Virginia**

Lord Cornwallis was in the South looting and burning cities before he moved towards Yorktown, VA to replenish supplies. This city was on a peninsula. At the time Washington was in New Jersey. He moved his army to attack by land, and asked the French navy to blockade Yorktown. The siege lasted 3 weeks.

In October 1781 the British surrendered. Traditionally the leader of the surrendering group gives a symbol of authority to the victorious leader. The British 2<sup>nd</sup> in command gave his sword to the American 2<sup>nd</sup> in command. The British played the song “The World Turned Upside-down” at the surrender.

## Immediate Results of the American Revolution

### **A. Articles of Confederation, 1781**

The 1781 Articles of Confederation was a movement towards an American republic.

**The weaknesses of the Articles include:**

1. No judges, no taxing powers, no way to draft troops, no way to enforce treaties.
2. States governments were established with Constitutions
3. Weak national government

**Accomplishments of the national government**

1. Representatives were able to negotiate war and peace
2. Passed the North West Ordinances that allowed territories to become states.

**Proclamation of 1763 no longer exists-** American people wanted to move west

**North West Territory Land Ordinances**

1. Government surveyed property and sold it off or gave property to veterans. Jefferson chose names for North West Territory. In each square of the North West Territory one lot must be sold to provide education. This was only required in the NW Territory.
2. Jefferson proposes that when areas of the NW Territory become states they not be allowed to have slavery. He wants no slavery north of the Ohio River. This plan lost by ONE vote in the south. “By the voice of one man so goes the lives of millions.” Thomas Jefferson

The new government does not want colonies. They want a waiting period and a way for territories to become states. Once there are 60,000 white males in a territory, that territory can write a state Constitution in line with the federal government to petition to become a state. Congress admits states into the union and this process has worked for every state in the union.

### **B. Treaty of Paris, 1783**

Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams go to France to negotiate the peace treaty.

**The Treaty of Paris:**

1. *US recognized* by Britain as an independent nation.
2. *Territory*-The British did not want the French to gain any territories, so they gave a large amount of land to America in the Treaty of Paris. This land more than doubled the size of the new United States of America to the east bank of the Mississippi River.
3. *Loyalists*- Loyalists were scattered across Canada. Their property was confiscated by the state when they fled. The Treaty of Paris said that these people could return to the United States unharmed and that they should be compensated for their property.

## Long-term results of the American Revolution:

How revolutionary was the American Revolution?

## A. Social Changes:

### Women

#### Before the Revolution:

- A woman's job was to raise a family. She needed a protector, her husband.
- *Fem Coverts*: Covered by men. All stuff belonged to the husband. Women had no legal rights to property, to be granted a divorce, or to gain custody of children.

#### During the Revolution:

- Men went off to war and women ran the farms to keep the family functioning. They made homespun clothes and sacrificed during the war. Women prepared meals and herbal medicines for troops. A few women even found ways to fight in the war.
- Deborah Sampson Garnett was the first known American woman to impersonate a male soldier and fight in a war.
- nurses

#### After the Revolution:

- Women searched for a way to fit into this new republic.
- There was a small movement to provide education for girls. The reason for female education was girls will raise future citizens. They needed to be good and educated republican mothers in order to educate good republican sons.
- There was not a lot of social change for women. It took until 1919 for women to be given the right to vote nationally.

### Native Americans

"Civilization of death to all savages."

After the war a treaty was signed with the Indians. The Indians had to move further west or scatter towards Canada. The Iroquois Nation lost confederacy as it was pushed westward.

### "Conservative Elite"

This included men like George Washington and John Adams.

This was not a great social revolution. There was still an upper class in the United States. People did not change classes because of the Revolution.

### Slavery

The plan was for *gradual emancipation* in Northern states. It was left up to the states to decide if they wanted to be a free or slave state. Vermont was the 14<sup>th</sup> state and chose to have no slavery. In 1784 Massachusetts outlawed slavery. New York had the most slaves of all the northern states. States faced many problems when freeing slaves including the competition for jobs the freed slaves would create, and how the states could compensate slave owners. It was decided that the emancipation of slaves could be spread out over 25 years. After the American Revolution there was a general euphoria in which 10,000 slaves were freed all over the country. George Washington willed his slaves to be freed after his death.

**Gabriel's Rebellion**- In the early 1800's Gabriel's Rebellion scared white people that a massive slave/black uprising was possible. This fear caused a law that prevented slave owners in Virginia from setting their slaves free in a will.

**Cotton Gin**- Slavery was becoming less common, but the invention of the cotton gin in 1794 made slavery profitable again. Southern plantation owners wanted slaves, and the 3/5 clause in the Constitution upheld slavery.

## B. Religious Changes:

The American Revolution was hugely revolutionary in regards to religious changes.

### Separation of Church and State:

- Thomas Jefferson fought to separate church and state, because he wanted to avoid religious wars within the country. The 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to the Constitution contained the Disestablishment Clause.
- Virginia had a statute for religious freedom.
- Roger Williams founded Rhode Island as a place for religious freedom.

## C. Political Changes:

The Revolution created the first modern republic with a national and a state government where representatives were elected and there was no monarchy. The power came from the people.

The colonists feared creating a strong central government, so they stumbled through the war with a weak confederation.

**Articles of Confederation** – The executive power was kept weak because states want to retain their power. There were no judges or judiciary branch to this government. The government had no power to tax, no power to enforce laws or treaties, or to regulate interstate trade.

**Federal Constitution, 1789 ratified**- Strong central government

## **D. Future Revolutions**

**Revolutionaries behind these events will have studied the Declaration of Independence.**

1789- French Revolution

1820- Mexican Revolution

1820- Spanish Revolution

1917- Russian Revolution

1989- Tiananmen Square demonstrations