

Toward Independence

Overview and Objectives

Overview

In a Response Group activity, students participate in a series of colonial town meetings to debate whether to rebel against British rule. In the process, they evaluate the events that deeply divided the American colonists and eventually caused them to rebel against the British government.

Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

Social Studies

- identify the roots of the nation's blend of civic republicanism, classical liberal principles, and English parliamentary traditions.
- assess the impact of such key events as the French and Indian War, the Boston Massacre, and the battles of Lexington and Concord on colonists' loyalty to the British government.
- analyze several actions of the British government between 1763 and 1775 that built resentment and divided the colonists in their feelings about British rule.

Language Arts

- write a persuasive composition that includes a well-defined thesis supported by evidence, examples, and reasoning.

Social Studies Vocabulary

Key Content Terms militia, tyranny, repeal, boycott

Academic Vocabulary violation, retain, restricted, authority

Lesson 5 - Toward Independence

Setting the Stage - Revolution in the Colonies

In this unit, you will learn why some colonists wanted to replace British rule with an independent government. You will also learn about the long, difficult struggle to gain that independence.

In the 1760s, Great Britain began passing new trade and tax laws for the colonies and enforcing old laws passed years before. Picture a southern rice farmer who is required by law to sell his crop only to England, even if he might get a higher price elsewhere. Or think of a northern merchant having to pay a new tax on paper—a tax imposed by a distant government in which he had no representation. How do you think they felt about such laws and taxes?

Colonists who supported Great Britain's policies and British rule were known as Loyalists. Those who resisted called themselves Patriots. When the colonies declared independence, Patriots were opposed by many Loyalists as well as British troops.

Knowing the land was one advantage Patriot forces had over British troops in the American Revolution.

These settlement patterns, along with the colonies' physical geography and regions of Loyalist strength, helped to shape the military strategies of the revolution.

Section 1 - Introduction

An almost full moon cast a pale light over Boston on April 18, 1775. But the night was anything but quiet. Mounted on Brown Beauty, one of the fastest horses in Massachusetts, Paul Revere woke up the countryside with alarming news. British troops stationed in Boston were on the move! They had orders to march to the nearby town of Concord and seize weapons the colonists had stored there.

This was news Patriots had been waiting for. Patriots (also called Whigs) were Americans who believed the colonies had the right to govern themselves. On hearing Revere's warning, Patriots around Concord grabbed their muskets and prepared to meet the British troops.

The same news filled Loyalists (also called Tories) with dread. Loyalists were colonists who felt a deep loyalty to Great Britain. They saw themselves as faithful subjects of the king. They were horrified by the idea of taking up arms against British troops. How did colonists come to be so divided in their feelings about the British? As you read in the last lesson, most Americans were content with British rule in the early 1700s. In this chapter, you will learn what happened to change the relationship between Great Britain and the colonies.

The story begins in the 1750s, when Great Britain and the colonies fought a war against the French and their Indian allies. The French and Indian War left Great Britain with huge debts and a vast new empire to protect. To solve its problems, the British government passed new laws that tightened its control of the colonies. Some of these laws also placed new taxes on the colonists.

Colonists were stunned. For the most part, they had been able to make their own laws and determine their own taxes. Suddenly, Great Britain was changing the rules. It wasn't right, the colonists protested. In this chapter, you will see how these feelings led many colonists to consider rebelling against their government.

Section 2 - Before 1763

Before 1763, Great Britain had relatively little to do with the day-to-day lives of most colonists.

By 1750, the American colonies were bursting with growth. In just a century, the population of the colonies had grown from 50,000 to more than a million people. What brought about this rapid growth? Cheap land? Religious tolerance? Economic opportunity? All of these were important in attracting people to the colonies. But there was another reason.

For more than a century, the British government had, for the most part, left the colonies alone to solve their own problems. During this time, Americans had learned to govern themselves. Each colony elected its own assembly. Like the British Parliament, the assemblies had the power to pass laws and to create and collect taxes. Each assembly also decided how the colony's tax money should be spent. Americans had more freedom to run their own affairs than ordinary people in any country in Europe. Self-government also made the colonies attractive to settlers.

Conflict in the Ohio Valley As the colonies grew, settlers began to dream of moving across the Appalachian Mountains and into the Ohio Valley—the region between the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Both Great Britain and France claimed this area. In 1754, the French made good on their claim by building a fort where the city of Pittsburgh stands today. They called it Fort Duquesne (du-KANE).

News of the fort alarmed the governor of Virginia. He ordered a small force of Virginia militia to drive the French out of the Ohio Valley. Militias are small armies of citizens who are trained to fight in an emergency. To head the militia, the governor chose a 22-year-old volunteer named George Washington.

Today, Americans remember George Washington as a great Patriot, a military hero, and the first president of the United States. In 1754, however, he was just an ambitious young man with no land or money. Washington believed that his best chance of getting ahead was to become an officer in the British army. There was only one problem with his plan. Most British officers believed that colonists made terrible soldiers.

The expedition into the Ohio Valley gave Washington a chance to prove them wrong. Near Fort Duquesne, he came across a French scouting party that was camped in the woods. Washington ordered his men to open fire. It was an easy victory. "I heard the bullets whistle," he wrote afterward. "And, believe me, there is something charming in the sound."

The French and Indian War Washington's whistling bullets were the first shots in a conflict known as the French and Indian War. This war was part of a long struggle between France and Great Britain for territory and power. Because many American Indians fought with France in this latest conflict, the colonists called it the French and Indian War.

In 1755, Great Britain sent 1,400 British soldiers to Virginia to finish the job that Washington had begun. They were led by a general named Edward Braddock. The soldiers' job was to clear the French out of the Ohio Valley. Washington joined the army as a volunteer, hoping to make a good impression on General Braddock.

Braddock's march into the Ohio Valley was a disaster. The troops' bright red uniforms made them perfect targets for French sharpshooters and their Indian allies. Two-thirds of the soldiers were killed.

Washington himself narrowly escaped death. "I had four bullets through my Coat and two horses shot under me," he wrote in a letter. Showing great courage, Washington led the survivors back to Virginia. There, he was greeted as a hero.

The French and Indian War raged for seven long years. The turning point came in 1759, when British troops captured Canada. In 1763, Great Britain and France signed a peace treaty, or agreement, ending the war. In this treaty, France ceded, or gave, Canada to Great Britain.

Americans were thrilled with this victory. Great Britain now controlled a vastly expanded American empire. Never before had the colonists felt so proud of being British. And never before had the future of the colonies looked so bright.

Section 3 - Early British Actions in the Colonies

The Proclamation of 1763 prohibited settlers from moving west of the Appalachians. King George III hoped this would prevent conflict between colonists and American Indians.

Changes that were taking place in Great Britain soon clouded the colonists' bright future. A new king, George III, had been crowned in 1760. He was not regarded as a bright man. One historian wrote that "he was very stupid, really stupid." He was also known for being proud and stubborn. He was determined to be a take-charge kind of ruler, especially in the colonies. The people George III chose to help him knew very little about conditions in North America. Before long, they were taking actions that enraged the colonists.

The Proclamation of 1763 The British government faced a number of problems after the French and Indian War. One was how to keep colonists and American Indians from killing each other as settlers pushed westward. Simply draw a line down the crest of the Appalachian Mountains, said George III. Tell settlers to stay east of that line and Indians to stay west of it.

This was what the king ordered in his Proclamation of 1763. To Americans, the king's order suggested tyranny, or the unjust use of government power. They argued that the lands east of the Appalachians were already mostly settled. The only place that farmers could find available land was west of the mountains. Besides, the proclamation was too late. Settlers were already crossing the mountains.

The British government ignored these arguments. To keep peace on the frontier, it decided to expand the British army in America to 7,500 men.

The Stamp Act The British government had other problems besides keeping colonists and American Indians from fighting each other. One was how to pay off the large debt from the French and Indian War.

The solution seemed obvious to Prime Minister George Grenville, the leader of the British government. People in Great Britain were already paying taxes on everything from windows to salt. In contrast, Americans were probably the most lightly taxed people in the British Empire. It was time, said Grenville, for the colonists to pay their fair share of the cost of protecting them from Indians.

In 1765, Grenville proposed a new act, or law, called the Stamp Act. This law required colonists to buy a stamp for every piece of paper they used. Newspapers had to be printed on stamped paper. Wills, licenses, and even playing cards had to have stamps.

Once again, the colonists sensed tyranny. One newspaper, *The Pennsylvania Journal*, said that as soon as “this shocking Act was known, it filled all British America from one End to the other, with Astonishment and Grief.”

It wasn't just the idea of higher taxes that upset the colonists. They were willing to pay taxes passed by their own assemblies, where their representatives could vote on them. But the colonists had no representatives in Parliament. For this reason, they argued, Parliament had no right to tax them. They saw the Stamp Act as a violation of their rights as British subjects. “No taxation without representation!” they declared.

Some colonists protested the Stamp Act by sending messages to Parliament. Loyalists simply refused to buy stamps. Patriots, however, took more violent action. Mobs calling themselves Sons of Liberty attacked tax collectors' homes. Protesters in Connecticut even started to bury one tax collector alive. Only when he heard dirt being shoveled onto his coffin did the terrified tax collector agree to resign from his post.

After months of protest, Parliament repealed, or canceled, the Stamp Act. Americans greeted the news with great celebration. Church bells rang, bands played, and everyone hoped the troubles with Great Britain were over.

The Quartering Act As anger over the Stamp Act began to fade, Americans noticed another law passed by Parliament in 1765. Called the Quartering Act, this law ordered colonial assemblies to provide British troops with quarters, or housing. The colonists were also told to furnish the soldiers with “candles, firing, bedding, cooking utensils, salt, vinegar, and . . . beer or cider.”

Of course, providing for the soldiers cost money. New Jersey protested that the new law was “as much an Act for laying taxes” on the colonists as the Stamp Act. New Yorkers asked why they should pay to keep troops in their colony. After all, they said, the soldiers just took up space and did nothing.

In 1767, the New York assembly decided not to approve any funds for “salt, vinegar and liquor” for the troops. The British government reacted by refusing to let the assembly meet until it agreed to obey the Quartering Act. Once again, tempers began to rise on both sides of the Atlantic.

Section 4 - The Townshend Acts

The next British leader to face the challenge of taxing the colonies was Charles Townshend. He was known as “Champagne Charlie” because of his habit of making speeches in Parliament after drinking champagne. Townshend believed that the colonists’ bad behavior made it even more important to retain an army in the British colonies. Once he was asked in Parliament whether he would dare to make the colonists pay for that army. Stamping his foot, Townshend shouted, “I will, I will!”

Townshend kept his promise. In 1767, he persuaded Parliament to pass the Townshend Acts. The new laws placed a duty, or tax, on certain goods the colonies imported from Great Britain. These goods included such popular items as glass, paint, paper, and tea.

A Boycott of British Goods To many colonists, the Townshend duties were unacceptable. Once again, colonists were determined not to pay taxes that their assemblies had not voted on.

A Boston Patriot named Samuel Adams led the opposition to the Townshend Acts. Adams was not an attractive man, and he was a failure at business. But he was gifted at stirring up protests through his speeches and writing. The governor of Massachusetts once complained, “Every dip of his pen stung like a horned snake.”

Adams wrote a letter protesting the Townshend Acts that was sent to every colony. The letter argued that the new duties violated the colonists’ rights as British citizens. To protect those rights, the colonies decided to boycott British goods. This was a peaceful form of protest that even Loyalists could support. One by one, all of the colonies agreed to support the boycott.

Women were very important in making the boycott work, since they did most of the shopping. The Virginia Gazette wrote that one woman could “do more for the good of her country than five hundred noisy sons of liberty, with all their mobs and riots.” Women found many ways to avoid buying British imports. They sewed dresses out of homespun cloth, brewed tea from pine needles, and bought only American-made goods.

Repeal of the Townshend Acts Meanwhile, a new leader named Lord North became head of the British government. Described by Townshend as a “great, heavy, booby-looking man,” Lord North embarrassed his supporters by taking naps in Parliament. But he was good with numbers, and he could see that the Townshend duties were a big money-loser. The duties didn’t begin to make up for all the money British merchants were losing because of the boycott.

Early in 1770, North persuaded Parliament to repeal all of the Townshend duties, except for one—the tax on tea. Some members of Parliament argued that keeping the duty on tea was asking for more trouble. But King George wasn’t ready to give up on the idea of taxing Americans. “I am clear that there must always be one tax to keep up the right,” the king said. “And, as such, I approve the Tea Duty.”

Section 5 - The Boston Massacre

On the same day that Parliament repealed most of the Townshend duties, a fight broke out between soldiers and colonists in Boston. When the dust cleared, five Bostonians were dead and ten were injured.

Patriots called this incident the Boston Massacre. A massacre is the killing of defenseless people. What really happened was a small riot.

Trouble had been brewing in Boston for months before the riot. To the British, Boston Patriots were the worst troublemakers in the colonies. In 1768, the British government had sent four regiments of troops to keep order in Boston.

Bostonians resented the British soldiers. They made fun of their red uniforms by calling them "lobsterbacks." Samuel Adams even taught his dog to nip at soldiers' heels.

Despite such insults, the troops were forbidden to fire on citizens. Knowing this only made Bostonians bolder in their attacks. General Thomas Gage, the commander of the British army in America, wrote that "the people were as Lawless . . . after the Troops arrived, as they were before."

Mob Violence Breaks Out On March 5, 1770, a noisy mob began throwing rocks and ice balls at troops guarding the Boston Customs House. "Come on you Rascals, you bloody-backs," they shouted. "Fire if you dare." Some Patriot leaders tried to persuade the crowd to go home. So did Captain Thomas Preston, the commander of the soldiers. But their pleas had no effect.

As the mob pressed forward, someone knocked a soldier to the ground. The troops panicked and opened fire. Two bullets struck Crispus Attucks, a black man at the front of the crowd. He was the first to die, but not the last. The enraged crowd went home only after receiving a promise that the troops would be tried for murder.

Massacre or Self-Defense? Samuel Adams saw this event as a perfect opportunity to whip up anti-British feeling. He called the riot a "horrid massacre" and had Paul Revere, a local silversmith, engrave a picture of it. Revere's engraving shows soldiers firing at peaceful, unarmed citizens.

Prints of Revere's engraving were distributed throughout the colonies. Patriots saw the Boston Massacre as proof that the British should remove all of their troops from the colonies. Loyalists saw the tragedy as proof that troops were needed more than ever, if only to control Patriot hotheads.

One hero came out of this sad event. He was a Boston lawyer named John Adams. Like his cousin Samuel, John Adams was a Patriot. But he also believed that every person, even the British soldiers, had the right to a fair trial. Adams agreed to defend the soldiers, even though he knew that his action would cost him friends and clients.

At the murder trial, Adams argued that the troops had acted in self-defense. The jury found six of the soldiers not guilty. Two of them were found guilty only of manslaughter, or causing death without meaning to.

Throughout his long life, John Adams remained proud of his defense of the British soldiers. He said that upholding the law in this case was “one of the best pieces of service I ever rendered to my country.”

Section 6 - The Boston Tea Party

To protest the tax on tea, Patriots disguised as American Indians threw 342 chests of tea overboard from three British ships. Colonists later called this the Boston Tea Party.

Despite the hopes of Patriots like Sam Adams, the Boston Massacre did not spark new protests against British rule. Instead, the repeal of the Townshend duties led to a period of calm. True, there was still a small duty on tea. But the tax didn't seem to bother Loyalists very much. Patriots knew they could always drink Dutch tea that had been smuggled into the colonies without paying duties.

Things did not stay peaceful, however. In 1773, a new law called the Tea Act prompted more protests. One of them was the incident that became known as the Boston Tea Party.

The Tea Act The Tea Act was Lord North's attempt to rescue the British East India Company. This large trading company controlled all the trade between Great Britain and Asia. For years, it had been a moneymaker for Great Britain. But the American boycott of British tea hurt the company badly. By 1773, the tea company was in danger of going broke unless it could sell off the 17 million pounds of tea that were sitting in its London warehouses.

The Tea Act lowered the cost of tea that was sold by the British East India Company in the colonies. As a result, even taxed British tea became cheaper than smuggled Dutch tea. The Tea Act also gave the British East India Company a monopoly, or complete control, over tea sales in the colonies. From now on, the only merchants who could sell the bargain-priced tea were those chosen by the company.

Lord North may have thought he could persuade Americans to buy taxed tea by making it so cheap, but colonists weren't fooled. They saw the Tea Act as still another attempt to tax them without their consent.

In addition, many merchants were alarmed by the East India Company's monopoly over the tea trade. They wondered what the British government might try to control next. Would there be a monopoly on cloth? On sugar? Nervous merchants wondered what would happen to their businesses if other goods were also restricted.

Tea Ships Arrive When the British East India Company's tea ships sailed into American ports, angry protesters kept them from unloading their cargoes. More than one ship turned back for England, still filled with tea. In Boston, however, the royal governor ordered the British navy to block the exit from Boston Harbor. He insisted that three tea ships would not leave until all their tea was unloaded.

On December 16, 1773, the Sons of Liberty decided to unload the tea, but not in the way the governor had in mind. That night, about 50 men dressed as Mohawk Indians boarded the three ships. One of them, George Hewes, described what happened:

We then were ordered by our commander to open the hatches and take out all the chests of tea and throw them overboard . . . and we immediately proceeded to execute his orders, first cutting and splitting the chests with our tomahawks . . . In about three hours from the time we went on board, we had thus broken and thrown overboard every tea chest to be found on the ship . . . We were surrounded by British armed ships, but no attempt was made to resist us.

About 90,000 pounds of tea were dumped into the sea that night. Nothing else on the ships was touched.

News of the Boston Tea Party excited Patriots throughout the colonies. "This is the most magnificent moment of all," wrote John Adams in his journal the next day. "This destruction of the tea is so bold, so daring, so firm . . . it must have . . . important consequences." He was right.

Section 7 - The Intolerable Acts

The first of the Intolerable Acts punished Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party. It closed Boston Harbor to all shipping until the destroyed tea was paid for. As a result, sailors and dockworkers lost their jobs, and stores closed for lack of goods to sell.

Lord North was stunned by news of the Boston Tea Party. As he saw it, he had tried to help the colonists by sending them cheap tea. And what did they do? They threw it in the sea! This time they had gone too far.

King George agreed. To him, the issue was no longer about taxes. It was about Great Britain's control over the colonies. "We must master them totally," he declared, "or leave them to themselves." The king wasn't about to leave the colonies to themselves, however.

Great Britain's anger led Parliament to pass a new series of laws in 1774. These laws were so harsh that many colonists called them intolerable, or unacceptable. Throughout the colonies, they became known as the Intolerable Acts.

Parliament Punishes Massachusetts The Intolerable Acts were designed to punish Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party. The first law closed Boston Harbor to all shipping until the ruined tea was paid for. The second law placed the government of Massachusetts firmly under British control. Colonists in Massachusetts could not even hold a town meeting without the colonial governor's permission. The third law said that British soldiers who were accused of murder would be tried in England, not in the colonies. Finally, more troops were sent to Boston to enforce the new laws.

A few British leaders worried that the Intolerable Acts might push the colonies into rebellion. But George III was sure they would force the colonists to give in to British authority.

The Colonies Begin to Unite In fact, the Intolerable Acts did not force the colonists to give in. Boston Patriots declared they would “abandon their city to flames” before paying a penny for the lost tea. Merchants in other cities showed their support by closing their shops. Many colonies sent food and money to Boston so that its citizens would not starve.

In Virginia, lawmakers drafted a resolution in support of Massachusetts. The Virginians said that everyone’s rights were at stake. “An attack made on one of our sister colonies,” they declared, “is an attack made on all British America.”

The Virginians also called for a congress, or meeting, of delegates from all the colonies. The purpose of the congress would be to find a peaceful solution to the conflicts with Great Britain.

Not all Americans agreed with this plan. In every colony, there were Loyalists who thought that Bostonians had gone too far and should pay for the tea. If they were forced to choose, they would side with the king against Sam Adams and his Sons of Liberty. In their view, it was the misguided Patriots who were causing all the trouble.

The First Continental Congress In September 1774, some 50 leaders from 12 colonies met in Philadelphia. The meeting brought together delegates from most of the British colonies on the North American continent, so it was called the First Continental Congress.

Delegates from the colonies met in Philadelphia at the First Continental Congress in 1774. Patrick Henry of Virginia urged the colonists to unite as Americans, not as citizens of separate colonies.

The delegates were used to thinking of themselves as citizens of their own colonies. Patrick Henry, a leader from Virginia, urged them to come together as one people. “I am not a Virginian,” he declared, “but an American.” But only strong Patriots like Sam and John Adams were ready to think of themselves this way. Many delegates were strong Loyalists who still thought of themselves as British. Still others, like George Washington, were somewhere in between. Only one thing united the delegates—their love of liberty and hatred of tyranny.

In spite of their differences, the delegates agreed to send a respectful message to King George. The message urged the king to consider their complaints and to recognize their rights.

The delegates also called for a new boycott of British goods until Parliament repealed the Intolerable Acts. Finally, they agreed to meet again the following May if the boycott didn’t work.

The Colonies Form Militias In towns and cities throughout the colonies, Patriots appointed committees to enforce the boycott. In case the boycott didn’t work, they also organized local militias. In New England, the volunteers called themselves Minutemen because they could be ready to fight in 60 seconds.

Across the colonies, militias marched and drilled. In New Hampshire, unknown persons stole 100 barrels of gunpowder and 16 cannons from a British fort. Similar thefts occurred in other colonies. Rather than forcing the colonies to give in, the Intolerable Acts had brought the two sides to the brink of war.

Section 8 - Lexington and Concord

King George had made many mistakes in his decisions about the colonies. The First Continental Congress listed all these mistakes in its message to the king. Now he made another one.

Rather than consider the colonists' complaints, King George refused even to answer their message. "The New England governments are in a state of rebellion," he said. "Blows must decide whether they are to be subject to this country or independent." In Boston, General Gage, the king's commander of British troops in America, got ready to deliver those blows.

The First Blow at Lexington In April 1775, a spy told General Gage that the colonists were hiding a large supply of gunpowder and weapons in the nearby village of Concord. General Gage decided to strike at once.

The general ordered 700 of his best troops to march to Concord and seize the weapons. To keep the colonists from moving the weapons, the attack had to be a surprise. So Gage had his troops march the 20 miles to Concord at night.

The colonists had their own spies. When Gage's troops slipped out of Boston on April 18, 1775, Patriots were watching their every move. Soon Paul Revere and others were galloping through the countryside, warning colonists that the British soldiers were coming.

The news reached Lexington, a town on the road to Concord, in the early hours of April 19. Led by Captain John Parker, a small band of Minutemen gathered nervously in the chilly night air.

At dawn, the British troops reached the town green. "Stand your ground," ordered Parker. "Don't fire unless fired upon, but if they mean to have a war, let it begin here." As the Minuteman faced the British troops, a shot rang out—from where, no one knew for certain. Without orders, the soldiers rushed forward, shooting wildly. A few Minutemen managed to return fire.

When the firing stopped, eight colonists lay dead or dying. Another ten were limping to safety with painful wounds. The British troops gave three cheers for victory and marched on to Concord.

At the North Bridge in Concord, the Minutemen fired upon British troops who had occupied the town. Surprised by the fury of the colonial attack, the British fled in panic. The Amos Doolittle engraving above shows the bridge at the time of the battle.

The Second Blow at Concord By breakfast time, the British were in Concord, searching for gunpowder and weapons. But the colonists had hidden them. In frustration, the soldiers piled up a few wooden tools, tents, and gun carriages and set them on fire.

On a ridge outside the city, militiamen from the surrounding countryside watched the smoke rise. "Will you let them burn the town down?" shouted one man. Captain Isaac Davis replied, "I haven't a man that's afraid to go." Davis marched his volunteers down the hill. As they approached Concord's North Bridge, the British troops opened fire. Davis fell dead, a bullet through his heart.

The British expected the Americans to break and run. To their surprise, the Minutemen stood their ground and fired back. Two minutes later, it was the redcoats who were running away in panic.

The retreat back to Boston was a nightmare for the British. More than 4,000 armed and angry Minutemen lined their route, shooting at every redcoat they saw. By the end of the day, 74 British soldiers were dead and another 200 were wounded or missing. The colonists counted their own losses as 49 dead and 41 wounded. A British officer described what it was like to face the colonists' fury that day. "Whoever looks upon them as an irregular mob," the officer said, "will find himself much mistaken."

Indeed, since the French and Indian War, the British had been mistaken about the colonists again and again. Their biggest mistake was in thinking that ordinary people—farmers, merchants, workers, and housewives—would not fight for the rights that they held dear. At Lexington and Concord, Americans proved they were not only willing to fight for their rights. They were even willing to die for them.

Summary

In this chapter, you read about tensions between the colonies and Great Britain in the mid-1700s.

Before 1763 During the French and Indian War (1754-1763), Great Britain and France fought for territory and power. When the war ended, France gave up Canada to Great Britain. Great Britain now had a much larger American empire to control.

Early British Actions in the Colonies The war left Great Britain with huge debts. To raise money, Parliament passed the Stamp Act in 1765. Colonists protested the Stamp Act because it was passed without colonial representation. Colonists also protested the Quartering Act, which required them to house British troops at the colonies' expense.

The Townshend Acts and the Boston Massacre The Townshend Acts imposed more taxes on the colonies, which divided many colonists into opposing camps. Loyalists urged obedience to Britain, but Patriots resisted "taxation without representation" through protests, boycotts, and riots. Tensions in Boston erupted into violence in 1770 when British troops fired into a crowd of colonists in what become known as the Boston Massacre.

The Boston Tea Party and the Intolerable Acts When Patriots protested a new tax on tea by throwing tea into Boston Harbor in 1773, Great Britain responded by passing the Intolerable Acts to force the colonies to give in to British authority. Patriots responded by forming the First Continental Congress and organizing colonial militias.

Lexington and Concord Fighting between Patriots and British troops at Lexington and Concord in 1775 showed that colonists would not only fight for their rights, but were willing to die for them.

The Declaration of Independence

Overview and Objectives

Overview

Students learn about key events leading up to the writing of the Declaration of Independence and, in a Writing for Understanding activity, analyze key excerpts of the Declaration and the principles of government they express.

Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

Social Studies

- identify the final causes, such as the Battle of Breed's Hill and Common Sense, that brought about independence.
- analyze the principles of government expressed in the Declaration of Independence.
- recognize how delegates to the Second Continental Congress were able to preserve the slave trade by suppressing Jefferson's attempt to condemn it in the Declaration of Independence.

Language Arts

- write an essay with a coherent thesis and a clear, well-supported conclusion.
- support a thesis or conclusions with paraphrases, quotations, and comparisons.
- revise writing for word choice and appropriate organization.

Social Studies Vocabulary

Key Content Terms independence, petition, Common Sense, Declaration of Independence, natural rights

Academic Vocabulary debate, impose, policy, fundamental

Section 1 - Introduction

The battles of Lexington and Concord marked the start of the fighting that would lead to independence from Great Britain. The day after the clashes, horseback riders galloped through the colonies with news of the “barbarous murders” of innocent militiamen. Most Americans were deeply shocked. More urgently than ever, they debated what the colonies should do about the trouble with Great Britain.

The Declaration of Independence was adopted on July 4, 1776. ~~This painting shows the committee that~~

The choices were clear enough. The colonies could declare their independence. Or they could continue with protests and petitions, or formal requests. This second choice would keep the colonies at peace, but at what cost to the colonists’ freedom?

No one was more outspoken in his support for independence than Patrick Henry of Virginia. After the passage of the Intolerable Acts, Henry delivered to the Virginia House of Burgesses one of the most famous speeches in American history.

“There is no longer any room for hope,” he began. “If we wish to be free . . . we must fight! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston. The war is inevitable—and let it come!”

Patrick Henry of Virginia gave a speech in May 1775 that helped lead the colonies closer to independence.

Then Henry spoke to those who treasured peace above freedom:

Gentlemen may cry, Peace, peace—but there is no peace.

The war is actually begun. The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! . . . What is it that gentlemen wish? . . . Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!

Despite the passionate words of Patriots like Henry, most colonists remained unsure about separating from Great Britain. As you will read, only after the fighting started did they decide to declare independence.

Section 2 - The Colonists Organize an Army

On May 10, 1775, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia. By then, New England militia had amassed around Boston. The first question facing Congress was who should command this “New England army.” The obvious answer was a New Englander.

George Washington and the Continental Army John Adams of Massachusetts had another idea. He proposed that Congress create a “Continental army” made up of troops from all the colonies. To lead this army, Adams nominated “a Gentleman whose Skill and Experience as an Officer, whose . . . great Talents and excellent universal Character, would [unite] the colonies better than any other person” alive. That man was George Washington of Virginia, who had distinguished himself in the French and Indian War.

The delegates agreed. They unanimously elected Washington to be commander in chief of the new Continental army.

Orderly rows of British soldiers marched up Breed’s Hill and eventually defeated the American forc...

The Battle of Bunker Hill Meanwhile, militiamen near Boston made plans to fortify two hills that overlooked the city: Bunker Hill and Breed’s Hill. On the night of June 16, 1775, Israel Putnam led a few hundred men up Breed’s Hill. In four hours of furious digging, they erected a crude fort on the top of the hill.

The fort worried British general William Howe, who had just arrived from England with fresh troops. Howe ordered an immediate attack. Under a hot June sun, some 2,000 British troops formed two long lines at the base of Breed’s Hill. At Howe’s order, the redcoats marched up the slope.

As the lines moved ever closer, Putnam ordered his men, “Don’t fire until you see the whites of their eyes.” Only when the British were almost on top of them did the militiamen pull their triggers. The red lines broke and fell back in confusion.

The British regrouped and attacked again. Once more the Americans stopped their advance. On their third attack, the redcoats finally took the hill—but only because the Americans had used up all their gunpowder and pulled back.

This clash, which became known as the Battle of Bunker Hill, was short but very bloody. More than 1,000 British troops and nearly half that many Americans were killed or wounded.

~~George Washington turned an undisciplined army, composed of troops from all the colonies, into a~~

General Washington Takes Command George Washington took command of his new army shortly after the Battle of Bunker Hill. He found “a mixed multitude of people . . . under very little discipline, order, or government.” Washington worked hard to impose order. One man wrote, “Everyone is made to know his place and keep in it . . . It is surprising how much work has been done.”

A month later, however, a dismayed Washington learned that the army had only 36 barrels of gunpowder—enough for each soldier to fire just nine shots. To deceive the British, Washington started a rumor in Boston that he had 1,800 barrels of gunpowder— more than he knew what to do with! Luckily, the British believed the rumor. Meanwhile, Washington sent desperate letters to the colonies begging for gunpowder.

Washington got his powder. But he still did not dare attack the British forces in Boston. To do that he needed artillery—heavy guns, such as cannons—to bombard their defenses. In desperation, Washington sent a Boston bookseller named Henry Knox to Fort Ticonderoga to round up some big guns.

Ticonderoga was an old British fort located at the southern end of Lake Champlain in New York. A few months earlier, militiamen led by Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold had seized the fort. The Americans had little use for the run-down fort, but its guns would prove priceless.

As winter set in, Knox loaded 59 cannons onto huge sleds and dragged them 300 miles to Boston. Knox's 42 sleds also carried 2,300 pounds of lead for making bullets. Boston was about to be under siege.

The British Abandon Boston On March 4, 1776, the British soldiers in Boston awoke to a frightening sight. The night before, the ridges of nearby Dorchester Heights had been bare. Now they bristled with cannons, all aimed at the city.

Rather than risk another battle, General Howe abandoned the city. Within days, more than a hundred ships left Boston Harbor for Canada. The ships carried 9,000 British troops as well as 1,100 Loyalists who preferred to leave their homes behind rather than live with rebels.

Some Americans hoped the war was over. Washington, however, knew it was only the beginning.

Section 3 - On the Eve of Independence

Nearly a year passed between the skirmishes at Lexington and Concord and the British retreat from Boston. During that time, there was little talk of independence. Most colonists still considered themselves loyal British subjects. Their quarrel was not with Great Britain itself but with its policies toward the colonies.

The Olive Branch Petition Many Americans pinned their hopes for peace on King George. In July 1775, the Second Continental Congress sent a petition to George III asking him to end the quarrel. John Adams called the petition an "olive branch." Olive tree branches are an ancient symbol of peace.

By the time the petition reached London, however, the king had declared the colonies to be in "open and avowed Rebellion." He ordered his ministers "to bring the Traitors to Justice."

Being called a traitor was enough to change the mind of one of Washington's generals. The general confessed that he had long "looked with some degree of horror on the scheme of separation." Now he agreed with Patrick Henry that colonists "must be Independent or Slaves."

Thomas Paine published the pamphlet Common Sense to persuade colonists to support independence.

Common Sense Many colonists, however, still looked with horror at the idea of independence. Then, early in 1776, a Patriot named Thomas Paine published a fiery pamphlet entitled Common Sense. Paine scoffed at the idea that Americans owed any loyalty to King George. "Of more worth is one honest man to society," he wrote, "than all the crowned ruffians who ever lived."

Paine also attacked the argument that the colonies' ties to Great Britain had benefited Americans. Just the opposite was true, he said. American trade had suffered under British control. Americans had also been hurt by being dragged into Great Britain's European wars.

Paine ended with a vision of an independent America as a homeland of liberty. "Ye that love mankind!" he urged. "Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny, but the tyrant, stand forth! . . . The sun never shined on a cause of greater worth."

Within a few months, more than 120,000 copies of Common Sense were printed in the colonies. Paine's arguments helped persuade thousands of colonists that independence was not only sensible, but that it was the key to a brighter future.

Section 4 - Thomas Jefferson Drafts a Declaration

A few weeks after the British left Boston, the Second Continental Congress appointed a committee to write a declaration, or formal statement, of independence. The task of drafting the Declaration of Independence went to the committee's youngest member, 33-year-old Thomas Jefferson of Virginia. A shy man, Jefferson said little in Congress, but he stated his ideas brilliantly in writing.

~~After~~ Thomas Jefferson wrote the first draft of the Declaration of Independence, ~~Benjamin Franklin~~

Jefferson's job was to explain to the world why the colonies were choosing to separate from Britain. "When in the Course of human events," he began, if one group of people finds it necessary to break its ties with another, "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind" requires that they explain their actions.

Principles on Which to Base a New Government Jefferson's explanation was simple but revolutionary. Loyalists had argued that colonists had a duty to obey the king, whose authority came from God. Jefferson reasoned quite differently. He based his arguments on the principle of natural rights. All people are born equal in God's sight, he reasoned, and all are entitled to the same basic rights. In Jefferson's eloquent words,

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.

Governments are formed, Jefferson said, "to secure these rights." Their power to rule comes from "the consent of the governed." If a government fails to protect people's fundamental rights, "it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it." The people can then create a new government that will protect "their Safety and Happiness."

The King's Crimes King George, Jefferson continued, had shown no concern for the rights of colonists. Instead, the king's policies had been aimed at establishing "an absolute Tyranny over these States" (the colonies).

As proof, Jefferson included a long list of the king's abuses. In all these actions, Jefferson claimed, George III had shown he was "unfit to be the ruler of a free people."

The time had come, Jefferson concluded, for the colonies' ties to Great Britain to be broken. "These United Colonies are," he declared, "and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States."

Section 5 - The Final Break

Any mention of slavery was removed from the Declaration of Independence ~~because the slave trade~~

On July 1, 1776, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia's State House to debate independence. By noon, the temperature outside had soared into the nineties, and a thunderstorm was gathering. Inside the State House, emotions were equally hot and stormy. By the end of the day, the issue was still undecided.

The next day was cooler and calmer. On July 2, all but one of the 13 colonies voted for independence. New York cast no vote.

No delegate was more excited about the colonies' decision than John Adams. He wrote to his wife Abigail, "The second Day of July . . . will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, with Pomp and Parade, with Shews (shows), Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations, from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more."

Debate over Slavery Adams was wrong about the date that would be celebrated as America's birthday, but only because Congress decided to revise Jefferson's declaration. The delegates liked most of what they read, except for a passage on slavery. Jefferson had charged King George with violating the "sacred rights of life and liberty . . . of a distant people [by] carrying them into slavery."

This poster shows the delegates leaving Independence Hall in Philadelphia to announce the signing ...

Almost no one liked this passage. Southerners feared that it might lead to demands to free the slaves. Enslaved African Americans provided much of the labor used on southern farms. Northerners worried that New England merchants, who benefited from the slave trade, might be offended. Even delegates who opposed slavery felt it was unfair to blame the king for enslaving Africans. The passage was removed.

Independence Day On July 4, the delegates approved a final version of the Declaration of Independence. When they signed the document, they pledged to support independence with "our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor."

This was a serious pledge. Every signer understood that he was committing an act of treason against Great Britain. If the new nation failed to win its freedom, each of them could very well end up swinging from a hangman's rope. Knowing this, Benjamin Franklin told the delegates, "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately."

Summary

In this chapter, you read how the American colonies took the dramatic step of declaring their independence.

The Colonists Organize an Army George Washington took command of the Continental Army after the Battle of Bunker Hill. The Continental Army used cannons brought from Fort Ticonderoga in New York to force the British to abandon Boston in March 1776.

On the Eve of Independence The failure of the Olive Branch Petition and the success of Thomas Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* moved the colonies closer to the decision to declare independence from Great Britain.

Thomas Jefferson Drafts a Declaration Thomas Jefferson, a delegate to the Second Continental Congress, was selected to write the Declaration of Independence.

The Final Break On July 4, 1776, the delegates approved the Declaration of Independence. For the first time in history, a government was being established on the principle of people's natural rights and the duty of government to honor those rights.

The American Revolution

Overview and Objectives

Overview

In an Experiential Exercise, students participate in a game of Capture the Flag. They compare their experience to the determining factors of the war for independence from Great Britain—examining the strengths and weaknesses of each side, important battles, and other key factors in the conflict—to determine how the British were defeated.

Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

Social Studies

- identify the impact of the American Revolution on other parts of the world.
- examine the course of the war for independence and the subsequent defeat of the British.

Language Arts

- analyze similes to understand the course and outcome of the war for independence.

Social Studies Vocabulary

Key Content Terms American Revolution, Continental army, strategy, ally

Academic Vocabulary democracy, rebellion, issue, crucial

Section 1 - Introduction

~~This painting shows British troops in battle during the American Revolution. Compare this painting to~~

When the American war for independence from Great Britain began in 1775, 15-year-old Joseph Martin was too young to join the Continental army. But when recruiters returned to his Connecticut village a year later, he was ready to go.

The recruiters were looking for volunteers to go to New York, where the British were rumored to have 15,000 troops. "I did not care if there had been fifteen times fifteen thousand," Martin said later. "I never spent a thought about numbers. The Americans were invincible, in my opinion."

Just two days after the Declaration of Independence was signed, Martin traded his plow for a musket, an early type of rifle. A week later, he arrived in New York City, where he hoped to "snuff [sniff] a little gunpowder." As he recalled, "I was now, what I had long wished to be, a soldier; I had obtained my heart's desire; it was now my business to prove myself equal to my profession.

~~This painting shows American soldiers at the Battle of Brandywine in 1777 during the war for independence.~~

If Martin had known what lay ahead, he might not have been so pleased about his new profession. The army in New York was ill trained, ill equipped, and just plain ill. "Almost the whole regiment are sick," reported a Massachusetts officer of his unit.

The British army, in contrast, was well trained, well equipped, and well supported by the British navy. Rather than the 15,000 troops Martin had heard of, the British had assembled a force of 25,000 men in New York. More than 400 British ships floated in the harbor. This was the biggest army and the largest fleet the British had ever sent overseas.

In the face of such overwhelming force, the Americans should have been easily defeated. But they were not. In this chapter, you will read how soldiers like Joseph Martin stood up to mighty Great Britain in a successful revolution that created a new nation.

Section 2 - American Strengths and Weaknesses

At the beginning of the war, American soldiers were poorly trained and poorly equipped. ~~They had~~

The Patriots were in a weak position when the American Revolution began. They had a hastily organized, untrained army and a small navy. Their weaknesses were far more obvious than their strengths.

American Weaknesses The Continental army was always short of men. General George Washington never had more than 20,000 troops at one time and place. Many soldiers enlisted for six months or a year. Just when they were learning how to fight, they would pick up their muskets and go home to take care of their farms and families.

Few Americans were trained for battle. Some were hunters and could shoot well enough from behind a tree. But when facing a mass of well-disciplined redcoats, they were likely to turn and run.

The army was plagued by shortages. Guns and gunpowder were so scarce that Benjamin Franklin suggested arming the troops with bows and arrows. Food shortages forced soldiers to beg for handouts. Uniforms were scarce as well. In winter, one could track shoeless soldiers by their bloody footprints in the snow.

Such shortages outraged Washington. But when he complained to the Second Continental Congress, nothing changed. Congress, the new nation's only government, lacked the power to raise money for supplies by taxing the colonies—now the new nation's states.

In desperation, Congress printed paper money to pay for the war. But the value of this money dropped so low that merchants demanded to be paid in gold instead. Like everything else, gold was scarce.

American Strengths Still, the Americans did have strengths. One was the patriotism of people like Joseph Martin, who willingly gave their lives to defend the ideal of a country based on liberty and democracy. Without them, the war would have been quickly lost.

The Americans also received help from overseas. Motivated by their old hatred of the English, the French secretly aided the Americans. During the first two years of the war, 90 percent of the Americans' gunpowder came from Europe, mostly from France. In addition, a Polish Jew named Haym Salomon, who immigrated to New York in 1775, helped to finance the war effort.

The Americans' other great strength was their commander. General Washington was more than an experienced military leader. He was also a man who inspired courage and confidence. In the dark days to come, it was Washington who would keep the ragtag Continental army together.

Section 3 - British Strengths and Weaknesses

In contrast to the American colonies, Great Britain entered the war from a position of strength. Yet, despite both their real and their perceived advantages, the British forces encountered many problems.

British soldiers were trained professionals. They were well equipped with plenty of ammunition.

British Strengths With a professional army of about 42,000 troops at the beginning of the war, British forces greatly outnumbered the Continental army. In addition, George III hired 30,000 mercenaries from Germany. These hired soldiers were known as Hessians (HEH-shenz) because they came from a part of Germany called Hesse-Cassel. The British were also able to recruit many Loyalists, African Americans, and American Indians to fight on their side.

British and Hessian troops were well trained in European military tactics. They excelled in large battles fought by a mass of troops on open ground. They also had far more experience firing artillery than Americans had.

The British forces were well supplied, as well. Unlike the pitifully equipped Continental army, they seldom lacked for food, uniforms, weapons, or ammunition.

British Weaknesses Even so, the war presented Great Britain with huge problems. One was the distance between Great Britain and America. Sending troops and supplies across the Atlantic was slow and costly. News of battles arrived in England long after they had occurred, making it difficult for British leaders to plan a course of action.

A second problem was that King George and his ministers were never able to convince the British people that defeating the rebels was vital to the future of Great Britain. The longer the war dragged on, the less happy the British taxpayers became about paying its heavy costs.

A third problem was poor leadership. Lord George Germain, the man chosen to direct the British troops, had no real sense of how to defeat the rebels. How could he? He had never set foot in North America. Nor did it occur to him to go see for himself what his army was up against. If he had, Germain might have realized that this was not a war that could be won by conquering a city or two.

To end the revolution, Germain's forces would have to crush the Patriots' will to fight, state by state. Instead, Germain kept changing plans and generals, hoping that some combination of the two would bring him an easy victory.

Section 4 - Great Britain Almost Wins the War

African Americans faced a difficult decision during the revolution. ~~Which country were they more likely to~~

After the British abandoned Boston in the spring of 1776, Germain came up with his first plan for winning the war. British forces in America, led by General William Howe, were ordered to capture New York City. From that base, British troops would then move north to destroy the rebellion at its heart: Massachusetts.

To block the British invasion, Washington hurried with his army from Boston to New York. It was there that he heard the good news: by signing the Declaration of Independence, Congress had finally declared the colonies to be "free and independent states."

Washington had the Declaration of Independence read aloud to his troops. The time had come, he said, to "show our enemies, and the whole world, that free men, contending for their own land, are superior to any mercenaries on Earth." The Declaration made it clear that the troops had the support of all the colonies, who agreed that independence was a prize worth fighting for.

African Americans and the War For African Americans, however, the Declaration of Independence raised both hopes and questions. Did Jefferson's words "all men are created equal" apply to them? Would independence bring an end to slavery? Should they join the revolution?

Even before independence was declared, a number of African Americans had joined the Patriot cause. Black militiamen, both free and slave, fought at Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill. Early in the war, however, blacks were banned from the Continental army. Washington did not want the army to become a haven for runaway slaves.

In contrast, the British promised freedom to all slaves who took up arms for the king. As a result, thousands of runaways became Loyalists and fought for Great Britain.

A shortage of volunteers soon forced Washington to change his mind. By 1779, about 15 percent of the soldiers in the Continental army were African Americans. Large numbers of black sailors also served in the Continental navy.

As black Americans joined the war effort, some whites began to question their own beliefs. How could they accept slavery if they truly believed that all people are created equal, with the same rights to life, liberty, and happiness? By the war's end, Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania had all taken steps to end slavery.

Defeat in New York On August 27, 1776, the American and British armies met in Brooklyn, New York, for what promised to be a decisive battle. The Americans began their defense of the city in high spirits. But the inexperienced Americans were no match for the British, with their greater numbers and superior training. In two days of fighting, the British lost only 377 men, while the Americans lost 1,407.

Satisfied that the war was nearly won, Howe ordered a halt to the British attack. Washington, he assumed, would do what any self-respecting European general would do in a hopeless situation. He would surrender honorably. And so Howe waited.

Washington had no intention of giving up. But for his army to survive, he would have to retreat. Even though Washington knew this, he could not bring himself to utter the word retreat.

An officer named Thomas Mifflin rescued him from his pride. "What is your strength?" Mifflin asked. "Nine thousand," Washington replied. "It is not sufficient," said Mifflin bluntly. "We must retreat."

Fading Hopes The battle for New York City was the first of many defeats for the Americans. In the weeks that followed, British forces chased the Americans out of New York, through New Jersey, and finally across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania.

For Joseph Martin and his comrades, this was a trying time. There was little food to eat, and the soldiers grew weak from hunger. As the weather turned cold, muddy roads and icy streams added to their misery. With their terms of enlistment nearly up, many soldiers headed for home. Along the way, they spread the word that anyone who volunteered to risk his life in the Continental army had to be crazy.

By the time Washington reached Pennsylvania, only a few thousand men were still under his command. Many of his remaining troops, he reported, were "entirely naked and most so thinly clad [clothed] as to be unfit for service." More troops had to be found, and found quickly, he wrote his brother. Otherwise, "I think the game will be pretty well up."

Section 5 - Pep Talk and Surprise Victories

~~With morale low and his soldiers threatening to return home, George Washington planned a daring attack.~~

By the end of 1776, the British also thought the war was just about over. General Howe offered to pardon all rebels who signed a statement promising to “remain in peaceful obedience” to the king. Thousands took him up on his offer.

The Crisis Washington knew he had to do something—quickly. Gathering his last troops together, he read to them from Thomas Paine’s new pamphlet, *The Crisis*.

These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.

Next, Washington outlined a daring plan to attack Hessian troops who were camped for the winter in Trenton, New Jersey. Heartened by Thomas Paine’s words, his men did not “shrink from the service of their country.”

Victory in Trenton Late on December 25, 1776, Washington’s army crossed the ice-choked Delaware River in small boats. On the New Jersey shore, Washington gave his men the password for the long nighttime march ahead: “Victory or death.”

As the American troops made their way toward Trenton, a driving snow chilled them to the bone. Ice and rocks cut through their worn-out shoes. One officer reported to Washington that the troops’ guns were too wet to fire. “Use the bayonets,” the general replied. “The town must be taken.”

When the Americans reached Trenton, they found the Hessians happily sleeping off their Christmas feasts. Caught completely by surprise, the mercenaries surrendered. Washington took 868 prisoners without losing even a single man. A week later, the Americans captured another 300 British troops at Princeton, New Jersey. These defeats convinced Howe that it would take more than capturing New York City and issuing pardons to win the war.

News of Washington’s victories electrified Patriots. “A few days ago they had given up their cause for lost,” wrote an unhappy Loyalist. “Their late successes have turned the scale and they are all liberty mad again.” The game was not yet up.

Section 6 - The Tide Begins to Turn

~~Catherine Schuyler was the wife of Philip Schuyler, a major general in the Continental Army.~~

When the American Revolution began, both sides adopted the same military strategy, or overall plan for winning the war. That strategy was to defeat the enemy in one big battle.

After barely escaping from his loss in New York, Washington revised his strategy. In the future, he wrote Congress, he would avoid large battles that might put his army at risk. Instead, the war would be "defensive." Rather than defeating the British, Washington hoped to tire them out.

A New British Strategy Germain revised the British strategy as well. His new plan was to divide the rebels by taking control of New York's Hudson River Valley. Control of this waterway would allow the British to cut New England off from the rest of the states. Without men and supplies from the New England states, the Continental army would surely collapse.

To carry out this plan, General John Burgoyne (ber-GOIN) left Canada in June 1777 with about 8,000 British soldiers and American Indian warriors. He planned to move this army south to Albany, New York. There he would meet up with General Howe, who was supposed to march his army north from New York City.

Problems with Burgoyne's Plan There were two big problems with Burgoyne's plan. The first was that what looked like an easy invasion route on a map was anything but easy. The route Burgoyne chose from Canada to Albany took his army through more than 20 miles of tangled wilderness. His army had to build bridges, chop down countless trees, and lay out miles of log roads through swamps as it crept toward Albany.

To make matters worse, Burgoyne didn't travel light. His army was slowed by more than 600 wagons, 30 of them filled with his personal baggage. Even in the wilderness, "Gentleman Johnny" Burgoyne sipped champagne with his supper.

The second problem with Burgoyne's plan was that General Howe had his own ideas about how to win the war. Instead of marching to Albany, Howe headed for Philadelphia, the rebels' capital. There he hoped to lure Washington into another major battle. Howe hoped it would be the last one.

Washington, however, refused to risk his army in another big battle. He would not fight for Philadelphia. Instead, he played hide-and-seek with Howe, attacking here and there and then disappearing into the countryside.

A Turning Point By the time the slow-moving Burgoyne finally reached Saratoga Springs on the Hudson River, the area was swarming with militia. Although the rebels outnumbered his army, Burgoyne ordered an attack. Again and again the rebels beat back Burgoyne's troops. On October 17, 1777, Burgoyne accepted defeat.

Burgoyne's surrender marked a turning point in the war. Before the victory at Saratoga, most of the world believed that the American cause was hopeless. Now the Americans had shown they could stand up to a British army and win.

Not long after this victory, France came into the war as an ally of the United States. The French government sent money, weapons, troops, and warships to the Americans. Spain also entered the war against Great Britain. The American cause no longer looked quite so hopeless.

~~Congress fled to Lancaster, then York, then Lancaster, then York, then Lancaster, then York.~~

Winter at Valley Forge Saratoga was a stunning victory, but the war was far from over. While General Washington's army roamed the countryside, Howe's forces still occupied Philadelphia.

Late in 1777, Congress declared a day of thanksgiving for the army's successes. By this time, Washington and his army were on their way to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, to make camp for the winter. Joseph Martin described the army's "celebration":

We had nothing to eat for two or three days previous . . . But we must now have what Congress said, a sumptuous [lavish] Thanksgiving . . . It gave each and every man a gill [a few ounces] of rice and a tablespoon of vinegar! The army was now not only starved but naked. The greatest part were not only shirtless and barefoot, but destitute of [without] all other clothing, especially blankets.

Washington's troops were hungry because many farmers preferred to sell food to the British. The British paid them in gold, whereas Congress paid them in paper money. As for uniforms and blankets, merchants had raised the prices for these items sky-high. This desire for profits at the army's expense outraged Washington. "No punishment," he fumed, "is too great for the man who can build his greatness upon his country's ruin."

To help lift his men from their misery, Washington put Baron Friedrich von Steuben (FREE-drik von STU-bin) in charge of training. A military officer from Prussia (in modern-day Germany), von Steuben arrived in December 1777 and set to work turning the Continental army into an organized fighting force. The Prussian's method, wrote Martin, was "continual drill." It worked wonders. "The army grows stronger every day," wrote one officer. "There is a spirit of discipline among the troops that is better than numbers."

Another foreign volunteer, the Marquis de Lafayette (mar-KEE duh la-fey-ET), also helped raise the troops' spirits. Although he was one of the richest men in France, Lafayette chose to share the hardships of Valley Forge. He even used his own money to buy the men warm clothing. "The patient fortitude [courage] of the officers and soldiers," Lafayette wrote, "was a continual miracle."

When at last spring arrived, Washington received news that the British were about to abandon Philadelphia. The time had come to put his newly trained army to the test.

~~While during the retreating Continental Army, British soldiers looted the homes of Americans, but~~

The Battle of Monmouth By this time, Sir Henry Clinton had replaced General Howe as commander of the British forces in North America. In Clinton's view, taking over Philadelphia had gained the British nothing. He ordered his army to retreat to New York City, where the Royal Navy could keep it supplied by sea.

Now it was Washington's turn to chase an army across New Jersey. On June 28, 1778, he caught up with the retreating British near Monmouth, New Jersey. In the battle that followed, Washington seemed to be everywhere, constantly rallying his men to stand and fight. "Cheering them by his voice and example," wrote Lafayette, "never had I beheld [seen] so superb a man."

Late that night, the British slipped across the Hudson River to safety in New York City. Washington camped with his army nearby. It was pleasing, he wrote, "that after two years maneuvering . . . both armies are brought back to the very point they set out from." Neither army knew it yet, but the war in the North was over.

Section 7 - The War Moves South

~~This engraving shows Francis Marion crossing the Pee Dee River in South Carolina. Marion, known as~~

After failing to conquer any state in the North, the British changed strategies yet again. Their new plan was to move the war to the South. There, they believed, thousands of Loyalists were just waiting to join the king's cause.

Clinton began his "southern campaign" with a successful attack on Savannah, Georgia. From Georgia, he moved north to take control of North and South Carolina. At that point, Clinton returned to New York City, leaving Lord Charles Cornwallis to control the war in the South.

Saving the South Cornwallis soon learned that he did not really control the Carolinas after all. Guerrillas—soldiers who are not part of a regular army—kept the American cause alive. One of them was Francis Marion, who was also known as the "Swamp Fox." Marion's band of rebels harassed the British with hit-and-run raids. They attacked and then faded into the swamps and forests like foxes.

Late in 1780, Washington sent General Nathanael Greene to slow the British advance through the South. Greene's army was too small to meet Cornwallis in a major battle. Instead, Greene led Cornwallis's troops on an exhausting chase through the southern backcountry. He wrote of his strategy, "We fight, get beat, rise, and fight again."

Greene's strategy worked wonderfully. In April 1781, Cornwallis wrote that he was "quite tired of marching about the country." He moved his army to Yorktown, a sleepy tobacco port on Chesapeake Bay in Virginia, for a good rest.

Three groups—the British, the Americans, and the French—were involved in the Battle of Yorktown.

A Trap at Yorktown By the time Cornwallis was settling into Yorktown, France had sent nearly 5,000 troops to join Washington's army in New York. In August, Washington learned that another 3,000 troops were scheduled to arrive soon in 29 French warships.

Washington used this information to set a trap for Cornwallis. Secretly, he moved his army south to Virginia. When they arrived, they joined the French and surrounded Yorktown on land with more than 16,000 troops.

Meanwhile, the French warships showed up just in time to seal off the entrance to Chesapeake Bay. Their appearance was crucial to the American victory. Now Cornwallis was cut off from the British navy and any hope of rescue by sea.

The trap was sprung on October 6, 1781. Joseph Martin watched as a flag was raised to signal that American and French gunners should open fire on Yorktown. "I confess I felt a secret pride swell in my heart," he wrote, "when I saw the 'star-spangled banner' waving majestically." The shelling went on for days, until "most of the guns in the enemy's works were silenced."

~~This map shows key battles of the American Revolution in the early part of the war, major battles~~

Cornwallis Surrenders At first Cornwallis clung to the hope that the British navy would come to his rescue, even as Yorktown was exploding around him. When no ships arrived, he finally agreed to surrender.

On October 19, 1781, American and French troops formed two long lines that stretched for more than a mile along the road to Yorktown—the French on one side and the Americans on the other. The two lines could not have looked more different. The French were dressed in elegant uniforms that gleamed with gold and silver braid in the afternoon sun. The Americans' uniforms—and not everyone even had uniforms—were patched and faded. Behind the lines stood civilians who had traveled for miles to witness the surrender.

After hours of waiting, the crowd watched as 8,000 British troops left Yorktown to lay down their arms. The defeated troops moved “with slow and solemn step.” They were accompanied by a slow tune known as “The World Turned Upside Down.” This same sad tune had been played at Saratoga after the British surrender.

Cornwallis did not take part in this ceremony, saying that he was ill. In reality, the British commander could not bear to surrender publicly to an army that he looked down on as “a contemptible and undisciplined rabble [mob].” While Cornwallis sulked in his tent, his men surrendered their arms. Many of them wept bitter tears.

~~This painting by John Trumbull shows the British surrender at Yorktown. At the center is General B.~~

To the watching Americans, there was nothing sad about that day. “It was a noble sight to us,” wrote Martin, “and the more so, as it seemed to promise a speedy conclusion to the contest.”

Section 8 - The War Ends

The ideals of the American Revolution inspired calls for "liberty and justice for all."

The conclusion of the war did not come as quickly as Martin had hoped. When Lord North, the British prime minister, heard about Cornwallis's defeat at Yorktown, he paced up and down the room repeating, "Oh God! It is all over!" When the British people heard about the defeat, most of them accepted it. The loss at Yorktown drained any remaining support for the war. Still, months dragged by before King George was finally forced to accept that the British had been defeated.

For most Americans, the end of the war was a time for joy and celebration. They had gained the freedom to govern themselves and create their own future. But liberty came at a high price. At least 6,200 Americans had been killed in combat. An estimated 10,000 died in camp of diseases, and another 8,500 died while in captivity as British prisoners. As a proportion of the total population, more Americans died fighting in the American Revolution than in any other conflict except the Civil War, in which Americans fought one another.

The Treaty of Paris Early in 1783, representatives of the United States and Great Britain signed a peace treaty in Paris. The Treaty of Paris had three important parts. First, Great Britain agreed to recognize the United States as an independent nation. Second, Great Britain gave up its claims to all lands between the Atlantic Coast and the Mississippi River, from the border of Canada south to Florida. Third, the United States agreed to return all rights and property taken from Loyalists during the war.

Many Loyalists did not trust the treaty's promise of fair treatment —and for good reason. During the war, Loyalists had been treated badly by Patriots. More than 80,000 Loyalists, both black and white, left the United States to settle in British Canada.

The Impact of the American Revolution The American Revolution had a major impact in other parts of the world. In Europe, it thrilled liberals who dreamed of creating their own democracies. The American example was especially influential in France, which soon had its own revolution. As one Frenchman wrote, "They [Americans] are the hope of the human race; they may well become its model." Indeed, in the 1800s, that model would help inspire revolts against European rule in South America.

Summary

The war officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783. ~~British troops were~~

In this chapter, you read how the American colonies won their independence from Great Britain.

American Strengths and Weaknesses The Continental army was short of men, and few men were trained for battle. The Americans also lacked adequate weapons and food. Their strengths included patriotism, support from France, and Washington as their military leader.

British Strengths and Weaknesses British troops greatly outnumbered American troops and were better trained and equipped. Sending troops and supplies to the colonies was slow and costly. The British also had poor leadership and a lack of support from people at home.

Great Britain Almost Wins the War The British won a series of victories early in the war. After the loss of New York City, only Washington's leadership kept the colonists going.

A Pep Talk and Surprising Victories Thomas Paine's *The Crisis* encouraged Americans to keep fighting. Colonial victories at Trenton and Princeton gave new hope for their cause.

The Tide Begins to Turn The colonists' victory in the Battle of Saratoga in 1777 marked a turning point in the war. Shortly afterward, France and Spain joined the colonies as allies.

The War Goes South The British moved south into Georgia and the Carolinas, but American troops slowed their advance. The British surrendered after the Battle of Yorktown.

The War Ends The conflict ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Under the terms of the treaty, Great Britain recognized the United States as an independent country.