

3 The American Revolution

TERMS & NAMES

George Washington
Declaration of Independence
Thomas Jefferson
Loyalists
Patriots
Treaty of Paris of 1783

MAIN IDEA

The American colonists fought to gain independence from Britain.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The American Revolution created the United States of America.

ONE AMERICAN'S STORY

James Otis, Jr., a young Massachusetts lawyer, was angry about Britain's lack of respect for colonial rights. For example, Britain allowed customs officials to use search warrants to enter any home or business to look for smuggled goods. Otis believed these searches were illegal.

Otis took up a case against the government that involved these search warrants. In court in February 1761, Otis spoke with great emotion for five hours about the search warrant and its use.

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

It appears to me the worst instrument of arbitrary power, the most destructive of English liberty and the fundamental principles of law, that was ever found in an English law-book.

James Otis, Jr., quoted in *James Otis: The Pre-Revolutionist* by J. C. Ridpath

Spectators listened in amazement. One of them, a young lawyer named John Adams, later wrote of Otis's performance: "Then and there, in the old Council Chamber, the child Independence was born." In this section, you will read more about the early protests against Britain's policies in America.



James Otis, Jr., argues in court against illegal search warrants in 1761.

Tighter British Control

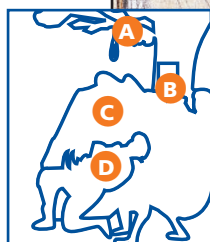
Great Britain gained territory and faced large debts after the French and Indian War. To better govern America and pay off its debts, Parliament passed new laws and taxes. In 1764, they passed the Sugar Act, which taxed sugar and other products shipped to the colonies. Colonial leaders claimed that Parliament had no right to tax the colonies, since the colonists were not represented in Parliament.

In 1765, Parliament passed the Stamp Act. This law required all legal and commercial documents to carry an official stamp showing that a tax had been paid. Colonial leaders protested. Colonial assemblies and newspapers took up the cry, "No taxation without representation!" Colonial merchants organized a boycott of British goods. A boycott is a refusal to buy. Parliament finally repealed the Stamp Act in 1766.

Bostonians Paying the Taxman

In this British political cartoon, Americans are depicted as barbarians who would tar and feather a customs official, or tax collector, and pour hot tea down his throat.

- A** Liberty Tree as a gallows
- B** Stamp Act posted upside down
- C** Protesters in Boston
- D** Customs official tarred and feathered



Colonial Resistance Grows

To raise money to pay for expenses in America, the British Parliament passed the Townshend Acts in 1767. The first of these acts suspended New York's assembly until New Yorkers agreed to house British troops. The other acts placed duties, or import taxes, on various goods.

The colonists felt that the Townshend Acts were a serious threat to their rights and freedoms. To protest these acts, colonists announced another boycott of British goods. The driving force behind this protest was Samuel Adams, a leader of the Boston Sons of Liberty. The Sons of Liberty was a secret society that opposed British policies.

On March 5, 1770, a fight broke out between youths and British soldiers in Boston. The soldiers began firing, killing five civilians. Called the Boston Massacre, this incident became a major source for anti-British propaganda.

Parliament repealed the Townshend Acts but, in 1773, passed the Tea Act. The Tea Act gave the British East India Company control over the American tea trade. This enraged colonial shippers and merchants. In Boston, the Sons of Liberty organized the Boston Tea Party. On December 16, 1773, a group of men disguised as Native Americans boarded three British tea ships. They destroyed 342 chests of tea.

ReadingHistory

A. Recognizing Propaganda How did the use of the word *massacre* show an anti-British view?

The Road to Lexington and Concord

The Boston Tea Party aroused fury in Britain. In 1774, Parliament passed a series of laws to punish the Massachusetts colony and to warn other colonies not to rebel. These laws were so harsh that the colonists called them the Intolerable Acts. Among other things, these acts closed the port of Boston until colonists paid for the destroyed tea.

In 1774, delegates from all the colonies except Georgia met in Philadelphia. At this meeting, called the First Continental Congress, delegates voted to ban all trade with Britain until the Intolerable Acts were repealed. They also called on each colony to begin training troops. In response, Parliament increased restrictions on colonial trade and sent

more troops. On April 18, 1775, British general Thomas Gage ordered his troops to arrest Sam Adams and John Hancock in Lexington. The troops were also to destroy colonial ammunition supplies in Concord.

Paul Revere spread the news about British troop movements. On April 19, some 700 British troops reached Lexington, where they found about 70 colonists waiting. After a skirmish, eight colonists lay dead. The British marched to Concord, Massachusetts, where a battle broke out. As the British retreated, nearly 4,000 colonists lined the road from Concord to Lexington, Massachusetts, and peppered the redcoats with musket fire. These confrontations were the first battles of the Revolutionary War.

Declaring Independence

After the fighting at Lexington and Concord, Ethan Allen and his band of backwoodsmen captured Britain's Fort Ticonderoga in New York and its large supply of artillery—cannon and large guns. On May 10, 1775, the Second Continental Congress began meeting in Philadelphia. They agreed to form the Continental Army with **George Washington** as its commander.

In June 1775, British soldiers attacked militiamen holding down Bunker Hill and Breed's Hill near Boston. The redcoats won the battle, but more than 1,000 were killed or wounded. By 1776, the Continental Army had surrounded British forces in Boston. General Howe, in charge of British forces, decided to withdraw his troops.

On June 7, a resolution that declared the colonies "free and independent states" was introduced to the Continental Congress. Congress debated the resolution and appointed a committee to draft the **Declaration of Independence**. The committee included Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Roger Sherman, Robert Livingston, and **Thomas Jefferson**. The group chose Jefferson to write the Declaration. On July 4, 1776, Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence. It stated that people have unalienable rights, or rights that government cannot take away.

The Early Years of the War

Historians estimate that roughly 20 to 30 percent of Americans were **Loyalists**, supporters of Britain. And roughly 40 to 45 percent were **Patriots**, supporters of the Revolution. The rest of the white population remained neutral. Some Iroquois nations fought with the British and others with the Americans. African Americans also fought on both sides.

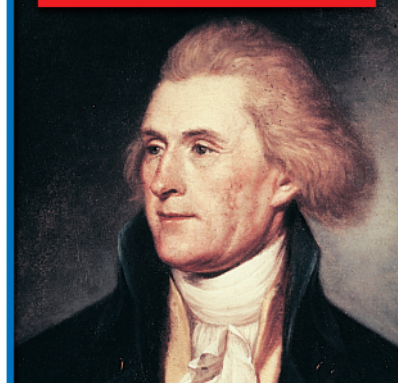
Because not everyone supported the war, raising an army was difficult. Men began to enlist, but most of

ReadingHistory

B. Making Inferences

Why do you think the colonists disagreed about independence?

AMERICA'S HISTORY MAKERS



THOMAS JEFFERSON
1743–1826

Jefferson was just 33 when chosen to write the Declaration of Independence. He was already a brilliant thinker and writer and a highly respected political leader. Jefferson came from a wealthy Virginia family. As a child, he was interested in everything, and he became an inventor, scientist, and architect, among other things. In 1769, he began his political career in the House of Burgesses.

Jefferson felt that writing the Declaration was a major achievement of his life. He had that fact carved on his tombstone.

Why do you think Jefferson felt the Declaration was one of his greatest achievements?

them didn't serve long. At the start of the war, Congress asked men to enlist for only one year. Congress's inability to deliver supplies to the army was also frustrating.

In late 1776, the British and American armies fought for New York State. The British forced Washington and his troops to retreat through New Jersey. The American army was in terrible condition when it crossed the Delaware River into Pennsylvania in December. However, later that month, Washington's troops launched surprise attacks against British allies at Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey. The Americans won both battles. The following year, the Continental Army defeated the British army at the Battles of Saratoga in upstate New York. This victory was the turning point in the Revolution.

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C. Analyzing

Causes Why would the lack of agreement about the war make it hard to raise an army?

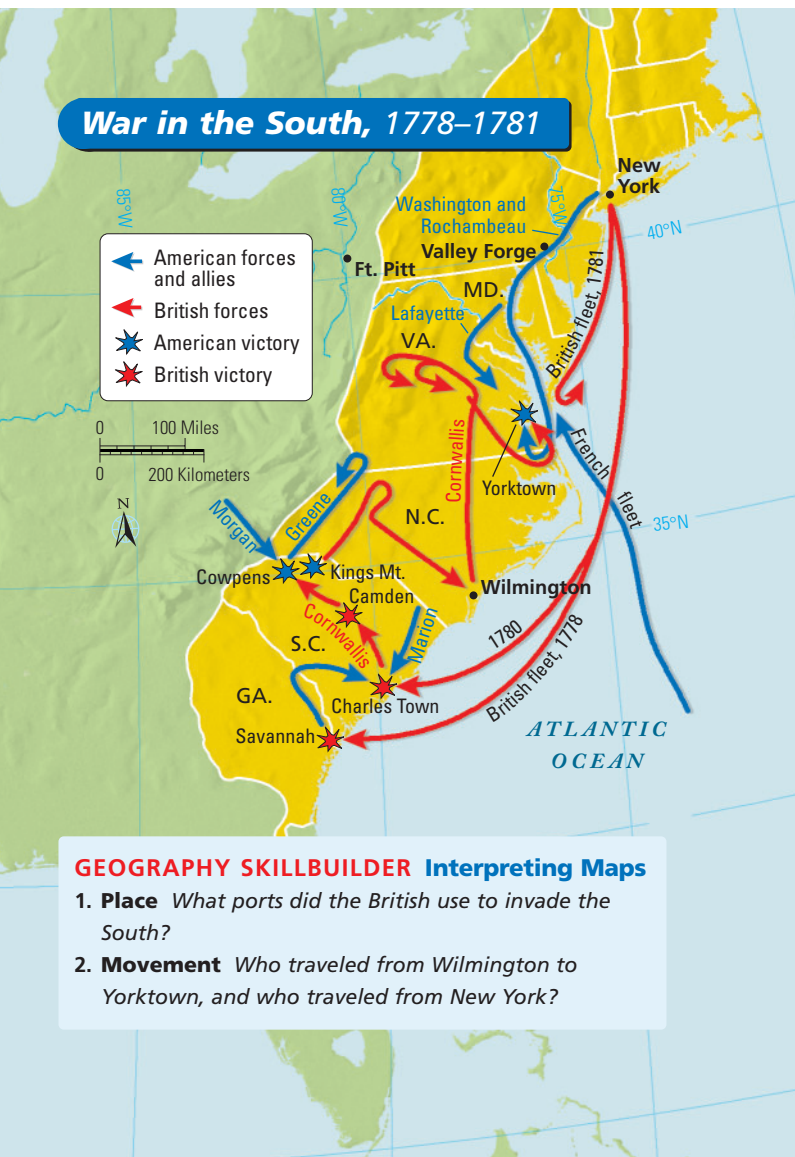
The War Expands

In 1778, France signed two treaties of alliance with the United States. As part of its new alliance, France sent badly needed funds, supplies, and troops to America. Several military officers also came to Washington's aid, including men from France, Poland, and the German states. A French nobleman named the Marquis de Lafayette was given the command of an army division. He also persuaded the French king to send a

6,000-man army to America.

In the winter of 1777–1778, Washington and his army camped at Valley Forge in southeast Pennsylvania. Roughly a quarter of the soldiers there died from malnutrition, exposure to the cold, or disease. Despite the hardships, Washington and his soldiers showed amazing endurance.

Throughout the war, Britain controlled the Atlantic trade routes. There was no way the Americans could defeat the powerful British navy. But American privateers attacked British merchant ships. A privateer is a privately owned ship with permission to attack enemy ships. During the war, privateers captured hundreds of British ships. Also, Commander John Paul Jones and his crew achieved a major naval victory against the British in 1779.



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER Interpreting Maps

- Place** What ports did the British use to invade the South?
- Movement** Who traveled from Wilmington to Yorktown, and who traveled from New York?

The victorious American forces accept the British surrender at Yorktown. George Washington is to the left of the American flag.



The Path to Victory

The British believed that most Southerners were loyalists, so they decided to move the war to the South in 1778. The British took control of most of Georgia and Charles Town (now Charleston), South Carolina. However, Francis Marion and his band of followers weakened the British with surprise raids and hit-and-run attacks.

In July 1781, British general Cornwallis set up his base at Yorktown, Virginia, on a peninsula in Chesapeake Bay. The following month, the French fleet blocked the bay. These ships prevented the British from receiving supplies or escaping. Washington moved his army from the north and trapped Cornwallis. American and French troops bombarded Yorktown with cannon fire. With no way out, Cornwallis surrendered on October 19, 1781. Although some fighting continued, Yorktown was the last major battle of the war. In November 1783, the last British troops left New York City. As the winners, the Americans won favorable terms in the **Treaty of Paris of 1783**, which ended the Revolutionary War. The United States had won its independence.

ReadingHistory

D. Forming and Supporting Opinions Was setting up base at Yorktown a sound military move by Cornwallis? Why or why not?

Section 3 Assessment

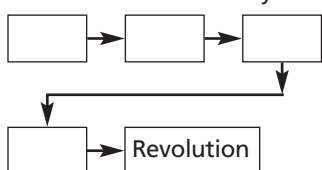
1. Terms & Names

Explain the significance of:

- George Washington
- Declaration of Independence
- Thomas Jefferson
- Loyalists
- Patriots
- Treaty of Paris of 1783

2. Taking Notes

Use a diagram like the one below to show events that led to the Revolutionary War.



3. Main Ideas

- How did colonists react to the Stamp Act?
- How were Americans divided over the issue of separating from Great Britain?
- How did European officers aid America in the Revolutionary War?

4. Critical Thinking

Drawing Conclusions

Why did it take colonists so long to declare their independence?

THINK ABOUT

- the colonists' British traditions
- the risk of revolution
- divided loyalties of Americans

ACTIVITY OPTIONS

TECHNOLOGY

MUSIC

Imagine that Congress has asked you to commemorate the Battle of Yorktown. Design a **Web page** or write a **song** celebrating the U.S. victory.