GRADE 6 LOUISIANA SOCIAL STUDIES

The Road to Independence

Phyllis Wheatley

Reader

Protesting British rule

Patrick Henry

George Washington

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The Road to Independence

Reader

BAYOU BRIDGES

A K–8 Louisiana Social Studies Curriculum

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The Road to Independence

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Chapter 1
The French and Indian War

War in the Colonies In the 1750s, Great Britain and France both had colonies all over the world. The two countries had been fighting each other on and off for nearly a century. Both wanted to control each other's colonies, including those in North America. The two countries had conflicting claims to lands in the Ohio River valley. As more and more British colonists moved west into French-controlled territory, tensions increased. A small battle in 1754 over control of Fort Duquesne (/doo*kayn/), in present-day Pennsylvania, led to a much larger conflict.

The Framing Question

How did the British defeat the French in the French and Indian War?

In an attempt to limit each other's influence in North America, the French and the British built defensive fortifications.

The war that started in North America spread to two other continents and three oceans. In Europe and Asia, it was called the Seven Years' War, but in North America, it was known as the French and Indian War. France, with its colonists in North America and their Native American allies, stood on one side of the conflict. On the opposing side was Great Britain, with its colonists in North America and their smaller number of Native American allies.

George Washington's Mistakes

The British had built a small fort in western Pennsylvania on the site of present-day Pittsburgh. The fort sat where two rivers come together to form the Ohio River. In 1754, a young British military officer from Virginia named George Washington and 150 soldiers were sent to join forces with the British soldiers at the fort. Before he arrived, Washington learned that the French had already captured the British fort and renamed it Fort Duquesne.

In time, George Washington would become a great general, but in 1754, he was young and inexperienced. He made a number of mistakes. Washington did not have enough soldiers to drive the French out of the fort. The French at Fort Duquesne had many more soldiers than Washington had, and they had Shawnee and Delaware allies as well.

Realizing this, Washington built a makeshift camp southeast of the French stronghold. His men called the camp Fort Necessity. The spot Washington chose for Fort Necessity was a low piece of ground. The French attacked, and it began to rain heavily. Before long, Washington's soldiers, their guns, and their gunpowder were soaked with the rain that collected in the low area where the fort was built. They fought, but after nine hours, Washington and the Virginians were forced to surrender.

The French commander instructed an assistant to prepare a statement explaining why the fighting had taken place. The statement was written in French, and Washington's translator did not accurately explain to him what was in the document. As it turned out, the document stated that the British

Benjamin Franklin created this cartoon in 1754 as a political statement to encourage the British colonies to unite during the French and Indian War. He believed that if they joined forces, they would have a better chance of defeating the French and their Native American allies. In fact, a plan known as the Albany Plan of Union was discussed with an aim to improve intercolonial cooperation. The plan was ultimately rejected because some colonial governments felt it would restrict their own authority.

soldiers had assassinated a French officer named Jumonville. Washington did not know this key fact, and with his signature, he admitted to the world that the British were the aggressors in the situation.

When the soldiers returned to Virginia, British officials were very upset. They were angry with the French and with Washington. They blamed him for his unwise decisions. They also blamed him for signing the statement.

Fighting in the Woods

The British were still determined to seize Fort Duquesne and drive the French from the Ohio River valley. In 1755, they sent General Edward Braddock with 2,200 British soldiers to accomplish the task. George Washington, eager to join Braddock's army and return to Fort Duquesne, offered to help the British general.

During the French and Indian War, George Washington and colonial soldiers fought alongside the British.

Braddock appointed Washington to the rank of **colonel**, and he was given command of 450 colonial soldiers.

Although Braddock was an experienced general, he was not familiar with the tactics needed to fight in the dense forests of North America. He was stubborn and unwilling to consider advice from those with experience. The first task he assigned was to cut a hundred-mile-long (161-km) road through the woods leading to Fort Duquesne. He wanted to march his army along it in **formation**, almost like a parade. However, Colonel Washington knew that creating such a road was a bad idea. He and the colonists were familiar with the land, and they advised Braddock that his troops should proceed with great care. After all, an ambush could occur at any moment and from any direction. Braddock ignored

Vocabulary

colonel, n. a high-ranking military official

formation, n. an arrangement of people or things acting as one unit

their warnings, dismissing them as simple colonists who knew little about the art of war.

In addition to the British and French forces, Native Americans played important roles in the war. They knew the land better than anyone. Some groups sided with the French, while a smaller number were allied with the British.

Both sides had Native American allies. The Huron fought with the French, while the Iroquois sided with the British.

A few miles from Fort Duquesne, French soldiers and their Native American allies attacked Braddock's army. They fired on the British from deep in the woods, where they couldn't be seen. Thanks to their camouflage and expert knowledge of the land, the Native Americans who fought with the French caused chaos and panic among the British soldiers. The British, in their red coats, were easy targets. They panicked and ran. General Braddock was killed. George Washington courageously took command and led the surviving British soldiers to safety.

British Victory

At first, the French and Indian War was not going well for the British. But when William Pitt became the British **prime minister** in 1756, things turned around. Pitt was responsible for Great Britain's foreign affairs, and he knew that the American colonies were crucial to the country's success in North America. He decided to send more soldiers to help win the war. This would help Britain maintain control of its North American territories and even add to them.

Vocabulary

prime minister, n. the head of the government in some countries

Pitt wanted to gain control of two rivers: the St. Lawrence River and the Niagara River. The French used these rivers to supply their soldiers in the Great Lakes region and the Ohio River valley with necessities. If the British could stop the French from using these rivers, the French would soon run out of supplies and

be unable to fight. To achieve Pitt's goal, the British captured Fort Duquesne and renamed it Fort Pitt (now Pittsburgh). They were helped by Native American allies and the American colonists. They also captured the French fortress at Louisbourg in Canada.

Pitt's strategy also included capturing Quebec, a city that sits atop steep cliffs along the St. Lawrence River. The French believed the city's location and geography protected them from attack. One night in September of 1759, British soldiers, led by General James Wolfe, climbed to the top of the cliffs. Early the next morning, the French found British troops close to the city and ready for battle. The French attacked, but soon the British forces defeated them and captured Quebec, a critical victory for the British.

Louisiana and New Orleans

The war continued, and when the British took control of more French territory in Canada in 1760, France asked Spain for help. The two countries formed an **alliance** in August 1761. During negotiations, the French representative offered colonial Louisiana to Spain. He hoped that this offer would encourage Spain to either provide France with a large loan or enter the war swiftly. He even hoped they might do both. Although the Spanish were interested in Louisiana, they took some time to inform the French of their decision.

Vocabulary

alliance, n. an agreement between two nations to help each other in wartime

Meanwhile, the war expanded to islands in the Caribbean, and Britain continued to win territory from France. Caribbean islands were the site of sugar plantations, and France could not afford to lose such valuable territories. France agreed to give up all French territory in North America east of the Mississippi River, excluding New Orleans, to Great Britain in exchange for the return of these islands. They negotiated peace terms, and France kept control of New Orleans by assuring the British access to the Gulf of

the Gulf of America through Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Maurepas. But the Spanish were unhappy with British access to and control of this area. And they needed to protect their valuable silver and gold mines in Mexico. And so to appease Spain, France handed over western Louisiana and New Orleans to the Spanish. As you know, Louisiana became a Spanish colony in November 1762 with the **Treaty** of Fontainebleau.

The Treaty of Fontainebleau had a major impact on the balance of power in Europe and colonial territories around the world.

Vocabulary

treaty, n. a formal agreement between two or more groups, especially countries

Acadians to Cajuns

The French and Indian War forced the migration of a group of people from Canada to Louisiana. These people were the Acadians, the descendants of people from France. They had lived in parts of what are now the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec, as well as the present-day state of Maine. For generations, they had developed their distinct French-speaking culture and agricultural economy there. Having refused to pledge their loyalty to Britain, around ten thousand Acadians were forced to leave their homes. Many died during the journey, while others were left in unfamiliar places along the coast.

Peace, but More Tension

The French and Indian War officially concluded in 1763 when Great Britain and France signed the Treaty of Paris. France gave all of Canada and the land between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River to Britain. The land west of the Mississippi River was given to Spain, as it was an ally of France in the war. Spain was, however, forced to give up Florida to Britain.

After the French and Indian War, Great Britain became the dominant colonial power in North America.

Though the British emerged victorious in the French and Indian War, it was costly. Great Britain needed money to pay for it. To raise the needed funds, Great Britain implemented policies in its North American colonies that angered the colonists. The lasting effects of the war would contribute to tensions that eventually led to the American Revolution.

Colonial North America After the French and Indian War

The outcome of the French and Indian War changed the political dynamic between Britain, France, and Spain in North America.

PRIMARY SOURCE: ALIBAMO MINGO, CHOCTAW LEADER, REFLECTS ON THE BRITISH AND FRENCH (1765)

Alibamo Mingo was a Choctaw leader who lived in the eighteenth century when British and French colonial forces were competing for control over Native American lands and resources. After the British victory in the French and Indian War and the withdrawal of France from North America, Native American communities were left to face a new political reality. In this document, a Choctaw leader shares his concerns in response to this significant historical event.

I am master of the whole Choctaw nation; by birth, by long employment, & by long experience, it is to me to give instruction to the rest. . . .

When I was young, the white men came among us bearing abundance. . . . I now see another race of white men come among us bearing the same abundance, & I expect they will be equally generous, which must be done if they wish equally to gain the affection of my people. . . .

In case we deliver up our French medals & commissions, we expect to receive as good in their place, and that we should bear the same authority & be entitled to the same presents. . . .

I am not of opinion that in giving land to the English, we deprive ourselves of the use of it. On the contrary, I think we shall share it with them, as for example the house I now speak in was built by the white people on our land, yet it is divided between the white & the red people. Therefore, we need not be uneasy that the English settle upon our lands, as by that means they can more easily supply our wants.

Source: Adapted from Rowland, Dunbar, ed. *Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1763–1766: English Dominion; Letters and Enclosures to the Secretary of State from Major Robert Farmar and Governor George Johnstone.* Vol. 1. Nashville, TN: Press of Brandon Printing Company, 1911, pp. 239–241.

Chapter 2
The Road to Revolution

The Framing Question

What events led to the American Revolution?

The End of One War, the Start of Another The French and Indian War played a big role in shaping the relationship between Great Britain and its American colonies. Even though the war made Great Britain stronger in North America, tensions were growing among the colonists. They felt that the British government was treating them unfairly, and this made them unhappy.

For Britain, winning the French and Indian War had many benefits. It gained more land in North America, and its colonies along the Atlantic coast were now more protected. The colonists saw the newly gained territory as empty land that settlers could move onto, therefore expanding their settlements westward. However, the British government had a different perspective.

There were many Native American peoples living on this newly acquired land. Some had fought alongside the British, while others had fought with the French. Given their recent war with France, the British wanted to avoid conflict with Native Americans. But conflict with Native Americans was unavoidable as more and more settlers pushed west. As a result, in 1763, the Ottawa chief Pontiac organized a rebellion that included a confederation of Native American tribes. This resistance movement is known as Pontiac's War. Pontiac could see that tribal lands, including hunting grounds, were under threat. In response, the British felt compelled to

The American colonists began to organize protests in an effort to increase their freedom from British rule.

stop settlers from moving onto Native American land. And so the British government issued the **Proclamation** of 1763. It stated that colonists were not allowed to settle west of the Appalachian Mountains. The proclamation angered many colonists, who saw it as a restriction on their freedom.

Vocabulary

proclamation, n. an important official announcement that is usually made to the public

To enforce the proclamation, the British government strategically stationed soldiers along the demarcation line to prevent colonists from settling on Native American land. This further angered the colonists. They believed that they had a right to settle and make a living wherever they chose, without interference from the British government. In addition, the colonists resented having British soldiers on their land. The soldiers were a constant reminder of British control.

The Proclamation of 1763 drew a line running along the Appalachian Mountains from New York to Georgia. The British told colonists they were no longer allowed to settle west of this line.

Trouble Brewing

The policy of the British government toward the thirteen colonies in the late 1600s to mid-1700s was called **salutary neglect**. American colonies were allowed to govern themselves mostly without interference from Britain. But when this policy ended, colonists felt unfairly oppressed by the British government's new rules. And then came the new **taxes**. The British government had accrued large amounts of war debts while fighting on two

Vocabulary

salutary neglect, n. an unofficial British policy of not enforcing rules and regulations in the colonies

tax, n. money that people are required to pay to support the workings of the government

continents and needed to pay them back. To raise the much-needed funds, King George III and the British Parliament, the ruling government in Great Britain, thought that the colonists should help pay for the recent war. As a result, new taxes were imposed on the American colonists. These laws caused great anger and frustration among the colonists, who believed that they were being unfairly taxed without representation.

James Otis, a lawyer in Boston, Massachusetts, coined the saying "taxation without representation is tyranny." In 1764, he wrote the pamphlet "The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved." In it, Otis stated that "the very act of taxing, exercised over those who are not represented, appears to me to be depriving them of one of their most essential rights, as freemen; and if continued, seems to be in effect an entire disfranchisement of every civil right."

That same year, the British government passed the Sugar Act. While this was not the first tax on imported sugar, it coincided with the end of salutary neglect and the beginning of strict enforcement of tax collection. The colonists saw it as a violation of their rights. They wanted to be able trade freely. The Sugar Act led to increased tensions between the colonies and the British government. It set the stage for even more conflicts.

With the Stamp Act of 1765, the British government placed a tax on all printed materials. Colonists had to buy stamps to purchase newspapers, pamphlets, and even playing cards. The stamps were not like the kind you stick on an envelope but were instead impressions made on paper. This tax angered many people who

As Britain increased rules and taxes, colonists became more and more unsettled.

thought it was unfair that the king and his government in London would make decisions about taxes that colonists had to pay, while the colonists did not have any say in the matter. In response to this situation, they organized protest meetings, wrote pamphlets, and sent petitions to London.

Most of the colonists were proud British subjects, but they also believed they had certain rights that the king and his government could not take away. These rights, called the "**rights of Englishmen**," date back to the 1215 CE Magna Carta and the 1689 English Bill of Rights. Many colonists believed that these documents protected them from unfair rulers. As a result, opposition to the Stamp Act increased. In Virginia, the House of **Burgesses**,

Vocabulary

"rights of Englishmen" (phrase) traditional legal rights that all English subjects in England were guaranteed

burgess, n. a representative to the legislature in colonial Virginia or Maryland

Patrick Henry

Patrick Henry was a twenty-nine-year-old Virginian colonist who strongly protested the Stamp Act. He was a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses and gave a powerful speech against the new tax. In his speech, he warned that the Stamp Act would take away the colonists' liberty.

Patrick Henry's speech was printed in newspapers throughout the colonies, and it made many people think. As a result, people in New York, Boston, and other places throughout the colonies protested and debated. These groups threatened the collectors of the stamp tax. Many collectors decided that the best thing to do was to leave town and forget about selling tax stamps.

Patrick Henry's words influenced many people in the colonies.

a group of representatives who had been elected by colonists, passed a motion protesting the Stamp Act. The burgesses agreed that the British Parliament had no right to tax the people of Virginia.

The Quartering Act

In addition to passing the Stamp Act, the British Parliament also passed the **Quartering** Act. This act, passed in 1765, required colonial governments to provide quarters, or housing, for the British soldiers who were stationed in the colonies. Many colonists were not happy about having to pay to quarter British soldiers and were alarmed by the possibility of housing them in their homes. They felt that they were being forced to provide quarters for them, and the added cost of taking care of the soldiers was a major burden. They argued that the act was a violation of their rights as British subjects.

Vocabulary

quarter, v. to give temporary lodging and meals to soldiers

Many colonists did not like having to provide for British soldiers.

As a result, many colonists opposed the Quartering Act and viewed it as an abuse of liberty. This act, together with the Stamp Act, further united colonists in their resistance to British authority and paved the way for the American Revolution.

The Sons of Liberty

Some of the strongest protests against the Stamp Act took place in Boston, Massachusetts. Angry crowds expressed their frustration by attacking tax collectors, and a new group of protestors emerged in Boston. They gathered under a tree that they named the Liberty Tree. The group delivered public

speeches against taxes and the British government and chanted, "No taxation without representation!" This group, led by Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Paul Revere, and others, became known as the Sons of Liberty.

After various protests and boycotts, the British government finally decided to repeal the Stamp Act in 1766. The tax on paper products was completely eliminated. However, the British government replaced the Stamp Act with other taxes, including taxes on imported goods such as glass, paint, lead, paper, and tea. These taxes were called the Townshend Acts.

With the introduction of the Townshend Acts, the problem was no longer simply about taxation without representation. The British government also began to deny colonists the right to a **trial by jury**, another violation of the "rights of Englishmen" code. When officials arrested colonists who did not pay the required taxes on imported goods, they could now be tried without a jury. The British did this because juries made up of colonists often did not convict these offenders.

Vocabulary

"trial by jury" (phrase) a case of law decided by a group of one's fellow citizens

Once again, the Sons of Liberty took action. They organized a boycott of all British goods. The colonists began to make their own paint, glass, and paper. This boycott lasted for almost three years before the British government backed down. Britain repealed all of the taxes, except the tax on tea. To avoid this tax, many colonists began buying their tea from Dutch merchants who smuggled it into the colonies.

John Dickinson, a lawyer and farmer, wrote a series of letters in 1767 and 1768 known as *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*. In these letters, Dickinson urged the colonists to resist British taxation and protect their rights. He argued that the British government had no right to tax the colonists without their permission. Dickinson believed people had a duty to stand up for their rights. His letters were read widely and were important in shaping public opinion against British taxes.

The Boston Massacre

During this period of unrest, the British government sent more soldiers to the colonies. Many colonists considered this yet another threat to their freedom. In Boston, troops seemed to be everywhere. People jeered at the soldiers and tried to make their lives miserable. Tensions also grew when soldiers took jobs that the colonists believed should have been theirs. Fights between colonists and soldiers broke out in several cities.

On March 5, 1770, an event worse than a street fight occurred in Boston. A crowd gathered around a lone British soldier on guard duty and started shouting insults and throwing snowballs. The frightened soldier called for help, and more British soldiers arrived. For reasons that are unclear, the soldiers turned their guns on the angry crowd and started shooting. Five colonists were killed or wounded, including a sailor named Crispus Attucks. Attucks was an African American man with Native American ancestry, and he is now considered the first person to die for the cause of American liberty. Bostonians called the killing a **massacre**.

Vocabulary

massacre, n. the violent killing of defenseless people

After the Boston Massacre, some colonists believed it was time to break away from Great Britain. Most colonists were loyal to their king, but increasing numbers of colonists talked about separation. They began to believe they could only keep their liberties if they were free from Britain. Samuel Adams of Boston was one of the colonists who believed in independence. After the massacre, Adams and others created a way to alert colonists if the British government threatened their liberties again. In 1772, they set up a Committee of Correspondence, which soon spread to other colonies. These committees became the fastest way to get news out within each colony and from one colony to another. Slowly, the idea of independence spread throughout the colonies.

The Tea Act and the Boston Tea Party

In 1773, Parliament created a new plan. They passed the Tea Act to make the American colonists pay the tea tax. They lowered the price of tea but kept the tax, hoping the colonists would start buying British tea again. However, the colonists were still not happy about being taxed without their say in government, so they refused to pay the tax, even if the tea was cheaper. When three ships carrying tea arrived in Boston Harbor, citizens demanded they leave. When they didn't, a group of colonists dressed up as Native Americans, boarded the ships at night, and dumped all of the tea into the water. This became known as the Boston Tea Party. The British government was angry and passed laws to punish the people of Boston by blocking their port and drastically increasing British control over Massachusetts's government. The colonists called these laws the **Intolerable** Acts because they wouldn't tolerate or accept them. Boston and other parts of Massachusetts suffered as a result.

Vocabulary

intolerable, adj. unbearable

Colonists dumped tea into the water to protest the Tea Act. This became known as the Boston Tea Party.

When Parliament passed laws to punish Boston, they didn't expect the other colonies to react. But Pennsylvania, New York, South Carolina, Connecticut, and Virginia all sent aid to Massachusetts. Virginia even set aside a day of fasting and prayer for them. This inspired Virginia to call for a meeting of all the colonies, which became the First Continental Congress in September 1774. In this Congress, representatives from all the colonies except Georgia met in Philadelphia and issued a Declaration of Rights. The declaration stated that the colonists were entitled to British rights and listed the ways Parliament had taken those rights away. They also declared their loyalty to King George III and asked him to consider their complaints.

George Washington attended the First Continental Congress.

By the end of the Congress, many colonists considered themselves not just individual Virginians, New Yorkers, or Rhode Islanders but members of a group of united colonies. This awareness led to Patrick Henry's statement "The distinctions [differences] between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders, are no more. I am not a Virginian but an American."

Tensions Reach a Boiling Point

By the beginning of 1775, many colonists anticipated that their conflicts with Britain would lead to war. In March and April of 1775, the British government passed the Restraining Acts. These acts prohibited New England and five other colonies from trading with any foreign country except Great Britain and by extension the British West Indies. It further aggravated the colonists.

During this period, **militias** in many colonies were preparing to fight. Militias were made up of regular citizens who volunteered to be part-time soldiers. Militias in Massachusetts were called *minutemen* because they were expected to be ready to fight against the British within a minute's notice. Their mission was to protect their local communities from British attack.

Vocabulary

militia, n. a group of armed citizens prepared for military service at any time

As war loomed, there were two main viewpoints among the colonists. *Loyalists* believed that it was important to remain loyal to Britain and that the colonies should continue to be governed by the British government. They argued that the colonists were better off as part of the British Empire. They also thought independence would lead to chaos and instability. *Patriots*, on the other hand, believed that the colonies should be independent. They argued that the British government had violated their rights and that they should have the freedom to govern themselves. Patriots believed that independence was necessary to secure their liberty and prosperity.

Elected representatives in Virginia discussed whether their colony should prepare for war as well. Patrick Henry supported the idea and gave a powerful speech to the Continental Congress, in which he passionately declared that liberty was worth any cost, including death. He famously stated, "I know not what course others might take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

Patrick Henry was a very persuasive speaker. Virginians responded to his "Give me liberty or give me death!" speech.

PRIMARY SOURCE: PATRICK HENRY'S SPEECH TO THE SECOND VIRGINIA CONVENTION (1775)

Let us not deceive ourselves, sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation [oppression]; the last arguments to which kings resort. I ask gentlemen, sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy, in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us: they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British ministry have been so long forging. And what have we to oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing. We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication [pleading]? What terms shall we find which have not been already exhausted? . . . Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances [protests] have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne! In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free—if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending . . . we must fight! . . .

I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

Source: Henry, Patrick. "Give Me Liberty" speech. In *The True Patrick Henry*, by George Morgan. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1907, pp. 189–191.

PRIMARY SOURCE: EXCERPTS FROM RESOLUTIONS OF THE STAMP ACT CONGRESS (1765)

In response to the passage of the Stamp Act by the British Parliament in 1765, representatives from nine colonies in British North America came together in New York for the Stamp Act Congress. The Congress adopted a Declaration of Rights and Grievances, which stated that colonists were entitled to the same rights and privileges as British subjects and that taxes could only be imposed with their consent, given either personally or through their elected representatives.

2d. That his majesty's liege subjects in these colonies are entitled to all the inherent rights and privileges of his natural born subjects within the kingdom of Great Britain.

3d. That it is inseparably essential to the freedom of a people, and the undoubted rights of Englishmen, that no taxes should be imposed on them, but with their own consent, given personally, or by their representatives.

4th. That the people of these colonies are not, and from their local circumstances cannot be, represented in the House of Commons in Great Britain.

5th. That the only representatives of the people of these colonies, are persons chosen therein, by themselves; and that no taxes ever have been, or can be constitutionally imposed on them, but by their respective legislatures. . . .

8th. That the late act of Parliament, entitled, An act for granting and applying certain stamp duties, and other duties in the British colonies and plantations in America, etc., by imposing taxes on the inhabitants of these colonies, and the said act, and several other acts, by extending the jurisdiction of the courts of admiralty beyond its ancient limits, have a manifest tendency to subvert the rights and liberties of the colonists. . . .

12th. That the increase, prosperity, and happiness of these colonies, depend on the full and free enjoyment of their rights and liberties . . .

Source: Niles, Hezekiah, ed. *Principles and Acts of the Revolution in America.* Baltimore: William Ogden Niles, 1822, p. 457.

Chapter 3
The Course of the American Revolution

The Shots Heard Round the World

In the early months of 1775, farmers and townspeople in Massachusetts were training for battle. These colonists called themselves minutemen because they could be ready to fight at a minute's notice. They gathered guns, gunpowder, and other supplies in the village of Concord, hiding them from the British soldiers stationed in Boston. British army general Thomas Gage became the new governor and learned about the minutemen's hidden supplies in Concord. He also learned the hiding place of two Sons of Liberty, Sam Adams and John Hancock, in Lexington. General Gage planned to capture the Sons of Liberty in Lexington and then seize the minutemen's firearms in Concord.

The Framing Question

How did the events of the American Revolution lead to independence?

The colonies were on the brink of a war that would change the world.

When the Sons of Liberty got wind of the plan, Paul Revere and William Dawes rode ahead of the British soldiers to warn citizens along the way. At Lexington, four hundred minutemen gathered to defend the town. They engaged in brief fighting with the British soldiers. The British decided to retreat and return to Boston, but the long march back became a nightmare as minutemen shot at them along the route. The minutemen killed seventy-three British soldiers and wounded about another two hundred, while the colonists suffered about ninety-five dead or wounded. The Americans did not know it at the time, but this event marked the official beginning of the War for Independence. American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson later referred to the minutemen as "embattled farmers" who "fired the shot heard round the world."

The Road to War

In May 1775, delegates from all the American colonies gathered in Philadelphia for the Second Continental Congress. They discussed the aftermath of the recent deaths caused by the British government. Although the delegates were not ready to break away from Britain, they realized the importance of preparing for more fighting. John Adams of Massachusetts proposed forming a real American army, known as the Army of the United Colonies or the Continental Army, to fight a war. The Congress appointed George Washington as the commander in chief. Washington's first mission was to lead the Massachusetts militia.

George Washington held the position of commander in chief of the Continental Army throughout the war.

Before Washington arrived, the Massachusetts militia fought in an important battle near Boston on June 16, 1775. The militia members were supposed to take positions on Bunker Hill but went to Breed's Hill instead. All night, they dug trenches and piled up earth into walls six feet (1.8 m) high. In the morning, the British discovered that the colonial militia was in control of the hill. General Gage knew the militia members could later use cannons to fire on his troops. The next day, British soldiers marched up Breed's Hill. The colonists had only a small amount of ammunition, and they stood shoulder to shoulder behind their earth walls. When the British got close, the militia members opened fire, and after two charges, the British soldiers were driven back by a hail of bullets. But the colonists began to run out of ammunition, and when the British charged for the third time, the militia retreated. The British won Breed's Hill, but more than a thousand of their soldiers were killed or wounded. One British officer said that his army couldn't sustain many more "victories" such as this.

This battle, known as the Battle of Bunker Hill (even though it took place on Breed's Hill), was an important moment for the colonists. Although they lost control of the hill, they gained confidence in their ability to stand up against the British army. However, despite this boost in morale, King George III showed no interest in the colonists' Declaration of Rights. By 1776, the argument between the colonies and Great Britain had lasted more than a decade. But the colonists remained split in their views. The Patriots still wanted to break away from Britain and establish independence, while the Loyalists wanted to remain under British rule.

Declaring Independence

As the British continued to resist the colonists' desire for **self-determination**, the number of Patriots grew. In 1776, Thomas Paine published *Common Sense*, a pamphlet that argued that America could not continue as colonies and

Vocabulary

self-determination, n. the ability of people in a country to decide their own government

that it must declare independence from Britain. In *Common Sense*, Paine also declared that kings were illegitimate rulers and that the people should govern themselves. Paine's writing style was simple, clear, and accessible, making it easy for ordinary people to understand these complex political ideas.

The Second Continental Congress met in June of that year and agreed that it was time to separate from Britain. A committee was appointed to write a declaration that would explain the reasons for breaking away. Members of the committee included John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson. John Adams was one of the first leaders to speak out in favor of independence, and Thomas Jefferson, known for his writing skills, was selected to draft the declaration.

Thomas Jefferson's document became the Declaration of Independence. It inspired new ideas for how governments should work. In it, Jefferson explained that the colonists had the right to break away from Britain due to the actions of the king, which the colonists viewed as unlawful. He explained that governments need "the consent of the governed" to rule over people. Jefferson also stated that governments are created to secure people's rights. He expressed the idea that "all men are created equal, . . . endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights," and that "among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Despite the fact that Jefferson and other Patriot leaders were slaveholders while he wrote these words about equality among men, the Declaration still inspired and motivated people toward the goals of freedom and independence.

On July 4, 1776, Congress adopted this Declaration of Independence. It was read and celebrated widely across the country. Bells rang out, and the document became a symbol of America's newfound independence and the ideals that would govern the new nation. It was official—America was its own country now.

A Difficult Start

America's independence had a difficult start. The lack of resources, especially a permanent army and sufficient money, was a major stumbling block. Americans had passionate beliefs and were strongly motivated, but it was difficult to compete with Britain, the wealthiest country in the world. The British had a powerful army of nearly fifty thousand troops, plus thirty thousand **mercenaries**. The British also had the world's largest navy, while Americans hardly had a navy at all.

Vocabulary

mercenary, n. a soldier paid to fight for a country or cause that they are not native to or in support of

However, the Americans did have a few significant advantages. They were fighting on their own land, which provided the possibility of a constant supply of fresh soldiers and provisions. In contrast, the British had to ship most of their soldiers and supplies from three thousand miles (4,800 km) away. Not only did this cause delays, but it could be significantly more expensive. Additionally, the American soldiers were more motivated and determined than the British soldiers because they were fighting to defend

	American	British
Leadership	George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams	King George III, General William Howe, Lord Charles Cornwallis
Military Power	Small, ill-equipped army	Large, well-equipped army
Recruitment	Volunteers and conscripts	Mercenaries, Loyalists, and conscripts
Allies	France, the Netherlands, and Spain	Loyalists and Native Americans
Population	Around 2.5 million people	Around 8 million people
Resources	Limited access to weapons, ammunition, and funds	Abundant access to weapons, ammunition, and funds

The chart shows a comparison between the American and British sides during the Revolutionary War. Native Americans fought on both sides, but more fought as British allies in the hope that their land would be better protected from settlers.

their homes, land, families, and freedom. These factors gave the Americans an edge, despite the difficult conditions.

The Role of Women and African Americans

Women played essential roles in the American Revolution, even though very few participated in combat. Abigail Adams was the wife of the future president John Adams, and during the Revolution, she exchanged long letters with him about politics and the war, advising him on many issues. Among other things, Abigail advocated for women's rights and argued that laws made only by men oppressed women. Abigail hoped that in a new America independent from Britain, women would have more freedom. Betsy Ross is credited with sewing the first American flag and was an important figure in the creation of America's national identity. Mercy Otis Warren wrote plays and poems in support of the Patriot cause, inspiring patriotism in many. A woman named Mary Ludwig Hays earned the nickname "Molly Pitcher" during the war after helping her husband's artillery crew during a battle. She carried pitchers of water from a nearby stream to cool off the cannons during battle and prevent them from overheating. She carried so many pitchers that the soldiers began calling her Molly Pitcher as a sign of respect and admiration for her bravery and hard work.

Deborah Sampson dressed up in men's clothing to join the Continental Army. She was a talented soldier who hid her identity so well that doctors only found out she was a woman after she sustained an injury. Other women served as messengers and spies, kept their homes running, and managed farms or businesses when the men left to fight. Through their hard work and dedication, women helped shape the course of the American Revolution and its aftermath.

Around five thousand African American soldiers fought against Britain in support of the Patriot cause. Most were free men from the northern states. African Americans fought in nearly every battle, including Salem Poor, Peter Salem, and other soldiers who fought during the Battle of Bunker Hill. Rhode Island even fielded a regiment in the Continental Army composed mostly of

African American soldiers. However, many more African Americans—about twenty thousand—fought for the British, because the British promised freedom to any enslaved person who sided with the king against the American revolutionaries.

Phillis Wheatley

Phillis Wheatley was an African American poet who published a collection of poems in 1773. She wrote a series of poems advocating for the Patriot cause during the American Revolution, highlighting the importance of independence and freedom. Her poems encouraged African Americans to join the fight for liberty, and she hoped her words would inspire Americans to achieve their independence. As an enslaved woman in America, Wheatley used her writing to challenge the social norms of her day, condemn slavery, create art showing African American life, and encourage others to fight for a better country. Wheatley gained her freedom in 1773.

Phillis Wheatley's poetry demonstrated the power of words to inspire change.

Turning the Tide

During the early stages of the Revolutionary War, things did not go well for the Continental Army. Within three months of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, a large British army sailed to New York City and defeated Washington's forces there, causing Washington and his remaining soldiers to flee.

Washington knew that more defeats could wear out his soldiers and the American people's support for the war. He planned a surprise attack on the Hessians, British-hired mercenaries from Hesse, Germany. They were camped in Trenton, New Jersey, just across the Delaware River from Pennsylvania. On Christmas night of 1776, Washington's soldiers rowed across the river and quietly approached the Hessians. As dawn broke, the Continental Army attacked the Hessians, who were surprised and confused. The attack led to a short fight, and the Hessians surrendered. The Battle of Trenton was a significant victory for Washington and raised morale both in the army and among the public.

The Battle of Princeton was fought about a week later, on January 3, 1777. This time, Washington led the Continental Army in a surprise attack

George Washington examines captured British flags following the Battle of Trenton on December 26, 1776.

against a British force. The Americans forced the British to retreat from New Jersey. Once again, another important victory boosted morale for the Patriots.

Revolutionary War Battles

Battles of the Revolutionary War were fought throughout the thirteen colonies.

The Battle of Saratoga

Following their defeat of the Continental Army in New York, the British turned their attention to New England. They planned for three of their armies to meet in Albany, New York, with the aim of defeating the Americans quickly. But one British general, William Howe, had other plans. Howe led the main British army in New York and wanted to capture Philadelphia first before moving north to join the other British troops.

By the time General Howe captured Philadelphia, there was no time for his forces to join the others in New York. The British and Americans fought a crucial battle at Saratoga, north of Albany, in October of 1777. The Americans won, and around six thousand of Britain's best soldiers surrendered. The Battle of Saratoga was a defining moment of the American Revolution, marking the first major battlefield victory for the Americans. The Patriots were reenergized by their victory.

New Allies

Following their victory at Saratoga, the Americans gained an important ally—France. The French entered the war several months after the Battle of Saratoga. Besides soldiers, France also sent money, equipment, and naval fleets. The country's support was crucial in America's ultimate victory. The Spanish and the Dutch also joined in, helping turn the tide of the war against the British and toward the Americans.

However, the winter of 1777–78 at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, was a low point for the Continental Army. Many soldiers died due to starvation or exposure to the cold. Despite this, the troops continued to train for more fighting against the British. Inspired by their fortitude, an unemployed former Prussian military officer, Baron Frederick von Steuben, offered to coach the American army, and George Washington agreed. For the first time, the American Continental Army was well trained. Steuben's efforts were successful, as the troops emerged ready for the spring period of fighting.

The Spanish colony of Louisiana also played a critical role in helping the Patriot cause, thanks in large part to the leadership of its governor, Bernardo de Gálvez. Gálvez offered supplies and support to American troops. His forces took important British-controlled posts such as Baton Rouge, in present-day Louisiana, in 1789 and Mobile, in present-day Alabama, in 1780. In the Battle of Lake Pontchartrain during the same year, Gálvez's forces helped the Continental Navy prevent a British attack on New Orleans. The Patriots achieved another major victory with the Battle of Baton Rouge, leading to the capture of the city. This win also strengthened Spanish support for American independence. As a result of these victories, Spain was able to expand its control over Louisiana and other nearby territories.

A statue stands in New Orleans, Louisiana, honoring Governor Bernardo de Gálvez.

Espionage and the War

Both America and Britain had secret ways of gathering information—spies. Spying in revolutionary America was considered dangerous work, and spies often risked their lives. **Encrypted** messages were often used to hide the information spies gathered, which then had to be decoded. Spies often worked behind the scenes, gathering information that influenced key strategic decisions made by leaders like George Washington.

Vocabulary

encrypted, adj.
coded or concealed

Nathan Hale worked as a spy in New York City, gathering information about British troop movements in 1776. He was caught by the British and hanged. His last words were "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." The Culper Spy Ring provided valuable intelligence to George Washington, including information about a planned British attack on French troops

stationed in Rhode Island in 1778. The lesser-known John Clark and Enoch Crosby were successful American spies, while Nancy Hart was able to provide the Americans with information despite the British presence in her Georgia home in 1781. One of the most successful spies for the American cause was James Armistead Lafayette, an enslaved man who worked as a double agent from 1781 to 1782. He was recruited by the British while pretending to have escaped slavery, but in reality he worked to provide important information for the Continental Army. Lafayette gained his freedom in 1787.

Benedict Arnold

During the American Revolution, George Washington suffered one of his greatest disappointments when one of the Patriots' bravest generals, Benedict Arnold, went over to the enemy. Arnold had helped win the Battle of Saratoga and was promoted to major general. In 1780, Washington placed Arnold in command of crucial fortifications at West Point along the Hudson River. Despite his success, Arnold did not feel appreciated. He agreed to turn West Point over to the British in exchange for a large sum of money. The plot was discovered in time, but Arnold escaped and joined the British forces. Americans were shocked to learn of Arnold's **treason**, which was not a defeat on the battlefield but a defeat of the spirit.

Benedict Arnold escaped on horseback when his treason was discovered.

Vocabulary

treason, n. a disloyal act against one's country, often by helping an enemy

The Fight at Sea

The American navy was considerably smaller than the British navy and lacked the resources to match it. However, American warships performed well when engaging one British ship at a time.

One of America's most famous naval commanders during the Revolutionary War was John Paul Jones. In 1779, Jones commanded the ship *Bonhomme* (/bahn*um/) *Richard*. Under his command, the ship encountered the British warship *Serapis* off the coast of Britain. The two ships engaged in a fierce battle. During the fight, the *Bonhomme Richard*'s deck burst into flames, and the British commander demanded Jones's surrender. But instead of giving up, Jones replied with the now-famous words "I have not yet begun to fight!" He continued to battle. Despite his own ship sinking, Jones and his crew boarded the *Serapis* and successfully captured it. Jones's victory was a defining moment in the history of the American navy and an example of the courage and determination of the American military during the Revolutionary War.

Yorktown and Surrender

In 1781, the British made a major mistake. Lord Charles Cornwallis was the general in charge of the British armies in the South. He spent a year chasing the Continental Army in the southern states. But things changed when the Continental Army defeated a large Loyalist force at the Battle of Kings Mountain, along the border between North and South Carolina. Cornwallis realized that the British plan for the South would not work. He then decided to move his army to Virginia.

Cornwallis chose the small town of Yorktown, located on the York River in Virginia, as his base, where he waited for supplies from the British navy. Cornwallis felt secure there. After all, he had one-third of all the British soldiers in America with him. However, Cornwallis was unaware of the fact that the Continental Army was heading his way.

While General Cornwallis was busy setting up his base at Yorktown, George Washington was combining his army in New York with French troops under General Rochambeau and the Marquis de Lafayette. The French general's army and ships were a boost to the Americans. At first, the Patriots set their sights on British-controlled New York City. But then they learned about the events in Yorktown. They decided they could trap Cornwallis's army by cooperating with the French navy to keep the British navy from reaching Cornwallis, making him surrender.

It took more than a month for the American and French armies to travel the five hundred miles (805 km) to Yorktown. They dug a half-ring of trenches around the town. Their plan was to take the British army by surprise. On October 9, 1781, at exactly five o'clock in the evening, the first cannon was fired. The Battle of Yorktown began. For the first time, General Washington had more guns and cannons than the British.

He also had more soldiers under his command than Cornwallis. The British hoped to turn to their navy for help, but the French naval fleet that had sailed from the Caribbean kept the British navy from reaching Yorktown. Cornwallis's army was on its own. As the days dragged on, General Washington directed his army's movements. He tightened the lines around Yorktown. Washington rode among his soldiers, encouraging them to press on. Cornwallis was trapped, the sounds of American cannons roaring around him. Finally, he realized there was no way to win. On October 19, 1781, after several days of intense fighting, Cornwallis surrendered. This surrender was a major victory for the Patriots, and although fighting continued on a smaller scale, it signaled the end of the war.

Victory and Peace

The Peace of Paris marked the end of the American Revolution. It was signed by representatives of the United States, Great Britain, France, and Spain on September 3, 1783. The treaty included several important agreements.

First, Britain recognized American independence. Specific boundaries were set for the new country, the United States of America. Britain was left in control of Canada and agreed to return property taken during the war. The treaty confirmed the transfer of control of Florida from Britain back to Spain. It formally ended hostilities between Britain and the United States. But for the United States, the difficult work of creating a new country had just begun.

Lord Cornwallis surrendered on October 19, 1781. The Americans were victorious in the war for American independence.

PRIMARY SOURCE: LETTER FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON TO HENRY LAURENS, DECEMBER 23, 1777

. . . I am now convinced beyond a doubt, that unless some great and capital change suddenly takes place in that line this Army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things. Starve—dissolve—or disperse, in order to obtain subsistence in the best manner they can. rest assured, Sir, this is not an exaggerated picture, and that I have abundant reason to support what I say.

Yesterday afternoon receiving information that the Enemy, in force, had left the City, and were advancing towards Derby, with apparent design to forage and draw subsistence from that part of the Country, I ordered the Troops to be in readiness, that I might give every Opposition in my power; when behold! to my great mortification, I was not only informed, but convinced, that the Men were unable to stir on account of provision, and that a dangerous mutiny, begun the night before and which with difficulty was suppressed by the spirited exertions of some Officers, was still much to be apprehended for want of this Article.

This brought forth the only Commissary in the purchasing line in this Camp, and with him this melancholy and alarming truth, That he had not a single hoof of any kind to slaughter, and not more than 25 Barrells of Flour! From hence form an opinion of our situation, when I add, that he could not tell when to expect any.

All I could do under these circumstances was, to send out a few light parties to watch and harrass the Enemy, whilst other parties were instantly detached different ways to collect, if possible, as much provision as would satisfy the present pressing wants of the Soldiery—But will this answer? No Sir: three or four days bad weather would prove our destruction. What then is to become of the Army this Winter? . . .

Source: "From George Washington to Henry Laurens, 23 December 1777," *Founders Online*, National Archives.

PRIMARY SOURCE: EXCERPT FROM THOMAS PAINE'S *THE AMERICAN CRISIS* (NO. 1)

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 his country; but he that stands it NOW, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly:—'Tis dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to set a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed, if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated. Britain, with an army to enforce her tyranny, has declared, that she has a right (not only to TAX) but "to BIND us in ALL CASES WHATSOEVER," and if being bound in that manner is not slavery, then is there not such a thing as slavery upon earth. Even the expression is impious [disrespectful], for so unlimited a power can belong only to GOD. . . .

I have as little superstition in me as any man living, but my secret opinion has ever been, and still is, that GOD almighty will not give up a people to military destruction, or leave them unsupportedly to perish, who had so earnestly and so repeatedly sought to avoid the calamities of war, by every decent method which wisdom could invent. . . .

. . . A man may easily distinguish in himself between temper and principle, and I am as confident, as I am that God governs the world, that America will never be happy till she gets clear of foreign dominion. Wars, without ceasing, will break out till that period arrives, and the Continent must in the end be conquerors; for, though the flame of liberty may sometimes cease to shine, the coal never can expire. . . .

Source: Paine, Thomas. *The American Crisis*. No. 1. Boston, 1776.

Glossary

A

alliance, n. an agreement between two nations to help each other in wartime (8)

B

burgess, n. a representative to the legislature in colonial Virginia or Maryland (16)

C

colonel, n. a high-ranking military official (6)

E

encrypted, adj. coded or concealed (37)

F

formation, n. an arrangement of people or things acting as one unit (6)

I

intolerable, adj. unbearable (20)

M

massacre, n. the violent killing of defenseless people (19)

mercenary, n. a soldier paid to fight for a country or cause that they are not native to or in support of (31)

militia, n. a group of armed citizens prepared for military service at any time (22)

P

prime minister, n. the head of the government in some countries (7)

proclamation, n. an important official announcement that is usually made to the public (14)

Q

quarter, v. to give temporary lodging and meals to soldiers (17)

R

"rights of Englishmen" (phrase) traditional legal rights that all English subjects in England were guaranteed (16)

S

salutary neglect, n. an unofficial British policy of not enforcing rules and regulations in the colonies (14)

self-determination, n. the ability of people in a country to decide their own government (29)

T

tax, n. money that people are required to pay to support the workings of the government (14)

treason, n. a disloyal act against one's country, often by helping an enemy (38)

treaty, n. a formal agreement between two or more groups, especially countries (9)

"trial by jury" (phrase) a case of law decided by a group of one's fellow citizens (18)

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Cornwallis surrendered at York Town, ending the war (gouache on paper) / Embleton, Ron (1930–88) / British / Private Collection / © Look and Learn / Bridgeman Images: 41

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Patrick Henry speaking to Virginia delegates in 1775 by Louis S.Glanzman (b.1922) / National Geographic Creative / Bridgeman Images: Cover C, 22

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