

# The American Revolution

## Complete Unit Guide Packet

### Overview

The [American Revolution](#) saw the United States win independence from Great Britain after 8 years of war and almost 20 years of varying rebellion. Colonists proclaimed “no taxation without representation” starting with the [Stamp Act Congress](#) in 1765. They rejected the authority of the British Parliament to tax them because they had no representatives in that governing body. Protests steadily escalated to the Boston Massacre in 1770, followed by the Boston Tea Party in December 1773.



The British responded by closing Boston Harbor and enacting a series of [punitive laws](#) which effectively rescinded Massachusetts Bay Colony’s rights of self-government. The other colonies rallied behind Massachusetts, and a group of American Patriot leaders set up their own government at the Continental Congress to coordinate their resistance of Britain; other colonists retained their allegiance to the Crown and were known as Loyalists.

Tensions erupted into battle between Patriot militia and King George’s redcoats at [Lexington and Concord](#) on April 19, 1775. The conflict then developed into war, during which the Patriots (and later their French allies) fought the British and Loyalists. The Continental Congress declared King George a tyrant and they declared independence on July 2, 1776.

Battles took place across the Colonies over the next 7 years. A major turning point was when the Patriots captured a British army at the [Battle of Saratoga](#) in October 1777. Benjamin Franklin helped convince France to enter the war as an ally of the United States with a large army and navy. A combined American and French force captured a second British army at Yorktown in the fall of 1781, effectively ending the war. The [Treaty of Paris](#) was signed on September 3, 1783, formally ending the conflict and confirming the new nation’s complete separation from the British Empire.

### Essential Questions

- How did the political ideas of the Enlightenment shape the American colonies?
- How did Great Britain’s neglect of the colonists gradually lead to independence?
- What political differences were created among the colonists concerning separation from Great Britain?
- Were the colonists justified in resisting British policies after the French and Indian War?
- What were the key events of the Revolutionary War?
- What factors led to Colonial victory in the Revolutionary War?
- How have the Declaration of Independence’s key principles grown in importance to become unifying ideas of American political philosophy?
- Was the American Revolutionary War inevitable?

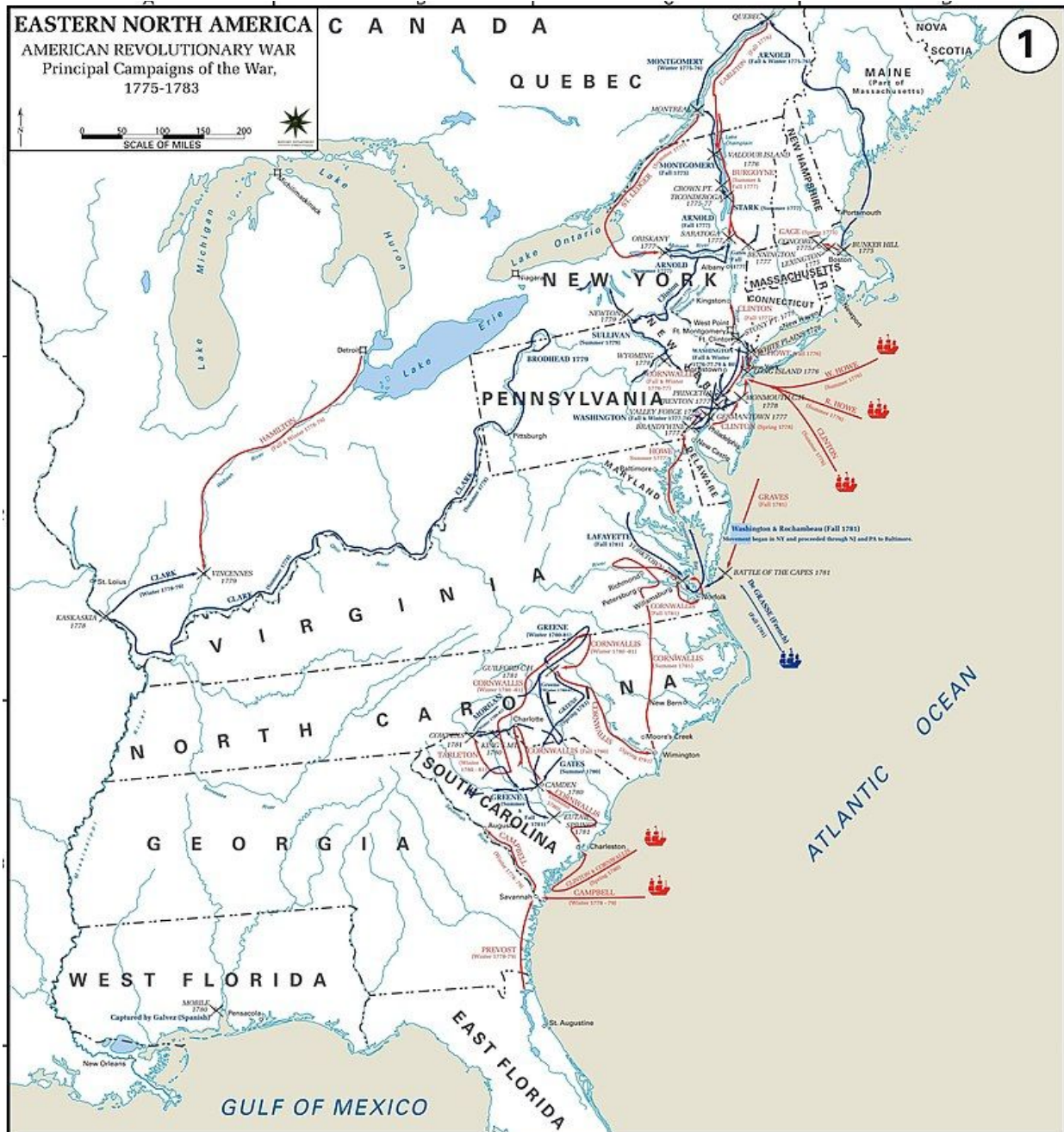
# Vocabulary

**Directions:** Write the definition for each vocabulary term in your own words in the second column.

<b>Patriot</b>	
<b>Loyalist</b>	
<b>Redcoats</b>	
<b>Shot Heard 'Round the World</b>	
<b>Boycott</b>	
<b>Blockade</b>	
<b>Guerrilla Warfare</b>	
<b>Mercenary</b>	
<b>Treaty of Paris</b>	

# Geography of the Revolutionary War

**Directions:** Analyze the [map of the American Revolution](#) and this animated map [video of the Revolution here](#) then answer the questions.



Where did most of the fighting take place?

What impact did the British Navy have on the war?

What geographic advantage did the Continental Army have?

# People to Know

**Directions:** Use the bank of names below to identify the appropriate category for each person. For each person, identify the significant contributions that person made to the American Revolution.

[King George III](#)

[Molly Pitcher](#)

[Alexander Hamilton](#)

[George Washington](#)

[Benedict Arnold](#)

[Benjamin Franklin](#)

[Marquis de Lafayette](#)

[Paul Revere](#)

[Lord Charles Cornwallis](#)

British Loyalists	Name: Contributions:	Name: Contributions:	Name: Contributions:
American Patriots	Name: Contributions:	Name: Contributions:	Name: Contributions:

# Timeline of the American Revolution

**Directions:** Research each event from the Revolution and place the date in the second column. Then, briefly describe the significance of that event in the last column.

Event	Date	Significance
<u>Lexington &amp; Concord</u>		
Battle of <u>Bunker Hill</u>		
Thomas Paine's <u>"Common Sense"</u> Published		
<u>Declaration of Independence Signed</u>		
Battle of <u>Saratoga</u>		
<u>Washington Crosses the Delaware</u>		
<u>Winter at Valley Forge</u>		
Colonies & France sign the <u>French Alliance</u>		
<u>Battle of King's Mountain, SC</u>		
The <u>Articles of Confederation</u> adopted		
Battle of <u>Yorktown</u>		
Treaty of Paris <u>Signed</u>		

## Key Concepts

**Directions:** For each section, either takes notes on the required topics or answer the questions in complete sentences.

Patriots	Neutrals	Loyalists

## Primary Source Analysis

What is Paine's argument here about why the United States should be independent of Great Britain?

“Small islands, not capable of protecting themselves, are the proper objects for kingdoms to take under their care; but there is something absurd, in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island.”

- Thomas Paine
- "Common Sense" (1775)

“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.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness.”

- Thomas Jefferson

The Declaration of Independence (1776)

Why does Jefferson feel the Colonies have the right to institute a new Government?

How would marginalized groups use these words later to support other causes?

Head Quarters, Valley Forge, February 16, 1778

Dear Sir: It is with great reluctance, I trouble you on a subject, which does not fall within your province; but it is a subject that occasions me more distress, than I have felt, since the commencement of the war; and which loudly demands the most zealous exertions of every person of weight and authority, who is interested in the success of our affairs. I mean the present dreadful situation of the army for want of provisions, and the miserable prospects before us, with respect to futurity. It is more alarming than you will probably conceive, for, to form a just idea, it were necessary to be on the spot. For some days past, there has been little less, than a famine in camp. A part of the army has been a week, without any kind of flesh, and the rest for three or four days. Naked and starving as they are, we cannot enough admire the incomparable patience and fidelity of the soldiery, that they have not been ere this excited by their sufferings, to a general mutiny or dispersion. Strong symptoms, however, discontent have appeared in particular instances; and nothing but the most active efforts everywhere can long avert so shocking a catastrophe."

- George Washington  
Letter to George Clinton

How does Washington describe the conditions at Valley Forge?

What impact did this have on the Continental Army and Washington?

**Lafayette** was a French aristocrat and military officer who fought in the Revolutionary War, commanding American troops in several battles, including the Siege of Yorktown. After returning to France, he was a key figure in the French Revolution.

How does Lafaeyette feel about supporting the American Revolution & why?

How do you think his view might be based on America today?

"I would never have drawn my sword in the cause of America, if I could have conceived that thereby I was founding a land of slavery."

– Marquis de Lafayette  
(From a letter to the abolitionist Thomas Clarkson )

In what way had the "world turned upside down" at Yorktown?

## The World Turned Upside Down

According to legend, the British army band under Lord Cornwallis played "The World Turned Upside Down" when they surrendered at Yorktown in 1781. An excerpt from the lyrics:

Listen to me and you shall hear, news hath not been this thousand year:  
Since Herod, Caesar, and many more, you never heard the like before.  
Holy-dayes are despis'd, new fashions are devis'd.  
Old Christmas is kickt out of Town.



Yet let's be content, and the times lament, you see the world turn'd upside down.

## Visual Literacy

**Directions:** Use the included images and captions to answer each of the questions.



Map showing the **population density** of the American Colonies just prior to the Revolutionary War.

Which Colonies had the highest population density?

How might this impact the American Revolution?



This lithograph based on Paul Revere's famous **engraving** of the **Boston Massacre** emphasizes **Crispus Attucks**, the black man in the center who became an important symbol for abolitionists.

What happened at the Boston Massacre?

Why might Attucks become a symbol for abolitionists?





Painting showing British [Redcoats](#) at the [Battle of Bunker Hill](#) in 1775.

In what way were the British uniforms ineffective?

How did this work to the Continental Army's advantage?



1780 drawing of American soldiers from the [Yorktown campaign](#).

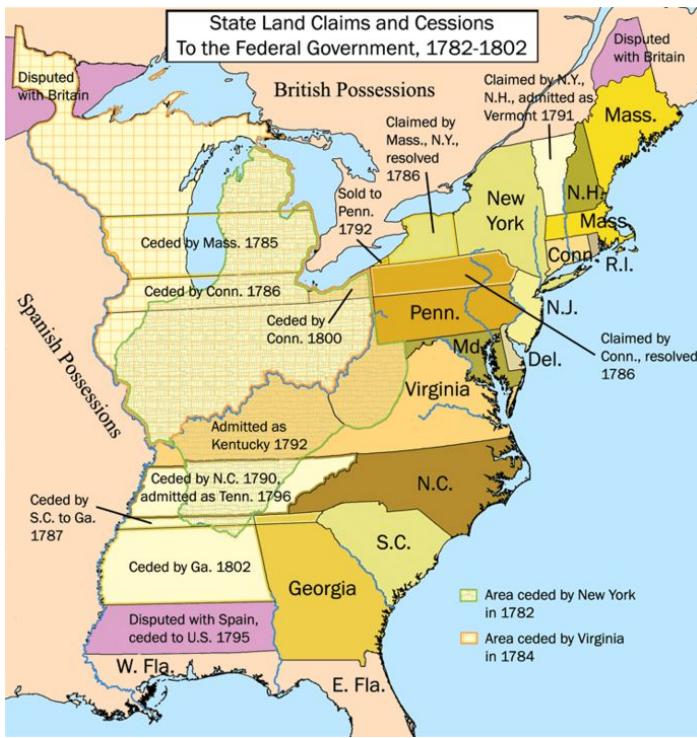
How do these Continental Army uniforms differ from those of the British?



George Washington's [crossing of the Delaware River](#) on the night of December 25-26, 1776 was the first move in a surprise attack against the Hessian forces in Trenton, New Jersey.

Why were Washington and his men crossing the river?

What impact did this event have on the War?



Map showing the United States after the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783.

Based on the map, what issues might states have to figure out once the United States achieved independence from Great Britain?