

# The American Revolution,

1775 - 1783



Successful Learners    Confident Individuals    Responsible Citizens    Effective Contributors

In this unit you will learn about important events in World History: the American, Revolution.

You will develop a variety of different skills for Life, Learning and Work:

- Literacy: communicating, listening, recording, reading and writing
- Working with others: working with a partner and in a group
- Managing yourself: completing all work in class and completing homework on time
- Thinking skills: remembering, explaining, analysing, evaluating, applying and creating



You will develop key **Literacy** skills:

- "I will select ideas and relevant information independently and organise essential information/ ideas in a logical order." **3/4-26a**
- "I will accurately spell most of the words I need to use. I will accurately punctuate and structure different types of sentences and arrange these to make meaning clear." **3/4-21 & 22a**
- "I will engage and contribute with others during class/group discussions and encourage others to contribute. I understand that they may have different opinions to mine, but that I can use their contribution to reflect, clarify or change my opinion." **3-02a**
- "I will use notes to generate and develop ideas, retain and recall information, explore problems, make decisions, generate and develop ideas or create original text. I understand when it is appropriate to quote from sources and when I should put points into my own words. I can acknowledge my sources appropriately." **3-25a**

You will also develop your **Health and Wellbeing**:

- I will make full use of and value the opportunities I am given to improve and manage my learning and, in turn, I can help to encourage learning and confidence in others. **3/4-11a**



# Introduction

The 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were a period of great change in Europe with many people demanding social, economic and political change for their lives and their countries.



*"That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their powers from the consent of the governed."* -

United States Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson in 1776, 3<sup>rd</sup> President of the USA.



In this unit you will learn about the American Revolution and consider the impact it had on the country.

**"I will be able to ..."**

- 1. Explain the reasons why the people of America revolted against the British authorities.**
  - ... gather evidence to investigate the causes of the American Revolution and to use my knowledge and my understanding to explain and present my views **(3-01a/05a/06a/4-06a)**. Some of these sources will give me conflicting ideas about why the revolution happened. **(4-01a)**
  - ... study the inequalities experienced by those in America and will be able to explain the reasons for the inequality **(4-04a)**.
- 2. Evaluate how successful each the American Revolution was in addressing the causes of the revolution.**
  - ... explain the ways inequality was addressed by explaining the changes that came about because of the revolution. **(4-04a)**
  - ... use my knowledge and my understanding to explain to interpret evidence about the impact and the achievements the revolution had on each country **(3-01a)**. Some of these sources will be conflicting on how successful the revolution was **(4-01a)**

## A. The 13 British Colonies

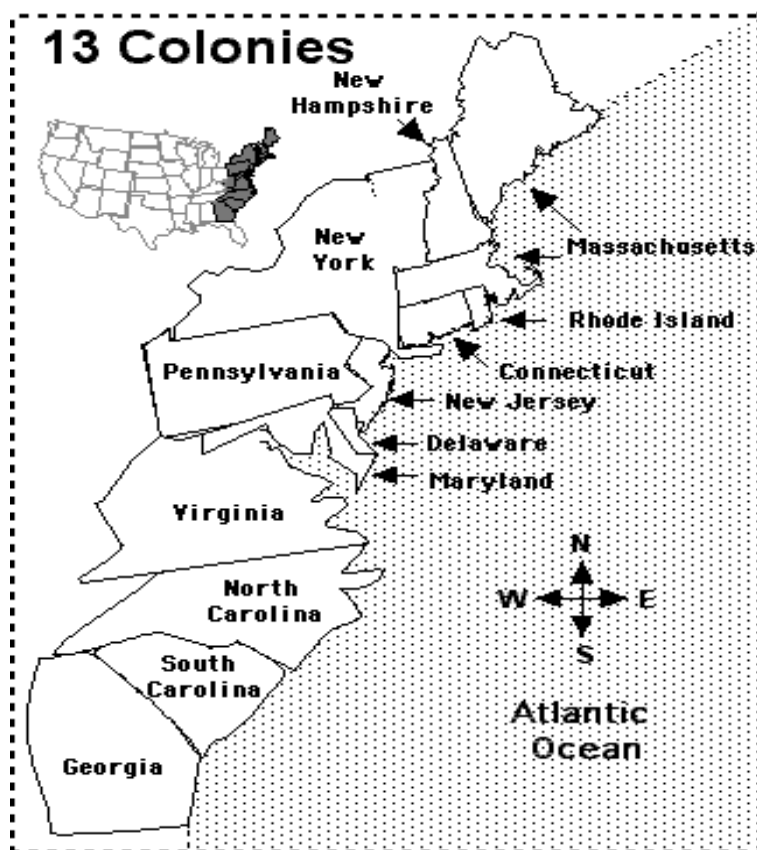


You will be able to:

Explain the reasons why Britain found it difficult to govern the colonies.

The **American Revolution** was a political upheaval during the last half of the 18th century in which thirteen colonies in North America joined together to break free from the British Empire, combining to become the United States of America.

Since prehistoric times the United States had been settled by Native Americans. After Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas in 1492 for Europe, white settlers had migrated there to start a new life. They settled on the land along the eastern coast of America. This land eventually became the original 13 British colonies. The King and Parliament ruled these colonies from Britain. For a long time this worked out well for Britain; however, by the 1770s the 13 colonies had grown to contain over 2.5 million people and these people had issues with the way King George III governed them.



### The 13 British Colonies

Connecticut  
New Hampshire  
Delaware  
Georgia  
Maryland  
Massachusetts  
New York  
North Carolina  
Pennsylvania  
New Jersey  
Rhode Island  
South Carolina  
Virginia

It was difficult for the British government to rule the colonies because:

- Britain was 3,000 miles away from the thirteen colonies.
- The sailing ships of the time took nearly three months to cross the Atlantic Ocean.
- The colonies were not all alike but varied greatly in their way of life.

The colonists were not happy with the way they were governed for many reasons, there is no one cause of the American Revolution but several factors which lead to the beginning of the revolution.

### Activity 1

1. Explain the reasons why was it difficult for Britain to rule the American colonies.

*You should give between 1 and 3 reasons. Use the following template to help you layout your answer.*

There were many reasons why it was difficult for the British government to rule the colonies. One reason was \_\_\_\_\_. This made it difficult for Britain to rule to rule because \_\_\_\_\_. Another reason was that \_\_\_\_\_. This made it difficult for Britain to rule to rule because \_\_\_\_\_. Finally, \_\_\_\_\_. This made it difficult for Britain to rule to rule because \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Glue the map of colonial America into your jotter.
3. Label the British colonies using the following clues. How many can you get without cheating!
  - Colour PURPLE the colony or colonies named after kings and queens of Britain
  - Colour GREEN the first colony to declare its independence from Britain on May 4<sup>th</sup> 1776
  - Colour RED the colony or colonies named after English places
  - Colour BLUE the colony or colonies named after English men
  - Colour PINK the colony or colonies named after Native American tribes
  - Colour ORANGE the colony or colonies named after rivers

## B. Causes of the American Revolution



You will be able to:

- Explain the reasons why the colonists were angry at being ruled by Britain.
- Compare sources to find points of agreement

The **Seven Years War** was a war between Britain and France over territory in North America. Britain won, however it cost a lot of money. Britain made the colonists pay for the cost of the war, which we resent!

The colonists pay tax to the British government. However, we have no representation in the British parliament and no say over how the tax is spent which is unfair. Colonists throughout the thirteen colonies argued against "**taxation without representation**". We have boycotted certain British goods in protest.

We are angry about the **Proclamation of 1763**, which says we cannot move from the 13 colonies and into the fertile land to the west of the Appalachian Mountains. We do not like being told what to do a little island 3,000 miles away!

We are angry at the British government telling us how to run our land. For 150 years the British government has left us to our own devices. We have got use to **self-government**.



I hate the **Stamp Act**. In 1765 the British placed a tax on all printed materials such as wills, newspapers even playing cards and dice! All because the British think we colonists are not paying enough in tax. Why should I pay more tax to support Britain? I am going to boycott these goods. That will make the British angry!

In 1767 Britain introduced more taxes, although in fairness they did remove them in 1770 - except on tea! This really angered the colonists and in Boston they had a '**Tea Party**' to show their anger. They threw tea into the Boston Harbour. The British were very angry about this.

We hate the **Intolerable Acts** as they put many restrictions on us, such as making us pay for the tea we ruined at the Boston Tea Party.

## Activity 2

1. Complete the table below to explain the reasons why the colonists were angry and decided to revolt against the British government. Alternatively, you might like to design a poster or a mind-map in your jotter showing the different reasons why they were angry.

*You should identify at least 1 key event in each of the factors.*

Factors	Event/Act	Why did this anger the colonists?
Economic		
Political		
Social		

2. Which do you think was the most important reason for the colonists being angry at the British? Use the template below to help you structure your answer.

The most important reason for the colonists being angry at the British was \_\_\_\_\_. This was because \_\_\_\_\_. This was more important than \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Compare **Sources A** and **B** about the reasons why the colonists had become unhappy with British rule by 1775.

4

Use the template below to help you structure your answer.

**Sources A** and **B** (*choose either agree or disagree*) about the reasons why the colonists had become unhappy with British rule by 1775.  
**Sources A** and **B** (*choose either agree or disagree*) that (*find something the in sources which they specifically agree or disagree about*). This is shown where **Source A** says "\_\_\_\_\_" and where **Source B** *agrees/disagrees* where it says "\_\_\_\_\_".

**Sources A** and **B** are about why the colonists were unhappy with British rule by 1775.

**Source A**

The British government collected money from their American colonies through taxes. Many colonists regarded the taxes as unfair as they were not represented in the British parliament. Colonists were furious with the passing of the Stamp Act in 1765. This led to violent clashes between British soldiers and colonists. Tension was highest in Boston. In one incident, British soldiers opened fire, killing five colonists. This was reported as a brutal massacre across the colonies.

**Source B**

During the war with France the British government had passed new laws to extend its control of the American colonies including collecting more taxes from the colonists. Many colonists resented British interference in their lives and businesses. The Stamp Act produced a furious storm of protest. Under the banner "no taxation without representation", mobs took to the streets in Boston and other large towns. In 1770, the shooting of five protestors by British soldiers in Boston was portrayed as a terrible crime committed by the British.

Compare **Sources A** and **B** about the reasons why the colonists had become unhappy with British rule by 1775.

*You should aim to identify between 2 and 4 areas of comparison.*



## C. Events in Boston



You will be able to:

- Describe the events in Boston in 1770 and 1773.
- Evaluate why a source is useful.

### 1. The Boston Massacre

The colonists were not happy at being taxed by the British so they boycotted British goods. British customs officers were worried by this. They asked the British government for military backing, hoping this would put pressure on the colonists who would start paying their taxes. Eventually, about 4,000 Redcoats were posted in Boston. Boston, Massachusetts



was a very successful British colony. Bostonians resented the presence of "foreign" soldiers in their city especially as they amounted to one-in-four of all the people in Boston. Groups such as the **Sons of Liberty** were formed to campaign against this. One of the leading members was John Adams, a lawyer who would go on to become the second President of the USA.



Incidents between Bostonians and Redcoats were frequent. They attacked tax collectors and covered them in tar and feathers. The most notorious was the so-called "Boston Massacre" of March 5, 1770. An argument broke out between a Redcoat and a local merchant. The Redcoat struck the colonist with the butt of a musket during the confrontation. A crowd assembled and began pelting the Redcoat with a variety of materials — stones, oyster shells, ice, and chunks of coal. The British sent in reinforcements to help the Redcoat but the colonists taunted them too. At this time, a Redcoat was struck and fell to the ground. As he regained his footing, someone yelled, "Fire!" and the Redcoats fired their weapons into the colonists. By the time order had been restored three colonists lay dead and two others mortally wounded; six others would later recover from their wounds.



### Activity 3

**Source A** is from the trial of a British officer written after the Boston Massacre on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1770.

One of my soldiers received a severe blow with a stick, which caused him to fire his weapon accidentally. There followed a general attack on my men by a great number of heavy clubs. At this point, our lives were in imminent danger and three or four of my soldiers fired claiming that they heard an order to shoot. I can assure you that I gave no such order.

1. Sources are very important to Historians, as they help us understand the events of the past. You are going to evaluate **Source A** and explain why it is useful for investigating events in Boston in 1770.
  - a) **Source A** is useful for investigating events in Boston in 1770 as it was written in (insert date) this is useful because it is a primary/secondary source written shortly after \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b) **Source A** is also useful because it was written by (insert author) which is useful because they were an eyewitness/have the benefit of hindsight to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c) **Source A** is again useful because it was written to allow the British officer to defend the actions of his soldiers/to allow the colonists the opportunity to blame to British.
  - d) **Source A** is useful because it tells us (You should identify 1 key piece of evidence) which is useful because it is accurate information backed up by other sources/it was written by a British soldiers so it will be truthful.
  - e) **Source A** is useful because it also tells us (You should identify 1 more key piece of evidence) which is useful because it is accurate information backed up by other sources/it was written by a British soldiers so it will be truthful.
  - f) However, **Source A** is less useful as evidence about the events in Boston in 1770 because it fails to mention (what is missing from the source that would make it more useful? You should identify 1 key piece of evidence).
  - g) However, **Source A** is less useful as evidence about the events in Boston in 1770 because it fails to mention (what is missing from the source that would make it more useful? You should identify 1 key piece of evidence).

## 2. The Boston Tea Party

The Boston Tea Party, 1773 came just three years after the Boston Massacre. The British East India Company had so much tea it could afford to lower its prices enough to undercut the smuggled tea the colonists drank instead of paying the British tax. However, even with lower prices, the colonists still did not like the arrangement as they did not like paying the tax on tea. Therefore, on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1773 the Sons of Liberty took action. Colonists, poorly disguised as Mohawk Indians, boarded three tea ships docked in Boston Harbour. They smashed 342 chests of tea, and dumped them into the harbour. No one was seriously hurt, although one colonist was reportedly roughed up a bit for trying to stuff some of the tea in his coat instead of throwing it overboard!

King George III was not amused by the colonists' lack of respect. "The die is now cast," he wrote to his Prime Minister, Lord North, "the colonies must either submit or triumph." The British government responded by passing new laws, the Intolerable Acts, to punish the colonists. The colonists were furious and unwilling to accept these punishments. The events in Boston helped start the American Revolution.



2. You are going to describe events in Boston in December 1773. You can do this by either:

- Creating a cartoon storyboards describing the events in Boston in December 1773.
- Creating a newspaper front page describing the events in Boston in December 1773.
- Creating something of your choosing to describe the events in Boston in December 1773.

*Whichever way you design your work, you should aim to have between 3 and 6 key pieces of evidence to describe the Boston Tea Party.*

## D. The First Continental Congress, 1774



You will be able to:

Explain the reasons why the Continental Congress was important in bringing about revolution.

To protest the Intolerable Acts, delegates from 12 colonies (Georgia chose not to take part) gathered in Philadelphia for the **First Continental Congress** in autumn of 1774. The delegates were prominent men in colonial political life: **Samuel Adams, John Adams and George Washington**.

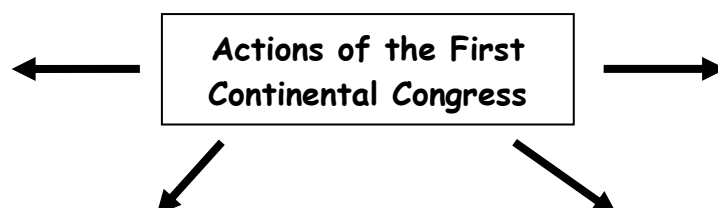
The Continental Congress petitioned Parliament, King George III, and the British people to abolish the acts and restore friendly relations. They continued to boycott British goods in the colonies; argue against taxation without representation; having British soldiers in the colonies, and demanded equal rights for every citizen. The Congress began to govern the colonies and took control over law and the army. The work of Congress was respected by the colonists and was seen as democratic and representative of their views, unlike the British government.



After petitioning the King, the Continental Congress voted to meet again in May 1775 to consider further action, but by that time violence had already broken out.

### Activity 4

Complete the mind-map to explain the reasons why the First Continental Congress helped bring America closer to Revolution. *You should aim to have between 3 and 6 key pieces of evidence.*



## E. Outbreak of Revolution



### You will learn:

Describe how events at Lexington and Concord led to Revolution.

Come to a conclusion on who you think was in a better position to win the war.

### 1. The Battle of Lexington and Concord

By 1775, many cities and towns had organised volunteer militias of “minutemen” (named for their alleged ability to prepare for combat at the drop of a hat) who undertook military drills openly in public areas.

#### Activity 5

1. Watch the video clips and take notes on the following questions.

- a) Who were the key men involved with the Battle of Lexington and Concord?
- b) What kind of men made up the militia?
- c) How did news of the British march get to the colonial militia?
- d) How many militiamen met the British?
- e) What advantages and disadvantages did the colonists have over the British?
- f) Who won the battle of Lexington?
- g) Where did the British go after Lexington and why?
- h) What were the 'patriots'/colonists doing?
- i) Who won at Concord?
- j) What do you think is meant by the “shot heard round the world”



Following the fighting at Lexington and Concord the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1775. Those present included Sam Adams, Patrick Henry, John Hancock, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and George Washington. Some wanted to declare American independence immediately; some wanted to avoid war at all costs. So Congress did both! They sent a document called the Olive Branch Petition to King George III to see if war could be avoided. However, they also created an army and appointed George Washington as Commander-in-Chief. King George III refused to read the document, and so Britain and America were officially at war.

The Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776 issued the **Declaration of Independence**, which announced that the thirteen American colonies, then at war with Great Britain, regarded themselves as independent states, and no longer a part of the British Empire. Instead, they formed a union that would become a new nation - the United States of America.



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.

## 2. The British and Colonial Armies

2. Who do you think was more likely to win? Use **Sources A** and **B** below to select the evidence to show each army's advantages and disadvantages. *You should have 2 - 4 pieces of evidence in each box.*

	American Army	British Army
Advantages		
Disadvantages		

**Source A** is from a modern historian writing about the strengths and weaknesses of the British and Colonial armies at the outbreak of war.

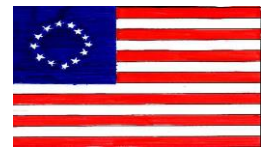
The British seemed unbeatable. During the previous 100 years, the British had enjoyed triumphs over nations as powerful as France and Spain. At first glance, the odds were clearly against the Americans. Britain's military was the best in the world. Their soldiers were well equipped, well disciplined, well paid, and well fed. The British navy also dominated the seas. Funds to pay for the war were easily raised by the British government. Some of those funds were used to hire skilled German mercenaries to help the British fight the Americans. The Americans had tremendous difficulty raising enough funds to purchase basic supplies for their troops, including shoes and blankets. American were divided over the war with one in five Americans openly favoured the British. Most Indian tribes sided with Britain, who promised them protection of tribal lands.

In **Source B**, an American historian explains some of the advantages and disadvantages of the two armies.

The Americans had many advantages. The British fought a war far from home. Military orders, troops, and supplies sometimes took months to reach their destinations. The British had an extremely difficult job because, although American troops may not have had the military force and economic resources of their British rivals, they did believe strongly in their fight for freedom and liberty. The British had to persuade the Americans to give up their claims of independence. As long as the war continued, the colonists' claim continued to gain strength. Despite occupying every major city, the geographic vastness of the colonies proved a difficulty to the British effort. American military and political leaders were inexperienced, but proved surprisingly competent. The war was expensive and the British population debated its necessity. In the British Parliament, there were many American sympathizers.

3. So, who do you think was in a better position to win the war in 1775? You should give a reason for your decision. Use the template below to help you.

The army most likely to win the war in 1775 was \_\_\_\_\_. This was because \_\_\_\_\_. They were more likely to win than \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.



## F. American Victory



**You will be able to:**

Explain the reasons why the Americans won their independence from Britain.

The first years of the Revolution were difficult for the Americans. France had secretly been giving the United States loans, gifts of money, and weapons. It was too risky for France to help openly the Americans until they proved themselves in battle. The American victory in the Battle of Saratoga, 1777 **convinced** France to enter the war and to recognise the United States as an independent country. France declared war on Britain and fought on the side of the Americans. Spain and the Netherlands followed France in supporting the Americans. **Historians** agree that without France's soldiers and money, the Americans would have lost the war.

### **The French:**

- Provided the Americans with money to fund the war
- Sent weapons and supplies to help the Americans
- Sent soldiers to join the Americans. The first French army reached America in 1780.
- Attacked and threatened British colonies in the Caribbean, the West Indies and the Mediterranean.
- Harassed British shipping in the Atlantic. Shipping was vital since Britain had such a big empire.
- Prevented Britain getting supplies to its troops in America.
- French and Spanish forces threatened Britain with invasion. In 1799 a huge French-Spanish force carrying 30,000 soldiers appeared off southern England.

The Battle of Yorktown, October 1781 was the last great battle of the American Revolution. This time the Americans had the French to help them and together they defeated Britain in the last great battle of the American Revolution. The British Army surrendered and the British government began to consider a peace treaty.

The Peace of Paris Treaty in 1783 confirmed the new nation's complete separation from the British Empire, and resulted in the United States taking possession of nearly all the territory east of the Mississippi river.



Among the significant results of the revolution was the creation of a democratically - elected representative government responsible to the will of the people. In 1787, the Constitutional Convention was held in Philadelphia and the Constitution of the United States was written.

### Activity 6

**Source A:** Historian explains the problems the involvement of France caused Britain in the American Revolution.

The entry of France into the war added enormously to Britain's difficulties. The French attacked Britain's colonies in the Caribbean and elsewhere undermining Britain's control. They harassed British shipping in the Atlantic interfering with Britain's trade. It also became more difficult for Britain to supply its soldiers in America.

1. How fully does **Source A** explain the reasons for the American victory in the revolution?

**Source A** explains the reasons for the American victory in the revolution quite fully but not completely.

**Source A** explains why Americans won as it tells us ...

**Source A** also explains why Americans won as it tells us ...

However, **Source A** fails to mention that the Americans won because ...

**Source A** also fails to mention that the Americans won because ...

Therefore, **Source A** explains the reasons for the American victory in the revolution quite fully but does not give us all the important information.

2. What do you think was the most important reason for the American victory in the Revolution? Give a detailed reason for your decision.

Take a double page in your jotter and copy the table below to show how much you have understood about the American Revolution.

	<b>American Revolution in a nutshell</b>
<b>Why were the American colonists angry with the British before 1775?</b>	
<b>What was the most significant cause of Revolution and why?</b>	
<b>Who were the political and military leaders of the Revolution?</b>	
<b>Who was the most effective leader?</b>	
<b>Why did the American's achieve independence?</b>	
<b>How successful was the revolution in addressing the cause of revolution?</b>	

**"I can ...**

**History**

"... I can explain why events in the past can lead to some aspects of a society changing while other aspects stay the same".

"...I can describe events in the past and show how they have impacted on people at the time and since."

"... analyse evidence to establish my own ideas about events in the past."

"... I can use evidence to reach my own conclusions about events in the past."

"... demonstrate my understanding of chronology and evaluate why sources are useful for investigating the past."

"... interpret information from primary and secondary sources to describe the cause and impact of events."

"... Compare sources to find points of agreement and disagreement"

## Literacy



"... find, select, sort, summarise, make links and use information from a variety of sources for a range of purposes.

"... make and organise my notes using my own words and use these notes to develop my thinking, help me retain and recall information, explore problems and create new texts.

"... review and edit my work throughout to ensure clarity of meaning and purpose."

## Health and Wellbeing



"... make full use of and value the opportunities I am given to improve and manage my learning and, in turn, I can help to encourage learning and confidence in others."