



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Analysing the American Revolution

Vincent Toohey & Andrew Butcher Second Edition



ISBN 978-1-108-88706-9

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

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First published 2016
Second Edition 2021

20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Cover designed by Carolina Kerr
Text designed by Claire Atteia
Typeset by Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.
Printed in China by C & C Offset Printing Co. Ltd.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Australia at www.nla.gov.au

ISBN 978–1-108–88706-9 Paperback

Additional resources for this publication at www.cambridge.edu.au/GO

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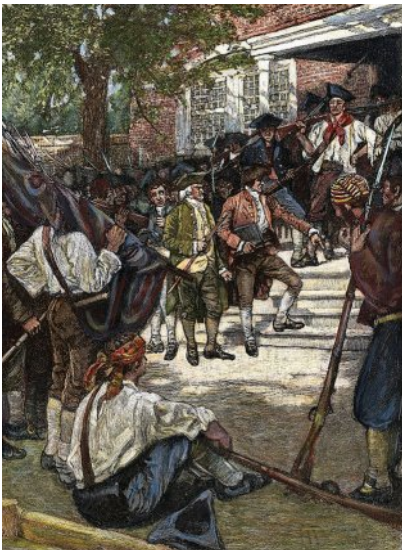
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About the authors



Vincent Toohey holds a BA from the University of NSW and an MA (History) from the University of Sydney. He has taught History or Aboriginal Studies at HSC or VCE level for over 25 years in Sydney and Melbourne. For well over a decade he has been a Senior Assessor/Marker for VCE Revolutions History with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), and has lectured regularly on both the American and Russian Revolutions for the History Teachers' Association of Victoria (HTAV) to both teachers and students. Vincent has also organised study tours and/or social justice tours to America, Europe and Africa.



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Dedication

Dedicated to my long-suffering and patient family, my 'genius teacher' wife Sophie and gifted children: James, Madeleine and Gemma Toohey. They have supported my teaching knowingly and unknowingly for over 25 years. I have also been blessed to teach many brilliant and hard-working students that have done exceptionally well at the HSC and VCE level. I have also been mentored by some wonderful teachers that have helped me on my journey through St Aloysius' College, St Ignatius' College, Trinity Grammar and lastly St Kevin's College. The camaraderie of these two groups keeps me in the industry.

Vince

Dedicated to my ever-patient and beautiful wife, Sam, whose intellect supports, challenges and extends me; and to my delightful children, Imogen and Liam. To the History Department at St Kevin's, in particular Rhona, Kerry and Catherine, for founding and cultivating American History at the College; Marie Cavanagh, Mary Hardwick and the people of Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts, who have long breathed life and colour into our American Revolution History tours; the dynamic and brilliant staff and students in VCE Revolutions at St Kevin's – Vinnie, Bob and the boys – who create an environment of learning, excellence and love of history. My heartfelt thanks to you all.

Andrew

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all St Kevin's staff and students that keep us on our toes each day and make the vocation of teaching a valuable one. To the generous VCAA Assessors that squeeze VCE marking in each year into a busy life, we thank them and hopefully they can use our new addition to the American library. To the amazing HTAV staff and members for adding so much to the profession and the teaching of history in this state. Special thanks to Dr Michael Adcock for his generous and excellent contributions to improving this text, including the analysis of *The Able Doctor* in Chapter 4 based upon his HTAV lecture *Patriot Pictures*. To my first great story-telling teacher, my mum Marie Toohey; her dining room chats implanted a love of a good yarn which my hilarious brothers inherited also. To Fr Stan Barry, Dr Gregory Haines and Professor Patrick O'Farrell who guided my early historical journey. Thanks to the many brilliant former students Adam Fenech, Giancarlo Tymms, Christian Von Struppi, Joseph Micallef, Jack Stoneman, Tim Lam, Zac Tuttle, Jack Polis, Rory McGrath, Tom Gilbert, Tom Woods, Hugh Carroll, Matt Griggs and Jack O'Malley, whose mastery of this course has benefited all Revolutions students. Their notes and sample answers have helped legions of their peers, as well as all subsequent teachers and students. Many of the work samples in the text are courtesy of them.

Finally, thank you to Cambridge University Press for their inspiration, guidance and faith in both Andrew and me in initiating this addition to the resources available to students and teachers of the American Revolution.

Vincent Toohey



How to use this resource

Structure

- This textbook is broken into two sections, each aligning with an Area of Study in the VCAA History: Revolutions Study Design
- **Area of Study openers** give a broad overview of the chapters to come and a timeline of key events
- **Chapter openers** also include an overview, listing the key issues of the chapter and a flow of diagram
- **QR codes** are included in all chapters for easy access to related videos
- Look out for icons flagging **key events**, **quotes** and **statistics** in the margins for use in revision
- A **selected bibliography** is supplied at the end of the book for each chapter, offering suggested further reading

Activities

- **Focus questions** are placed throughout the chapter to assess comprehension and encourage discussion
- **Analysis activities** explore key primary and secondary historical sources. These sources can be visual or text-based, to help develop your understanding of the revolution as well as your skills as a historian

Develop your historical thinking skills

The end of chapter review activities include a combination of tasks to help consolidate your learning:

- **Define key terms** encourages you to write definitions of important terms in your own words
- **Establishing historical significance** and **Analysing cause and consequence** are exam-style writing tasks that allow you to practise paragraph-length answers
- **Constructing historical arguments** are practice essay questions that allow you to prepare for internal and end-of-year assessments
- **Analysing historical sources as evidence** provide practice for exam-style source analysis, both textual and visual
- **Using quotes as sources** allows for the practice of paraphrasing quotes, or for incorporating them into broader arguments by contrasting multiple quotes
- **Analysing historian's interpretations** focuses on arguments made by individual historians and encourages you to put forth your own views

Digital resources

Further digital resources are available in the *Interactive Textbook* and on *Cambridge GO*:

- **PDF textbook** – downloadable, contains note taking and search functions
- **Interactive activities** – (e.g. drag and drop questions) assist recall of facts and understanding of concepts
- **Videos and links to history** – additional sources to watch, read and analyse
- **Pronunciation** – audio files appear at the start of the chapter, and cover any difficult or unfamiliar terms to be introduced

The **Teacher Resource Package** also includes:

- Teaching programs and teaching tips
- Curriculum grids for each topic area
- Suggested responses
- Practice Assessment Material

Understanding icons

The following icons are used throughout the textbook to indicate different activities, resources or points of view.



Analysis Activity – textual analysis

Source analysis questions focusing on speeches or text extracts



Analysis Activity – visual analysis

Source analysis questions focusing on artwork or photos



Significant Individuals

Biographies on significant individuals of the Revolution



Key Historian

Snapshots of important historians and their points of view on the Revolution



Key Statistic, Events, Quotes

Indicators of particularly memorable quotes, statistics and events



Digital Activities

See the Interactive Textbook for access to digital resources



The story so far video

Summary videos on the chapter, available through the Interactive Textbook or through QR codes

Area of Study 1

Causes of Revolution: The development of significant ideas, events, individuals and popular movements in America, 1754 – 4 July 1776

A great Empire, like a great Cake, is most easily diminished at the Edges.

– BENJAMIN FRANKLIN IN *THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER*, 11 SEPTEMBER 1773

Overview

empire a group of nations ruled by a single leader (usually a monarch – a king or queen) or government

revolution a process of massive political upheaval that changes the way in which a country is governed; often a vertical shift in power from an absolute monarch to a popular government ruling on behalf of the people

Congratulations on choosing to study history and in particular the American Revolution in the VCE. The greatest stories of human history are always the real ones, be they heroic and inspiring, tragic or comic, or the awful cautionary tales. The mighty Egyptian, Chinese, Persian, Greek and Roman **empires** of the Ancient World, the tragedy of the Romanovs, the First and Second World Wars, the Holocaust, the assassination of John F Kennedy, the Vietnam War, the great calamity of indigenous populations from Western colonisation and a billion other incredible stories of the human experience are the fabric of history. One of history's roles is to offer a window into those collective stories of how the human race got to the present day and offer a cautionary wisdom for the future.

What exactly is a '**revolution**'? A definition as good as any other is the one provided by Cambridge Dictionaries Online, that a revolution is:

a change in the way a country is governed, usually to a different political system and often using violence or war.

So why study America? In VCE Revolutions, of the four choices for study (the American Revolution of 1776, the French Revolution of 1789, the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Chinese Revolution of 1949), America is in many ways unique. Whereas the other national contexts provide examples of massive social upheaval and change via the process of revolution, their established 'old regimes' were hundreds, if not thousands of years old. However, in the American context (not including the peoples of the First Nations) a new nation was actually formed out of the events of the Revolution itself. Power over the British-ruled Thirteen Colonies of North America was basically transferred from faraway Europe to the colonists themselves, and it is how this momentous shift took place that we will examine in detail.

Another reason why the American Revolution is unique is that the revolutionaries who in turn became the '**Founding Fathers**' aimed to draw on the best practices of government (republicanism) and provide a Constitution that remains the envy of many countries. This structure saw the nation through many challenges in the following 200 years. The significant and ongoing contemporary US problems over the legacy of slavery, racism, civil rights and gun laws also hark back to this time. Spike Lee's 2018 movie *BlacKkKlansman* highlights the awful legacy and entrenched hold these issues have in America.

Importantly, the office of the **President** of the United States was also born out of this narrative, and the inauguration of the first President, **George Washington**, is one of the closing events of our study. Indeed, it is worth noting that although he is but one of the significant individuals in the American Revolution, Washington himself is a crucial figure in this book, whose ideas and experiences in many key events cannot be overlooked.

In this book we will consider the wide range of factors that triggered the American Revolution of 1776, as well as looking at its aftermath. Many important questions propel this narrative. For example, what was British America like before the Revolution? How did a revolutionary situation develop in the colonies? Who was involved? How did the Revolution itself play out? After the dust had settled, how did the Americans deal with their newfound freedom? How did the 'new regime' consolidate its hold on power against various challenges? What sort of government would the newly formed United States of America have, after removing the rule of the British monarchy and Parliament? Were the ambitions of the Revolution achieved, and how different was the new society? We hope that this study of the American Revolution affords you the chance to think critically about these questions and many more.

Overall, it is fascinating studying a powerful nation – as we know the United States of America to be today – at the moment of its formation. Indeed, your study will help you unpack some of the reasons how America, the 20th- and 21st-century superpower, came to be. Enjoy the journey.

Founding Fathers men such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin and others of the Revolutionary era who created the foundations of the American nation

president the leader or head of state of a republic – a government in which power resides with the people who elect their own representatives

Washington, George (1732–1799) the first President of the United States, who fought in the early stages of the French and Indian War on the side of the British, then led the colonial forces to victory against the British in the War of Independence



▲ Source 1A A painting of the Founding Fathers, in the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

historians men and women who attempt to make sense of the past and usually specialise in one country or period of history

George III the reigning King of the United Kingdom for the entire American Revolutionary period (1763–1789)

British Parliament the official political body that makes laws, raises taxes and oversees government in Great Britain in partnership with the monarch

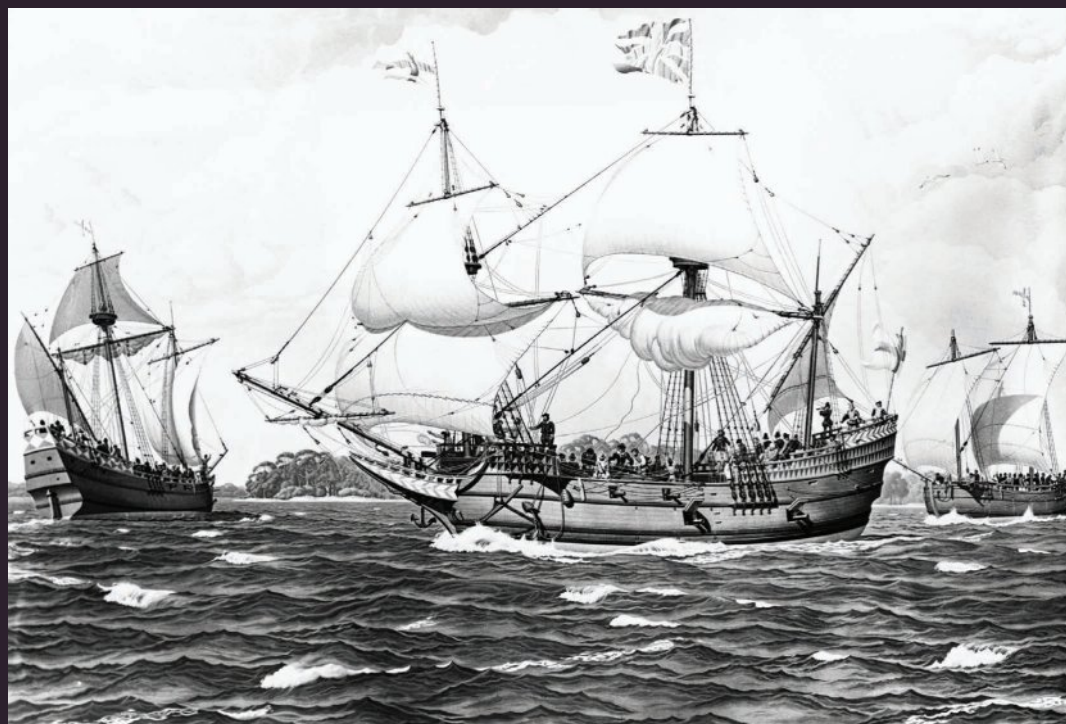
leaders significant individuals (men and women) who influence ordinary people

Area of Study 1 focuses specifically on 1754–1776 of the VCE American Revolution course. Chapter 1 provides a summary of some pre-revolutionary factors that all converge to make America a country ripe for unrest and lay the groundwork for what would eventually become the Revolution by the 1770s.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 work through the significant ideas, events, individuals and popular movements of this period, as well as the **historians** who write about it. This part concludes with an analysis of the key tensions and conflicts within America. Was the creation of a revolutionary situation just the result of poor leadership from **George III** and the **British Parliament**, or a fusion of many different antecedents that were operating in America already? The first four chapters attempt to unpack this question. Chapter 5 is a selection of typical VCE questions for Area of Study 1, plus sample answers to guide you when approaching these tasks. Note that the VCAA Study Design changes and you have to stay aware of the latest requirements.

Area of Study 2 of the American Revolution course focuses on the period between 1776 and 1789. Chapter 6 covers the significant ideas, events and **leaders** involved in the War of Independence between 1776 and 1783. Chapters 7 and 8 deal with the consequences the American colonists were faced with after winning the war and their freedom from the British. Chapter 9 is a selection of VCE-type questions for AOS 2 Sections A and B and sample answers for your reference.

Chapter 10 looks at different social groups and their experiences under the Revolution, and Chapter 11 is a Who's Who; a glossary of many of the major players in the American Revolution.



▲Source 1B Depiction of three ships full of English colonists arriving at Jamestown, 1607



▲Source 1C A scene in a New England town, 1700. Righteous citizens pass a miscreant being punished in the stocks, whom boys prepare to pelt with snowballs.

Timeline of key events

1607 – 4 July 1776

1607

- ▶ John Smith lands in Jamestown; first British colony of Virginia established in North America. The Southern colonies, the South, will develop from this initial base.

1620

- ▶ Puritans or 'Pilgrim Fathers' aboard the *Mayflower* land in Massachusetts just south of present-day Boston. The Northern colonies, the North, will develop from this initial base.

1732

- ▶ Britain passes the *Hat Act*, restricting American colonies in the making of their own hats.

1733

- ▶ Britain passes the *Sugar and Molasses Act* 1733, restricting the American rum trade from using sugar from non-British sources. The 13th European colony of Georgia is established in North America.

1740s

- ▶ The 'Great Awakening' begins in America, leading to the evangelisation of the population.

1750

- ▶ Britain passes the *Iron Act*, restricting any American manufacturing of iron products, again applying similar restraints as the *Hat Act* 1732.

1751

- ▶ Britain passes the *Currency Act*, discouraging the use of American colonial currencies.

1754

- ▶ The French and Indian War begins.

1759

- ▶ French and British fight on the Plains of Abraham, near present-day Quebec City in Canada. Britain wins this crucial battle and effectively wins the French and Indian War and control of the east coast of North America.

1760

- ▶ George III becomes King of England, Scotland and Ireland. Initially very popular in America, by 1783 he would become famously known as the 'King that lost America'.

1763

- ▶ The Treaty of Paris (1763) officially ends the French and Indian War. French possessions in North America are reduced to pockets in Canada and in Louisiana.
- ▶ **February:** Start of *Proclamation Act*
- ▶ **May:** Pontiac's Rebellion

1764

April

- ▶ *Sugar Act* established
- ▶ James Otis pens *Rights of British Colonists Asserted and Proved*

1765

- ▶ **March:** *Stamp Act* established
- ▶ **August:** *Quartering Act* established

October

- ▶ Formation of the Sons of Liberty
- ▶ Stamp Act Congress in New York

1766

- ▶ **February:** Repeal of *Stamp Act*
- ▶ **March:** *Declaratory Act* established

1767

- ▶ **June:** *Townshend Duties* established

1768**February**

- ▶ John Dickinson pens *Letter from a Farmer*
- ▶ Samuel Adams writes *Journal of Our Times* and *Massachusetts Circular Letter*

1770**March**

- ▶ Boston Massacre
- ▶ Samuel Adams publishes *Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre of Boston*
- ▶ Repeal of the *Townshend Duties*
- ▶ Paul Revere draws his famous depiction of Boston Massacre

1772

- ▶ **June:** British customs ship the *Gaspee* is burned by Rhode Island Sons of Liberty
- ▶ **November:** Samuel Adams begins Committees of Correspondence in Massachusetts

1773**December**

- ▶ *Tea Act* established
- ▶ Boston Tea Party

1774

- ▶ **March:** *Coercive Acts* established
- ▶ **September:** First Continental Congress is held

1775

- ▶ **May:** Second Continental Congress is held

April

- ▶ Paul Revere performs his Midnight Ride
- ▶ Colonial militia skirmishes with British troops at the towns of Lexington and Concord

July

- ▶ Congress appoints George Washington as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army
- ▶ The Battle of Bunker Hill
- ▶ Thomas Jefferson starts drafting the *Declaration of Independence*
- ▶ Olive Branch Petition sent to Britain

1776

- ▶ **January:** Thomas Paine pens *Common Sense*
- ▶ **4 July:** Congress ratifies the *Declaration of Independence*, written principally by Thomas Jefferson

▶ **Source 1D** A painting depicting the English navigator Henry Hudson meeting the First Nations peoples in present-day Albany, 1609



1 **BRIEF BACKGROUND TO AMERICA IN 1763**

I have seen two generations of my people die ... I know the difference between peace and war better than any man in my country.

– WAHUNSENACAWH, LEADER OF THE POWHATAN



Overview

The American Revolution is an important historical event that's well worth investigating closely. Apart from the change it brought upon America itself, significantly it also inspired other revolutions – including French Revolutionaries only a decade later – to act to dramatically change their society, with the legendary 'American spirit' spreading through France. Indeed, it must be said that the pre-revolutionary period (before 1754) and post-revolutionary period (after 1789) are fascinating areas of study that are not assessed in the VCE Revolutions course. These time periods will have to be taken up at university, or just in your general reading as a lover of American history. For now, in order to better understand the events of 1754–76, in which a revolutionary situation developed in North America, first it is instructive to look at a range of pre-revolutionary factors that influenced America's foundation.



Key issues

After completing this chapter, you should be able to answer these questions:

- What was America like before the arrival of European colonists?
- How was America founded by Europeans?
- What was the social structure of the British colonies in America?
- What role did slavery play in America's founding?
- Where did American colonists get their revolutionary ideas?
- What was the Enlightenment and its role in the revolution?
- What was the French and Indian War?
- Who was George Washington, and what did he do up to 1776?
- Who was King George III?

Digital resources for this chapter

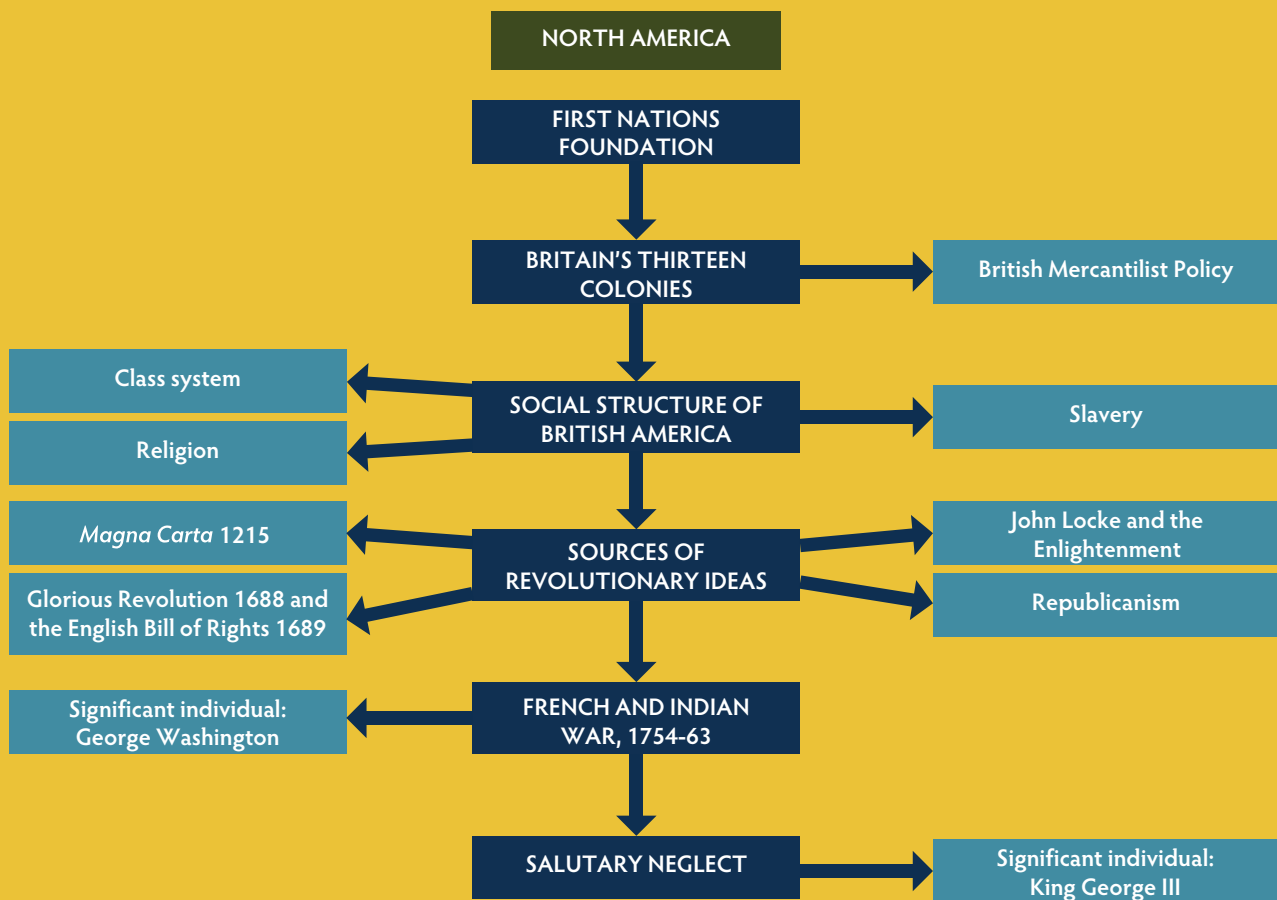
In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

◀ **Source 1.0** An 18th-century painting depicting settlers arriving in America

Flow of chapter

How is this chapter structured?



Chapter timeline

What are the key events of the American Revolution covered in this chapter?

1607

First British colony of Virginia established



1740s

The Great Awakening of religious revival begins

1760

George III becomes King of England



1620

Mayflower and the Pilgrim Fathers land in Massachusetts



1754

The French and Indian War begins

1763

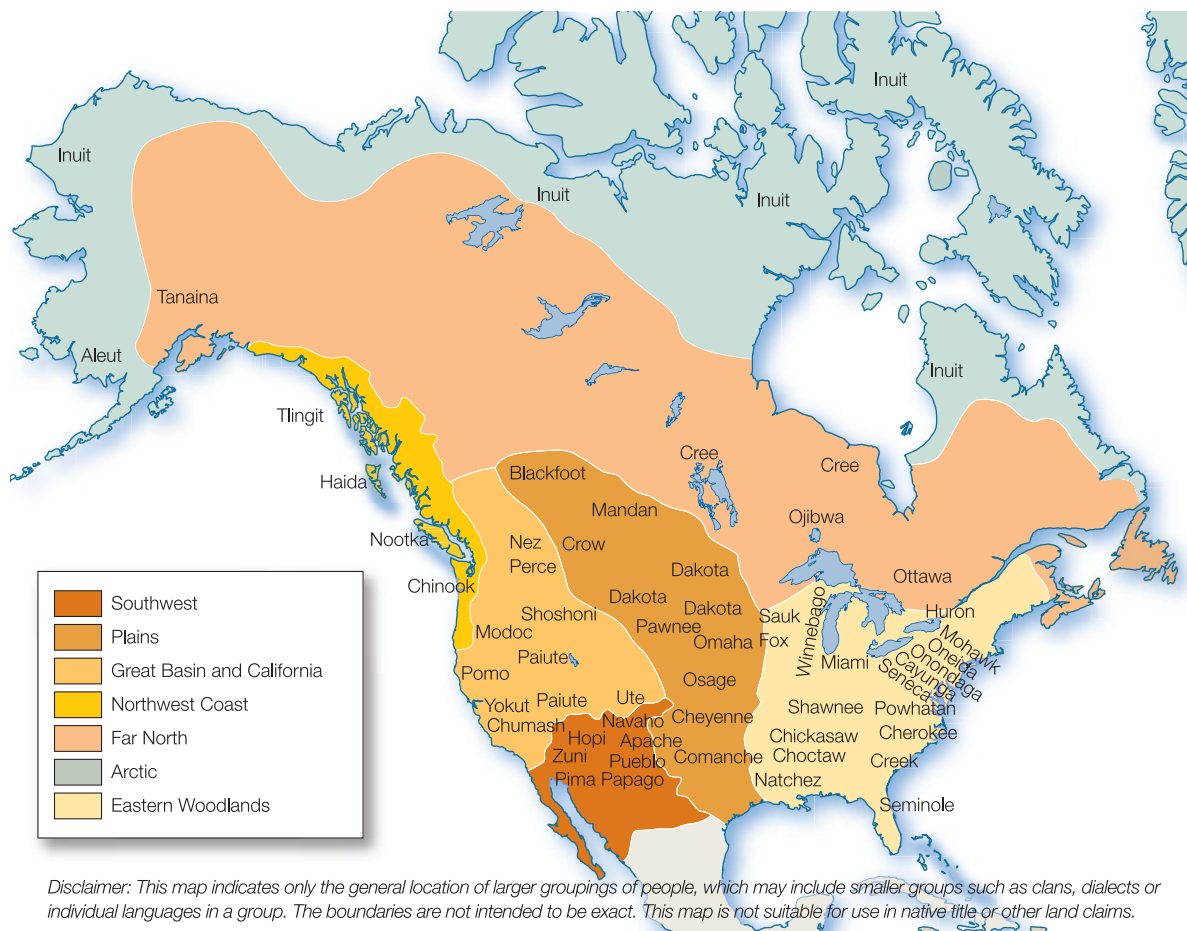
The Treaty of Paris officially ends the French and Indian War

1.1 First Nations foundation

One of the tragic stories of the American journey is the decline of the once proud ‘500 Nations’ of North and South America. One modern theory about the settling of America is that Siberian nomads travelled across the Bering Strait via an Ice Age land bridge from the Asian continent into present-day Alaska more than 14 000 years ago. Eventually these groups populated the whole of both American continents from the Arctic Circle to the bottom of South America. Until Europeans made inroads into the Americas (especially the Vikings, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch and English), these 500 Nations – the **First Nations** Americans (or ‘Native Americans’) – had rich cultures, civilisations and histories. While tribal names like Iroquois, Sioux, Apache, Huron, Algonquin, Creek, Cherokee and Mohawk have become incorporated into the European lexicon (see Source 1.1), First Nations Americans are one of the key groups for whom the American Revolution and the new Constitution in 1789 (covered in Chapter 8) did not bring any benefit, nor do their once proud several thousand-year history in North America any justice. Europeans exploited inter-tribal rivalries and used First Nations Americans for their own larger political, military and **economic** purposes. First Nations Americans also used inter-European rivalries for their own larger political, military and economic purposes. Invariably, First Nations Americans came off second best in all these transactions.

First Nations the pre-colonisation indigenous communities of North America; a respectful alternative term for ‘Native Americans’

economic the theme that involves any issues to do with money, such as taxation, inflation, unemployment, wages and prices of goods



▲ **Source 1.1** Map of First Nations land holdings prior to European colonisation. For a closer look at First Nations land holdings in America and across the globe, see the Native Land website. <https://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/9503>



Historians such as Francis Jennings and Howard Zinn deal with these issues in their writings on America, which you will read about in due course.

Tensions between First Nations and non-Indigenous Americans continue today, with this painful chapter of American history still being written.



▲ **Source 1.2** This 1724 engraving by Joseph-François Lafitau represents the five-nation Iroquois Confederacy. The Confederacy was a civic and political organisation formed sometime between 1440 and 1660 between the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca nations.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Contemporary American culture continues to grapple with the issues: below (Source 1.3) is a photo from a march in Washington protesting the building of the Dakota Access Pipeline, which would go through tribal lands. The protest, led by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, took place over years, and reveals that tensions continue to this day between First Nations people and colonists.

▼ **Source 1.3** Activists protest against the development of the Dakota Access Pipeline in Washington, March 10 2017



1.2 Britain's Thirteen Colonies

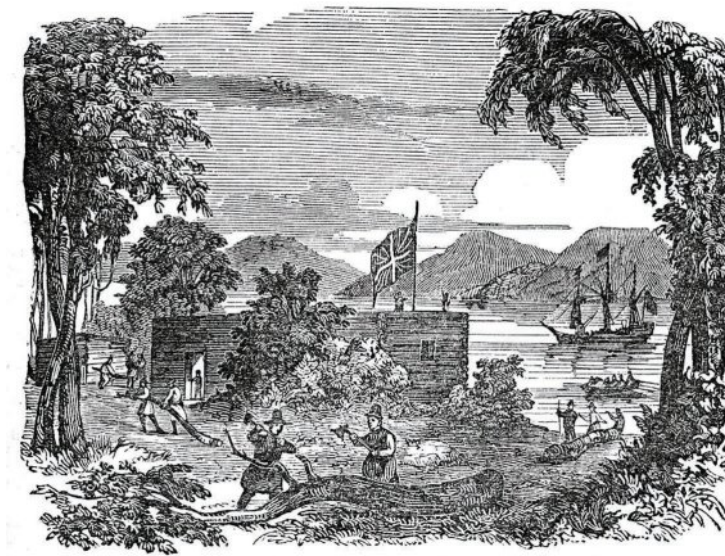
After centuries of imperialistic scrambling, piracy, arranged marriages and 'hot' and 'cold' wars by competing European powers for global supremacy (particularly the Spanish, French and British; see Source 1.6), by 1754 Britain had emerged as a key power in North America. Britain's **government**, booming economy, armed forces, speed in harnessing early Industrial Revolution technology and successful military campaigns outmuscled the other powers, and were all factors in creating an empire that stretched across the globe.

government the official political body that runs a country

Between 1607 (Virginia) and 1733 (Georgia), Britain founded Thirteen Colonies on the east coast of North America. This was to be the setting of the American Revolution, and most of the events featured in this book. Apart from North America, the other key location to consider was London, the capital city of the British 'motherland'. The ways in which the British managed the Thirteen Colonies is a major focus of the chapters in Area of Study 1 of this book. The ways that British rule was executed over their colonies will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

▼ Source 1.4 Map of Spanish, French and British territorial claims in North America around 1754





Settlement of Jamestown.



POWHATAN
*Held this state & fashion when Capt. Smith
was delivered to him prisoner
1607*

▲ **Source 1.5** Left: An engraving from 1845 depicting the settlement of Jamestown, Virginia in 1607. Right: A 17th-century engraving depicting Wahunsenacawh, the chief who led the Powhatan Confederacy of Algonquin-speaking people. What is now Jamestown was part of the country of Tsenacommacah, which was Powhatan territory.



▲ **Source 1.6** The first colonist of British origin recorded as born on American soil, Virginia Dare, was born on 18 August 1587, in the Roanoke Colony of North Carolina. By 1590 the colony was deserted and the 108 colonists had disappeared. The fate of the so-called 'Lost Colony' is still a mystery. *Baptism of Virginia Dare*, lithograph, by Henry Howe, 1876

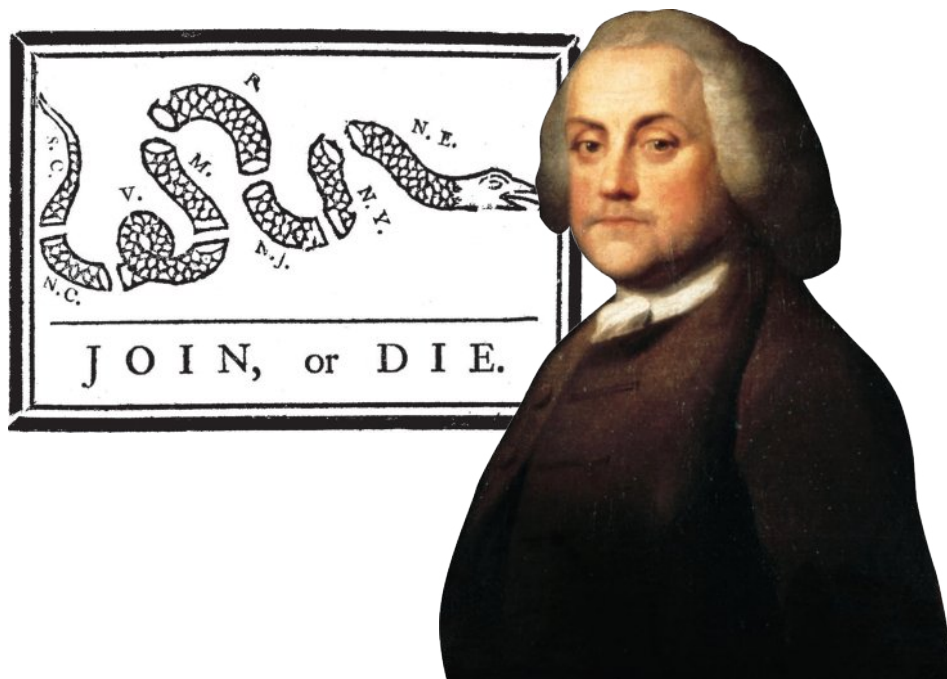
By the mid-18th century, each **colony** had its own character: Georgia, for instance, was as different from Massachusetts as night and day. Colonists had different accents, clothing styles, economies, religious practices, politics, manners and mores. Most of their external connections, such as trade, were with Britain rather than with the other colonies themselves. As future Founding Father John Adams later put it:

The colonies had grown up under constitutions of government so different, there was so great a variety of religions, they were composed of so many different nations, their customs, manners, and habits had so little resemblance, and their intercourse had been so rare.

Source 1.7 J. Adams, letter to H. Niles, 13 February 1818

Similarly, describing how different the American colonies were from one another, an English visitor to the colonies said, ‘fire and water are not more heterogeneous than the different colonies of North America’. In other words, fire and water had more in common than the different colonies of North America.

This was the case at least until the 1750s, when the colonies began collaborating with each other at the Albany Congress of June 1754. This meeting, in Albany, New York, between nine of the Thirteen Colonies, was not designed to forge an alliance between the Thirteen Colonies independent of British rule, but instead to discuss ways the colonies could better deal with First Nations peoples and the growing threat of the French in the area. **Benjamin Franklin** presented his **Albany Plan** for unity between the colonies against the French. One of the reasons his call for a colonial union was unsuccessful was economic: most colonies were self-managed, self-financed and self-sufficient and dealt with foreign trading partners on their own terms. That being said, the Albany Congress did prove that the colonists could come together in times of great need when they shared concerns. They would learn this lesson well 20 years later during the *Coercive Acts* in 1774.



▲ Source 1.8 Above: Benjamin Franklin's 1754 'Join or Die' cartoon. This ink drawing became well known in the American colonies and reappeared later in the Revolution. In fact, Franklin's cartoon became a flag of the later Revolution, which came to fruition in the First **Continental Congress** of 1774. Right: Benjamin Franklin, by Benjamin Wilson, 1759.

colony a place governed by another country and settled by their people

Franklin, Benjamin (1706–1790) one of the Founding Fathers; he negotiated the 1783 Treaty of Paris (ending the Revolutionary War) and helped to draft both the *Declaration of Independence* and the Constitution of the United States

Albany Plan a plan to unite the Thirteen Colonies proposed by Benjamin Franklin at the Albany Congress in July 1754

Continental Congress an assembly of delegates representing the Thirteen Colonies in North America that met twice in Philadelphia, in 1774 and 1775



1.3 British mercantilist policy

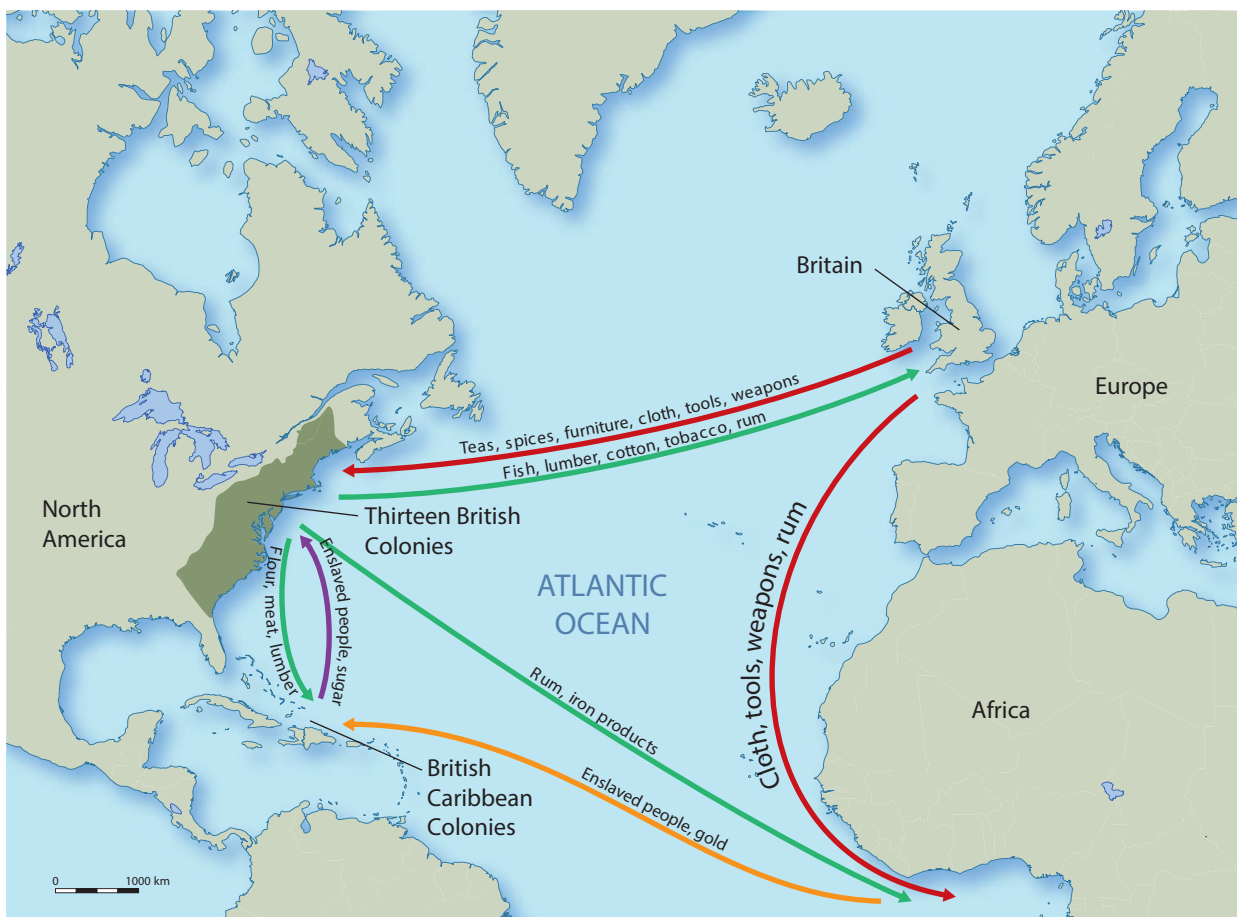
mercantilism an economic system whereby the first priority of setting up new colonies is that they enrich the Mother Country (Britain in the case of America)

Navigation Acts a series of British laws dating from the early 1600s designed to help the British mercantilist system operate successfully; the British Parliament, Navy and customs officials had sweeping powers to enforce these laws but many American merchants like John Hancock successfully flouted these policies

Mercantilism is the economic policy applied in Britain and its colonies in the 18th century and it worked on the basis of maintaining a positive trade balance. Britain would put in a massive early investment in setting up the colony and then sit back and reap a huge financial windfall. Raw materials were taken from America and other colonies, used to produce goods from British factories and then sold back to the colonists (and also exported elsewhere). This policy was backed by legal regulations; for example, the British **Navigation Acts** prohibited foreign merchants from trading with America. Britain sought to establish or take over colonies, and then imposed regulations so that the colony was only allowed to produce raw materials and to trade them solely with Britain. Exclusive trade monopolies like the ones Britain was enforcing on America would be unpopular even in

today's society. In the 17th and 18th centuries much of the British transatlantic trade used a triangular route that ensured ships carried profitable full loads on each leg of the voyage. Ships would carry cloth, tools, weapons and other manufactured goods from Britain to West Africa and barter them for enslaved people, gold, and ivory. The ships then sailed westwards across the Atlantic to the Caribbean and American colonies where the Africans were exchanged for plantation produce such as sugar, tobacco, and cotton, as well as other goods. This was transported eastwards back to Britain with the West African gold and ivory. There was also a lot of two-way trade in the Atlantic as shown in Source 1.9, and some historians have questioned the relative importance of the triangular route.

▼ **Source 1.9** Map of triangular and two-way trade between Europe, Africa and Britain's colonies in North America in the 18th century to support the British policy of mercantilism



ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 1.1: INTERNET RESEARCH TASK



Starting with a basic Google search on the Thirteen Colonies, compare Virginia with Pennsylvania or Massachusetts, including each colony's ethnic and cultural makeup, and economic, social, political and religious practices. If using Wikipedia, scroll down to the links under 'References' for more sites. Share your findings with your class.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

It's important to note that there was no such thing as an American nation like we know it today at this stage in its history. The 13 separate British colonies didn't much like each other and operated as virtually separate countries. There was no loyalty to an American nation because one didn't yet exist. There was no Washington DC or federal American government – loyalty was solely to one's own colony.

1.4 Social structure of the British colonies

17

Class system

By the 1700s, **Old World** hierarchical class structure, snobbery and **deference** were as pervasive in the American colonies as they were in Europe. The difference was the colonies' absence of monarchs, absence of overcrowded cities and enclosed lands, the geographical isolation of the Thirteen Colonies from Europe, isolation from each other, the existence of unlimited employment opportunities and availability of land. All of these factors diluted Old World values in the colonies, and helped foster a latent sense of self-determination and independence that would bear fruit in various ways over the course of American history. **Social mobility** is the ability to move out of one's class, and in America, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine and John Adams epitomised this as men from humble beginnings who became wealthy or famous or both (even if fame was fleeting in the case of Paine). The '**American dream**' of going from rags to riches was born. A person with sufficient motivation and drive could rise up the social ladder in America based on their merit and hard work, not solely on the aristocratic lineage of their family, as it was in Europe.

British Army officers and British Parliamentarians, for instance, were mostly sons of aristocrats and landed gentry. At this time in history, few men and women could ever break through the entrenched class inequities of the social ladder they were born into – and which was also protected by law. People lower down on the social ladder were forced to accept that they were inferior in a restrictive system that rigidly maintained the status quo (see Source 1.10).

America – the New World – began to differ from the Old World of the rigid **class consciousness** of Europe, as one could move up in the world based on merit rather than family influence or **heredity**. As an example, Benjamin Franklin was the son of a candlestick maker, and had he been English he would have been confined to being a candlestick maker or taken a similar type of trade himself. His 'class' would have defined his future. In America, because of the greater opportunities afforded by the less rigid class system, Franklin was able to become a well-educated, wealthy printer who also dabbled in scientific experiments (see Source 1.11), and a wily politician in the Pennsylvania colonial assembly who helped to draft the *Declaration of Independence*.

Old World Britain, or more generally Europe, especially in reference to the rigid and claustrophobic class-based social structure of Europe, with small numbers of elites like kings and queens at the top and the masses of poor at the bottom.

deference the act of recognising a 'superior' class of people; in America before the Revolution, people were expected to stop and let a 'gentleman' pass or to tip their hat to them in recognition that they were of a superior class. Revolutionary ideology ended the practice during and after the Revolution.

social mobility ability to move up the social hierarchy on talent not royal patronage

American dream the ideal that all American citizens are entitled to equal rights and the ability to realise their ambitions

class consciousness a term to describe a section of society all holding the same ideas or values

heredity the passing of traits to offspring from parents or ancestors



AREA OF STUDY 1 CAUSES OF REVOLUTION

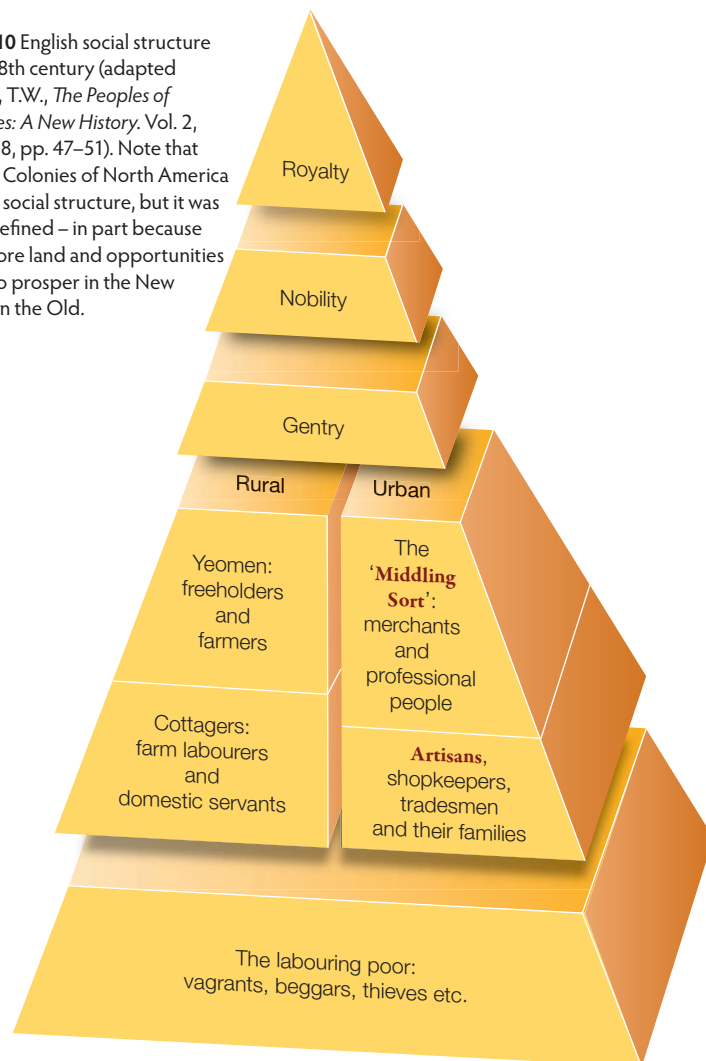
middling sort or middling class was an 18th-century term for people with wealth, land or property who engaged in commerce. The origin of the modern term 'middle class'.

artisans skilled workers drawn from all levels of society, including poor shoemakers and tailors to elite metal workers or silversmiths

meritocracy a society based on being recognised for one's talents and ability and not from hereditary connections

aristocracy a rigid social system based entirely on one's hereditary or aristocratic connections (George Washington was refused entry into the officer class of the British Army because he didn't have these aristocratic class connections, no matter how competent a soldier/leader he became)

► **Source 1.10** English social structure during the 18th century (adapted from Heyck, T.W., *The Peoples of the British Isles: A New History*. Vol. 2, Lyceum, 2008, pp. 47–51). Note that the Thirteen Colonies of North America had a similar social structure, but it was less rigidly defined – in part because there was more land and opportunities for people to prosper in the New World than in the Old.



▼ **Source 1.11** *Benjamin Franklin Drawing Electricity from the Sky*, by Benjamin West, circa 1816



As an American ambassador, Franklin would negotiate crucial French financial and military aid to America in the Revolutionary War against the British. His fame was built from his own talent and merit instead of from any aristocratic leverage. A notion of a **meritocracy** became possible in America and had begun to supplant the entrenched centuries-old notion of **aristocracy**.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

By the time the American Revolution was underway, Benjamin Franklin was, in Europe, indisputably the most famous person from the Thirteen Colonies.

The increase in the colonies' ethnic diversity since their founding added another layer of complexity for Britain in trying to wield its authority after 1763. Just how British were the 13 colonies? One can see from Source 1.12 that America's ethnic diversity was considerable, particularly when compared with the more monocultural nations of Europe.

English	1 287 000
Africans	520 000
Scots and Scots/Irish	302 000
German	184 000
Dutch	126 000
Miscellaneous (Finns, Swedes, Belgians and others)	101 000
Southern Irish	82 000
First Nations Americans	38 000
Convicts	30 000
Total population	2 670 000



▲ Source 1.12 American population diversity pre-1763 (Cantwell, J., *America in Revolution*, McGraw-Hill, Sydney, 2005, p. 35)

FOCUS QUESTIONS 1.1

- 1 Examine Source 1.12. What problems can you see arising for Britain from the cultural diversity of America on the cusp of the 1760s? Look at each group and consider their potential loyalty to Britain. Be prepared to share your individual or group findings with the class.
- 2 Where did the convicts come from originally and where did they go once the Revolution began? How did this affect Australia? Discuss your theories in class.

Religion

The founding of America by religious **zealots**, exiles, **dissidents**, New World idealists and capitalists had a profound influence on the overtly evangelical nature of American society. The Pilgrim Fathers (Source 1.13) were Puritans, but in their wake came Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Quakers and, later, Amish and Mennonites.

zealot an ardent and fanatical follower of a religious creed or idea

dissident a person disagreeing with the established government or system



◀ Source 1.13 A representation of the Pilgrim Fathers with their minister John Robinson. This is an engraving by John Burnet, based on a painting by Charles Lucy, c. 1847.

**Great Awakening**

a religious revival in American colonies from the late 1730s to the 1760s sparked by George Whitfield (1714–70), an itinerant English Methodist preacher whose evangelical fervour and eloquence led to many conversions

Anglican relating to the Church of England

These groups sought new starts and a renewal or reawakening of their faith by escaping the confines of European laws and customs. Northern colonies would especially be influenced by this independent, self-sufficient mindset, free from control of the state or established church authorities. The **Great Awakening** in mid-18th-century America was a religious resurgence of the power of a citizen (or a group of like-minded citizens) to determine the destiny of their own independent faith. This would soon bear fruit in terms of a self-sufficient desire for a more representative government – if one can worship their own God in their own independent way without ordained priests, reverends and pastors, or the oversight of the established Church (such as Anglicanism in Britain and Catholicism in France), why shouldn't one be able to govern a nation without kings or a distant British Parliament?

Church type	No.
Anglican	406
Baptist	457
Congregational	749
Reformed	328 (Dutch 127 and German 201)
Lutheran	240
Presbyterian	495
Quaker	200
Roman Catholic	56

KEY STATISTIC

▲ **Source 1.14** The type and number of churches in the American colonies by 1780 (Gaustad, E., 'Religion Before the Revolution', in J. Greene & J. Pole (eds), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1991, p. 69)

FOCUS QUESTIONS 1.2

- 1 The official and governing religious denomination of England at this time was the Anglican faith – or the Church of England as it was known. Add together all the non-Anglican churches in America in 1780. Can you make some conclusions about this fact? Be prepared to share your findings.
- 2 Briefly research the Quaker, Amish and Mennonite religious factions. How would these groups provide challenges to British and to American authority? Be prepared to share your findings.



◀ **Source 1.15** St Paul's Chapel in New York City was built in 1766 as an Anglican church. After the Revolution, such churches formed the Episcopalian Church in the United States.

Slavery

Please note: Today, most historians use the term ‘enslaved people’ instead of ‘slaves’. The usage of ‘owner’ or ‘master’ empowers the enslaver and dehumanises the enslaved person, reducing them to a commodity rather than a person who has had slavery imposed upon them. The terms ‘slave’ and ‘slave owner’ will still appear in various sources throughout this book, as this was convention at the time.

A system of **slavery** was well established by the time of the Revolution and both the British and the American sides in the Revolutionary War of 1775–83 used African-Americans expediently. The trans-Atlantic slave trade ultimately altered the course of American history and became an ongoing cause of rebellions, exploitation, death, Civil Wars and Civil Rights debates, as well as fracturing America into distinct regions of North and South.

The distinctly awful and harrowing experience of the capture and deportation of African enslaved people is captured forcefully by Steven Spielberg’s 1997 film *Amistad*, while the experience of later plantation life is depicted in Steve McQueen’s 2013 film *12 Years a Slave* (see Source 1.16) and the 19th-century best seller by Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. That book was said to have made the British sovereign Queen Victoria weep. Slavery would give the South its great distinction from the North: culturally, economically, socially and politically.



◀ Source 1.16 A still from *12 Years a Slave*

slavery the forced labour of human beings without payment; in the American context this refers to African people taken from their homeland against their will. In what was termed ‘chattel slavery’, enslaved people were the personal property of the ‘master’ and could be bought and sold on a whim. Husbands, wives and children could all be split and sold separately. The children of enslaved people were also enslaved for life, and so were their children.

Historian Simon Schama takes up some of these issues in his book *Rough Crossings*. The following description is from an enslaved person who grew up on a Virginian plantation in the mid-1700s and eventually helped the British Army during the Revolutionary War:

My oldest sister was called Patty; I have seen her several times so whipped that her back was all corruption, as though it would rot. My brother Dick ran away, but they caught him and brought him home, and as they were going to tie him up he broke away again and they hunted him with horses and dogs, till they took him; then they hung him up to a cherry tree in the yard, by his two hands, quite naked except for his breeches with his feet about half a yard from the ground. They tied his legs close together and put a pole between them at one end of which one of the owner’s sons sat, to keep him down and another son at the other. And after he received 500 lashes or more, they washed down his back with salt water and whipped it in as well as rubbed it in with a rag and then directly sent him to work in pulling off suckers of tobacco.

Source 1.17 Schama, S., *Rough Crossings*, Vintage Books, London, 2009, p. 117

Life for enslaved people in America was often ‘brutish, and short’ (a famous Thomas Hobbes’ quote), but consider also that they first had to survive the ocean voyage from Africa. On a voyage from Africa to Jamaica in 1781, Captain Luke Collingwood of a notorious slave ship (as ships built for transporting enslaved people were known) called the *Zong* found himself in charge of a ship rife with illness. When a navigation error resulted in an extra week at sea,



supplies started to run out. Already on this voyage 60 enslaved people had died on board the *Zong* along with seven of the 14 white passengers. Alexander Falconbridge, a surgeon who served on four slaving voyages between 1783 and 1787, recounted that (Schama, p. 188):

down in the hold, amid the slop of mucous, blood, faeces, urine and black vomit, slaves continued to sicken.

He wrote that the floors of a slaving ship were:

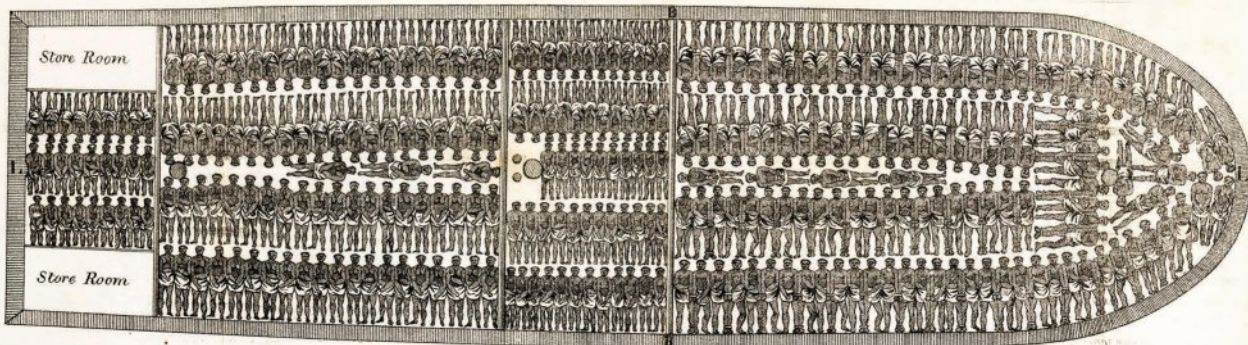
so covered in blood and mucous that it resembled a slaughterhouse. It is not in the power of human imagination to picture to itself a situation more dreadful or more disgusting.

In his wisdom, Captain Collingwood thought what was needed was a mercy killing of selected enslaved people to save the rest of the ship. Over the next few days, he ordered his crew to throw selected numbers of their 'live cargo' (African men, women and children) overboard. Schama states:

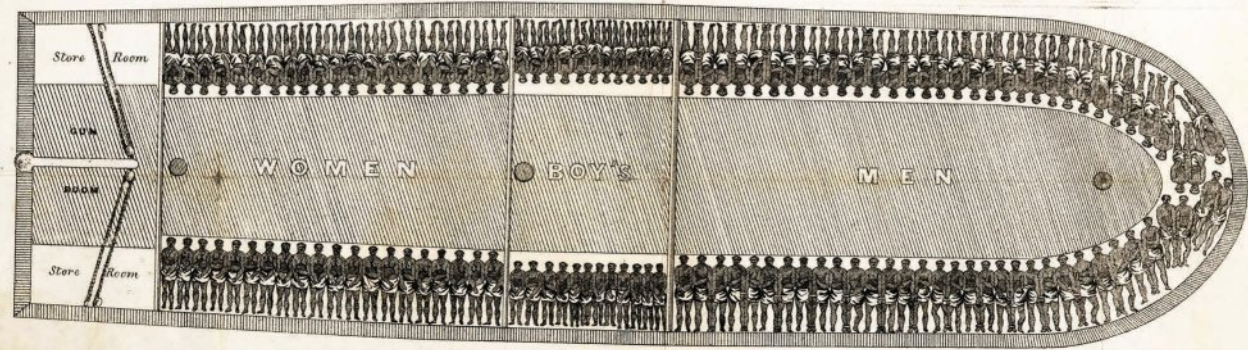
With the children it could not have been much labour, made light and soft from their sickness as they were. But with the adult men and women two crewmen were needed, sometimes even a third... As the remainder suddenly comprehended what was to be done to them, the screaming and flailing against the shackles started, and then, from those already in the water, there was some further impotent thrashing until the waves closed over them. Sensing a meal from the wounds opened by the chafing of the irons, sharks slid economically towards their prey.

Source 1.18 Schama, S., *Rough Crossings*, Vintage Books, London, 2009, pp. 189–90

PLAN OF LOWER DECK WITH THE STOWAGE OF 292 SLAVES
130 OF THESE BEING STOWED UNDER THE SHELVES AS SHOWN IN FIGURE B & FIGURE S.



PLAN SHewing THE STOWAGE OF 130 ADDITIONAL SLAVES ROUND THE WINGS OR SIDES OF THE LOWER DECK BY MEANS OF PLATFORMS OR SHELVES (IN THE MANNER OF GALLERIES IN A CHURCH) THE SLAVES STOWED ON THE SHELVES AND BELOW THEM HAVE ONLY A HEIGHT OF 2 FEET 7 INCHES BETWEEN THE BEAMS AND FAR LESS UNDER THE BEAMS. See Fig 1.

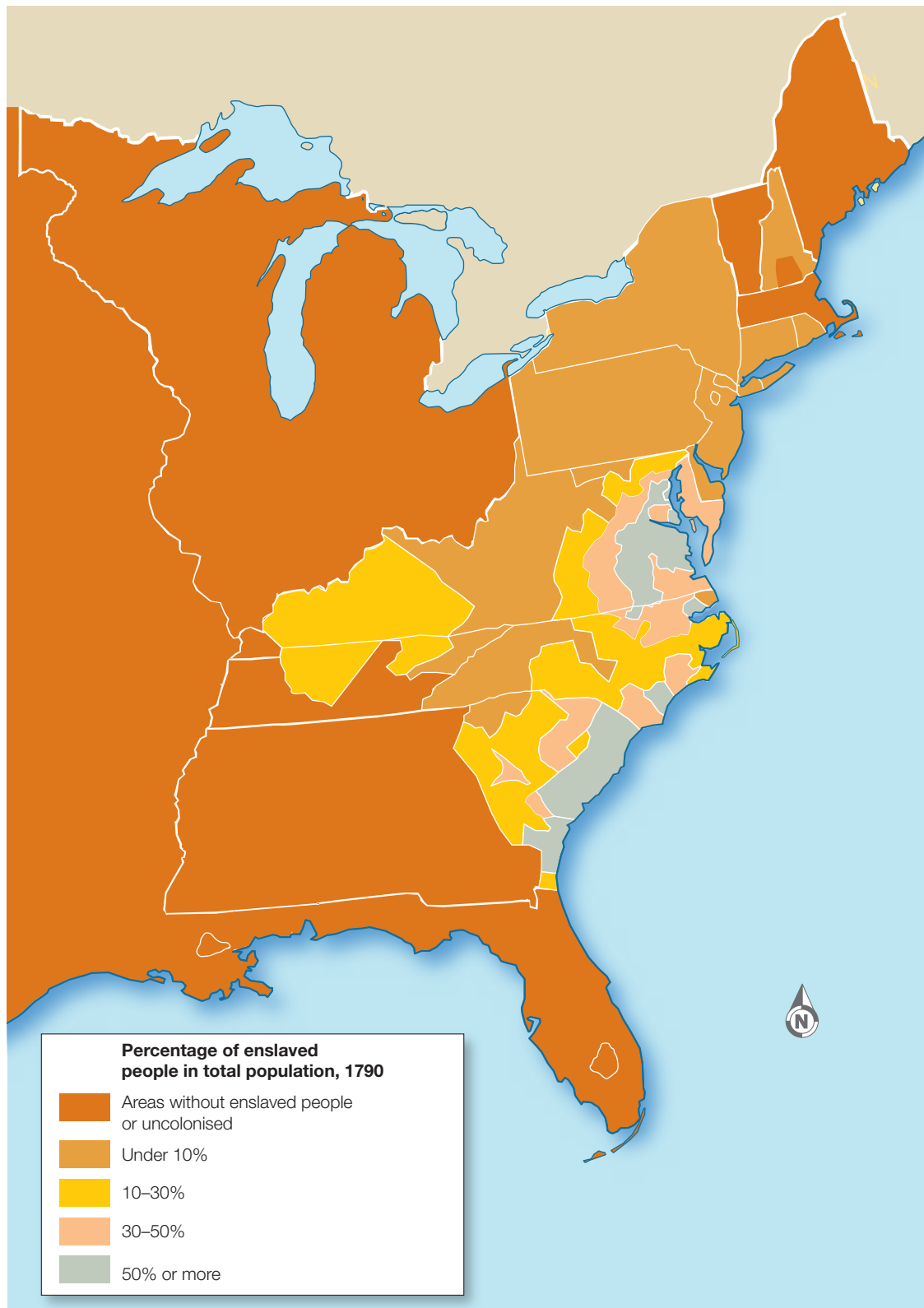


▲Source 1.19 A diagram of how enslaved people were stowed on board the British slave ship *Brookes*

▼ **Source 1.20** An abolitionist print by Isaac Cruikshank, depicting an alleged incident of an enslaved girl being whipped to death aboard a slave ship in 1792.



▲ **Source 1.21** A sketch of European sailors throwing African enslaved people overboard during a sea voyage to the Americas, circa 1750



▲Source 1.22 Percentage of enslaved people as a portion of the total population, as adapted from the 1790 census

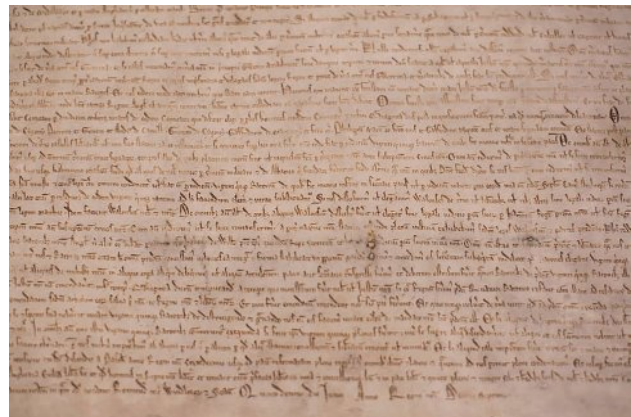
1.5 Sources of revolutionary ideas

Magna Carta, 1215

From where did revolutionaries get their ideas during the American Revolution? The *Magna Carta* was a famous English document from the 13th century that was constructed to constrain the power of a monarch in favour of landowners and businesspeople. Two core principles from the *Magna Carta* underlay common American beliefs of the revolutionary period:

No freeman shall be taken, imprisoned, disseised [dispossessed], outlawed, banished, or in any way destroyed, nor will We proceed against or prosecute him, except by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land.

To no one will We sell, to no one will We deny or delay, right or justice.



▲ Source 1.23 Left: A modern representation of English King John signing the *Magna Carta* in 1215; Right: A page of the document today

The American colonists used these principles as a source for their Constitution and the US **Bill of Rights**. According to Professor Peter Mancall:

the Magna Carta mattered because it demonstrated limits to the power of the monarch, which became one of the fundamental principles of British law.

The link between the documents was noted by Sir Winston Churchill, the British **Prime Minister** during the Second World War, who claimed that the *Declaration of Independence* was essentially a restatement of *Magna Carta* values.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Recently released British Cabinet documents from the Second World War revealed that Winston Churchill's government was prepared to give the Americans one of the original surviving copies of the *Magna Carta* in return for America joining the war against Nazi Germany. The British Parliament knew how highly regarded the *Magna Carta* was in America.

Natural rights

Where else did American revolutionaries source their inspiration? John Locke (see Source 1.24) was an influential 17th- and 18th-century English philosopher who contributed to the main ideas and **ideology** of the American Revolution and the Founding Fathers of

Bill of Rights a declaration of individual rights and freedoms, usually issued by a national government; a list of fundamental rights included in each state constitution. The most well known in history is the American Bill of Rights

Prime Minister the elected leader of the ruling party in the British Parliament

ideology a governing set of ideas or beliefs held by a group



Enlightenment a British and French philosophical movement in the 18th century whose ideas would inspire many of the American Founding Fathers

natural rights John Locke's idea that people are entitled to certain privileges and basic freedoms simply because they exist

treatise a formal and systematic written work that examines and explains a specific subject

divine right the idea that a king or queen is placed in their position by God and that all others below them are inferior

standing army an army of professional soldiers that is always combat ready; seen as an affront and risk to liberty under Enlightenment ideals

social contract a contract between those in power and their people or followers; the American colonists felt King George III had violated the social contract, which justified the Revolution

justified revolution the idea that revolution is both justified and right if those in power have trespassed on a citizen's rights

the new American state. Locke's writings *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (1689) and *Two Treatises on Government* (1690) and the **Enlightenment** movement itself found fertile soil in the minds of Americans. In these documents, Locke argued that all human beings have three '**natural rights**' – Life, Liberty and Estate (or property) – that governments and royalty should not infringe upon:

- *life* – everyone is entitled to live once they are created.
- *liberty* – everyone is entitled to do anything they wish as long as it doesn't conflict with the first right.
- *estate* – everyone is entitled to own all they create or gain through gift or trade so long as it doesn't conflict with the first two rights.



▲ **Source 1.24** John Locke, alongside his *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* and *Two Treatises of Government*

In Locke's first **treatise**, he disputed the concept of a monarch's '**divine right**' to rule. In his second treatise, he attacked the need for a '**standing army**' and its potential use as a tool by a tyrant, and propounded the '**social contract**' theory: that people have a right to revolt against a government that infringes on their 'natural rights'. The British Parliament's trespassing on these natural rights of American colonists provided ideological ammunition for the American Revolution, with the ideas of natural rights, the social contract, the force of the British standing army and **justified revolution** used by the Founding Fathers in their speeches, countless newspaper pieces, personal correspondence, state papers, pamphlets, **broad-sides**, posters, cartoons, paintings and songs before, during and after the Revolution. Locke also directly influenced Thomas Jefferson's writings almost 100 years later when Jefferson penned the *Declaration of Independence*, including the famous line:

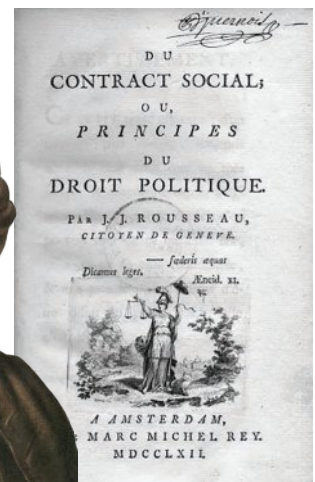
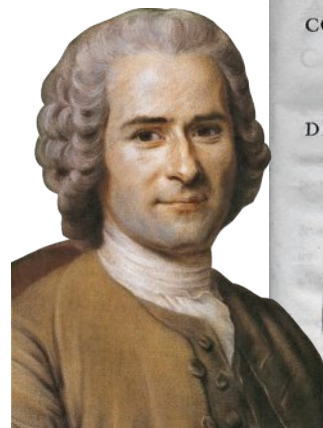
All men are created equal and endowed with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

It is important to note that, like most historical standpoints, this view of Locke's influence is contested. For an alternative viewpoint, see Chapter 4 of Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*, where he puts forward an interesting left-wing critique of Locke and some of the motivations behind the American Revolution. For more on the use of political pamphlets, see the Preface to Bernard Bailyn's *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*.

Several major French philosophers were also central to the Enlightenment, including Baron de Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Denis Diderot and René Descartes. These men argued that freedom, democracy, religious tolerance and reason were primary and central values in society. Rousseau (1712–78; see Source 1.25), particularly in his book *The Social Contract* (1762), argued that society was divided into the government and the people, with each keeping the other in check. The government runs the country, maintains law and order, and protects the welfare of its citizens. The people pay for this stability and protection through taxes. When the government exceeds the boundaries set in place by the people, it is the mission of the people to abolish such government, and begin anew. The social contract is broken. The American argument of justified revolution was born.

Two other major Enlightenment figures were John Trenchard (1662–1723) and Thomas Gordon (circa 1690s–1750). In the early 18th century, they published a series of political critiques of the British Government known as *Cato's Letters*, which also had a profound effect on the American revolutionary intelligentsia, and also propounded the idea that standing armies are a prelude to tyranny.

broadside a large poster-sized article that could be displayed in a public place, usually containing a scathing attack on one's enemies; the Americans used this form of media very successfully against the British



► Source 1.25 Portrait of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, by Maurice Quentin de La Tour, circa 1750

FOCUS QUESTION 1.3

Examine how Enlightenment ideas were utilised by the colonists to justify and legitimise their challenge to British authority. Be prepared to share your findings.

Glorious Revolution 1688 and the English Bill of Rights 1689

During the 17th century, the reign of King James II of England and VII of Scotland was controversial. Part of the reason was that he was a Catholic while most of his realm, except Ireland, had become Protestant. When the English and Scottish parliaments refused to pass his measures giving religious tolerance to Catholics, he suspended them and tried to rule by decree, which his opponents viewed as tyrannical. Leaders of the British ruling classes invited the Protestant Prince William of Orange and his wife Mary Stuart (daughter of King James, but Protestant) to replace James as joint monarchs, in both England and Scotland. The English Parliament set up a new model of monarchical and parliamentary power-sharing, replacing the divine right of the monarch with a contract between monarch and citizens. It set up a Bill of Rights in 1689 to limit the power of the monarch. The monarch could no longer dismiss a judge or create new courts without parliamentary consent, nor maintain a standing army in peacetime or raise taxes. Together these events were termed the **Glorious Revolution**. The monarch's power had been contained by the people's representatives, Parliament.

Both the Glorious Revolution and the **English Bill of Rights** (based on Locke's ideas) in time would serve as ideological weapons for the American colonists as they used these precedents as political, legal, social, military and economic constraints against their very creators.

Glorious Revolution

the union of English parliamentarians and William III of Orange-Nassau that overthrew King James II of England, leading to his daughter Mary II and William III jointly taking the throne (also known as the Revolution of 1688)

English Bill of Rights

an Act of the British Parliament passed in 1689, which declared the rights and liberties of citizens; it also settled the succession of Mary II and William III



► **Source 1.26** An engraving by Carey depicting the Bill of Rights being presented to King William III and Queen Mary II, prior to their coronation.



republic a form of government where elected officials are chosen by and represent their citizens to enforce the rule of law. In modern parlance, a republic often means a government without a monarch.

civic virtue the belief that a society of virtuous citizens could run a nation and voluntarily subordinate their private interests to the common good of the whole society; together they could resist the corruption or tyranny of an oppressive force

Republicanism

Where did American colonists get the idea that they could run their own government separate from a king or queen, which was the major governing structure of most of the European powers for hundreds of years? The Roman **Republic** and the Greek city-state (*polis*) of antiquity both served as an inspiration for the Americans, in concert with what they had gleaned from the *Magna Carta* and the Glorious Revolution.

Wealthy and well-educated citizens in Ancient Greece and Rome voluntarily subordinated their private interests to the common good of the whole society. These participatory republics predicated their stability and authority on the virtue of the citizenry as a whole and their resistance to corruption or tyranny by the ruler (or rulers). Each citizen was required to display what is called **civic virtue** and

thus had a role to play in keeping their society stable. If the ruler became a tyrant, then the most able and most civically virtuous citizen's duty was to oust them and replace them with a better system or candidate. Julius Caesar's assassination and America's eventual rejection of George III in the *Declaration of Independence* fit this pattern.

Citizenship, in these societies, was generally associated with some form of land holding (enslaved people excluded) as it was thought that landowners had more invested in the society and the public good. Eighteenth-century republicans believed a person with 'virtue' owned property, possessed an intrinsic sense of morality and was willing to subordinate his own interests for the interests of the community; that is, the public good. These were the only sorts of people whom Founding Father Benjamin Franklin thought capable of freedom. Republican government was, by design, antithetical to monarchies or aristocracies.

The preservation of liberty rested on the ability of the people to maintain effective checks on the wielders of power. As historian Bernard Bailyn put it:

Virtuous citizens needed to be strong defenders of liberty and challenge the corruption and greed in government. The duty of the virtuous citizen became a foundation for the American Revolution.

Source 1.27 Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, The Belknap Press, Cambridge, 1967, Enlarged edition, 1992

1.6 French and Indian War, 1754–63

The French and Indian War is the name given to the North American theatre of the Seven Years' War – a global conflict involving the European empires of Britain, France and Spain. The French and Indian War was a conflict that had multiple repercussions for the American Revolution, including the following:

- It brought George Washington into the historical frame, serving as a major in the Virginia militia attached to the British Army.
- It caught First Nations Americans in the terrible position of being used by both France and Britain in a deadly game of European conquests.
- It opened up the territory west of the 13 Colonies for expansion land sales and speculation, in line with the notion that in the 19th century would be called **manifest destiny**, which would see the whole American continent taken over by Europeans.
- France's defeat in the war provided them with yet another reason for vengeance against the British, by supporting the American Revolutionaries.
- It increased European settlers' fear of 'Indians'.
- It blooded a generation of Americans in war on the **frontier**.
- Finally, it created an enormous economic black hole in Britain's finances that would be shifted to the American colonies to repay in a series of taxation measures from 1764–73. This alone would have disastrous consequences for Britain.

Ultimately, the war sounded the death knell of French control of North America from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Circle. The **Treaty of Paris (1763)** that formally ended the war gave all French lands west of the **Appalachians** to Britain, including the Ohio River Valley and Quebec (which in those days stretched south of the Great Lakes). The subsequent British **Royal Proclamation Line** (created by the *Proclamation Act 1763*) led to an uneasy truce and was a source of contention to all British, French, American and First Nations' interests for years to come. American colonists' resentment of the line was a cause of the Revolutionary War.

manifest destiny the 19th-century American establishment belief that all of America would and should eventually be conquered and be rightfully theirs

frontier land not controlled by colonialists beyond an established border

Treaty of Paris (1763) a peace treaty ending the Seven Years' War between France and Britain fought mainly in North America

Appalachians a mountain range in eastern North America that bordered most of the Thirteen Colonies

Royal Proclamation Line a border that ran the length of the Appalachian Mountains, skirting the western border of most of the Thirteen Colonies, which Britain forbade its colonists to cross; created by the British *Proclamation Act 1763*, arising out of the Treaty of Paris (1763)



▲ Source 1.28 A representation of the French and Indian War, *The Death of General Wolfe*, by Benjamin West, 1770

1.7

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



George Washington (1732–99)

Part 1

- George Washington was arguably the most famous American in his own lifetime, and also the most famous figure in US history (though Abraham Lincoln also has strong claims on this title).
- Washington's contribution is significant because he figured in the American Revolution at several crucial points, capturing the hearts and minds of revolutionary America as well as winning the Revolutionary War and becoming President of the United States by 1789 (more on this in Part 2).

Early life and career (1732–76)

Born and raised in Virginia to Augustine and Mary Ball Washington, George's father was an enslaver and tobacco plantation owner. He was of largely English descent; his ancestor, John Washington, had immigrated from Sulgrave, England, to Virginia in 1657. At the time, Virginia and most of the southern colonies were 'slave societies' and, in a way, were far more British in outlook than the northern colonies – they possessed a ruling elite, into which Washington was born. Washington was a classic example of a British-American colonial elite whose family looked to the Mother Country. In fact, it was only the premature death of his father that prevented George from following his brothers and receiving his education at the Appleby School in England.



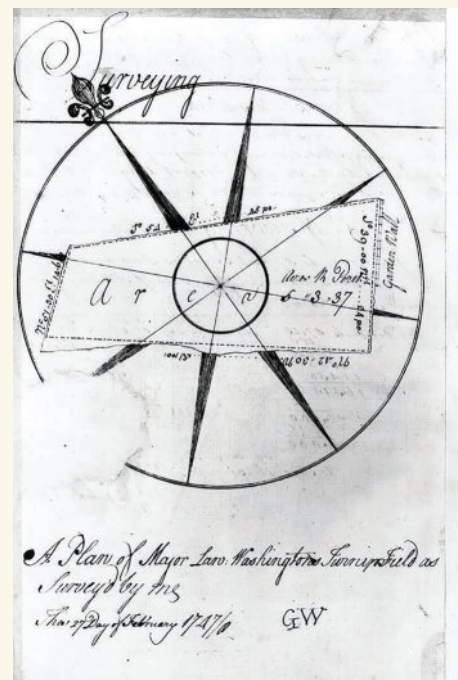
▲ Source 1.29 The earliest authenticated portrait of Washington (in his 40s) wearing his Virginia militia uniform from the French and Indian War, by Charles Willson Peale, 1772



▲Source 1.30 A chromolithographic representation of Washington at his home in Mount Vernon, painted by G. F. Gilman, 1876

He was tutored at home and then sent to a school near Fredericksburg run by an Anglican clergyman. If education at the hands of a Church of England clergyman didn't establish his English credentials, then early talk of securing a post as a midshipman in Britain's Royal Navy when he turned 15 certainly did. He inherited enormous wealth from his half-brother Lawrence in 1752 and later from his wife Martha Custis. Lawrence had a powerful connection to the Fairfax family, and at age 17 George was appointed as official surveyor for Culpeper County. This was a lucrative post that facilitated his purchase of land in the Shenandoah Valley, thus launching a career as a land speculator that would later cause him to state that the Royal Proclamation Line of 1763 (restricting land settlements west of the Appalachians) was a 'temporary' barrier; in fact, he was surveying land beyond the line at the time for future investment.

Lawrence was a commander in the Virginian Militia and, along with Washington's father, Augustine, a co-founder of the Ohio Company – a land investment company funded by Virginian investors. These connections and George's imposing physique (he stood over six feet, which was tall



▲Source 1.31 A page from Washington's surveying notebook, February 27, 1747

continued...

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for the time) brought him to the attention of the Lieutenant Governor, Robert Dinwiddie. Effectively, the British system of royal favour and connections facilitated his career. He would lead the revolution that would destroy that very system.

Washington was commissioned into the Virginia Militia as a major in 1753; at the same time, he joined the Freemasons. At this point, the Ohio Company, which had been granted land by the Crown in the Ohio Valley, was having its claims tested by French interests. Governor Dinwiddie dispatched the young major with a letter for the local French Commander Jacques Legardeur de Saint-Pierre, who refused to vacate the land. Prior to this meeting Washington had befriended an allied Iroquois chief, Tanacharison, at Logstown. They devised an ambush of what the French claim was a diplomatic party, under the command of the French officer Joseph Coulon de Jumonville. This resulted in the death of de Jumonville and a counter-attack at Fort Necessity, where Washington was humiliatingly taken prisoner and forced to sign a document of surrender before being allowed to return to Virginia. Thus, Washington literally began the global Seven Years' War (aka French and Indian War) that would ultimately be the catalyst for the end of British rule in the Thirteen Colonies.

His taste for military ventures was whetted, and he was involved in British General Edward Braddock's disastrous expedition in the Ohio Valley that resulted in the Battle of the Monongahela 1755, where Washington performed well, rallying British troops and colonial militia to fight on after the death of Braddock.



▲ **Source 1.32** A depiction of George Washington on horseback at the Battle of the Monongahela, 9 July 1755. Painted by Junius Brutus Stearns, 1854.

It is clear from this action he learnt a lot about the strengths and weaknesses of the British Army and its handling of tactics and strategy in the American wilderness. Due to his experience he repeatedly sought and was denied a regular commission in the British Army between 1755 and 1757. His 'class' in British circles was seen as inferior, as we have mentioned previously, and Washington in disgust left the British Army and returned to Virginia. It is interesting to speculate what would have eventuated had the British accepted his offers. By 1758, he was a member of the **Virginia House of Burgesses** and was involved

with opposing the **Stamp Act** of 1765, stating that the British Parliament had no right to 'put their hands in my pockets without my consent' (see Chapter 2 for more on this). From 1768 to 1769 Washington led a continent-wide **boycott** of British goods in opposition to the *Townshend Duties* (see Chapter 3). In 1774 he approved the Fairfax Resolves and brought them to the House of Burgesses (Virginia Convention). Finally, he attended both Continental Congresses and was appointed Commander in Chief of the Continental Army in 1775, after turning up to the Second Congress in the uniform of a full Virginian Colonel, thereby shoring up an alliance of the southern states with New England (see Chapter 4).

Importantly, his opposition towards the Proclamation Line in 1763 should be seen in the light of his position as a tobacco plantation holder. Any restriction on land acquisition for plantation holders meant penury (extreme poverty), as tobacco sucked nutrients out of the ground and further land was always being sought by plantation owners. Land equalled wealth in Virginia.

For Part 2 of this profile on Washington's life from 1776 to 1789, see Chapter 6.



◀ **Source 1.33** A depiction of George Washington and people he enslaved at his plantation in Mount Vernon. Painted by Junius Brutus Stearns, 1853.

Virginia House of Burgesses the representative colonial assembly of Virginia

Stamp Act a British law of 1765 to raise funds from the Thirteen Colonies. This proved to be greatly unpopular and was a key source of revolutionary tension through the 1760s.

boycott the deliberate choice to avoid purchasing goods as a protest against their manufacturer or country of origin

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

George Washington is one of the most famous Americans of all time. His image is on the \$1 bill, meaning he is literally in every American home and possibly in every American pocket at any given time.



▲ **Source 1.34** George Washington on the US\$1 bill

1.8 Salutary neglect

salutary neglect

a term in American history that refers to the unofficial and long-term 17th- and 18th-century British policy of lenient or lax enforcement of parliamentary laws meant to keep American colonies obedient to England

Grenville, George

the British Prime Minister who devised the *Sugar Act 1764* and the *Stamp Act 1765* to raise colonial revenue for Britain; these were spectacularly unsuccessful in America and cost him his job as Prime Minister

Coined by British Prime Minister Robert Walpole (served 1721–42), the term ‘**salutary neglect**’ is used to denote the period of 150 years from the early decades of the 1600s until 1763 in which the American colonies were virtually self-governed. Britain had too much on its imperial agenda to concentrate much energy on its newest venture in America. Only after the French and Indian War (1754–63) did King George III, Prime Minister **George Grenville** and the British Parliament find the time to focus on colonial America’s domestic and foreign policy. Salutary neglect ended in 1763, with Britain attempting to extract more revenue (income) from its colonies – as opposed to just regulating normal trade – in order to pay for the massive French and Indian War debt in excess of £130 million.



▲ Source 1.35 George Grenville as painted by William Hoare, 1764



▲ Source 1.36 An engraving of British Parliament: the House of Commons, circa 1760s

1.9 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



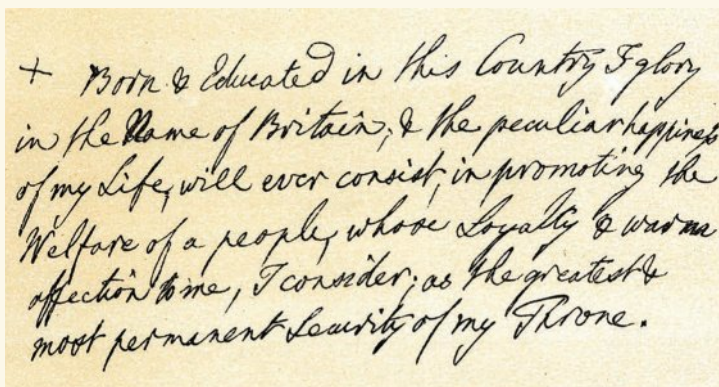
King George III (1738–1820)

- George III had his coronation ceremony in 1760 and remained the King of Britain for 59 years.
- An heir of the Hanoverian dynasty, George III was the third Hanoverian monarch and yet the first to be born in England, speak English as his native language and be brought up in the Anglican faith. In fact, he never even visited Hanover in Germany.
- George III received an education in science and the arts that was heavily influenced by Enlightenment thinking. As king, he became known as ‘Farmer George’ due to his attention to more modern agricultural and industrial techniques.
- However, despite this progressive thinking, George’s politics and his appointments as a constitutional monarch remained highly conservative throughout his reign.
- His time as monarch was marked by his kingdom being involved in various military conflicts, accompanied by his firm resolve to maintain the empire he inherited and was extremely proud of. Despite the fact that George III almost exclusively followed the policies of his appointed ministers, due to his traditional nature and imperialist leaning, he is often depicted as the initiator of the American Revolution.

- After the loss of the North American colonies, George III considered abdicating the throne due to his personal distress at the situation. However, in his later years, George III grew to accept the independence of the United States and started trying to rebuild a relationship between the two nations.
- Upon his death, the Prince Regent became King George IV.



▲ **Source 1.37** King George III in coronation robes, by Allan Ramsay, circa 1765



▲ **Source 1.38** A paragraph from George III's accession speech in his own handwriting, from 6 December 1766. The paragraph reads: 'Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Britain, and the peculiar happiness of my life, will ever consist, in promoting the Welfare of a people, whose Loyalty & warm affection to me, I consider, as the greatest & most permanent security of my Throne.'

35

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

George III is known to many people today because of the stage play and film *The Madness of King George*. In his lifetime, it is known that he was taken by several bouts of a severe and mysterious illness (diagnosed in the 1960s as acute porphyria – but today considered to be a mental illness such as bipolar disorder). George III had one particularly strange symptom: when he was ill his body allegedly produced blue urine!

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS 1.1



For the Revolutions History course, in SACs and the end of year Examination, you are required to write about historians' or others' interpretations of history. This is a difficult concept to grasp at first, but not impossible. Imagine that two people from the time of the American Revolution, an enslaved person and a colonial elite, like George Washington, were both asked to recount their experiences of that time. Due to their varied experiences, as you might expect, both would give us very different accounts about the past – and both would be correct. That was their reality. You have to take into account a person's biographical story to understand where they are coming from. The way a historian sees the world and puts their thoughts on paper works in the same manner. One's life experiences, religious beliefs, political persuasion, education and so on flavour the way one sees the world. Historians are people and are affected in the same way.

The term 'historical interpretations' relates to the study of the writing and interpretation of the past by historians. (You may come across the term '**historiography**' in your research for VCE Revolutions – this is the formal term for historical interpretations). That is, it looks at methods used by historians to determine what occurred in history and how it should be regarded. It tries to decipher a historian's interpretation of a nation, group, person, event or fact to find the truth being presented.

historiography
the writing and
interpretation of the
past

continued...

continued...

In short, the dominant perspective on the American Revolution by the bulk of the Western historians, especially Americans, is a very positive interpretation of what happened. In this view, America is a brilliant nation and the Founding Fathers are exceptional, beating the 18th-century world's most dominant political and military power. This can be termed a very positive interpretation or in this case a 'right-wing' or an orthodox interpretation.

A 'left-wing' interpretation is a more critical or negative interpretation of America and the Founding Fathers, focusing on controversial issues of slavery, class inequality, gender inequality and the treatment of First Nations Americans. These two opposite poles of right wing and left wing are important concepts to understand as you continue through the course. After working through a range of sources in class and at home, you should begin to see some of these different interpretations emerge.

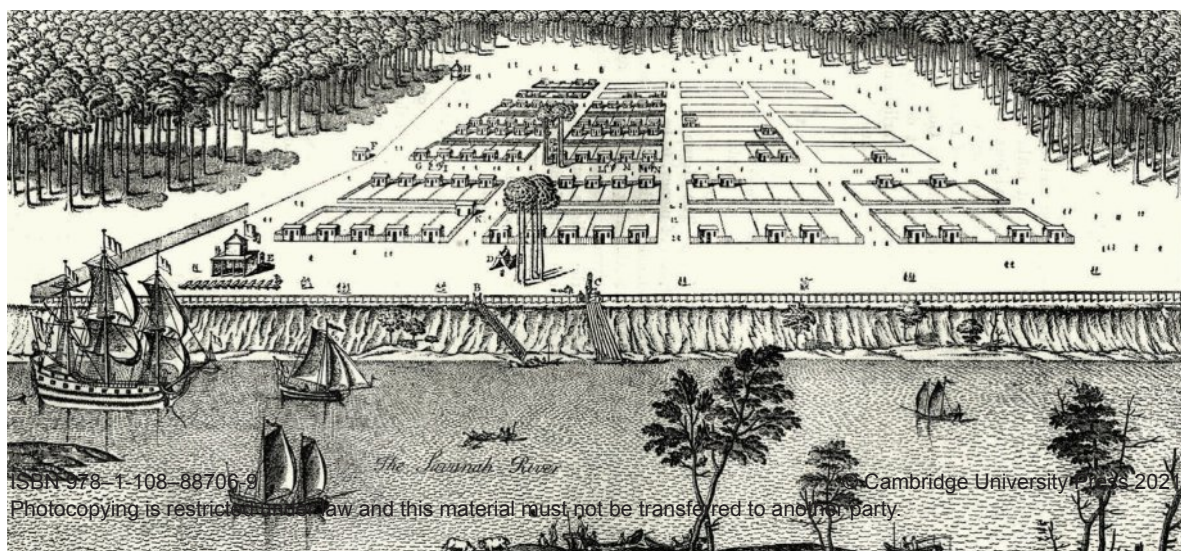
THE STORY SO FAR

- America's founding was in part a by-product of a global power struggle between competing European nations in which Britain emerged as the dominant power.
- Slavery was an ongoing undercurrent of tension in America that would frustrate the making of the New Society, influence the drafting of the *Declaration of Independence* and the Constitution, and eventually fracture the North and the South and climax in a massive Civil War in 1861.
- Enlightenment ideals from French and British philosophers found fertile soil in the New World – a remote continent far removed from the strict hierarchies, class snobbery and lack of economic opportunity within staid European monarchies.
- Precedents set by the *Magna Carta*, the English Bill of Rights, the Glorious Revolution and republican ideas dating back to antiquity became powerful agents of change in America's intelligentsia and the Founding Fathers, like Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John Adams and Alexander Hamilton.
- Religious freedom was fundamental to a post-Great Awakening America. This led naturally to the idea that kings were not needed and citizens could organise their own government.
- Long after the Treaty of Paris (1763), the French and Indian War of 1754–63 produced social, economic, political and military repercussions both in Europe and America.
- America enjoyed unofficial economic and political independence for 150 years in the 'salutary neglect' period prior to 1763. Britain's attempts to rein in that independence after 1763 sowed the seeds for formal independence.

Use the QR code or visit the Interactive Textbook and watch the video summarising the chapter.



▼ Source 1.37 The port of Savannah in the colony of Georgia, 1741



Develop your historical understanding

Define key terms

In this activity, you will review your understanding of the key issues analysed in the chapter. By writing a brief explanation after reading each chapter, you will gradually build up a glossary of comprehensive notes for revision. Write explanations defining each of the following.

Significant ideas and events	Significant individuals
First Nations	George Washington
European colonisation	King George III
The Thirteen Colonies	
Mercantilism	
Aristocracy	
Slavery	
The Enlightenment	
Natural Rights	
<i>Magna Carta</i>	
Republicanism	
The French and Indian War	
Salutary neglect	
<i>Proclamation Act 1763</i>	

Establishing historical significance

This activity encourages you to learn the material presented and begin developing your own opinions. Answer precisely using two or three key points to write a punchy analysis. These points will become a core of an argument that in the VCE might have to be sustained over a paragraph or essay.

Using your knowledge of what you have learnt so far, predict and explain how you think each of the following factors would later fuel the revolutionary cause:

- the effect of Enlightenment ideas in the colonies
- British mercantilism
- the French and Indian War
- the period of salutary neglect.



Constructing historical arguments

Historical events are often quite complex, and this is reflected in the essay questions used in this text and in the examinations. Provocative words and controversial ideas are used, giving you the opportunity to agree or disagree with different parts of the statement. This section enables you to practise the skills of relevantly answering the question, forming your own arguments supported by persuasive evidence and constructing logical, flowing answers.

- 1 Just how 'British' were the American colonies on the cusp of 1763?
- 2 What factors allowed America to develop its early Northern and Southern distinction by 1763?
- 3 What were the implications and outcomes of the French and Indian War that contributed to the American Revolution?

Using quotes as sources

Write a sentence using a short phrase from one of the quotes below, or contrast the views from a few quotes. You can also use any of the quotes used throughout this chapter. Quotes can be used directly or paraphrased into your own words.

The French and Indian War (Seven Years War)

The end ... saw British politicians determined to assert the mother country's superiority.
Edward Countryman

With England victorious over France in the Seven Years' War (known in America as the French and Indian War), expelling them from North America, ambitious colonial leaders were no longer threatened by the French. They now had only two rivals left: the English and the Indians. **Howard Zinn**

The period between the twelve years war and the First Continental Congress saw changed relations between the government and the governed. **Gordon Wood**

Online research suggestions

This activity provides students and teachers with links to valuable resources available online. These suggestions have also been briefly annotated to explain their value.

- Alpha History (access via <http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/9504>)
A website of VCE and university-level history content including summaries, timelines, graphics, documents and historiography on all four VCE Revolution topics.
- Crash Course – US History (access via <http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/9505>).
Knowledgeable and geeky US author John Green covers difficult concepts of American history in an accessible way. It has plenty of short lectures on many of the big topics of American history and several pertinent ones on the Revolution.
- Khan Academy – US History (<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history>) A resource that also covers difficult concepts of American history in an accessible way.





2 **GROWING OPPOSITION TO BRITAIN, 1763–66**

If this be treason, make the most of it!

– PATRICK HENRY AT THE HOUSE OF BURGESSES, 1765

Overview

America's quasi-independence and self-sufficiency for more than 150 years of salutary neglect ended in 1763 with the Treaty of Paris. By defeating France in the French and Indian War (1754–63), Britain gained control of virtually the whole of North America. The end of the French and Indian War meant Britain could concentrate all its energies on a more direct governance of its rapidly expanding American colonies. The potential, resources, people and future wealth of America could now be properly harnessed to enrich the Mother Country. The strategy of British involvement in colonial acquisitions was heavy investment and then heavy returns. This approach was the basis of the British Empire, which at its peak dominated almost a quarter of the world's land mass and population.

America's peculiar New World foundation – the political, social, religious and economic experiences of the colonists – would in time be a point of fracture from the Old World order of the British Empire. The more the British attempted to rein in the American colonies from 1763 onwards, the more these points of fracture were revealed. This chapter highlights some of these early points of difference, tension and fracture.



Key issues

After completing this chapter, you should be able to answer these questions:

- What were the outcomes of the French and Indian War?
- What was the *Proclamation Act*?
- What was Pontiac's Rebellion?
- What were the colonial assemblies?
- What was meant by 'no taxation without representation'?
- Who was John Hancock?
- How did Britain try to force the American colonies to pay for its debts?
- How did the Americans respond?
- Who were the Sons of Liberty?
- Who was Patrick Henry (Part 1)?
- Who was Samuel Adams?

Digital resources for this chapter

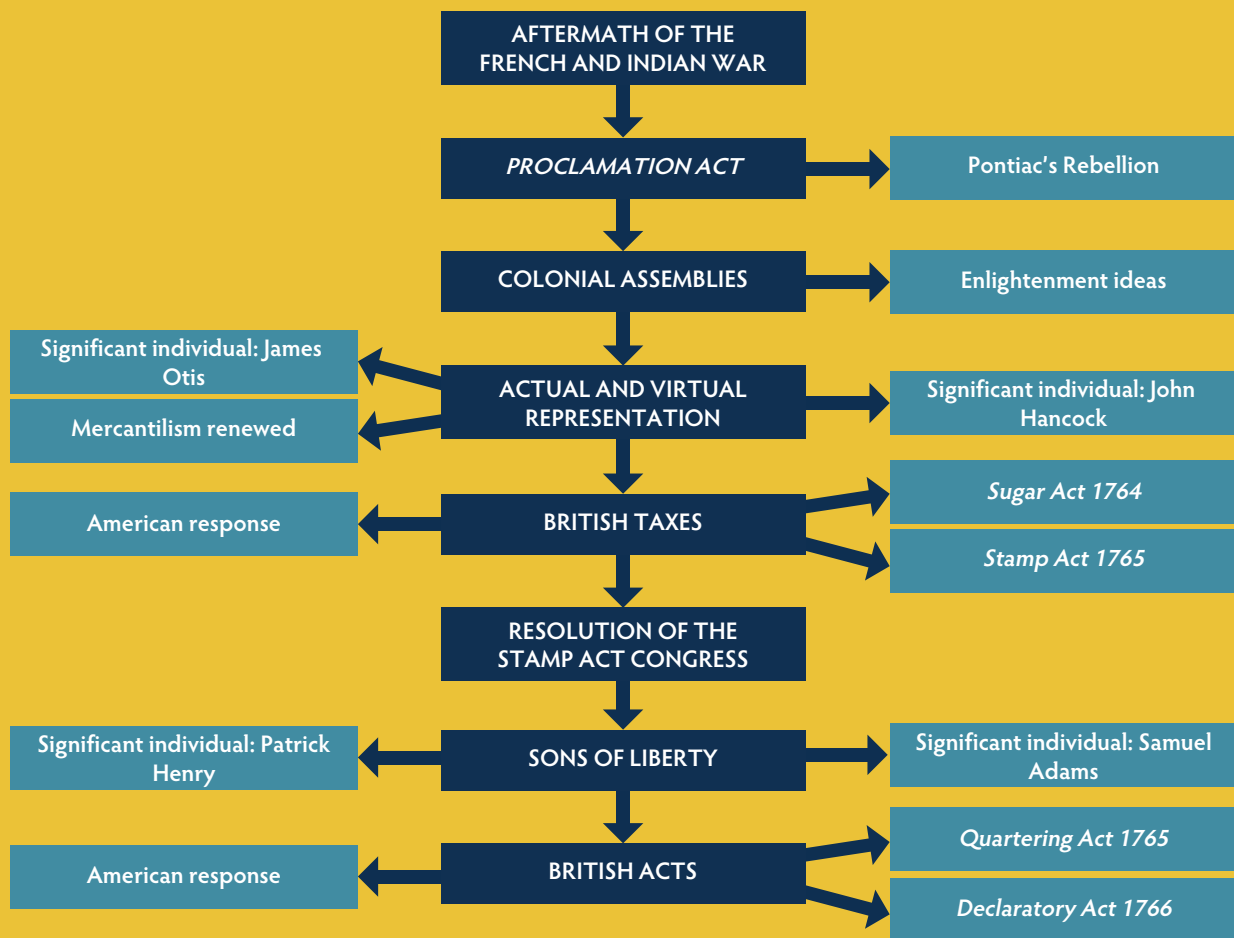
In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

◀ **Source 2.0** *Patrick Henry Before the Virginia House of Burgesses* by Peter F. Rothermel, 1851

Flow of chapter

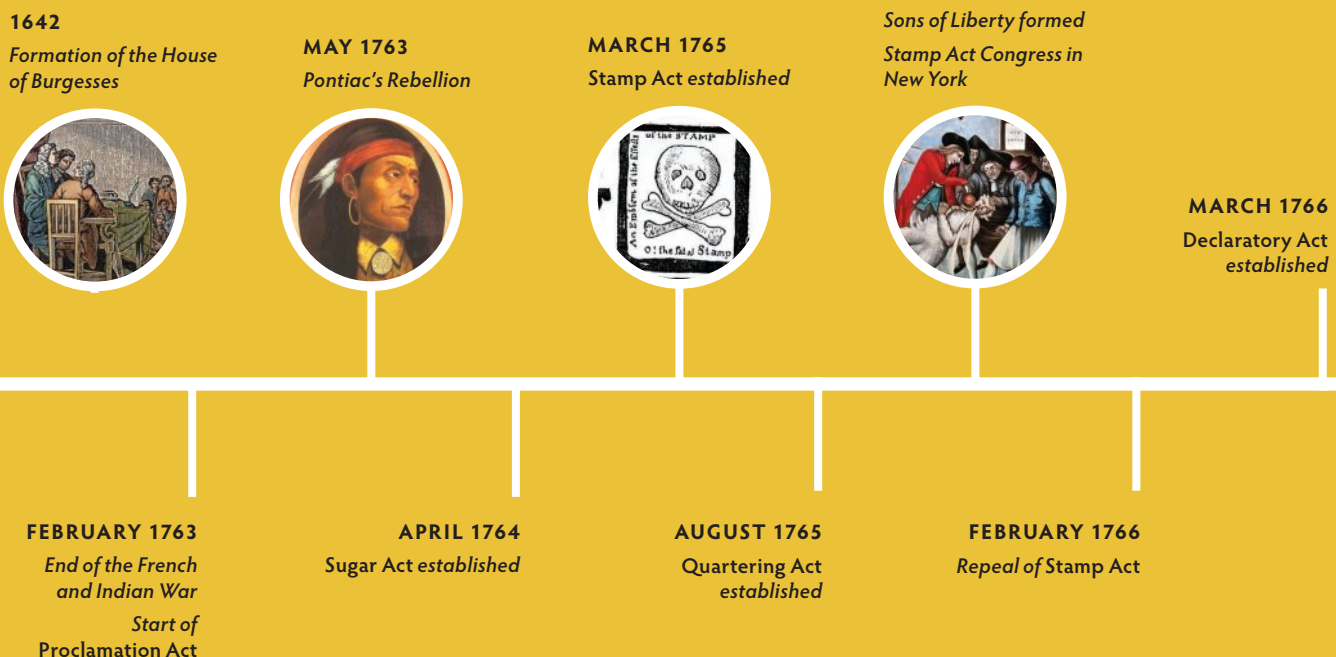
How is this chapter structured?



42

Chapter timeline

What are the key events of the American Revolution covered in this chapter?



2.1 Aftermath of the French and Indian War, 1754–63

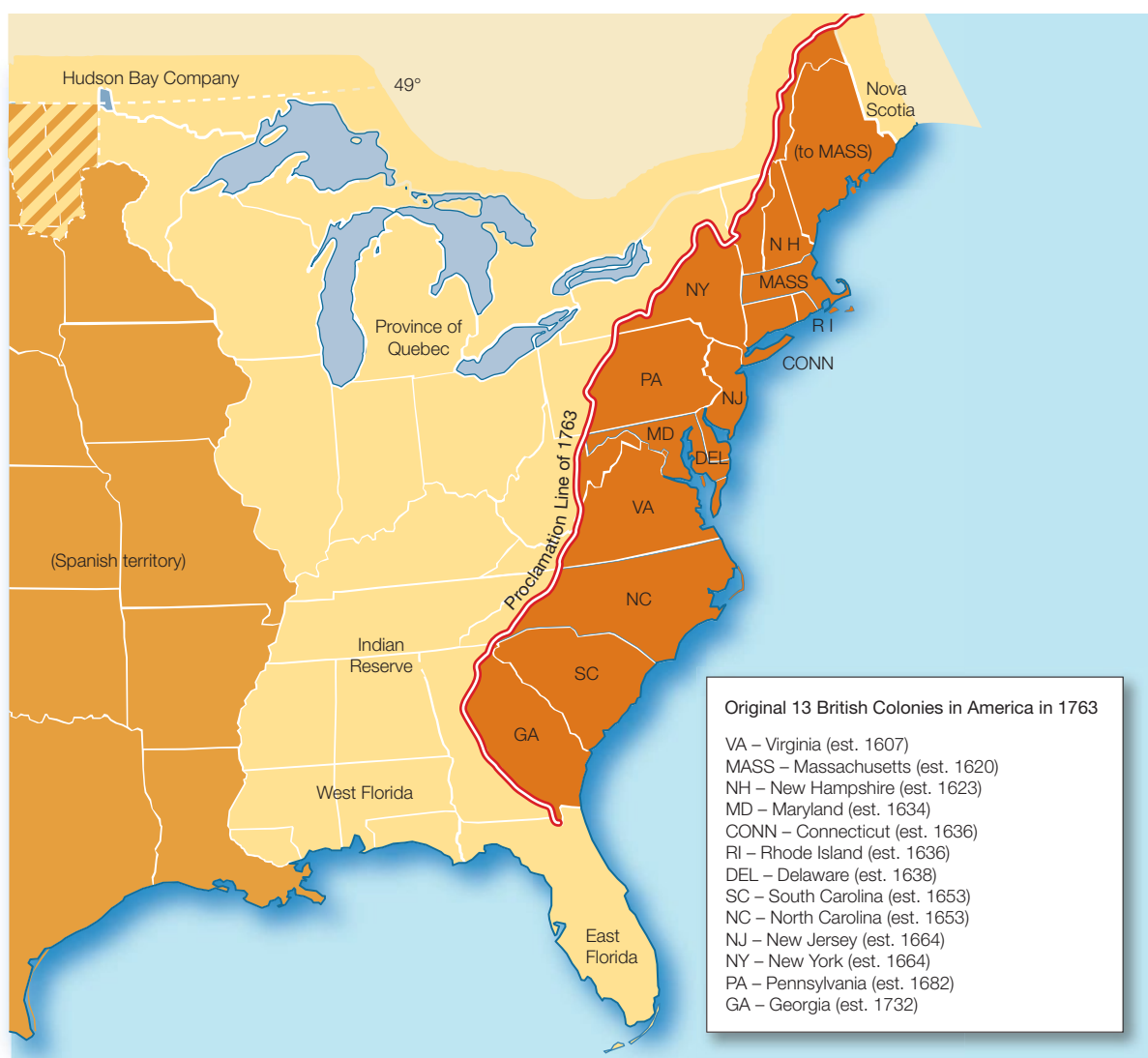
It is unlikely that you will be asked a VCE exam question about the titanic battles or other specific events of the French and Indian War (1754–63). However, the significance, the outcomes and repercussions of this war profoundly affected both America and Britain from 1763 onwards. Those repercussions were social, economic, political and eventually military, and caused England to attempt to recoup costs of that war at the expense of the American colonies.

The war left a massive black hole in excess of £130 million (a debt in the billions in today's money) in the British Government's purse. The subsequent British revenue-raising taxes of the *Sugar Act 1764*, *Stamp Act 1765*, *Townshend Duties* of 1767 and the *Tea Act 1773* were all an attempt to finance the administration of the American economy and to wind back the war debt. Other repercussions are also teased out in this chapter.



2.2 The Proclamation Act and Pontiac's Rebellion

▼ Source 2.1 A map of the east coast of America in 1763, showing the 13 British colonies and the Proclamation Line





The Treaty of Paris 1763 (not to be confused with the later Treaty of Paris in 1783) consolidated Britain's victory in the French and Indian War (1754–63) and took virtually all French possessions in North America, conceding only a few areas to the French province of Quebec in British Canada. These concessions became a thorn in America's ambitions for conquests into that territory, and would flare up in 1774 with the *Quebec Act* being added to the *Coercive Acts* of that year (see Chapter 4).

KEY EVENT

Pontiac's Rebellion

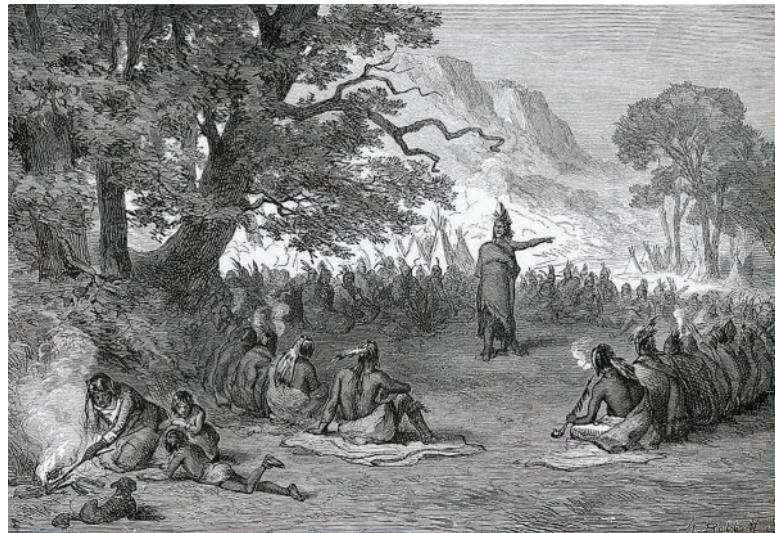
led by Chief Pontiac, an attempt by an alliance of warriors from various First Nations tribes to drive British soldiers and colonial settlers out of their lands in 1763

Part of the Treaty of Paris of 1763 was Britain's new commitment to containing colonial westward expansion via legislation such as the *Proclamation Act* (or Royal Proclamation). This created a Proclamation Line, a line that was forbidden to cross and which restricted land settlements west of the Appalachian Mountains between Georgia and Massachusetts. Britain did this in an attempt to contain colonial American opportunistic and (as they saw it) illegal land-grabbing from 'Indian', French and British territory, as well as to avoid the cost of having to police those areas, which would add to the already significant French and Indian War debt.

Pontiac, an Ottawa chief, saw that Britain's treatment of First Nations Americans was arrogant and mean-spirited, but knew that the unfettered ambitions of colonial Americans would be even more disastrous. (Pontiac was to be proved right over the course of the next two centuries.) Pontiac coordinated a series of attacks up and down the Appalachians that became known as **Pontiac's Rebellion**. Many white settlers and soldiers were murdered and their forts, homes and property destroyed in reprisal raids for the similar treatment of First Nations Americans over the previous decades. Fears of 'Indian' attacks became a part of the American frontier psyche, and a very unhappy aspect of American history over the next two centuries.



▲ Source 2.2 No authenticated images of Pontiac are known to exist. This interpretation was painted by John Mix Stanley, circa 1835–50.



▲ Source 2.3 A 19th-century woodcut depicting Pontiac in a war council

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin all had land speculation interests across the Proclamation Line and actively flouted British law in obtaining property west of that line. Washington famously said the *Proclamation Act* in 1763 'was a temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians'. That is, a temporary measure made to just keep 'Indians' happy. He and many other colonial elites ignored this law, even though they were supposed to be loyal to Britain.

Not only did this British policy upset the wealthy American colonists, but it also hurt many frontiersmen, poor settlers and former colonial soldiers who felt they had fought to win this land from the French and that it should now be rightfully theirs.

2.3 Colonial assemblies

The colonial assemblies were the equivalent of state governments in Australia, but they were not answerable to a domestic federal government – as Australian states are. Each of the Thirteen Colonies was autonomous, answerable only to themselves and Britain. From the 1600s onwards, the American colonial assemblies enjoyed 150 years of virtual self-government of their own territories, as Britain was preoccupied by empire building and fighting rival powers for European and international dominance. Britain also had its own domestic political, social and economic problems. This period in America was known as ‘salutary neglect’ (see Section 1.8). Significantly, the colonial assemblies blooded (or prepared) the generation of politicians that rose to prominence in the period 1763–89. The best politicians of each colony’s colonial assembly were chosen for the First and Second Continental Congresses in 1774 and 1775, and then for the Constitutional Convention in 1787 and finally for the brand-new federal government in 1789. These men, such as James Madison from the Virginia Colonial Assembly (the elite Virginia House of Burgesses), would in time actually design the structure of an independent American government.

property qualification
an assets-based criterion of attaining a certain amount of property or money before one qualifies to vote or to be elected to government

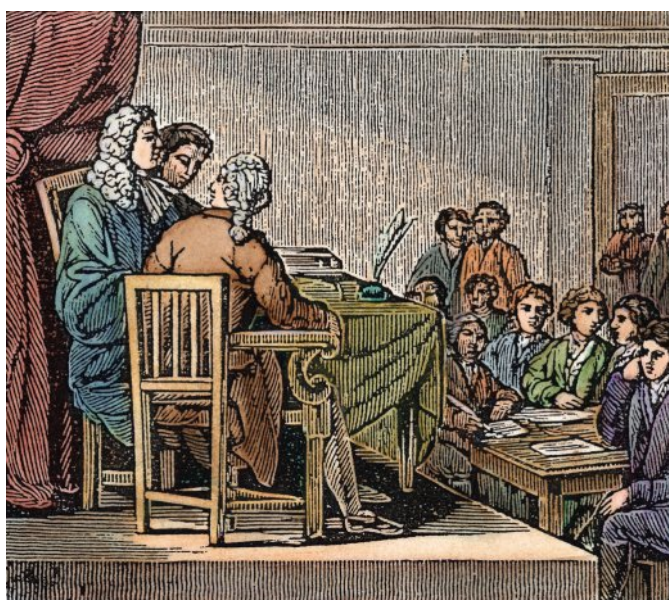
Each colonial assembly’s governance was based on the British political system (a Charter, signed by the King, gave legitimacy and authority) and in many respects laid the groundwork for the republican-style government that would later emerge. Most assemblies had a **property qualification**.

This required a male to have a certain level of wealth in order to satisfy the eligibility criteria for voting in an election or standing for the colonial assembly. The opportunity to vote and to be involved in government spread to a greater number of white males with property in America than any other similar group in any other nation at the same time. White males could get rich far more quickly in America because of easy access to cheap land and unlimited employment opportunities. As historian Edwin Perkins put it:

Three vital economic factors had a profound effect on population growth and the structure of the economy: the colonies had a surplus of fertile land and other natural resources but shortages of labor and capital required for development. The ownership of land was the main goal of pre-industrial peoples, and in North America that goal was in reach of almost every free citizen ... Except in certain areas of New England, population pressure did not hold down the median size of farms ... Farmers, who comprised about three-quarters of the colonial workforce, typically lived on properties containing 60 to 100 acres, a huge farm by European standards.

Source 2.5 Greene, J. & Pole, J., *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1991, p. 54

The British Royal Governors were the British government’s direct representatives in each of the Thirteen Colonies, who helped run each colonial assembly. The payment of these men was a flawed system as the assembly not only controlled revenue from local taxes but also dictated the Royal Governor’s salary. The Governor did not want to bite the hand that fed him and so a conflict of interest arose.



▲ Source 2.4 This coloured engraving from 1833 depicts the first Colonial Assembly in Virginia, 1619.



The Royal Proclamation of 1763 reasserted the role of Royal Governors to the colonists:

... our loving Subjects should be informed of our Paternal care, for the security of the Liberties and Properties of those who are and shall become Inhabitants thereof... We have also given Power to the said Governors, with the consent of our Said Councils, and the Representatives of the People so to be summoned as aforesaid, to make, constitute, and ordain Laws, Statutes, and Ordinances for the Public Peace, Welfare, and good Government of our said Colonies, and of the People and Inhabitants thereof, as near as may be agreeable to the Laws of England ...

GOD SAVE THE KING

Source 2.6 The Royal Proclamation of 1763

FOCUS QUESTION 2.1

Why was the Royal Proclamation controversial in the American colonies? Discuss with a partner.

legislature the political body or assembly which is empowered to make and change laws (legislation), like a parliament

It is worth noting that an assembly could withhold the salary of a Governor if he tried to exercise his powers in a way that conflicted with the wishes of the local colonial **legislature**. That said, some assemblies were closed for opposing British policy. Assemblies in New York, Boston and Virginia were all shut down by their respective Royal Governors for breaches of British law, such as during the *Quartering Act 1765*.

Therefore, even though overtly loyal to the British Empire from the early days of colonisation, the colonial assemblies would increasingly play an important role in harnessing the power of the growing protest movement, and forming collective responses to British actions in the American Revolution. To that end, the colonial assemblies instigated some very important documents during the Revolution. They include the *Virginia Resolves* of 1765, which contained the famous line:

an attack, made on one of our sister colonies, to compel submission to arbitrary taxes, is an attack made on all British America.

Also issued were the *Declaration of Rights of the Stamp Act Congress* in 1765; Samuel Adams' *Massachusetts Circular Letter* in 1768; and, obviously, Thomas Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence* 1776.

Enlightenment ideas

intelligentsia the well-educated thinkers, writers and artists of a society

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Locke and Rousseau were part of a wave of modern thinkers involved in the Enlightenment movement. Popular with the **intelligentsia** of France and England, the ideas of 'natural rights' and 'social contract' found fertile soil in America also. Colonists felt the British monarch, King George III, had violated their natural rights and the social contract that existed between him and his subjects. By 1776 this became a justification for him being overthrown. The *Declaration of Independence* was inspired by those very ideas: 'certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness'. Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Samuel and John Adams, John Dickinson and George Washington were all Founding Fathers who took up the cause of 'natural rights'.

One American who took up these ideas passionately was Bostonian lawyer James Otis, who would be, knowingly and unknowingly, a part of the broad dissemination of Enlightenment ideas to the American masses.

FOCUS QUESTION 2.2

From your reading of Chapters 1 and 2, as well as other sources, establish three or four reasons why Enlightenment ideas would undermine British authority in many of the Thirteen Colonies, and contribute to the American Revolution by 1776. Give specific examples and be prepared to share your findings.

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



James Otis (1725–83)

- James Otis was one of the early and truly influential Bostonians, whose legal training and great oratory skills made him a noted adversary to British intrusions into American affairs.
- Otis used many of the Enlightenment ideas to plant the seeds of revolution. In a famous court case in 1761, he argued on behalf of Boston merchants against the hated British **Writs of Assistance**. His speech at that trial, which was published and entitled *Against the Writs of Assistance*, galvanised some foundation members of the early revolutionary movement.
- Men like John Hancock and Samuel Adams, whose businesses would directly benefit from a lack of close inspection by British officials, had found a brilliant ally in Otis. Otis also inspired John Adams, another noted celebrity in the Revolution. John Adams said of hearing Otis' speech in court: 'Every man appeared to me to go away as I did, ready to take arms against the writs of assistance.'
- Like many of the Founding Fathers, Otis had a revenge motive against Britain: in his case, because his father had been passed over as Chief Justice of Massachusetts in favour of **Thomas Hutchinson**. Ironically, Hutchinson was the magistrate in Otis' court case and had the Writs of Assistance case thrown out of court. This family slight became one of the great motivations for Otis taking on the anti-British cause.
- Otis disputed the British Parliament's right to tax colonies, with his 1764 pamphlet *Rights of British Colonies Asserted and Proved* espousing ideas of natural rights and 'no taxation without representation'.
- Otis also headed the **Stamp Act Congress** in 1765, an important precursor to the Continental Congress 10 years later. Nine of the Thirteen Colonies attended the Stamp Act Congress in New York. The slow fusion of an embryonic American nation was beginning.

Although sentiment was strong in the other colonies to attend the congress, colonial governors loyal to Britain took steps to ensure that their respective colonial legislatures could not meet to select and send delegates to the meeting in New York in October 1765.

Eventually, Otis was severely injured in a bar fight that left him with a brain injury. This blunted his extensive mental powers and developed into a debilitating mental illness, leading Samuel Adams to take up Otis' role in leading the revolutionary movement in Boston. Otis died in 1783 after being struck by lightning in his doorway.



▲ Source 2.7 A portrait of James Otis by John Singleton Copley, circa 1760

Writ of Assistance

a search warrant from the British Government permitting a search for contraband items in American homes, warehouses, shops, ships etc.

Hutchinson,**Thomas** (1711–80)

a businessman and governor from Massachusetts, who became hated for not publicly opposing the *Stamp Act*

Stamp Act Congress

the first unified mass meeting of nine of the Thirteen Colonies in North America, to determine a course of collective action against Britain's *Stamp Act*

continued...



...continued



◀ Source 2.8 A later engraving of James Otis' last residence in Andover, Massachusetts from 1860

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AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

The beating Otis took in 1769 was for his patriotic writings, and it rendered him 'insane'. Otis was not harmful to himself or others, but he was no longer the brilliant, fiery Patriot he once was. On the day of the Battle of Bunker Hill in July 1775, Otis was under the care of his sister. He snuck away from her house, managed to get a rifle and then walked to Breed's Hill. Otis volunteered to fight, took some unknown part in the battle, and then simply walked home.

2.4 'No taxation without representation'

actual representation a form of democratic government in which every citizen is represented in the government by someone acting on his or her behalf (in Australia, your local, state and federal members perform this role for you, and you can approach them directly)

'No taxation without representation' a popular revolutionary slogan that argues that taxes can only be levied on a populace by its own elected representatives

virtual representation a system where the citizens are loosely represented by the entire legislature; the citizen is not involved in the election process

One of the contentious issues in America was sovereignty. With each colony being self-sufficient, the colonial assembly had the power to tax in its own colony. The people in that colonial assembly were voted in by their constituents, to whom they were directly answerable. If they didn't do a good job, they would be thrown out at the next election. This system that the Thirteen Colonies had become used to was known as **actual representation**.

Once the mercantilist policies (such as the *Sugar Act 1764* and *Stamp Act 1765*, discussed shortly) began to make an impact, colonists declared it was unlawful for the British to tax them as they were not represented in the British Parliament. The catch cry became: **'No taxation without representation'**. Colonists wanted to be directly represented in Britain if they were to be directly taxed by Britain. They wanted actual representation, which they had experienced through their own colonial assemblies. However, the class snobbery and hierarchical nature of British society meant Americans were perceived to be part of the lower classes, so they were never going to get representation in the British Parliament.

The British Prime Minister George Grenville during the tumultuous 1763–65 period argued that the American colonists were **virtually represented**, as the Members of British Parliament did not just represent their constituents but all British subjects across the globe. Furthermore, when Britain closed American colonial assemblies – as in New York in 1767 and Boston in 1768 – colonists felt their right to be directly represented was being taken away and that their 'liberty' (encased in natural rights) was being infringed.

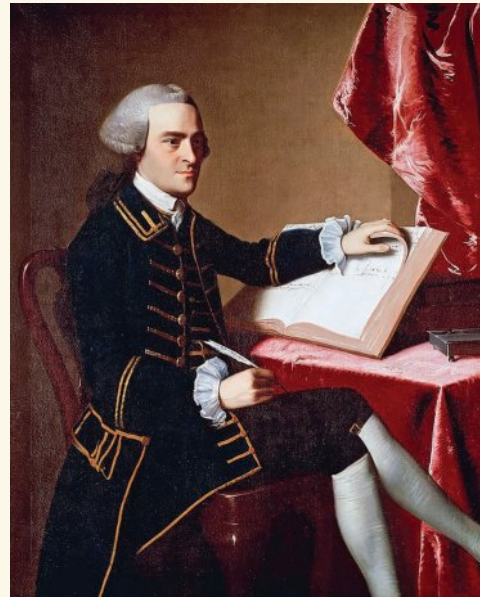
2.5

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



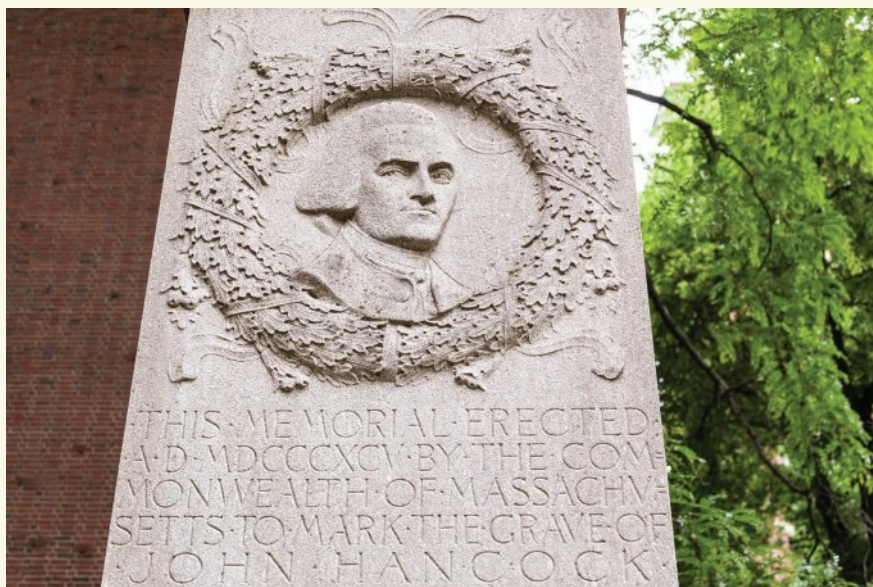
John Hancock (1737–93)

- John Hancock was a Boston-born, Harvard-educated wealthy merchant who was also a well-known smuggler.
- After working for his rich uncle and learning the import-export business, he inherited his uncle's fortune and with his own hard work and industry also became one of the richest men in America.
- After the mercantilist policies of Britain (including the Writs of Assistance, *Navigation Acts*, *Sugar Act 1764*, *Stamp Act 1765*, *Townshend Duties of 1767* and *Tea Act 1773*) started to negatively impact Hancock's substantial smuggling operations from non-British sources, he openly began to support James Otis, Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty's operations in and around Boston.
- Hancock lent his support for revolution through both financial and political means by serving on the Massachusetts Colonial Assembly and the Continental Congress.
- Hancock's enormous signature on the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776 (the first and the biggest signature on the document; see Source 2.11) gives you some idea of the enormous arrogance and self-importance in which he held himself during the American Revolution. His headstone in the graveyard near Boston Common (see Source 2.10) is equally ostentatious.
- His contribution was significant, though not in the same league as Washington, Jefferson or Madison.
- However, his most important contribution was sending money and supplies to the fledgling Continental Army.



▲ Source 2.9 Portrait of John Hancock, by John Singleton Copley, circa 1765

Hancock's wealth was thrown behind the Revolution, as the Continental Army relied on loans from individual benefactors, the states and eventually the Kingdom of France to bankroll its operations.

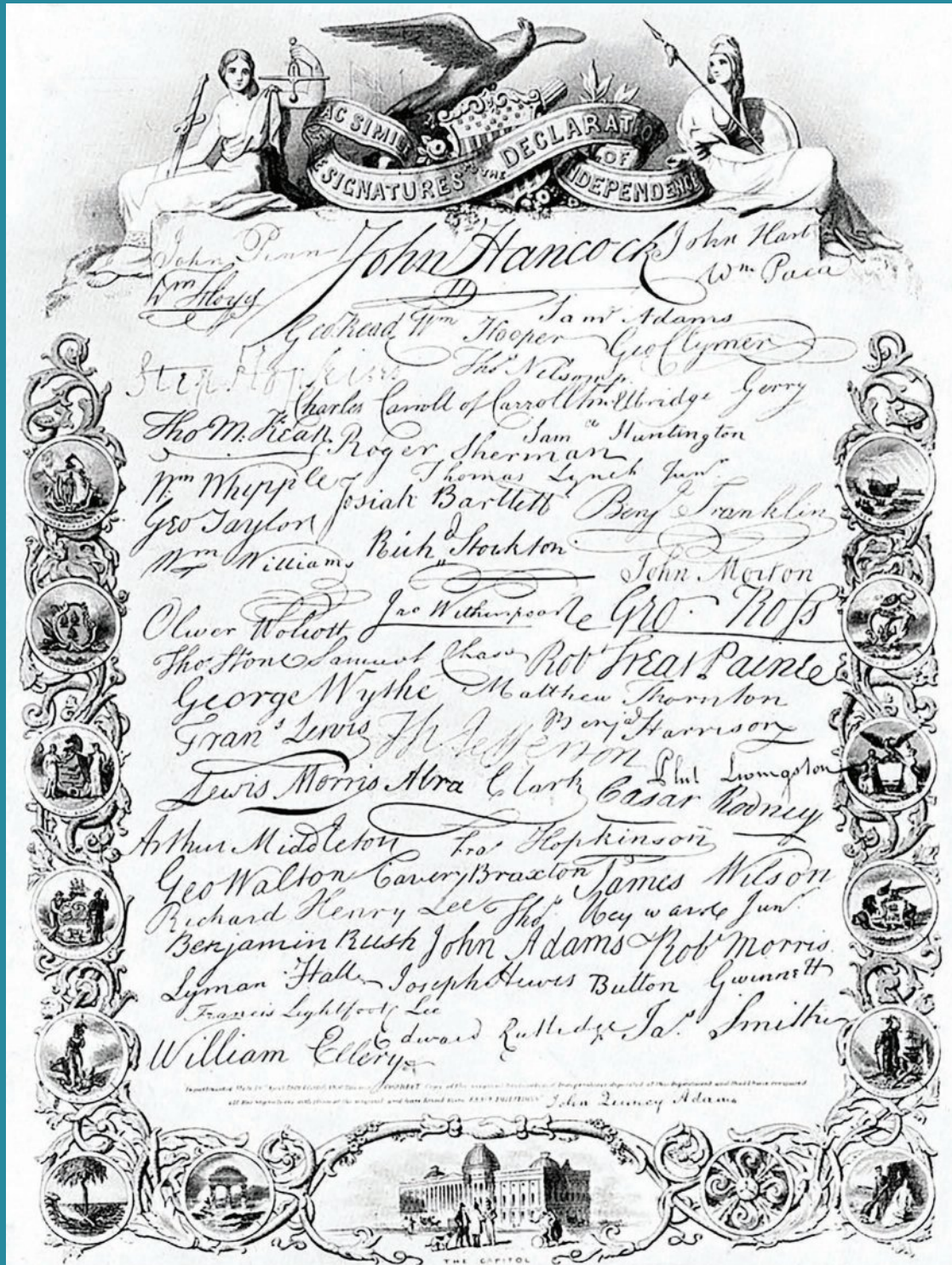


▲ Source 2.10 John Hancock's ornate gravestone today in Boston, Massachusetts



AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

A person's 'John Hancock' is North American slang for their signature – highlighting how famously Hancock's large signature appears on the Declaration of Independence.



▲ Source 2.11 John Hancock's large signature on the Declaration of Independence

2.6 Sugar Act 1764

Britain conducted an official inquiry into the proper conduct of trade in America and found massive holes in the administration. Britain was making good money out of trading with America but losing revenue due to smuggling and inefficient administration. Customs officers were inept, intimidated or corrupt, and smuggling was rife, with the colonies trading illegally with traditional English enemies including the French, Dutch and Spanish. British Prime Minister George Grenville, with his background as a former Chancellor of the Exchequer (the Treasurer of England), realised that England was in a financially perilous state following the French and Indian War. However, he couldn't increase the taxation of English citizens without risking domestic troubles (which was also a major factor in the French Revolution in 1789). Grenville instead designed a new course of action to make America pay through a series of taxes.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

One of the great ironies of Britain trying to make the American colonies more loyal or subservient to Britain was that it united the Thirteen American colonies in defiance against Britain. Britain helped make America, as they created another layer of government in America – a federal government – that could address their shared grievances against Britain.

Rum was a major currency of sorts in America (as it was in Australia in the late 18th century). Therefore, Grenville introduced a tax measure in the American colonies called the *Sugar Act 1764* that was a reinstitution of Britain's former mercantilist policy, the *Sugar and Molasses Act 1733*, which gave new powers to customs officers to contain the smuggling of rum from non-British controlled sources – namely the French West Indies. Grenville's plan was to lower the duty (tax) on molasses – the rawest form of sugar distillation and the main ingredient in rum – from 6 pence to 3 pence per gallon to undercut the appeal of smuggled sugar in the colonies. The *Sugar Act* also included introduced taxes on many other items in the colonies, including wines, coffee, spices and cloth. The *Navigation Acts* and the Writs of Assistance that went hand in hand with the *Sugar Act* enabled the full power of the British Navy and British customs officers of the colonies to search any American property on land and at sea suspected of containing smuggled goods. Britain's economic monopoly, economic restraints on colonial American trade and the forced searching of people's property began to build pockets of resentment among the people.

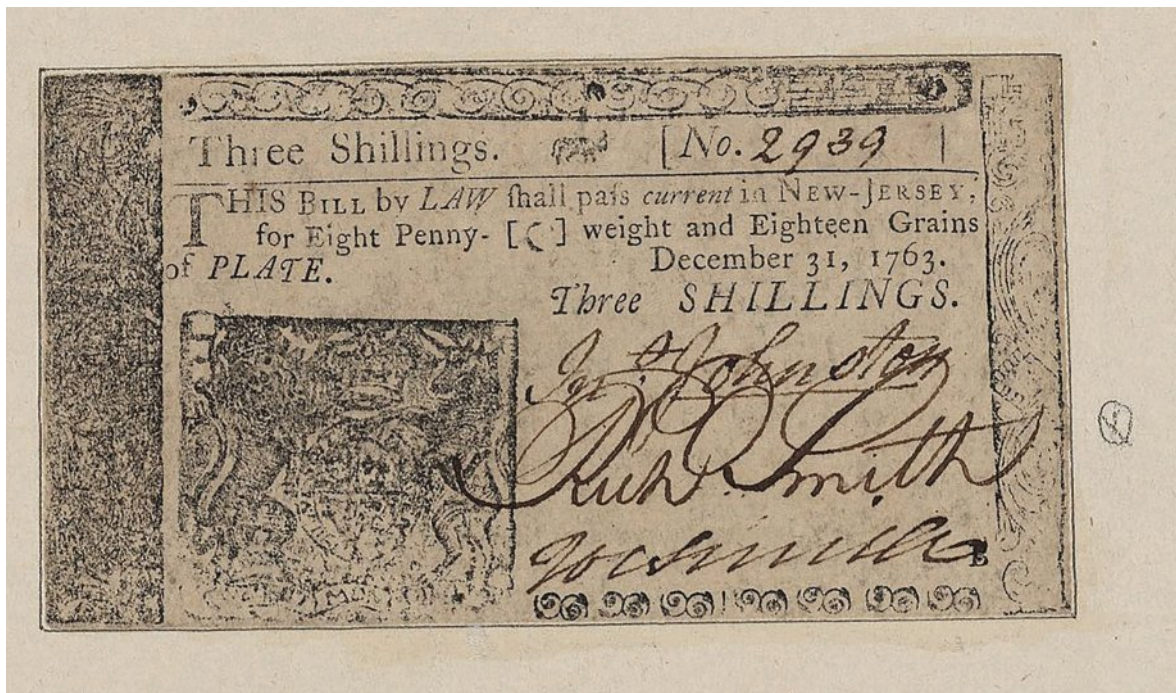
Sugar Act a revenue-raising Act passed by the British Parliament in 1764, which alarmed the colonists about the intent of the British and helped fuel the growing discontent



▲ **Source 2.12** A depiction of enslaved people working in a rum distillery in Antigua



▲ **Source 2.13** An engraving depicting revenue cutters capturing an American smuggling ship circa 1764. These were British revenue ships that were sent out to prevent smuggling by Americans, who were attempting to avoid taxes.



▲ **Source 2.14** The colonial currency of New Jersey circa 1763. The *Currency Act* 1764 meant this printed currency could no longer operate for British items, angering many Americans.

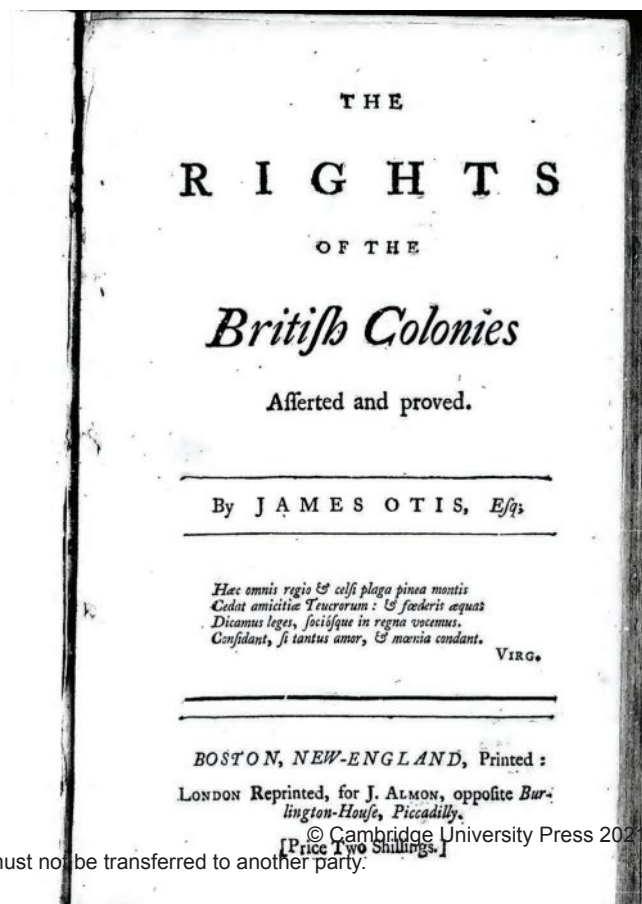
Currency Act one of several acts created by the British Parliament designed to regulate the use of paper money in America

The *Currency Act* of 1764 also undermined the various colonial assemblies' right to control their own colony's economy. The British Government tried to dissuade the use of colonial printed money and have all British items bought and debts paid with only British currency, gold or silver (the latter two were known as 'specie', a term for currency based on intrinsic worth). These actions angered the merchant and financial classes in colonial American society, including men like John Hancock, who called for economic independence long before the call for political independence.

American response

The *Sugar Act* became Britain's first 'direct tax' in America; the first time the British Parliament took that right off each colonial assembly. As it bypassed colonial assemblies' taxation rights it was seen to violate colonists' rights (see Section 1.5 for more on revolutionary ideas). The influential merchant class of New England became a pillar of opposition as the *Sugar Act* only affected the various Northern colonies that dealt in molasses. The Southern colonies principally dealt in tobacco, indigo and rice, and thus weren't affected. The *Sugar Act* made Boston a central player in the forthcoming

► **Source 2.15** A copy of Otis' *The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved*



Revolution and brought John Hancock, Samuel Adams, James Otis and John Adams into the spotlight. In response to the *Sugar Act*, Otis produced an influential pamphlet, *Rights of British Colonists Asserted and Proved*. In this text, he highlighted the flaws of British economic policy, in that it violated natural rights and was unconstitutional based on Britain's own laws since the time of the *Magna Carta* and Glorious Revolution. The pamphlet became an important foundation of the ideological arguments that ultimately led to the Revolution.

During the *Sugar Act*'s implementation, Bostonians resisted the law via the courts and colonial assemblies, at town meetings, through ardent speeches and documents and by harnessing the power of the press to spread their message. They also used illegal means through the intimidation of customs officials and increasing smuggling rates. The unsuccessful British prosecution of this tax set a blueprint for how the American colonies could work around British law.

FOCUS QUESTION 2.3

How did the *Sugar Act 1764* contribute to a revolutionary situation in the mid-1760s?

2.7 Stamp Act 1765

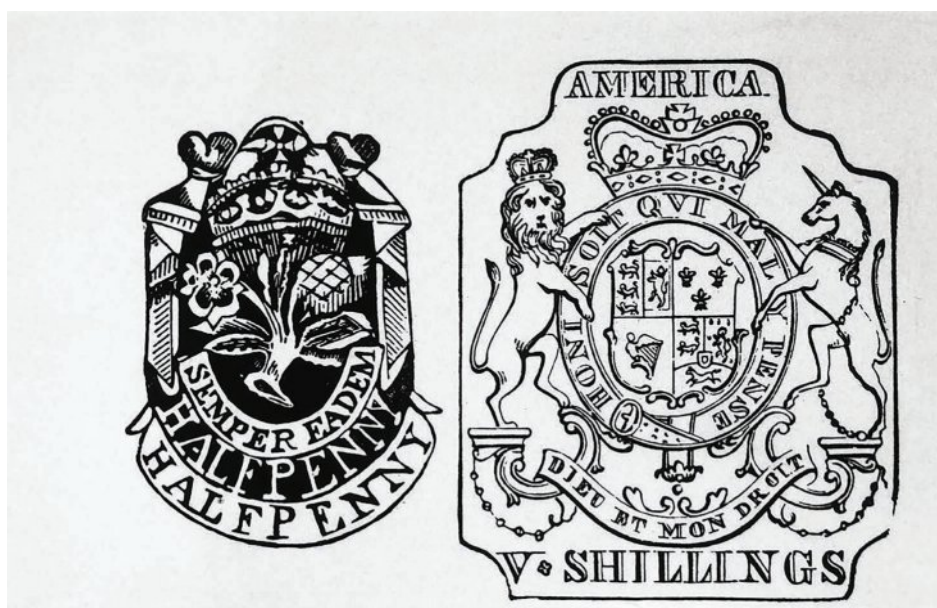
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The fallout from the *Sugar Act 1764* was nothing compared with the next British tax, the *Stamp Act 1765*. In March 1765, Grenville and the British Parliament had devised what they saw as clever taxes on a range of products, but in particular one that every colonist used: paper. This revenue-raising act was designed to cover the costs of defending the colonies (the £130 million French and Indian War debt) and enforcing existing mercantilist acts. The British Parliament had explored the idea of a stamp tax since 1764, and gave the colonists opportunities to suggest alternatives. The tax was seen to be a sure-fire and lucrative means for Britain to make additional money and catch every taxable American. In fact, it was a disaster financially, politically and socially, as the outrage in American colonies was universal and the reactions to the tax united the colonists.

The *Stamp Act 1765* was passed to raise £60 000 to fund the supply of British troops in America. British parliamentarians believed (with some justification) that funding should be sourced from the colonies because Britain, via the British Army, was protecting them, and the colonies should pay for that protection.

Unlike the *Sugar Act*, which targeted people in the rum trade, the *Stamp Act* became the first direct tax to target all social classes in every American colony, taxing everything from playing cards to legal documents – including titles, wills, bills of sale, contracts and diplomas, and even gambling paraphernalia. Under the *Stamp Act*, a document needed a British stamp placed on it to represent that the tax or duty had been paid on that item (see Source 2.16).

► Source 2.16 *Stamp Act* stamps from Boston, circa 1765





American response

Henry, Patrick
(1736–99) a lawyer,
politician and
plantation owner
who became known
as a great orator
and advocate
for American
independence

Virginia Resolves
a set of resolutions
decreeing that
the only taxation
valid in Virginia
was that enforced
by a parliamentary
assembly elected
by Virginians,
which effectively
invalidated
the British
Government's taxes

Sons of Liberty
a collection of
underground
groups that formed
to fight the *Stamp
Tax* and later
became aggressive
supporters
of American
independence

Oliver, Andrew
(1706–74)
a merchant
and official in
Massachusetts who
became responsible
for enforcing the
Stamp Tax there

effigy a model of a
person, often used
for the purpose of
protest

With the *Stamp Act*, Britain unwittingly galvanised the colonists in common outrage at a British tax that affected everyone in America from the colonial elite to ordinary workers. Lawyers were taxed on every legal document used. Merchants and retailers were taxed on all contracts, bills of sale and bonds. Journalists, publishers and essayists were taxed on all newspapers and pamphlets they produced. Common labourers, dockhands and sailors were taxed on items such as playing cards.

The colonial assemblymen feared that if Britain successfully implemented this tax, they would possess infinite power to tax the colonists in all facets of life and the economy. Upper-class angst was channelled in petitions, 'resolves' and letters to various British representatives. For example, Virginian lawyer **Patrick Henry** challenged the *Stamp Act*, introducing his **Virginia Resolves** in the Virginian Colonial Assembly in May 1765, which rejected British authority to tax the colonies. The Virginia Resolves were printed in many colonial newspapers and were important in garnering opposition from the 13 separate colonies.

The 'colonial elites' – or politicians – of the British colonies in North America united for the first time at the Stamp Act Congress in October 1765 in New York (discussed in the following section). However, dissent against British rule was also developing among the general population in the colonies, and took many other forms, of which an opposition group called the **Sons of Liberty** is the most notorious example. Samuel Adams organised the Sons of Liberty as a vigilante group of sorts that violently opposed the *Stamp Act* through acts of terror. They made sure colonists systematically boycotted the scheme, intimidating those who purchased stamps, and committing acts of violence against stamp officers like **Andrew Oliver**, whose house they ransacked before hanging an **effigy** of him at the Liberty Tree in Boston Common on 14 August 1765. Oliver was eventually forced to resign because of these tactics. Soon after, angry colonists ransacked Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson's home and stole or destroyed most of his property. The top levels of British power in the colonies were being openly attacked and defied in Boston.

► **Source 2.18** A depiction of colonists protesting against the *Stamp Act* with a sign reading 'England's Folly, America's Ruin'



▲ **Source 2.17** The *Pennsylvania Journal* protests about the *Stamp Act* on October 31 1765. In the upper right corner there is a satirical stamp that reads 'An emblem of the effects of the stamp. O! The Fatal Stamp'.

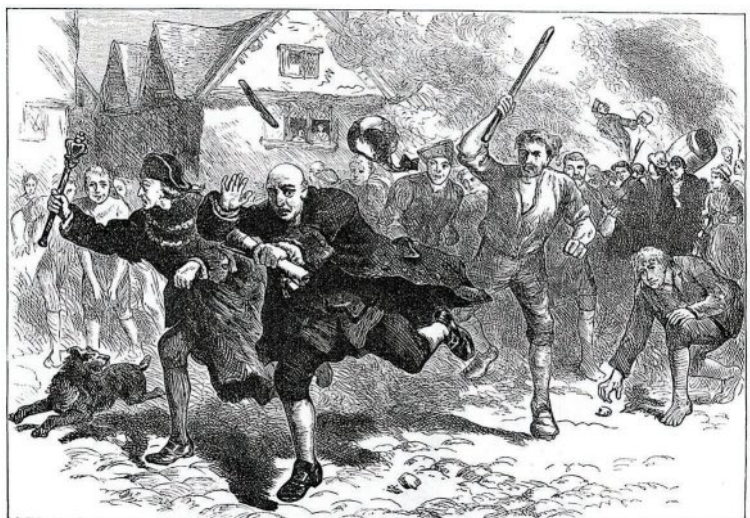




▲ **Source 2.19** This engraving from the 19th century depicts an effigy of Andrew Oliver being hanged from the Liberty Tree in Boston. The Liberty Tree was a famous elm that stood near Boston Common for a hundred years before the Revolution. In the 1760s, the tree became a rallying point for the growing resistance to the rule of Britain over the American colonies and for that reason it was felled by British soldiers in 1775.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Though publicly supportive of the *Stamp Act*, and hated in Boston for this, privately Andrew Oliver was against the crippling British tax.



▲ **Source 2.20** Left: Massachusetts Colonial Governor Thomas Hutchinson painted by Edward Truman, 1741; Right: Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson being chased by rioters protesting the *Stamp Act*.



tarring and feathering an act of public humiliation and shame involving pouring hot and sticky tar onto a victim then covering them in feathers, and parading them around the town square. Could be fatal and, if not, would be definitely physically and emotionally painful.

The backlash to the *Stamp Act* in the colonies was a protracted campaign of propaganda and violence that became so universal that Britain eventually backed down and repealed the Act in 1766. This colonial success established a model of how to oppose any unfair British policy; that is, by:

- establishing in each colony a Sons of Liberty-type secret organisation
- using Sons of Liberty tactics (such as **tarring and feathering**, and harassing British representatives)
- using newspapers to spread radical ideas to a large audience, since America had one of the highest literacy rates in the world at the time
- employing the power of the colonial assembly to direct opposition in each colony
- promoting the boycott of British goods.

FOCUS QUESTIONS 2.4

- 1 Briefly describe the *Stamp Act 1765*. Why was it introduced?
- 2 Summarise the arguments used by the colonists against the tax. How did the *Stamp Act* contribute to the social, political and economic tensions between the colonists and Britain?

2.8 Stamp Act Congress

In October 1765, the Stamp Act Congress was held in the city of New York. It came about after James Otis, on 8 June, put a motion to the Massachusetts legislature to invite all the colonies to send delegates to a congress at New York in October 1765. Representatives from only nine colonies attended (Virginia, New Hampshire, North Carolina and Georgia were not represented). The Congress agreed upon a document being produced (the *Declaration of Rights of the Stamp Act Congress*, reproduced below) petitioning the King and Parliament for the repeal of the tax. The Declaration pledged loyalty to King George III while simultaneously stating that Britain had usurped colonial rights. This document contended that since the colonists could only vote for members in their colonial assemblies and not in British elections, these were the only legal bodies that could tax them. The cry of ‘no taxation without representation’ was a regular feature in most colonial writings at the time, especially from James Otis, Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams. Interestingly, because the credentials of certain delegates authorised them merely to consult and not to take action, the petition was signed by the members of only six colonies.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 2.1: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS



The Declaration of Rights of the Stamp Act Congress 19 October 1765

The members of this congress, sincerely devoted, with the warmest sentiments of affection and duty to His Majesty's person and government, inviolably attached to the present happy establishment of the Protestant succession, and with minds deeply impressed by a sense of the present and impending misfortunes of the British colonies on this continent having considered as maturely as time would permit, the circumstances of said colonies, esteem it our indispensable duty to make the following declarations, of our humble opinions, respecting the most essential rights and liberties of the colonists, and of the grievances under which they labor, by reason of several late acts of Parliament.

1st. That His Majesty's subjects in these colonies owe the same allegiance to the crown of Great Britain that is owing from his subjects born within the realm, and all due subordination to that august body, the Parliament of Great Britain.

continued...

...continued

2nd. 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.

3rd. 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.

6th. That all supplies to the crown, being free gifts of the people, it is unreasonable and inconsistent with the principles and spirit of the British constitution for the people of Great Britain to grant to His Majesty the property of the colonists.

7th. That trial by jury is the inherent and invaluable right of every British subject in these colonies.

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.

9th. That the duties imposed by several late acts of Parliament, from the peculiar circumstances of these colonies, will be extremely burthensome and grievous, and, from the scarcity of specie, the payment of them absolutely impracticable.

10th. That as the profits of the trade of these colonies ultimately center in Great Britain, to pay for the manufactures which they are obliged to take from thence, they eventually contribute very largely to all supplies granted there to the crown.

11th. That the restrictions imposed by several late acts of Parliament on the trade of these colonies will render them unable to purchase the manufactures of Great Britain.

12th. That the increase, prosperity, and happiness of these colonies depend on the full and free enjoyment of their rights and liberties, and an intercourse, with Great Britain, mutually affectionate and advantageous.

13th. That it is the right of the British subjects in these colonies to petition the king or either house of Parliament.

Lastly, that it is the indispensable duty of these colonies to the best of sovereigns, to the mother-country, and to themselves, to endeavor, by a loyal and dutiful address to His Majesty, and humble application to both houses of Parliament, to procure the repeal of the act for granting and applying certain stamp duties, of all clauses of any other acts of Parliament whereby the jurisdiction of the admiralty is extended as aforesaid, and of the other late acts for the restriction of the American commerce.

Source 2.21 *The Declaration of Rights of the Stamp Act Congress, 19 October 1765*

- 1 Identify the main arguments made by the Stamp Act Congress.
- 2 How do the colonies perceive their relationship with Great Britain?
- 3 What early revolutionary ideas are emerging through this document?

House of Commons the lower house of the British Parliament. Holds more power than the House of Lords, as the people elect its members, and it is where the Prime Minister leads the ruling party. This is the House that made the key decisions affecting the Thirteen Colonies during the Revolution.



ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 2.2: VISUAL ANALYSIS



THE FAMOUS CARTOON WHICH FRANKLIN HAD MADE AT THE TIME OF THE STAMP ACT

◀ Source 2.22
The Colonies Reduced,
1765



◀ Source 2.23 The Boston
Stamp Official Hanged,
Paul Revere, 1765

Sources 2.22 and 2.23 show two key political cartoons produced in 1765 in reaction to the *Stamp Act*. The first was commissioned by Benjamin Franklin, while the second was created by Paul Revere.

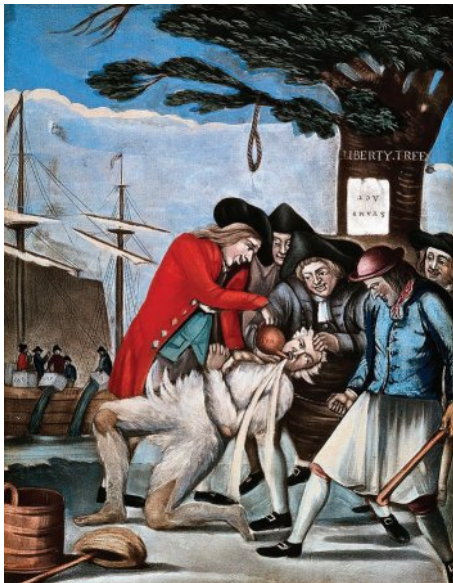
- 1 Describe the main features of each cartoon.
- 2 What is the key message of each cartoon?
- 3 In your opinion, why are cartoon or visual images created with a bias, or a one-sided perspective?

2.9 Sons of Liberty

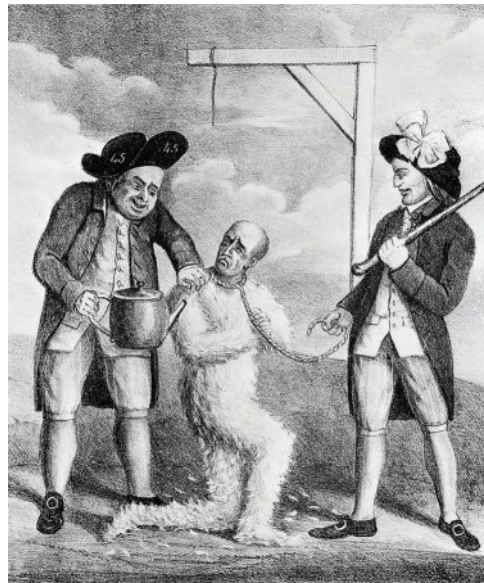
As mentioned previously, the Sons of Liberty had an important role in the early years of the Revolution. Formed as a reaction to the *Stamp Act* 1765 in Boston, Sons of Liberty became a generic term for many different groups in the Thirteen Colonies that engaged in violent anti-British activities. However, the original Sons of Liberty in Boston were preceded by the **Loyal Nine**. These were nine men who met in May or June 1765 to organise opposition to the *Stamp Act*. The members were small-scale merchants, artists and shopkeepers who organised in secret, and as a group instigated the intimidation of Andrew Oliver in August 1765, which is considered the starting point of the Sons of Liberty in Boston. They were able to engage in vigilante behaviour, which included harassing tax officials and vandalism.

Complementing this revolutionary behaviour were the great propagandists. The more astute like James Otis, Samuel Adams and Paul Revere wrote and drew influential pamphlets and cartoons, and were able to use the sympathetic newspaper the *Boston Gazette* to reach a large audience.

One of the Sons' more infamous tactics was tar and feathering opponents who were seen to be anti-Sons of Liberty, pro-British or **Tory**, or who failed to comply with boycotts. This is a particularly brutal tactic and is best summarised by viewing the graphic scene in the HBO series *John Adams*, in Episode 2 titled 'Independence'. Molten tar is poured on naked flesh and then feathers are applied.



▲ **Source 2.24** *The Bostonian Paying the Excise-Man, or, Tar and Feathering*. This is a print from an engraving that originated in London in late October 1774.



▲ **Source 2.25** *A new method of macarony making, as practised at Boston*. Lithograph by D.C. Johnson based on a print circa 1774

Loyal Nine a hard-line anti-British group in Boston that became the core and the driver of the Sons of Liberty activities in that city in the period 1765–75

Tory a member of the dominant party in power in the British Parliament at the time of the Revolution; the party survived to become the modern Conservative Party, whose members are commonly still referred to as Tories; 'Tory' also became the term for any pro-British sympathiser during the Revolution

The Sons of Liberty were incredibly successful and helped to cause the repeal of the *Stamp Act*. They were also instrumental in the Boston Massacre of 1770 through the harassment of British troops, and carried out the Boston Tea Party in 1773.

The egalitarian nature of the Sons of Liberty, incorporating everyone from lawyers to labourers, meant they had far-reaching powers. Famous US historian Gordon Wood, in his book *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, states it was the egalitarian nature of groups like the Sons of Liberty that helped to create a more open and free society in America, far removed from Britain's class snobbery.

2.10

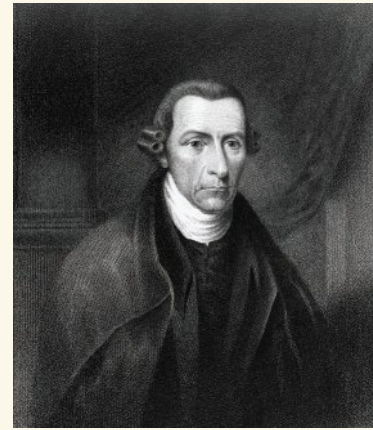
SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



Patrick Henry (1736–99)

Part 1

- Born in Virginia, Patrick Henry was a noted orator in the Virginian colonial assembly, the House of Burgesses; he often articulated radical ideas and didn't seem concerned with the consequences.
- A lawyer, politician, governor and friend of the common man, he supported popular aspects of the Revolution.
- His famous quotes include 'If this be treason, make the most of it' in 1765, speaking out against the *Stamp Act* in the House of Burgesses; 'I am not a Virginian, but an American', stating a new American national vision after the *Coercive Acts* in 1774; and 'Give me liberty or give me death' in 1775, during a speech that apparently swung the Virginian vote in favour of sending Virginian troops to join the Continental Army in the Revolutionary War.



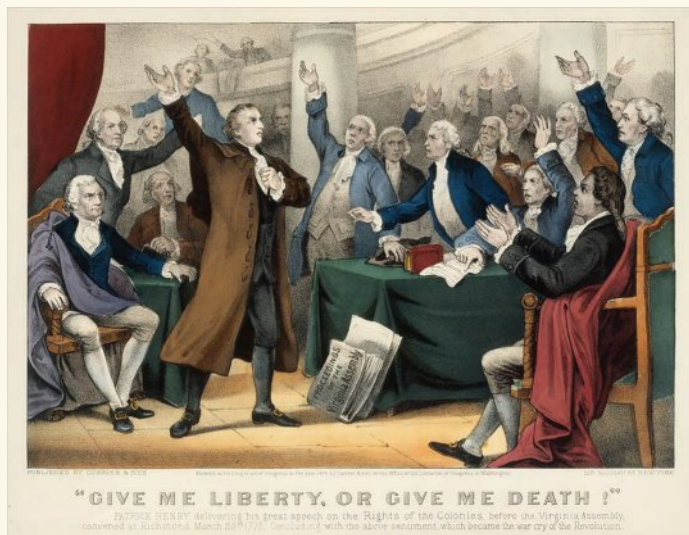
▲ Source 2.26 Patrick Henry, unknown artist and date

- Interestingly, our records of Henry's most famous speeches were most likely reconstructions by a biographer in the 1800s.
- Henry claimed that under British law, Virginia was subject to taxation only by an assembly to which Virginians themselves elected representatives. They had no colonial representation in the British Parliament, therefore the only assembly that could legally tax them would be the Virginian House of Burgesses (this is the difference between the ideas of *actual* and *virtual* representation discussed earlier in this chapter).
- Henry's *Virginia Resolves* stated that the colonists are 'entitled to all liberties, privileges and immunities' of freeborn Englishmen. They state, in part:

3. Resolved, that the taxation of the people by themselves, or by persons chosen by themselves to represent them, who can only know what taxes the people are able to bear, or the easiest method of raising them, and must themselves be affected by every tax laid on the people, is the only security against a burdensome taxation, and the distinguishing characteristic of British freedom, without which the ancient constitution cannot exist.

5. Resolved, therefore that the General Assembly of this Colony have the only and exclusive Right and Power to lay Taxes and Impositions upon the inhabitants of this Colony and that every Attempt to vest such Power in any person or persons whatsoever other than the General Assembly aforesaid has a manifest Tendency to destroy British as well as American Freedom.

► Source 2.27 Patrick Henry delivering his famous 'Give me liberty, or give me death' speech at a 1775 Virginia House of Burgesses assembly.



"GIVE ME LIBERTY, OR GIVE ME DEATH!"
PATRICK HENRY delivering his great speech on the Rights of the Colonies, before the Virginia Assembly, convened at Richmond March 20th 1775. Connected with the above document which became the war cry of the Revolution.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

The most famous speech attributed to Henry ends with the dramatic lines: 'Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!'

SAMPLE ANSWER

This feature is designed to help you prepare for your assessments by modelling possible responses to VCE-style exam questions (explored further in Chapters 5 and 9). The following is a short sample response to a question that might appear in AOS 1, America.

1 Explain the contribution of Patrick Henry to the American Revolution in the period up to 1776.

Patrick Henry was an outspoken and passionate speaker, a radical opponent to British policy in the early 1760s who fervently endorsed colonial rights and pro-individual liberties. Due to his radical nature, Henry promulgated the ideas of independence and royal tyranny as early as 1765, when such ideas were extremely unpopular. Henry was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses and became a solicitor in 1769. He was creator of the *Virginia Resolves* with his 'If this be treason, make the most of it' speech. The *Resolves* were a series of resolutions against the *Stamp Act 1765*, which denied the British Parliament's right to tax the colonies, resulting in the Stamp Act Congress. Thomas Gage (a British general) credited the *Resolves* 'as the signal for a general outcry over the continent'. Intent on galvanising the American colonies against their British oppressors, Henry proposed a Continental Congress be called following the closure of Boston Port as part of the *Coercive Acts* in 1774. He made a second speech in the more radical year of 1775, which ended with 'give me liberty or give me death', helping to form support for the newly formed Continental Army and justify a revolutionary conflict. Henry's idea for a Continental Congress was essentially a revolutionary government and the body that would produce the *Declaration of Independence* and commission the Continental Army: the final call for war against Britain.

2.11

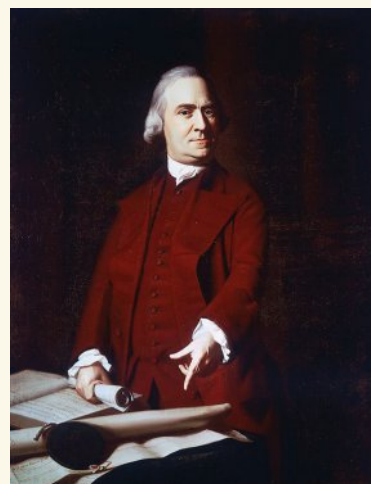
SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



Samuel Adams (1722–1803)

Samuel Adams was one of the real drivers of the Revolution by the mid-1760s and was involved in virtually every anti-British action in Boston up to the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776.

- He was America's first career politician and, like Otis, he had a revenge motive against Britain for slights against his father.
- He popularised the Revolution through his work in the Sons of Liberty and by harnessing the power of the mob and the press (especially in his anti-British propaganda writing, which was regularly published in the *Boston Gazette*).
- He also connected lower-class support for revolution (dock workers, tradesmen) with the colonial elite, such as lawyer James Otis and wealthy merchant John Hancock.
- Adams organised Sons of Liberty activities against the *Stamp Act* in 1765, and a non-importation group against the *Townshend Duties* in 1767.
- In 1768 he wrote the *Journal of Events*, documenting atrocities by British soldiers who had been sent to Boston to maintain order and enforce the *Townshend Duties*. This tension became directed at the idea of Britain having a standing army, leading to confrontation in the Boston Massacre in 1770.



▲ Source 2.28 Samuel Adams, by John Singleton Copley, 1772

continued...



...continued

- He also wrote the *Massachusetts Circular Letter* (1768) that angered the British, who shut down the Massachusetts Colonial Assembly.
- In 1770, after manipulating the events that led to the Boston Massacre, he wrote *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre of Boston*, a biased account that increased anti-British feeling.
- In 1771 he organised Committees of Correspondence, an influential group that spread anti-British propaganda; each colony soon had a similar organisation.
- In 1773 he led and organised the Boston Tea Party.
- He attended the First and Second Continental Congresses as a delegate from Massachusetts in 1774 and 1775, respectively, and in 1776 he signed the *Declaration of Independence*.



◀ Source 2.29 A statue of Samuel Adams in Boston

FOCUS QUESTION 2.5

Analyse Samuel Adams' contribution to revolution in the period 1754–76.

2.12 Quartering Act 1765

Britain passed the *Quartering Act* (an amendment to the *Mutiny Act*) in the same year as the *Stamp Act*. It gave the British Crown legal permission to compel colonists to quarter (that is, accommodate and feed) British troops and their horses who remained in America after the French and Indian War (1754–63). This became a major sticking point in America after British troops were used to enforce unpopular British laws such as the *Townshend Duties* of 1767 (see Chapter 3) and the infamous *Coercive Acts* of 1774 (see Chapter 4). British troops were now bearing the brunt of the anti-British feeling and were the target of propaganda, as the most visible British presence in large cities such as Boston and New York. The New York Colonial Assembly, for instance, refused to comply with the *Quartering Act* and was suspended in 1767 by the *New York Restraining Act*.

The view that the British Army was a latent ‘standing army’, and inevitably would be used against the American colonists, was mere propaganda in 1765, but within the next 10 years, following the Boston Massacre in 1770 and the Battle of Lexington-Concord in 1775, this would become fact.

FOCUS QUESTION 2.6

Examine the role of the *Quartering Act 1765* as contributing to a revolutionary situation in the period to 1776.

63

2.13 Declaratory Act 1766

The *Stamp Act 1765* was repealed in 1766 after Prime Minister George Grenville (the Act’s creator and greatest supporter) was dismissed and two prominent British parliamentarians, Edmund Burke and William Beckford, spoke out against the Acts in the House of Commons. However, the new Prime Minister, Lord Rockingham, agreed to the *Stamp Act*’s repeal only on the condition that it was accompanied by an assertion of full British sovereignty over the Thirteen Colonies. This would give Britain ‘full power and authority to make laws and statutes ... to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever’. In many respects, the *Declaratory Act* was Britain’s attempt to save face following the repeal of the *Stamp Act*.

Declaratory Act

British legislation passed in 1766 granting Parliament the authority to pass all laws for its American colonies. Initially, it did not cause much of a reaction but came to be viewed as a dangerous sign of British intentions.



◀ Source
2.30 A British cartoon from 1766 depicting the repeal of the *Stamp Act* as a funeral procession. George Grenville is carrying the coffin.



American response

The *Declaratory Act* 1766 did not provoke great upheaval and outrage in the colonies as they were still celebrating the repeal of the *Stamp Act* and pledging their loyalty to King George III. In fact, in New York City a statue was erected celebrating the 'Best of Kings' George III (see Source 2.31). Most colonists did not grasp the full significance of the *Declaratory Act*, which ultimately entitled Britain to full authority over the colonies. In reality, the Act was an implicit statement of British intention to take further steps to tax the colonies to recover costs for colonial expenditure. Although the Act had no practical impact on the colonies, some radicals did realise the grave danger in Britain asserting its full powers and sovereignty over the Thirteen Colonies.

At this time Americans were largely loyal to the British Empire and the main question was: did Britain have the right to tax America? Over the course of the next 10 years, all this changed and by 1776 Americans would be defying the right of Britain not just to tax the colonies but also to rule at all.

FOCUS QUESTION 2.7

- 1 James Otis, John Adams, John Dickinson and Patrick Henry were all lawyers and members of their colonial assembly. Why would lawyers and politicians be a dangerous pressure group against Britain in the Revolution?



▲ Source 2.31 'Britons behold the best of kings ...', a 1762 print by Nathaniel Hurd

Summary chart: British Acts affecting the Thirteen Colonies and the Prime Ministers in charge at the time

British Act affecting the colonies	Year policy enacted	Prime Minister at time of enactment
<i>Proclamation Act</i>	1763	King George III (this was a royal declaration bypassing Parliament)
<i>Sugar Act</i>	1764	George Grenville
<i>Stamp Act</i>	1765	George Grenville
<i>Quartering Act</i>	1765	George Grenville
<i>Declaratory Act</i>	1766	Lord Rockingham
<i>Townshend Duties</i>	1767	William Pitt
<i>Tea Act</i>	1773	Lord North
<i>Coercive Acts ('Intolerable Acts')</i>	1774	Lord North

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

King George III could enact Royal Decrees in the Thirteen Colonies, but not in Britain. This was because the English Bill of Rights 1689 limited the monarch's power in Britain, but not its colonies.

THE STORY SO FAR

- Repercussions of the French and Indian War caused Britain to attempt to recoup massive war debt costs not from higher taxing of its own citizens but rather by shifting this debt to the American colonists. The *Sugar Act 1764* and *Stamp Act 1765* were all part of this plan. These economic policies of Britain backfired spectacularly and cost George Grenville his prime ministership.
- After 150 years of self-government and self-management, almost every facet of colonial American life was rudely interrupted by Britain after 1763. Traditional attachment to the Mother Country was still very strong, but this sentiment was tested as each new piece of British legislation was enacted.
- Prominent American colonial figures emerged, such as James Otis, Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams, and these men were to become prominent Founding Fathers in the years to come.
- A test of wills was developing between the British Parliament and the Thirteen Colonies of North America – who were once a loyal and obedient part of the British Empire.

Use the QR code or visit the Interactive Textbook and watch the video summarising the chapter.





Develop your historical understanding

Define key terms

Write explanations defining each of the following:

Significant ideas and events	Popular movements	Significant individuals
Proclamation Act	Loyal Nine	James Otis
Pontiac's Rebellion	Sons of Liberty	John Hancock
Sugar Act 1764		Patrick Henry
Stamp Act 1765		Samuel Adams
Declaratory Act 1766		
Virginia Resolves		
British Parliament		

Establishing historical significance

- 1 Explain the importance of the *Stamp Act 1765* in the development of the American Revolution from 1765 to 1766.
- 2 Outline how the *Currency Act 1764* contributed to a revolutionary situation.

Constructing historical arguments

On the VCAA website, attempt an old Area of Study 1 American Revolutions examination question. Discuss with teacher or classmates what would be the template/argument you would devise to answer this question.

Using quotes as sources

Write a sentence using a short phrase from one of the quotes below, or contrast the views from a few quotes. You can also use any of the quotes used throughout this chapter. Quotes can be used directly or paraphrased into your own words.

Proclamation Act 1763

- Perhaps once the British were out of the way, the Indians could be dealt with. **Howard Zinn**
- The Proclamation Line of 1763 disabled the natives to retain their dominance in the regions west of the line. **Gordon Wood**

Stamp Act 1765

... grew out of British conviction that Parliament had the power to tax the colonists directly. **Edward Countryman**

The Stamp Act was a catalyst, touching off fundamental change. **Hugh Brogan**

This accumulated sense of grievance against the rich in Boston may account for the explosiveness of mob action after the Stamp Act of 1765. **Howard Zinn**

... a most dangerous innovation. **Louis Hartz**

Online research suggestions

- Alpha History (access via <http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/9504>)
Under the drop-down menu 'History Sites', select 'American Revolution' to access numerous documents, images and historiography that are tailored to each particular Area of Study. Both class time and study time can be devoted to interpreting the images and documents on this site.
- *Liberty*, television series, PBS, Twin Cities Public Television, 1997.
This is a six-part series of one-hour episodes on the American Revolution. Episode 1, 'Reluctant Revolutionaries', and Episode 2, 'Blows Must Decide', deal with the entire Area of Study 1 course. All six episodes provide a window into the American Revolution, but offer an extremely patriotic and one-sidedly positive viewpoint. Leftist historians like Howard Zinn and James Loewen would argue strongly against many of its claims.



3

BRITAIN'S FOLLY, 1767-73

From that moment we may date the severance of the British Empire.

– SECRETARY OF STATE DANIEL WEBSTER ON THE BOSTON MASSACRE

Overview



American taxation problems with Britain led to the emergence of more sophisticated colonial organisations of resistance than the Sons of Liberty and their overt violence. According to historians like Bernard Bailyn and David Conroy, the power of the word arose, in both speech and in pen, through several avenues: sermons in weekly church services, impassioned speeches from colonial assemblymen, letters printed in the local press, Committees of Correspondence forming and spreading those ideas, the formation of the Daughters of Liberty and widespread boycotts of British products. All of these provided ideological and economic muscle to the colonial response, and in the long term were a far more successful form of revolutionary opposition than simple armed struggle.

Key issues

- How did the British react to American indignation over new taxes?
- What was the physical threat posed by the British in the colonies?
- Who were the Daughters of Liberty?
- Who was Paul Revere?
- What was the Boston Massacre?
- Who were John and Abigail Adams?
- What was the Boston Tea Party?
- Who were the Patriots and the Loyalists?

Digital resources for this chapter

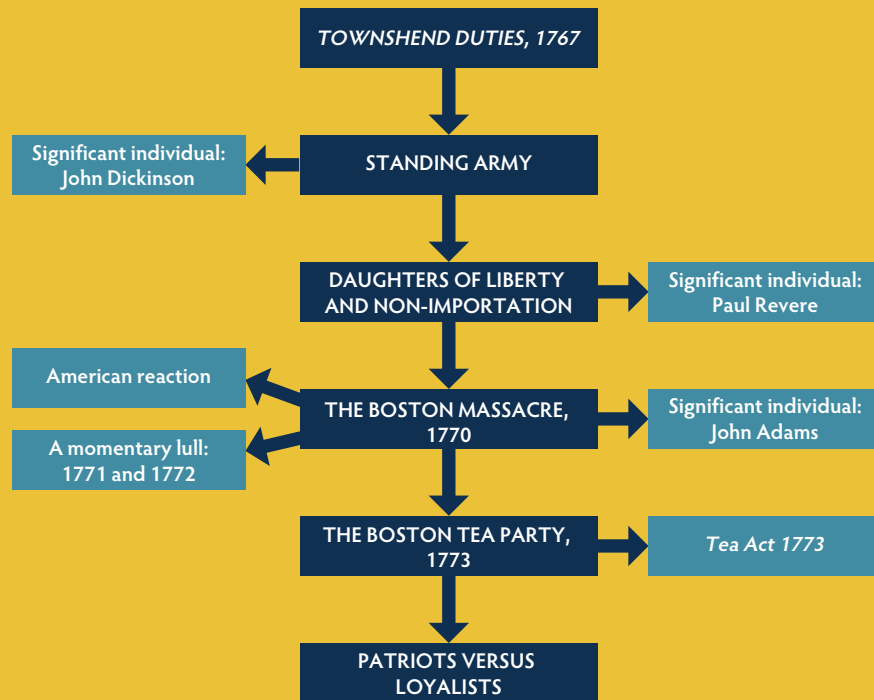
In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

◀ **Source 3.0** Detail from a hand-coloured steel engraving of an Alonzo Chappel painting, depicting the Boston Massacre of March 1770

Flow of chapter

How is this chapter structured?



70

Chapter timeline

What are the key events of the American Revolution covered in this chapter?

JUNE 1767
Townshend Duties
established



JUNE 1772
*Sons of Liberty burn
the Gaspee*



DECEMBER 1773
– Tea Act established
– Boston Tea Party



MARCH 1770
Boston Massacre

NOVEMBER 1772
*Samuel Adams
begins Committees of
Correspondence*

3.1 Townshend Duties, 1767

The collection of taxes on both sugar and paper had been disastrous for Britain, so a new raft of taxes were implemented in another attempt to collect much-needed revenue for the British treasury, known as the *Townshend Duties*. The principal piece of legislation was simply the *Townshend Act 1767* (also known as the *Revenue Act*), but the *Townshend Duties* also included the *Indemnity Act 1767*, the *Commissioners of Customs Act 1767*, the *Vice-Admiralty Court Act 1767* and the *New York Restraining Act 1767*, which collectively represented the counter-punch by Britain to offset the previous taxation failures of former British PM George Grenville. His failure to implement the *Sugar Act 1764* and the *Stamp Act 1765* in the colonies had cost him his job, the first of many political changes in Britain during the Revolutionary period (see Source 3.1). This political instability would eventually play into American hands.

Term	Name	Party
1762–63	Earl of Bute	Tory
1763–65	George Grenville	Whig
1765–66	Marquess of Rockingham	Whig
1767–70	Duke of Grafton	Whig
1770–82	Lord North	Tory
1782	Marquess of Rockingham	Whig
1782–83	Earl of Shelburne	Whig
1783	Duke of Portland	Coalition
1783–1801	William Pitt the Younger	Tory

▲ **Source 3.1** Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, 1763–1801 (*The Hutchinson Dictionary of World History*, Helicon, 1998)

Whig a member of a political faction and then a political party in the Parliaments of England, Scotland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom; between the 1680s and 1850s, they contested power with their rivals, the Tories. Whig can also mean anyone liberal minded or progressive who was sympathetic to the cause of independence.

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL

Charles Townshend (1725–67)

Charles Townshend was a British politician from the Whig party, who, in August 1766, became **Chancellor of the Exchequer** in Prime Minister William Pitt's government. He held this position until his sudden death in September 1767, aged 42. Townshend was known for delivering witty speeches in the House of Commons; however, it is his final official act in Parliament for which he is best remembered. This was to pass through Parliament resolutions for taxing several articles, such as glass, paint, paper and tea, on their importation into America, which he estimated would produce the (then considerable) sum of £40 000 for the English treasury: also known as the *Townshend Duties*.

Chancellor of the Exchequer the title held by the British Cabinet minister who is responsible for all economic and financial matters, equivalent to the role of Treasurer or Minister of Finance in other nations



▲ **Source 3.2** Charles Townshend, by Joshua Reynolds, circa 1765



Like all the mercantilist legislation, the purpose of the *Townshend Duties* was twofold: to raise revenue and to assert the power of the British Parliament. The *Townshend Act* itself was a duty on products such as paper, lead, glass, oil, paint and tea: popular items used by virtually every colonist and, importantly, all of these products were imported from Britain. However, it was the principle of the external taxes – not the tax itself – that was the main colonial concern; a fact Britain didn't fully comprehend at this stage. Resistance in the colonies re-emerged because of the imposition of these external taxes, which were met by widespread boycotts by the general public and the non-importation of most British products by traders and merchants.

Once more, the resistance was most acute in Boston, in part due to the sheer volume of British imports that landed in that port city:

- The Sons of Liberty began their clandestine activities as a guerrilla-like response to the overwhelming power of 1000 or more British troops in Boston – literally, a 'standing army'.
- In 1768 Samuel Adams penned the *Massachusetts Circular Letter* and John Dickinson wrote the first of 12 essays published between 1767 and 1768: *Letters from a Farmer*. Both works publicly declared the *Townshend Duties* to be unconstitutional, as the colonists were not directly represented in the British Parliament. Parliament had no right to tax them against their consent. The catch cry of the *Stamp Act* – 'No taxation without representation' – re-emerged.
- Samuel Adams' *Circular Letter* was passed by the Massachusetts Assembly. Because this was rightly seen by Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson as defying British law, he had the Assembly temporarily dissolved. As riots broke out in response, more British troops were sent to Boston to maintain public order and to enforce compliance with the *Townshend Duties*. These front-line British troops bore the brunt of poor British management and public policy. For colonists this was a rationalisation of their fears regarding standing armies and tyranny.



▲ **Source 3.3** The American Revolution is popularly seen as the rebellious youth of the nation. Here young boys in Boston confront the governor, General Thomas Gage, because his soldiers had pulled down the forts they had made in the snow. This coloured steel engraving depicting the event is from the mid-19th century.

3.2 Standing army

The theoretical threat of a standing army (as mentioned in Chapter 2) was beginning to become a practical threat, as large numbers of British Army soldiers and British Navy sailors moved into Boston and New York to police British laws. Stories of **impressment** and the establishment of the unpopular *Quartering Act 1765* (the forced colonial housing of British troops; discussed in Chapter 2) meant that the colonists now felt a growing and oppressive presence of British troops in their cities.

In response, Samuel Adams' *Journal of Events* (a work of pure propaganda) railed against the immorality and harshness of British troops in the Boston press, while the Sons of Liberty strove to discomfort the British troops wherever they could. Fights between isolated **Redcoats** and locals became commonplace in the streets and bars of Boston. And as the pay of a British soldier was so meagre, they often had to get secondary employment in cities to supplement their wages – further increasing tensions during a period when jobs were in short supply.

impressment the forced membership of colonists into the British Army or Navy

Redcoats or 'lobsterbacks' – slang for British soldiers, especially during the Revolutionary period



◀ **Source 3.4** An example of impressment in the colony of New York: *British Recruiting Party*, by William Henry, 1780

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

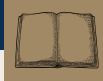
Though often referred to as 'Redcoats', British troops were also known by other pejorative terms in the Thirteen Colonies. 'Regulars' or 'King's men' were commonplace, 'Bloody backs' was one name, and a popular one in Boston around 1770 was 'lobster' – as the colour of the British uniform matched the colour of the local staple (New England lobsters) when boiled.



▲ **Source 3.5** British Army and Navy troops moving into Boston to police British policies: *A View of Part of the Town of Boston in New-England and Brittish [sic] Ships of War Landing their Troops! 1768*, by Paul Revere, 1770

We have established earlier that two of John Locke's three 'natural rights' – liberty and estate (property; see Chapter 1) – had already been usurped by Britain through taxes, the *Quartering Act* 1765 and Writs of Assistance (see Chapter 2). Britain only had to take 'life' and all three 'rights' would be abrogated – and this is exactly what happened. The presence of Britain's standing army was a crucial factor in the cause and aftermath of the Boston Massacre in 1770, the *Coercive Acts* in 1774, the Battle of Lexington-Concord in 1775 and subsequent Revolutionary War and the formation of America's own Continental Army.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 3.1: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



Discuss in class how the presence of British troops contributed to a revolutionary situation by 1776. Refer back to Chapter 2 and the *Quartering Act* sample answer that was given. Be specific with actual events, laws, documents, individuals or groups involved and historians' opinions about this topic. Make a summary of your findings.

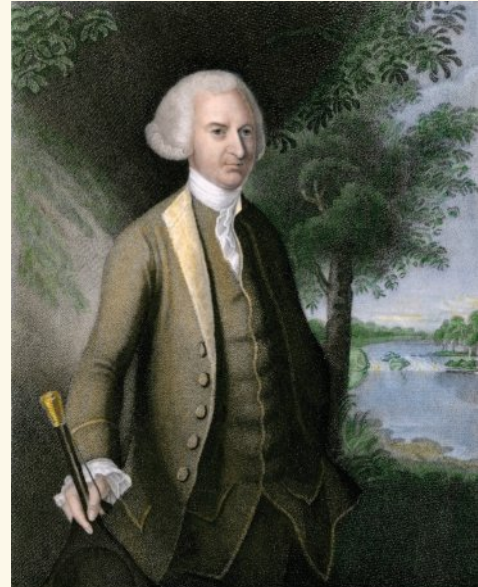
3.3

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



John Dickinson (1732–1808)

- John Dickinson, a lawyer from Pennsylvania, was one of the Founding Fathers. He rose to fame as a legislator in the Pennsylvanian colonial assembly opposing the *Townshend Duties* in 1767.
- He was well known for his oratory and his collection of essays, *Letters from a Farmer*, written between 1767 and 1768. These 12 letters, which were widely read and reprinted throughout the colonies, acknowledged the power of the British Parliament in Empire affairs, but argued that the colonies should be sovereign in their own internal affairs, especially in the areas of taxation.
- He also argued that taxes laid upon the colonies by Parliament for raising revenue, rather than regulating trade, were unconstitutional.
- He foresaw the possibility of conflict but urged against the use of violence; Pennsylvania was traditionally a Quaker state and had strong undercurrents of that religion, especially their historic commitment to anti-war, anti-violence and pacifism.
- He attended the First and Second Continental Congresses in 1774 and 1775, respectively. He also famously penned the *Olive Branch Petition* in 1775 and the Articles of Confederation in 1777.



John Dickinson

▲ Source 3.6 John Dickinson, by Charles Willson Peale, circa 1770

75

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

John Dickinson inherited 37 enslaved people from his father, making him Delaware's largest enslaver. In 1777, Dickinson decided to free those he enslaved – most likely influenced by the abolitionist Quakers. The process of freeing enslaved people ('manumission') took multiple years, and only by 1786 were they fully freed.

Dickinson was the only Founding Father to have freed enslaved people between 1776 and 1786, Benjamin Franklin having freed the two people he enslaved in 1770. Of the Founding Fathers, only John Adams, Samuel Adams and Thomas Paine never enslaved people.



▲ Source 3.7 This idealised image by Franz Xaver Habermann from the 1770s, of British soldiers working with the colonists, shows both the presence of the Redcoats and the importance of Boston as a location for the Revolution.

3.4 Daughters of Liberty and non-importation



▲ Source 3.8 A woodcut from 1779 depicting a Daughter of Liberty

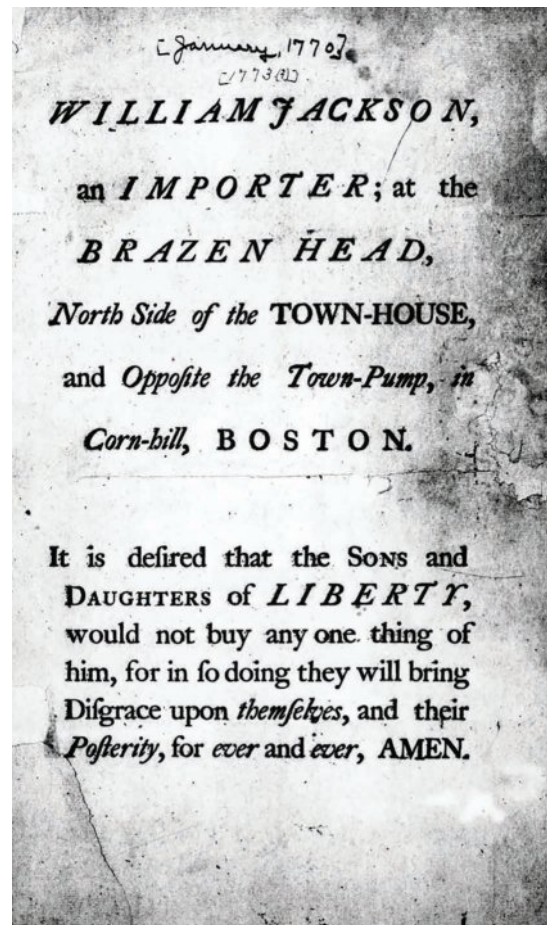
Formed as a complement to the Sons of Liberty, the Daughters of Liberty harnessed the important role of women in colonial America as the principal purchaser of foodstuffs for the family. By refusing to purchase British products, women put severe economic pressure on Britain, which highlights their power in the ‘domestic sphere’ (home), as recent historians such as Laurel Thatcher Ulrich have argued. As examples of ways that the Daughters of Liberty contributed to the politically charged atmosphere, they spun their own cloth to avoid buying British textiles, and even went to the extent of blending their own tea to avoid British duties – ‘Labrador tea’ was one such herbal substitute to British tea advertised in many papers of the time. According to Ulrich, in Edenton, North Carolina, in October 1774, 51 women gathered at the private residence of Elizabeth King to drink wild raspberry tea and sign non-importation agreements. An Englishman who heard about the gathering considered the whole thing a ‘marvellous joke’, and sarcastically wrote:

Is there a Female Congress at Edenton too? I hope not, for Ladies have ever, since the Amazonian era, been esteemed the most formidable Enemies: if they, I say, should attack us, the most fatal consequence is to be dreaded.

Source 3.9 Ulrich, L., ‘Political Protest and the World of Goods’, *The Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution*, Oxford, New York, 2013, p. 78



▲ **Source 3.10** *A society of patriotic ladies, at Edenton in North Carolina* by Phillip Dawe, London, March 1775. In this political cartoon we can see a critical take on the Daughters of Liberty and one of their famous tea parties to rally support against the British. Overall, the women are portrayed in quite a negative light and this shows one way that the actions of the colonists were interpreted across the Atlantic. For example, the text of their resolution reads 'We the Ladys of Edenton do hereby solemnly Engage not to Conform to that Pernicious Custom of Drinking Tea, or that we the aforesaid Ladys Promote the use of any Manufacture from England, until such time that all Acts which tend to Enslave this our Native Country shall be Repealed.'



▲ **Source 3.11** A sign declaring that Sons and Daughters of Liberty should boycott an importer of British products, William Jackson

While more passive in their resistance than the Sons of Liberty, the organised boycotts of British goods by the Daughters of Liberty were still successful, and their influence was certainly felt across the Atlantic.

Another tactic was to encourage merchants to not trade with British ships. The idea was to strangle trade with Britain to force them to repeal the *Townshend Act* and its associated taxes. The tactic was agreed upon in the Suffolk Resolves in 1774 at the First Continental Congress, in reaction to the *Coercive Acts*. Samuel Adams was responsible for instituting a non-importation authority that would hold the colonies to the agreement.

The subsequent downturn in trade hurt British merchants and manufacturing industrialists, who then pressured their members in the British Parliament to repeal laws that were supposed to be raising revenue, but had the effect of dramatically reducing it – for both the Crown and the merchants.



FOCUS QUESTION 3.1

- 1 Do you think non-importation placed greater pressure on Britain than street riots or tarring and feathering random British officials, customs officers or sympathisers? Share your thoughts with your class.



▲ **Source 3.12** Two examples of leading Daughters of Liberty: Esther de Berdt Reed (1746–80) and Sarah Franklin Bache (1744–1808). Reed was married to leading Philadelphia Patriot Joseph Reed, who would serve as Washington's secretary and aide-de-camp in the Revolutionary War. Bache was the only daughter of Benjamin Franklin, and in particular strongly opposed the *Stamp Act*. Both women were politically active and exceptionally dedicated to the revolutionary cause. Through the Ladies' Association of Philadelphia, which Reed established, they raised funds and purchased much-needed clothing for the fledgling Continental Army. *Left: Portrait of Esther De Berdt Reed, artist unknown, circa 1760s; Right: Portrait of Sarah Franklin Bache, by John Hoppner, circa 1793*

3.5

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



Paul Revere (1735–1818)

- Paul Revere was an active member of the Sons of Liberty and a good example of the role of 'grassroots' involvement in the Revolution and how traditional class enemies – the working, middle and upper classes – successfully worked together in America.
- As an artisan (a silversmith), he became widely known for his engraving of the Boston Massacre in 1770 that accompanied Samuel Adams' *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre of Boston*. Although the account bore little resemblance to the actual incident, it became the accepted version of the event in America.
- Revere's role as a propagandist is important as he copied and disseminated other anti-British images, including *The Able Doctor* (which depicts America as a semi-naked First Nations woman being sexually assaulted and forced to drink British tea; see Chapter 4) in 1774 in response to the Coercive Acts.
- Revere delivered the Suffolk Resolves of 1774 to the First Continental Congress.
- Revere became immortalised in American folklore for his famous 'midnight ride' on the eve of the Battle of Lexington-Concord in 1775 (discussed in Chapter 4).
- He also sat on the Committee of Safety, and joined the Massachusetts militia to fight in the Revolutionary War.



▲ Source 3.13 Portrait of Paul Revere, by John Singleton Copley, 1768–70

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HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS

This silver bowl was made by Paul Revere in 1768. He was commissioned by the Sons of Liberty to commemorate the moment when 92 members of the House of Representatives chose to not rescind their letter that protested the Townshend Act.

The text on the bowl reads:

*To the Memory of the glorious
NINETY-TWO: Members of
the Hon^{bl} [Honorable] House
of Representatives of the
Massachusetts-Bay, who, undaunted by the insolent Menaces of Villains in Power, from a Strict Regard
to Conscience, and the LIBERTIES of their Constituents, on the 30th of June 1768, Voted NOT TO
RESCIND.*



▲ Source 3.14 Revere's 'Liberty Bowl'

There is further text below the rim listing the fifteen members of the Sons of Liberty who commissioned the bowl. On the other side of the bowl is a depiction of the *Magna Carta*, the Bill of Rights and other Whig symbols.



3.6 The Boston Massacre, 1770

Seider, Christopher

a member of a large mob that attacked a custom official's house, and who was shot and killed by the owner, the Loyalist Ebenezer Richardson

Loyalist a colonist loyal to Britain

Britain's unsuccessful prosecution of the *Townshend Duties*, the widespread boycott of British products, the activities of the Sons of Liberty, the defiance of colonial assemblies of British policies and the growing propaganda war against Britain had further deteriorated relations between the American colonies and Britain, especially in Boston. Harassment of British soldiers was overt in bars, streets and in the workplace.

These tensions culminated in the Boston Massacre, which firmly established the city as the 'epicentre of revolution'. Ironically, this fatal confrontation erupted on the same day that the *Townshend Duties* were partially repealed in London: 5 March 1770. The Sons of Liberty and other Bostonians had been aggravating and taunting British troops ever since the death of 11-year-old **Christopher Seider** at the hands of a **Loyalist** in February 1770. According to John Adams, who later defended the British soldiers in court, a 'rabble' of 300 or so 'saucy

boys, negroes, mulattos, Irish teagues and outlandish Jack Tars' gathered outside the customs house opposite the Boston State House to harass the British troops on guard duty there. Snowballs, rocks, razor-sharp oyster shells and heavy wooden clubs were thrown at the guards, as well as a torrent of abuse. When one trooper was hit to the ground, his musket discharged. In the ensuing chaos, the British troops killed five Bostonians, escalating the anti-British atmosphere in Boston to toxic levels.

In many respects the Boston Massacre reignited the Sons of Liberty's role in the community. Indeed, the event may well have been orchestrated: much has been written about Samuel Adams manipulating the events on the day so a confrontation was inevitable. In any case, Adams now had a real incident that he could use to punish Britain, launching a new wave of propaganda through the *Boston Gazette*. His clever manipulation of the massacre validated his fulminations about British troops in his *Journal of Events* and resulted in his emotional piece, *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre of Boston* (1770). He published this so quickly that he outmanoeuvred any British version of events; in fact, his version was the one first read by audiences in both the colonies and Britain. In colonists' minds this confirmed the Lockean fears of standing armies.



◀ Source 3.15 The front page of *The Boston Gazette*, from 1 January 1770. In this edition, there is a list of merchants who 'audaciously continue' importing British goods into Boston, 'contrary to the Agreement'.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 3.2: VISUAL ANALYSIS



▲ **Source 3.16** Paul Revere's depiction of the Boston Massacre (based on an English engraving) that accompanied Samuel Adams' *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre of Boston*. Note that behind the British troops is a row of buildings including the Royal Custom House, which bears the sign 'Butcher's Hall'. Beneath the print are 18 lines of verse, which begin: 'Unhappy Boston! see thy Sons deplore, Thy hallowed Walks besmeared with guiltless Gore.' Also listed are the 'unhappy Sufferers' Sam Gray, Sam Maverick, James Caldwell, Crispus Attucks and Patrick Carr (killed)' and it is noted that there were 'Six wounded; two of them (Christophe Monk & John Clark) Mortally.'

Examine Source 3.16. Even though this image is factually incorrect and the British soldiers involved were acquitted in court, this was the version sent to all American colonists and it caused widespread condemnation of Britain both in the colonies and at home.

- 1 Find out what actually occurred and how the court case was handled. Then compare this information to the scenario depicted in this image. Also consider the accompanying text.
- 2 What inconsistencies did you find?

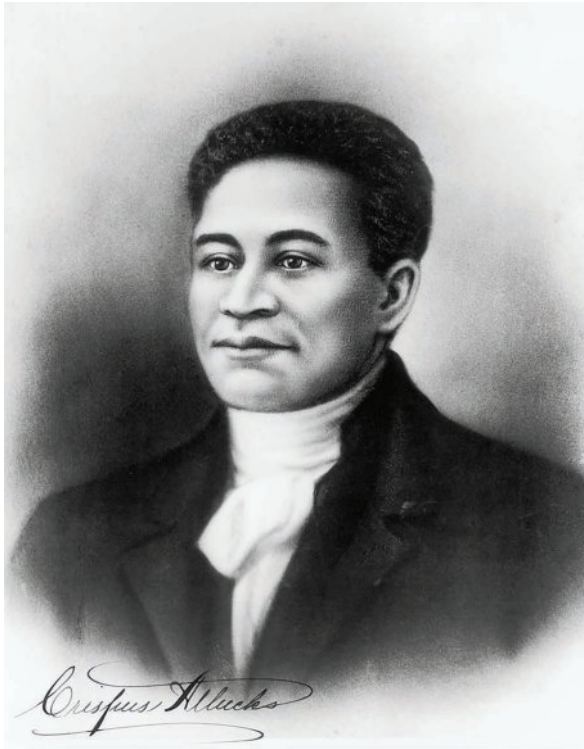
AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Crispus Attucks is today remembered as the first casualty of the American Revolution when he was shot and killed in the Boston Massacre. Years later he became a heroic symbol for the abolitionist movement against slavery.



AREA OF STUDY 1 CAUSES OF REVOLUTION

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▲ **Source 3.17** Left: *Crispus Attucks* (1723–70), date and artist unknown. Right: A mural painted by Herschel Levit in 1943, depicting Crispus Attucks and the Boston Massacre. The mural was made for the Recorder of Deeds building in Washington DC, and reveals the continuing legacy of the Boston Massacre.



▲ **Source 3.18** The Boston Massacre Memorial in Boston Common, Boston, Massachusetts

American reaction

Samuel Adams described the Boston Massacre, and other lesser incidents that took place in the days prior, as unprovoked attacks on peaceful, law-abiding citizens. His account of the massacre was drawn from more than 90 testimonies taken after the event – all from anti-British sources. Adams asserted that the British soldiers, under the command of Captain Preston, were deployed with the express intention of causing harm.

Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson collected his own testimonies, publishing *A Fair Account of the Late Unhappy Disturbance in Boston* and had the text sent to London. However, Hutchinson's work was published too long after the event, by which time Adams had already won the propaganda war.

Interestingly, it was John Adams, who later became the second President of the United States, who defended the soldiers in the trial of the Boston Massacre. However, even though he was successful, eventually getting them acquitted, the damage had already been done and the Boston Massacre set a precedent for further violent confrontations between colonists and British armed forces over the next six years.



AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Though it might seem strange that a **Patriot** and future President of the United States would defend British troops

against murder charges during a time of great political and social turmoil, John Adams wasn't pro-British but liked a famous case and the spotlight, and also believed in justice being served.

Patriot 18th-century colloquial term for anyone who supported the Revolution

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AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

The date of the Boston Massacre, 5 March, was commemorated in America until 4 July was adopted as the national day 13 years later.

FOCUS QUESTION 3.2

- 1 How did the Boston Massacre in 1770 contribute to a revolutionary situation by 1776?

◀ **Source 3.19** Paul Revere's obituary for the Patriots killed in the Boston Massacre published in the *Boston Gazette*, 17 March 1770. There were five deaths but only four coffins represented in Revere's engraving because one of the deaths happened from wounds and medical complications days later.



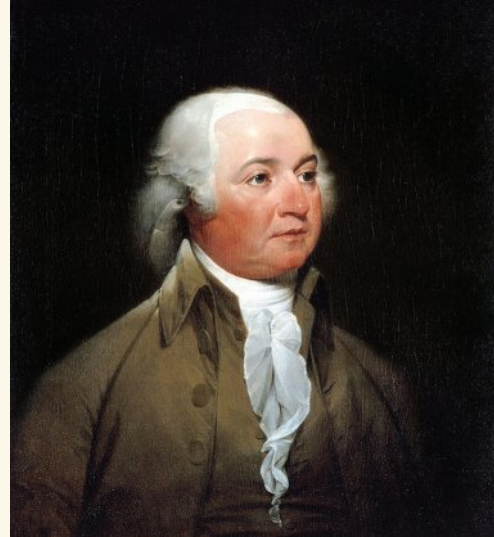
3.7

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



John Adams (1735–1826)

- John Adams was a prominent Boston lawyer, a Massachusetts's colonial assembly member and one of the eventual Founding Fathers. John was the cousin of Samuel Adams.
- He famously won the 'unwinnable' Boston Massacre case defending the British troops and getting them (rightfully) acquitted.
- Adams had earlier opposed the *Stamp Act*, writing in the *Boston Gazette* and laying out his ideas to the Massachusetts colonial assembly. He was an outspoken revolutionary advocate at the First and Second Continental Congresses in 1774 and 1775, respectively, and became a forceful advocate for independence.
- He cleverly nominated George Washington as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army in 1775, winning over Virginia to the side of Massachusetts; Adams knew he could never win the southern colonies without Virginia being on board.
- A member of the drafting committee of the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776 with Thomas Jefferson, Adams became George Washington's Vice President in 1789, and the second US President in 1797. His oldest son John Quincy Adams also became US President in 1825.
- Adams was married to powerhouse revolutionary, faithful wife and his best friend, Abigail Adams (see her Significant Individual box).



▲ Source 3.20 John Adams as painted by John Trumbull, circa 1793

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



Abigail Adams (1744–1818)

- Born Abigail Smith at Weymouth, Massachusetts, in 1744.
- As a child, she was never well enough to attend school, and so was educated at home by her mother, Elizabeth Quincy Smith, and her sisters. She explored the great libraries of her father and grandfather, studying literature in English and in French.
- At 17 years of age, her cousin, John Adams, a country lawyer, showed an interest in Abigail. Her mother thought him too coarse, and a bad match, but in 1764 they married. This began a rich friendship, although John Adams' frequent absences from home often obliged them to discuss matters by letter.
- In 1774, John attended the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia, while Abigail stayed at home. It was then that she realised that it would be men who would define the new nation, and that women's opinions might not be heard. But she had the ear of her beloved



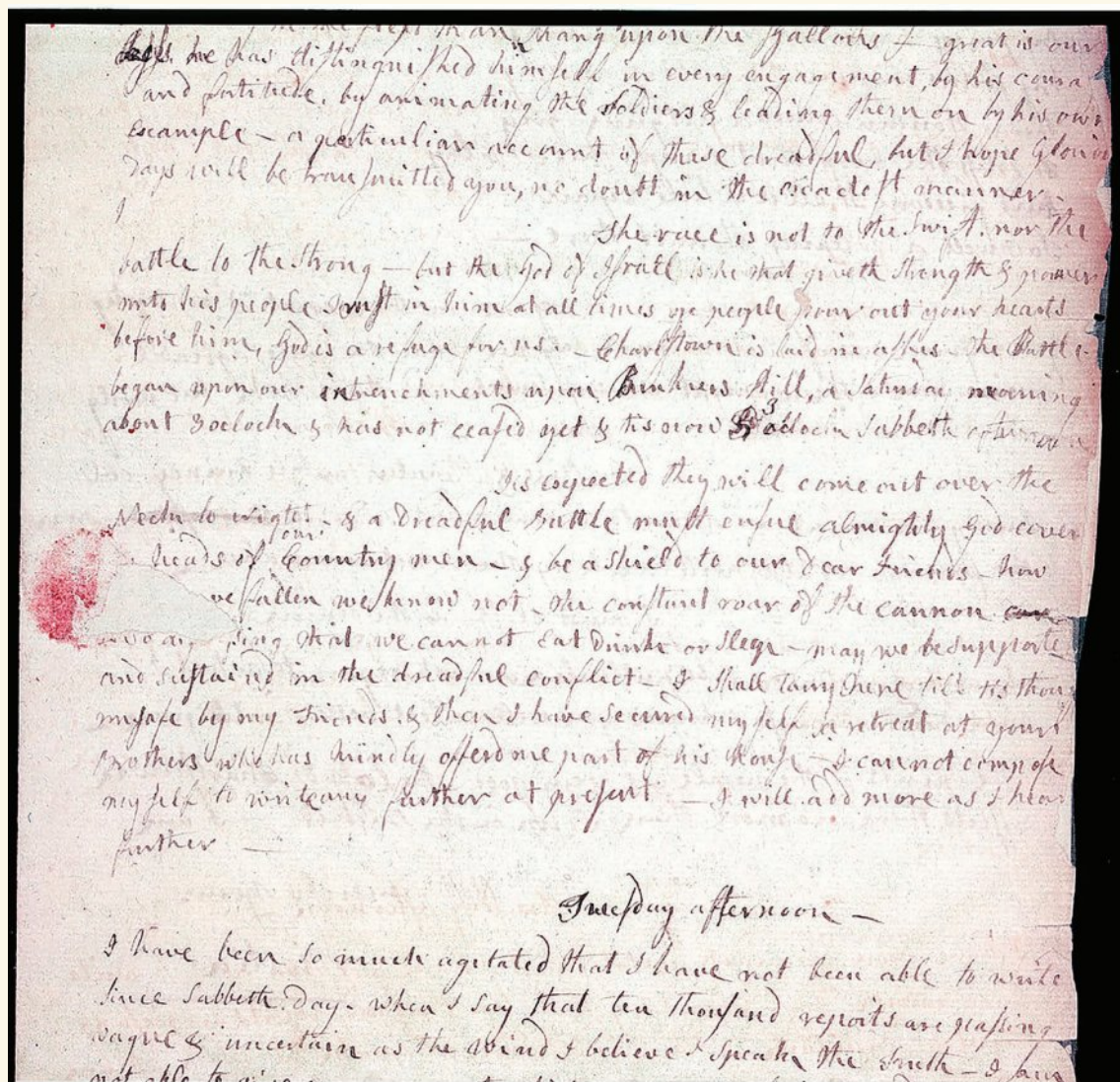
▲ Source 3.21 Abigail Adams, by Benjamin Blythe, circa 1766

husband, and she urged him to support the idea of education for women: 'If we mean to have Heroes, Statesmen, Philosophers, we should have learned women.'

- As the Thirteen Colonies fought their way towards independence from Britain, it occurred to her that the Liberty they were fighting for would not necessarily be applied to women; women would have to fight for their rights in order to gain them. Abigail therefore wrote a stern warning to John at the Continental Congress:

I long to hear that you have declared an independency. And, by the way, in the new code of laws I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power in the hands of husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are prepared to [cause] a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.

- Later, when the United States of America was formed, the capital of our new nation was moved to Washington, and John Adams became President. Abigail continued the domestic responsibilities of keeping house for him and family, but now in the grand surroundings of the president's house. However, she remained active in political matters, and was delighted to hear her enemies call her 'Mrs President'.



▲ Source 3.22 A letter written by Abigail to her husband circa 1775, describing the events of the battle of Bunker Hill (see Chapter 4)



AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Abigail Adams was an assertive and strong-minded woman who provided an important window into the drama of the American Revolution via her prolific correspondence with her husband. Her life and its hardships, and her loyalty to the Revolution and her family, are dramatically depicted in the HBO production *John Adams*.

A momentary lull, 1771 and 1772

The quiet period of 1771–72 belied the fact that the Revolution was soon to take a major turn for the worse for the American colonists when the Boston Tea Party occurred in 1773. For the moment, however, the taxation regimes tried by Britain had failed and the American colonists settled back into looking after their own colonial affairs again. There were some incidents of note. The capture of John Hancock's ship the *Liberty* in 1768 by the British Navy, and the confiscation of all its contents, outraged the Boston Sons of Liberty and revenge would thereafter be sought covertly and overtly. One such revenge event happened in 1772 when the Rhode Island Sons of Liberty burned the British Customs ship the *Gaspee* (see Source 3.24) for harassing colonial merchant ships in the area. However, since all British taxes had failed and been repealed, an overall relative calm had returned to the American colonies.

Committees of Correspondence

organised letter-writing civilian groups that circulated news, intelligence and revolutionary ideas throughout the Thirteen Colonies after their formation in 1772

One notable group did emerge at this time: Samuel Adams formed and led the Massachusetts **Committees of Correspondence** in 1772. Boston had previously had a Committee of Correspondence in 1764 in response to the

Currency Act but they would usually fold the Committee after an issue had been resolved. By 1774 every colony had a similar Committee, which distributed Revolutionary pamphlets, ideas, cartoons, letters and copies of speeches to every corner of the Thirteen Colonies. These Committees peaked post the *Coercive Acts* 1774 until the Continental Congress took over this role of spreading dissent, action and revolutionary ideas. These Committees played an important role in uniting the Thirteen Colonies, linking their ideas, modes of opposition and solutions to their problems. In fact, historian Bernard Bailyn later argued that these Committees helped to bring the latent American nation to life. Therefore, it is worth stressing that these Committees represented yet another step towards unifying the colonies.

SIR,

BOSTON, JUNE 22d, 1773.

THE Committee of Correspondence of the Town of *Boston*, conformable to that Duty which they have hitherto endeavoured to discharge with Fidelity, again address you with a very fortunate Important Discovery; and cannot but express their grateful Sentiments in having obtained the Approbation of so large a Majority of the Towns in this Colony, for their past Attention to the general Interest.

A more extraordinary Occurrence possibly never yet took Place in *America*; the providential Care of that gracious Being who conducted the early Settlers of this Country to establish a safe Retreat from Tyranny for themselves and their Posterity in *America*, has again wonderfully interposed to bring to Light the Plot that had been laid for us by our malicious and insidious Enemies.

Our present Governor has been exerting himself (as the honorable House of Assembly have expressed themselves in their late Resolves) "by his secret confidential Correspondence, to introduce Measures destructive of our constitutional Liberty, while he has practiced every method among the People of this Province, to fix in their Minds an exalted Opinion of his warmest Affection for them, and his unremitted Endeavours to promote their best Interest at the Court of Great Britain." This will abundantly appear by the Letters and Resolves which we herewith transmit to you; the serious Perusal of which will shew you your present most dangerous Situation. This Period calls for the strictest Concurrence in Sentiment and Action of every individual of this Province, and we may add, of THIS CONTINENT; all private Views should be annihilated, and the Good of the Whole should be the single Object of our Pursuit—"By uniting we stand," and shall be able to defeat the Invaders and Violators of our Rights.

We are,

Your Friends and humble Servants,

Signed by Direction of the Committee for Correspondence in *Boston*,

William Cooper } Town-Clerk.

To the Town-Clerk of _____, to be immediately delivered to the Committee of Correspondence for your Town, if such a Committee is chosen, otherwise to the Gentlemen the Selectmen, to be communicated to the Town.

▲ Source 3.23 A 1773 letter from the Boston's Committee of Correspondence, listing complaints about Governor Hutchinson

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

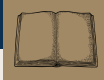
Hancock's sloop (a small sailboat) *Liberty* became the Royal Navy ship HMS *Liberty* after its seizure by the British in 1768. It was used to patrol the waters around Rhode Island to stop customs violations. In July 1769 it was boarded and burnt down by Patriots, similar to the *Gaspee* incident in 1772.



THE BURNING OF THE "GASPEE"

◀ **Source 3.24** A 19th-century depiction of the burning of the *Gaspee* in 1772. Rhode Island Sons of Liberty burnt the British customs ship to stop British interference in local trading operations.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 3.3: HISTORICAL INTEPRETATION



Samuel Adams, writing on the revolutionary ideas of liberty and freedom in 1772, said:

Among the natural Rights of the Colonists are these: First, a Right to Life; Secondly to Liberty; thirdly to Property; together with the Right to support and defend them in the best manner they can ...

The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man; but only to have the law of nature for his rule ...

Just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty in matters spiritual and temporal, is a thing that all Men are clearly entitled to, by the ... laws of nature, as well as by the law of Nations ...

The great end of civil government from the very nature of its institution is for the support, protection and defence of those very rights ...

continued...



...continued

*All Men have a Right to remain in a State of Nature ...
And in case of intolerable Oppression ... to leave the
Society they belong to, and enter into another.*

*... civil laws, should conform as far as possible, to the Law
of natural reason ...*

*The Legislative has no right to absolute arbitrary power
over the lives and fortunes of the people ...*

*All Persons born in the British American Colonies are
by the laws of God and nature ... entitled to all natural
essential, inherent and inseparable Rights, Liberties and
Privileges ...*

Source 3.25 Quoted in M. Jensen (ed.), *Tracts of the American
Revolution*, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1967, pp. 235,
236, 237, 239

- 1 Using the Source and using your own knowledge, explain the extent to which ideas of rights and liberty influenced the direction of the American Revolution.
- 2 Using the Source and your own knowledge, explain the rise of significant individuals and their ideas from 1763 to 1776.



▲ **Source 3.26** Samuel Adams, line engraving circa 1776

3.8 The Boston Tea Party and Tea Act 1773

The tax on tea was the only part of the *Townshend Act* still in operation by 1773. England passed the *Tea Act* 1773 to continue the tax on tea, to collect more revenue and to stop smuggling by undercutting smugglers and colonial merchants. The *Tea Act* also helped the struggling British East India Trading Company to stay solvent and thus save the company.



Up until the *Tea Act*, the colonies were spending £3.4 million on tea annually, making tea a very lucrative product for Britain. However, Britain realised it was capturing only 10% of the American market, as 90% of tea consumed in America was being smuggled in from Dutch sources. If Britain could tighten up this imbalance, it could be an even more profitable market.

Even though British tea would be cheaper than the smuggled product under the new tax regime, its existence rekindled the colonists' longstanding gripe from the days of the *Sugar Act* and *Stamp Act*: 'No taxation without representation'. The stage was set for another showdown.



Famously, in December 1773, three British ships laden with tea arrived in Boston: the *Eleanor*, *Beaver* and *Dartmouth*. The Sons of Liberty had a sympathetic following among the merchant class in Boston and also had many members on the Boston wharves. Dockworkers refused to unload the British tea and this led to a standoff between the two main protagonists, with Samuel Adams representing Boston interests and Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson representing British interests. No tax would have to be paid if the ships never unloaded their cargo. Hutchinson was keen to uphold British law and to get the tax due for the cargo, but he didn't have the military muscle to break the strike. Adams broke the impasse by organising the Sons of Liberty, dressed as members of the First Nations Mohawk people, to throw 342 chests of British tea into Boston Harbour – an act that became known as the Boston Tea Party.

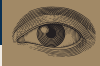
It is important to understand the British attitude to its citizens and colonies in this period. Within a decade, convicts would be transported for seven years (or more) to the new colony of New South Wales for stealing single loaves of bread or other trivial items. In this light, the Boston Tea Party was seen as an outrageous violation of British law and the sanctity of private property, and could not go unpunished as far as Britain was concerned.

The repercussions of the Boston Tea Party were enormous and set America and Britain on a course that would culminate in the Revolutionary War. The British Government had had enough of American civil and non-civil disobedience. Governor Hutchinson lost his job, Boston was locked down under martial law and the *Coercive Acts* were introduced in the following year, 1774. The Acts forced colonists to take sides and become either Patriot or Loyalist.

► **Source 3.27** A coloured wood engraving depicting the events of the Boston Tea Party, date and artist unknown



ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 3.4: VISUAL ANALYSIS



▲ **Source 3.28** *The Destruction of Tea at Boston Harbor*, by Nathaniel Currier, 1846

Examine Source 3.28. This graphic depiction of the Boston Tea Party is similar to the Boston Massacre image by Paul Revere (see Source 3.16). Likewise, it contains many falsehoods.

- 1 Find out what actually occurred and compare this information to the scenario depicted in this image.
- 2 What inconsistencies did you find?



HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS

The day after the Boston Tea Party, T.M. Harris in Dorchester Neck collected tea leaves that had reached the shore. The note on this bottle reads:

Tea that was gathered up on the Shore of Dorchester Neck on the morning after the destruction of the three Cargos at Boston December 17, 1773.



▲ Source 3.29 Boston Tea Party tea leaves collected in a bottle

3.9 Patriots versus Loyalists

I will hold up America to the lightning scorn of moral indignation. In doing this, I shall feel myself discharging the duty of a true patriot; for he is a lover of his country who rebukes and does not excuse its sins.

African-American social reformer and statesman Frederick Douglass, 1847

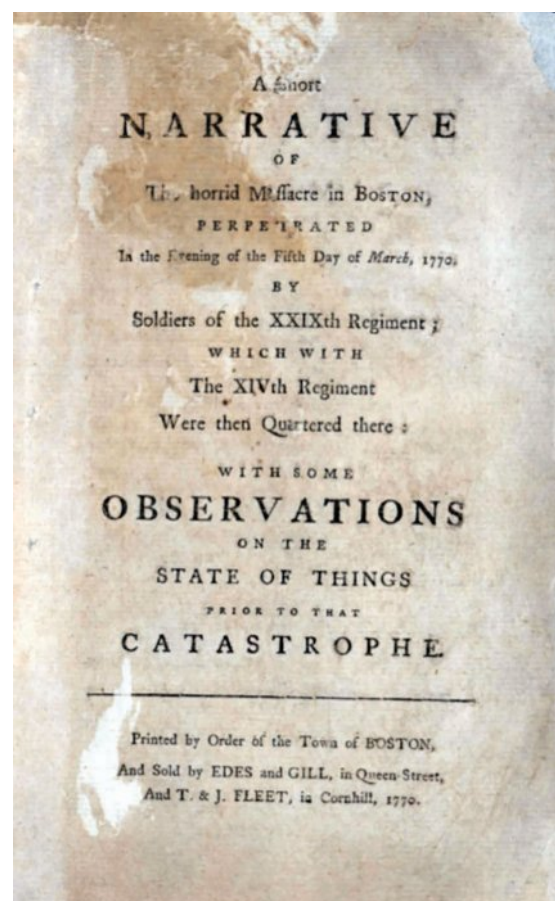
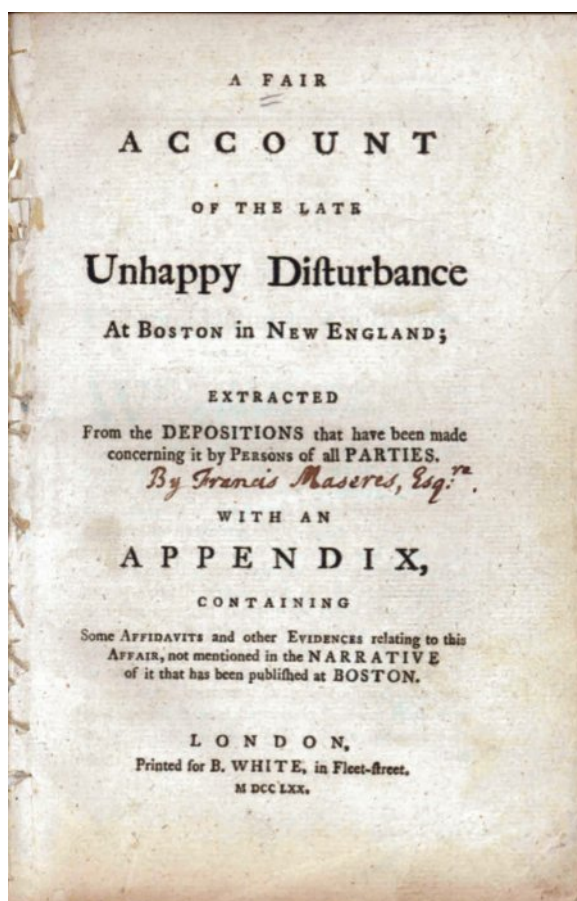
One significant result of simmering tensions between the colonies and the British was the fracturing of the American colonies between those that supported the revolutionaries and those that stayed loyal to the Crown: the Patriots and Loyalists. In broad terms, a Patriot was pro-revolutionary, anti-British, anti-Tory and part of an emerging American nationalist faction that supported the economic, political and social boycott of all things British. A Patriot would support the military action against Britain, the eventual severance from the British Empire and the establishment of an independent America. A Loyalist, by contrast, was an anti-revolutionary, pro-British, pro-Tory conservative who supported the status quo and would stay loyal to 'King and Country' throughout the American Revolution. Eventually, some 80 000 Loyalist Americans migrated to Canada or Britain after their position and treatment in their own colonies became intolerable.

In Paul Revere or Samuel Adams (see Chapter 2 for more on him), we have notable examples of Patriots. On the other hand, in Thomas Hutchinson, we have a famous example of a Loyalist. However, things were often not so clear-cut, and communities and even families were torn apart by their divided loyalties to Britain or the patriotic cause. The example of Founding Father Benjamin Franklin and his own personal battle with his allegiance to the 'motherland' or the New World is evidence of this (more on his story appears in Chapter 4).

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

In New England to this very day chimneys dated prior to and during the revolutionary period are painted white with a black trim indicating that the residents of the house remained loyal to Britain during the Revolution.

► Source 3.30 A 'Tory chimney' in Boston today

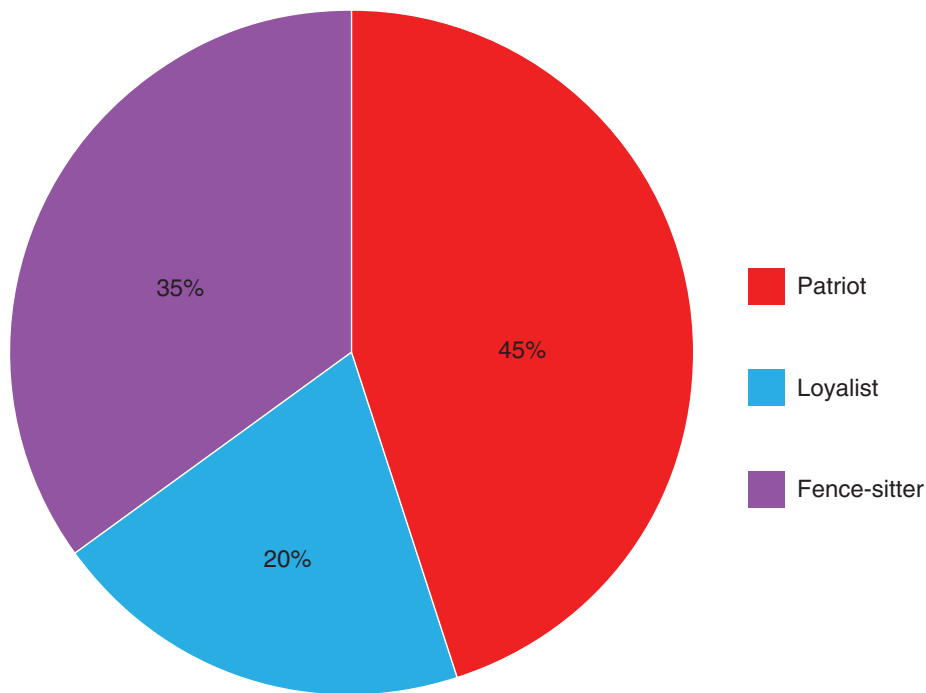


▲ Source 3.31 Left: Hutchinson's Loyalist account of the Boston Massacre, *A Fair Account of the Late Unhappy Disturbance in Boston*. Right: Adams' Patriotic account of the Boston Massacre, *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre of Boston*.



AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

A general consensus among historians today estimates that in the early 1770s, of a white population of about 2.5 million American colonists, around 45% were dedicated Patriots, 20% were Loyalists and the rest were undecided fence-sitters.



AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

According to historian Bernard Bailyn, who wrote a book on the man (*The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson*), criticising Hutchinson became an obsession for Patriot and future Founding Father John Adams. However, not only the colonial elite of Massachusetts despised Hutchinson. Bailyn discovered a Boston shopkeeper with the peculiar name of Harbottle Dorr, who was a one-time member of the Sons of Liberty. During the decade after the *Stamp Act* was introduced, Dorr collected the leading Boston newspapers of the day and added his own comments about news items in the margins of the page. Many of Dorr's comments are especially critical of the Boston governor. For example, his notes in an issue of the *Boston Gazette* included the terms 'vile hypocrite! ... and slanderer,' 'arch fiend,' 'traitor!' and at one point simply 'Oh the villain!' to describe Hutchinson.



▲ **Source 3.32** *Left:* Political cartoon from 1774 by Paul Revere, depicting Death attacking Governor Thomas Hutchinson. *Right:* Engraving of Lieutenant Governor of Boston in 1765, Thomas Hutchinson. He was deported from Boston in 1774, and eventually died in exile in England six years later.

THE STORY SO FAR

- The *Townshend Duties* of 1767 were enacted by the British Parliament to raise much-needed revenue. However, after three years of non-compliance by most colonies, they were repealed in 1770, much like the *Stamp Act* was in 1766.
- Due to the sheer volume of British imports into Boston Harbour, and after a series of anti-British incidents, Boston became the 'epicentre of revolution'. The Boston Massacre in 1770 was a key event in which British soldiers fired on and killed colonists for the first time.
- John Dickinson and John Adams emerged as the most articulate and capable politicians from the Pennsylvania and Massachusetts colonial assemblies, respectively. In future years, they would play significant roles in the Revolution and help to form a rival federal government to the British.
- The Boston Tea Party in 1773 was the final act of defiance for the British Parliament, which acted to bring the colonies back into line.

Use the QR code or visit the Interactive Textbook and watch the video summarising the chapter.





Develop your historical understanding

Define key terms

Write explanations defining each of the following:

Significant ideas and events	Popular movements	Significant individuals
<i>Townshend Duties</i> (1767)	Sons of Liberty	John Dickinson
Standing armies	Daughters of Liberty	Paul Revere
<i>Massachusetts Circular Letter</i> (1768)		John Adams
Boston Massacre (1770)		Abigail Adams
Non-importation		Thomas Hutchinson
Boston Tea Party (1773)		
<i>Tea Act</i> 1773		

Constructing historical arguments

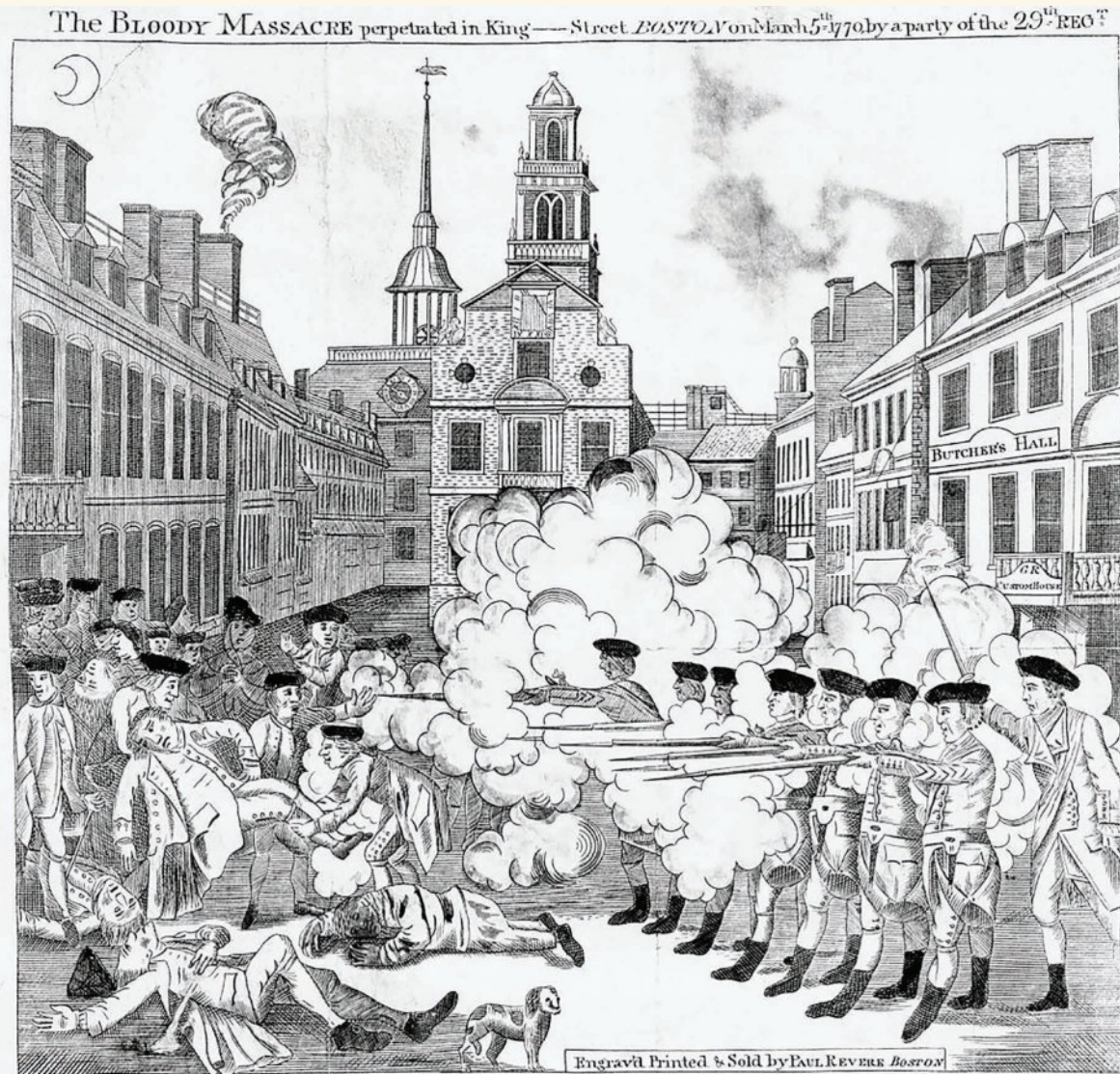
Explain the importance of the Boston Tea Party in the development of the American Revolution from 1773 to 1776.

Analysing historical sources as evidence

The following VCE-style question would be typical of those asked of students that choose America for Area of Study 1 of their exam.

Source A:

Paul Revere's famous widespread lithograph of the Boston Massacre



▲ Source 3.33 Boston Massacre engraving by Paul Revere, 1770

'The Bloody Massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston, on 5 March 1770, by a party of the 29th Reg.', from a re-engraved facsimile of the original engraving by Paul Revere. This image was attached to Samuel Adam's 30-page account of the massacre entitled the *Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre of Boston*. It captured a massive audience in the American colonies and in Britain.



Source B

Howard Zinn's assessment of the reasons behind the Boston Massacre

Impressment and the quartering of troops by the British were directly hurtful to the sailors and other working people. After 1768, two thousand soldiers were quartered in Boston, and friction grew between the crowds and the soldiers. The soldiers began to take the jobs of working people when jobs were scarce. Mechanics and shopkeepers lost work or business because of the colonists' boycott of British goods. In 1769, Boston set up a committee 'to Consider of some Suitable Methods of employing the Poor of the Town, whose Numbers and distresses are daily increasing by the loss of its Trade and Commerce.'

On March 5, 1770, grievances of rope makers against British soldiers taking their jobs led to a fight. A crowd gathered in front of the customhouse and began provoking the soldiers, who fired and killed first Crispus Attucks, a mulatto worker, then others. This became known as the Boston Massacre. Feelings against the British mounted quickly.

Source 3.34 A *People's History of the United States*, Howard Zinn

- 1 Using Source A and your own knowledge, outline how revolutionary leaders like Paul Revere and Sam Adams manipulated the press and social tensions within colonial society to cause growing anti-British feeling by the 1770s.
- 2 Using both Sources provided and your own knowledge, explain how colonial attitudes and views of British soldiers contributed to the American Revolution.
- 3 Evaluate the significance of the Boston Massacre in causing the American Revolution. In your response, refer to the Sources provided and other views.

Using quotes as sources

Write a sentence using a short phrase from one of the quotes below, or contrast the views from a few quotes. You can also use any of the quotes used throughout this chapter. Quotes can be used directly or paraphrased into your own words.

Townshend Act 1767

Grew out of British conviction that Parliament had the power to tax the colonists directly. **Edward Countryman**

The Townshend Act sought to overthrow this traditional safeguard by releasing governors and judges of their financial dependence on colonial legislatures. **George H. Smith**

Americans in general never disputed the controlling power of this kingdom to regulate their trade. **John Phillip Reid**

Boston Massacre

Feelings against the British mounted quickly. **Howard Zinn**

Anti-British opinion was inflamed. **Martin Manning**

The Boston Massacre is remembered as a key event in helping to galvanize the colonial public to the Patriot cause. **Daniel Boorstin**

Tea Party

The Tea Party was the last straw for Britain. ... They were now resolved on very different measures. **Hugh Brogan**

To the British the Boston Tea Party was the ultimate outrage. It led to the Coercive Acts which convinced Americans once and for all that Parliament had no more right to make laws for them than to tax them. **Gordon Wood**

The aftermath of the Boston Tea Party, with the town's harbour closed and the government of Massachusetts reorganized, moved men to organize themselves so they could help. **Edward Countryman**

Online research suggestions

- *John Adams*, HBO series, 2008, Episode 1, 'Join or Die'.

This episode in the award-winning seven-part US series covers the Boston Massacre and subsequent trial. It brings the historical figures of John Adams and Samuel Adams and other Founding Fathers to life, and gives you an idea of life in 18th-century Boston at the time of the imperial crisis.



4 **BRITAIN'S 'VIETNAM', 1774–76**

We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately.

– BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AT THE SIGNING OF THE *DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE*, 1776

Overview

While the Boston Tea Party of 1773 was a show of defiance by just one of the Thirteen Colonies, it unknowingly set the stage for a major confrontation between all the colonies and Britain. The introduction of the *Coercive Acts 1774* increased tensions between the colonies and Britain, and by 1775 the situation had descended into outright war. In September 1774, King George III famously said ‘blows must decide’ the outcome in America. The time for repealing taxes and acquiescence was over.

This conflict would become Britain’s version of the **Vietnam War** – a situation that pitted the world’s greatest economy – boasting an army and navy that had defeated virtually all rival nations – against an underestimated opponent. It was a war with no front line, fought in a hostile environment, and even though the British won many battles, it ended exhausted and defeated – both on American soil and at home – and vulnerable to the other European powers.



Key issues

After completing this chapter, you should be able to answer these questions:

- How did the British react to the Boston Tea Party?
- Who was Lord North?
- What significant revolutionary ideas spread at this time?
- What were the First and Second Continental Congresses?
- How did the colonists form a fighting force against the British?
- Who was Benjamin Franklin?
- What were the provincial congresses?
- Who was Thomas Paine?
- Who was Thomas Jefferson?
- What was the importance of the *Declaration of Independence*?
- Who was Richard Henry Lee?
- How did American nationalism develop?

Digital resources for this chapter

In the *Interactive Textbook*:

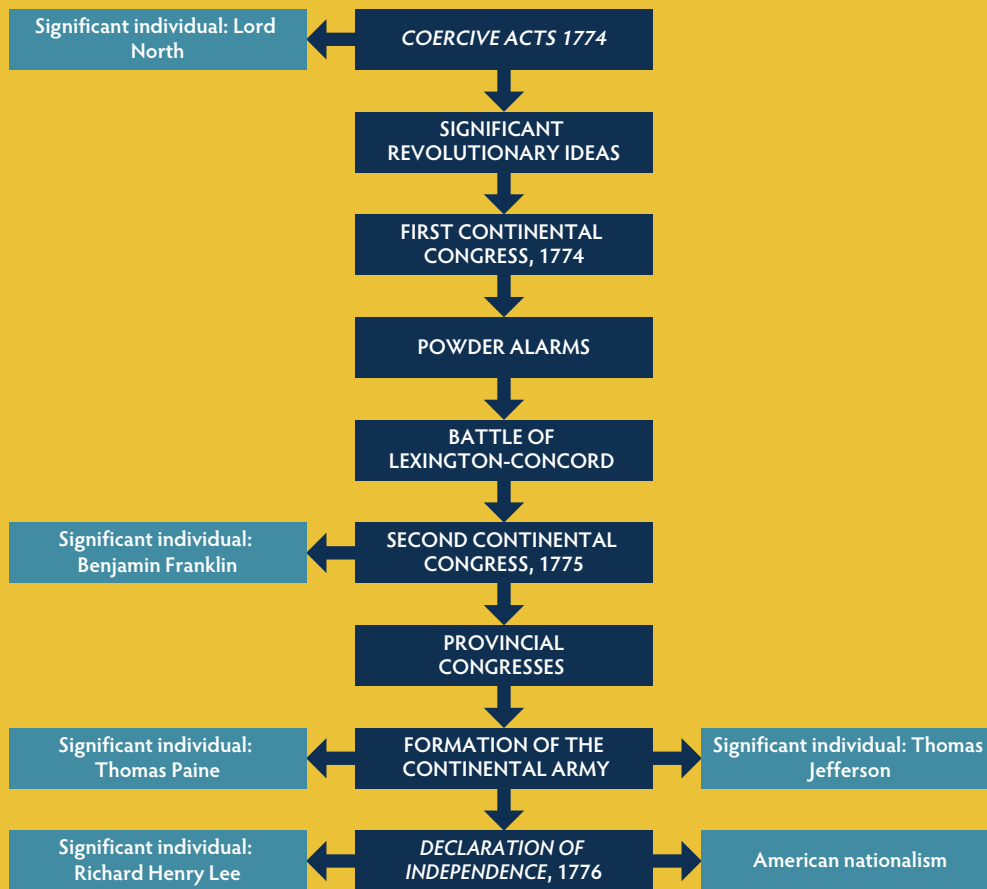
-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

Vietnam War the conflict that took place between 1962 and 1975 where the powerful armed forces of the United States fought against the resourceful (North) Vietnamese in their homeland in South-East Asia. Used in the context of the American Revolution, this is a historical analogy that refers to the way that Britain had great military superiority over the Thirteen Colonies, but still lost the war.

◀ **Source 4.0** *Writing the Declaration of Independence, 1776*. Benjamin Franklin (left), John Adams (centre) meeting with Thomas Jefferson (right) in Philadelphia to study a draft of the Declaration. Painting by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris, circa 1900

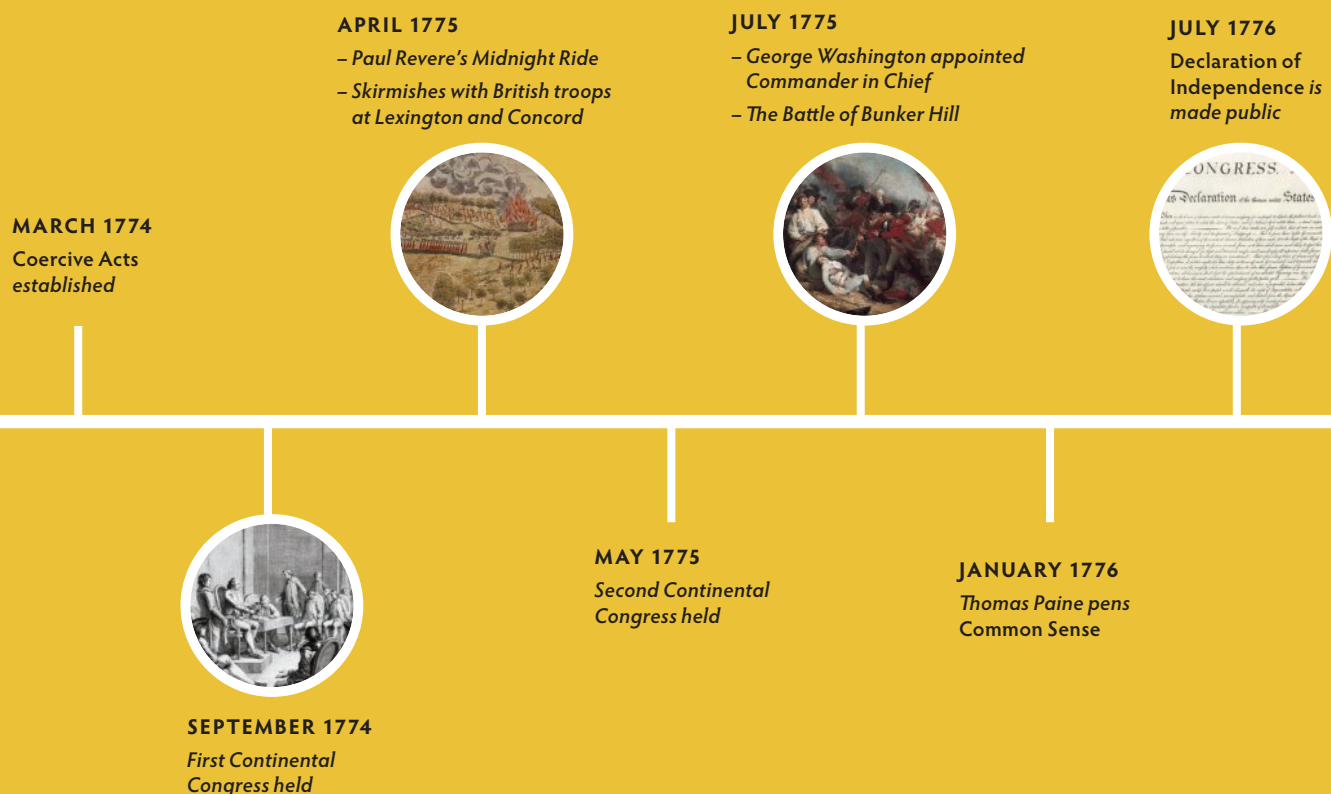
Flow of chapter

How is this chapter structured?



Chapter timeline

What are the key events of the American Revolution covered in this chapter?



4.1 Coercive Acts 1774

Britain's reaction to the Boston Tea Party of 1773 changed the course of American history. The open defiance of the colonists and the loss of British property was not going to go unpunished. The British Parliament came up with a raft of measures to bring Boston back to order: economically, politically, socially and militarily. They termed this legislation the '*Coercive Acts*' – an appropriate punishment to fit the crime. In America they began to be known as the '*Intolerable Acts*', and would be a game changer as they had the opposite outcome to that intended by Britain. Not only would the *Coercive Acts* fail to bring Boston into line but they would also inadvertently galvanise all the colonies to rise against the Mother Country.

There were four main parts to the *Coercive Acts*:

- The *Boston Port Act 1774* closed Boston Harbor to all trade, and only allowed entry to British military vessels, until the full cost for damaged tea had been repaid.
- The *Massachusetts Government Act 1774* stripped the power of the colonial assembly, and effectively gave it to the King. The new military governor Thomas Gage (replacing the much-maligned Thomas Hutchinson) would appoint his own representatives to govern Massachusetts.
- The *Administration of Justice Act 1774* ensured that officials and soldiers charged with a crime while performing their duties in America would be tried in another British colony or in Great Britain. This was designed to produce legal decisions more favourable to the accused (and to the Crown) by removing any potential anti-British bias by American juries. It was known colloquially in America as the '*Murder Act*', as British people could literally get away with murder and be acquitted by their own pro-British juries.
- The *Quartering Act 1774* was reinstated, again requiring Americans to house and supply British troops.

Not long after the *Coercive Acts*, by June 1774, Britain also passed the *Quebec Act*, which further inflamed colonial tempers. This Act touched on long-held prejudices in colonial America that combined anti-French, anti-Catholic and anti-British legislation that contained American colonial territorial ambitions. In brief:

- The *Quebec Act 1774* added large sections of the Indian Reserve to the Province of Quebec in British Canada. The Act effectively gave the French complete control of Quebec. These were lands claimed by the colonies, and Americans felt that Britain was giving away territory they had fought for (and won) in the French and Indian War. Further, the Act established Catholicism as the state



▲ Source 4.1 A British cartoon called *America Aflame* from 1775. It was produced in response to the *Coercive Acts*, and it signifies that through their policies the British leaders seemed to be fanning the flames of rebellion.



▲ Source 4.2 *A Political Lesson*. An English mezzotint from 1774 depicting Gage's difficulties with popular opposition to the *Boston Port Act 1774*.

religion of Quebec, enraging sections of Protestant America. This was possibly to pacify any French backlash in Canada to British rule but instead enraged American colonists that had just been affronted by the *Coercive Acts*. The timing of this legislation for Britain was not good in hindsight.

The *Coercive Acts* completely shut down Boston and placed the city under military rule. All the rights that Bostonians had previously enjoyed were now stripped from them, especially the rights based on the Enlightenment ideals so dear to them of life, liberty and estate/property. Further, their fear of having a standing army in their colony had been realised, prompting a new campaign of action by longstanding critics of the British, including the Sons of Liberty, Samuel Adams, John Adams and the Committees of Correspondence.

Fairfax Resolves 1774

a set of resolutions adopted by a committee in Fairfax County in the colony of Virginia on 18 July 1774, in the early stages of the American Revolution; written primarily by George Mason, the resolutions rejected the British Parliament's claim of supreme authority over the American colonies

Suffolk Resolves 1774

a declaration made on 9 September 1774 by the leaders of Suffolk County, in the colony of Massachusetts; the declaration rejected the *Massachusetts Government Act*, resolved on a boycott of imported goods from Britain unless the 'Intolerable Acts' were repealed, and promoted the formation of a militia for each colony

militia the part-time army of each colony, often having had limited training and very poorly equipped in comparison to the British Army

One important political reaction was the organisation of separate meetings by the Northern and Southern colonies to discuss appropriate reactions to the latest British trespass on their colonial rights. These meetings would eventually lead to the calling of the First Continental Congress in 1774 (discussed in Section 4.4).

In the South, a core of influential Virginians (including George Washington, George Mason and Patrick Henry) met in Fairfax County, Virginia, and produced a raft of resolutions that become known as the **Fairfax Resolves 1774**. The resolutions rejected the British Parliament's claim of supreme authority over the colonies; summarised their concerns on taxation, representation, judicial power, military matters and the colonial economy; adopted a proposal to place an embargo on British goods; and called for a congress for the purpose of preserving their rights as Englishmen. This last resolution was an important step forward in inter-colonial cooperation as more Americans came to realise that a threat against one colony was a threat against all.

In the North a similar meeting took place in Suffolk County, Massachusetts, led by Dr Joseph Warren (who would later be killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill). They also produced a list of resolutions, which became known as the **Suffolk Resolves 1774**. These resolutions called for a boycott of British goods and the curtailing of exports to Britain; rejected the *Massachusetts Government Act 1774* and the *Boston Port Act 1774*; demanded the resignations of those appointed to positions under the *Massachusetts Government Act*; proposed a ban on tax payments until the *Massachusetts Government Act* was repealed; and called for a colonial government in Massachusetts free of royal authority. The Suffolk Resolves also urged each colony to raise a **militia** for their own protection.

The resolutions of both these meetings increased colonial animosity towards Britain and paved the way for the First Continental Congress.



◀ **Source 4.3** A depiction of Dr Joseph Warren, from a painting by Alonzo Chappel circa 1800s

4.2

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



Lord North (1732–92)

- Frederick North, best known as Lord North, was a Tory British prime minister who led from 1770 until 1782 – or most of the American Revolutionary period.
- Following the Boston Tea Party in 1773, North proposed a number of legislative measures designed to punish the colony of Boston, known as the *Coercive Acts* in Britain, and dubbed the 'Intolerable Acts' in the colonies.
- North wanted to shut down the economy of Boston by cutting off trade in order to shake up the rebellious colonists. Instead, the Acts further fanned the flames of revolution in Massachusetts, and eventually the other colonies.
- According to left-wing historian Francis Jennings, North dutifully executed his king's wishes in Parliament.
- North remains the first and only British prime minister to be forced out of office by a motion of no confidence in Parliament, resigning in March 1782. This was due to the result of the American Revolutionary War (more on this in Chapter 6).



▲ Source 4.4 Lord North, as painted by Nathaniel Dance circa 1774

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4.3 Significant revolutionary ideas

Apart from the influence of Enlightenment thinkers on significant individuals discussed in earlier chapters, where else did revolutionary ideas develop, and how were they spread at the time? The following section demonstrates some of the ways in which revolutionary political ideas developed in the American colonies as well as in Britain itself, via the spread of political pamphlets and visual representations.

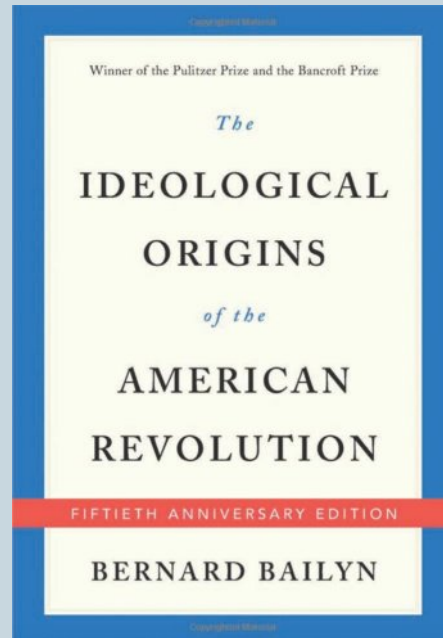
Political pamphlets

It should be remembered that unlike in the Chinese, French or Russian revolutions, the population in North America was largely middle class, prosperous and literate at the time of the Revolution. As discussed throughout this text, this allowed the Revolutionary leaders to widely disseminate (spread) their ideas and gain support for their cause from people from all walks of life.



KEY HISTORIAN

BERNARD BAILYN (1922–2020)



▲ **Source 4.5** Left: Bernard Bailyn receiving the National Humanities Medal from President Obama in 2010. Right: Bailyn's *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (1967)

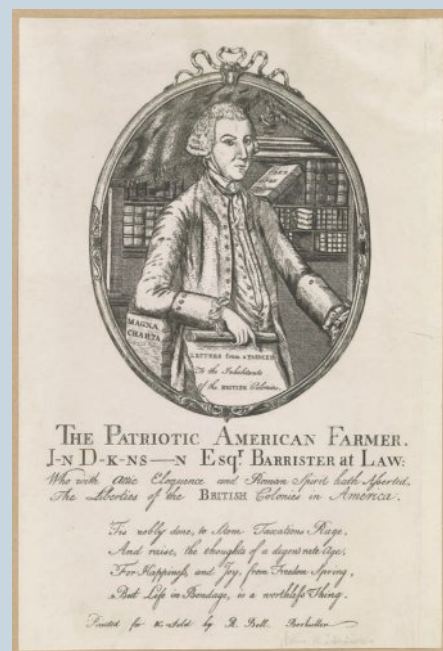
The most potent political instrument of the 18th century was certainly the pamphlet. These early pamphlets were the discourse of an educated elite, between patriotic colonists such as Thomas Jefferson. The historian Bernard Bailyn studied these pamphlets closely in his 1967 book, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and the Bancroft Prize in 1968. He wrote:

Study of the pamphlets confirmed my rather old-fashioned view that the American Revolution was above all else an ideological, constitutional, political struggle and not primarily a controversy between social groups undertaken to force changes in the organisation of the society or the economy.

Bailyn found political pamphlets to be profoundly imbued with beliefs about the concepts of 'Liberty', 'Tyranny' and standing armies.

Bailyn believed that 'there were real fears, real anxieties, a sense of real danger behind these phrases, and not merely the desire to influence by rhetoric and propaganda the inert minds of an otherwise passive populace'. The greatest concern was 'the fear of a comprehensive conspiracy against Liberty throughout the English-speaking world'.

► **Source 4.6** John Dickinson's 1767 pamphlet, 'The Patriotic American Farmer'. This lithograph version was published between 1870 and 1880.



Visual representations

The visual equivalent to Bailyn's study of pamphlets is the exploration of the various graphic works – cartoons, drawings and engravings – produced to illustrate the same ideas.

These images are important because they track what the colonists thought was going wrong in Britain, which they had once believed to be one of the greatest democratic systems the world had known. It is worth noting that many of these images (as well as political pamphlets) came from England itself, originating from the Whig movement in politics (against the ruling Tory party policies of Lord North's government, which were directed against the colonists in North America). In essence, the Whigs, as well as the colonists, felt that the British Parliament was subverted by 'Corruption' and 'Tyranny', which are the great enemies of 'Liberty'.

For example, the image depicted in Source 4.7 was published in the *London Magazine* on 1 December 1774, and would have reached the colonies a few weeks later. It depicts the Prime Minister, Lord North, standing astride an allegorical or symbolic river of corruption flowing between the pillars marked 'Tyranny' and 'Venality'.

His name and portly figure are wittily satirised by reference to Boreas, the North Wind. His flaming torch represents the punishment of America. His corruption is represented by the bundle of 'favours' he holds in his hand.

The allegorical figure of Britannia/Liberty is smaller and more vulnerable. She holds a scroll proclaiming: 'Those who should have been my preservers have been my destroyers.' The second figure is John Wilkes, a politician whose rejection by the British Parliament after his election in 1769 seemed to provide strong evidence of a complete subversion of parliamentary democracy. Grimly determined, he holds a broom and proclaims: 'I'll stem the stream [of corruption]'.



▲ Source 4.7 *The Colossus of the North*, Anonymous, 1774

The spread of revolutionary ideas

In our studies, apart from analysing the powerful language of the pamphlets and the detailed imagery of the cartoons, we can also track the electrifying speed with which these ideas flashed across the Atlantic world – at least by the standards of the day. However, at this distance, most colonists could not know that the Whig movement in England was actually the work of a relatively small group in English politics. To the colonists, Whig literature confirmed their own suspicions that liberty was under threat in the home country itself.

As an example of this movement of revolutionary ideas from England to the American colonies, we can track the trajectory of three versions of the same political cartoon. Firstly, we have the original, English version of *The Able Doctor or America Swallowing the Bitter Draught*, depicted in Source 4.8.

The Able Doctor: London version

In this image, the personification of America was as a First Nations woman, which was later to be replaced by an Anglo-Saxon figure. The forced drinking of tea is matched to an act of



▲ Source 4.8 Version 1: *The Able Doctor*, Anonymous, London, 1774

sexual domination. Power is represented by the lunging figure of Lord North, the leader of the parliamentary group proposing the three pence per pound tea tax. The Boston Port Bill emerges from his pocket, a technique also used in revolutionary street theatre with effigies. Historian McSherry Fowble has identified the two Tory ministers holding the woman as Lord Bute and Murray, First Earl of Mansfield.

We know from the pamphlets that the colonists' greatest nightmare was 'Tyranny', which perpetually threatened to destroy 'Liberty'. The figure on the far right is considered chilling because he holds a sword labelled 'Military Law'. This may be Lord Wedderburn, Solicitor General, identifiable by his Scottish kilt. He had helped draft the Boston Port Bill.

Another condemnation is that the allegorical figure of Britannia covers her eyes in shame when she sees how British liberty has degenerated into despotism.



▲ Source 4.9 Version 2: *The Able Doctor*, by Paul Revere, Boston, 1774

The Able Doctor: Boston version

It was the colonial artist, Paul Revere, who adopted this English image and reproduced it, very similarly, for the local market in America. This second version was published in a Boston journal, the *Royal American Magazine*, in June 1774 (see Source 4.9). This process of translation illustrates the degree to which he and other artisans like him were middlemen or conductors of ideas in a double sense: like most artisans, he would have been able to explain the ideas of the pamphlets to co-workers who could not read, but he could also produce a picture that would translate political issues into imagery that could be understood by nearly everybody.



▲ Source 4.10 Version 3: *The Able Doctor*, Anonymous, Backcountry, 1776

The Able Doctor: Backcountry version

At some stage, Revere's second version of the image must have been seen by the editor of a publication called *Freebeter's New England Almanack*, who published the third version as the front cover of his paper in the year 1776 (see Source 4.10). This was another great leap, for the *Almanac* was a form of popular literature, sold cheaply to working people, particularly poor farmers in the backcountry of the colonies. This third incarnation of the image is

in a sense more surprising than the first two images that crossed the Atlantic. We know that the urban elites and the artisans (like Revere) of colonial America discussed political ideas, though these ideas might not have enjoyed much dissemination among the far-flung and largely illiterate populations of rural areas. This may be so, yet the editor of the *Almanack* would not have risked publishing an image like this if it would have been incomprehensible to people who lacked a basic political vocabulary.

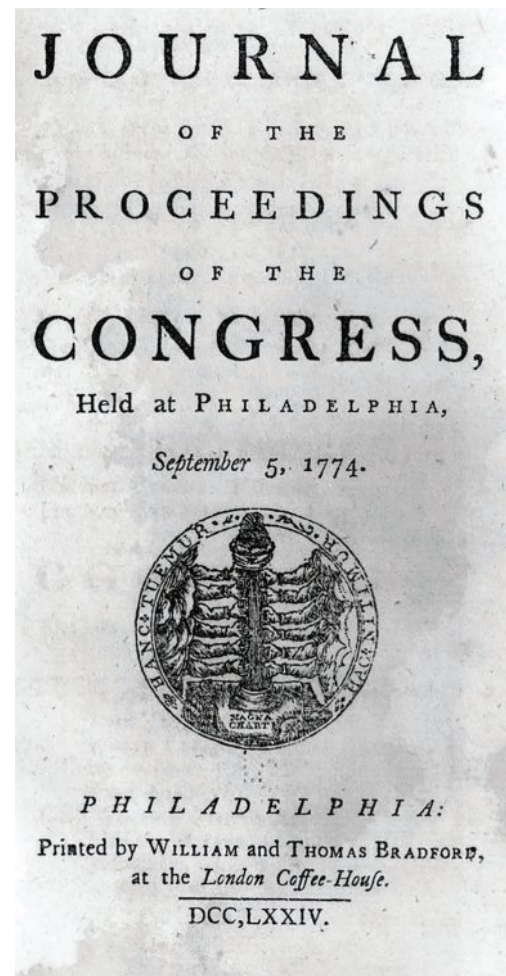
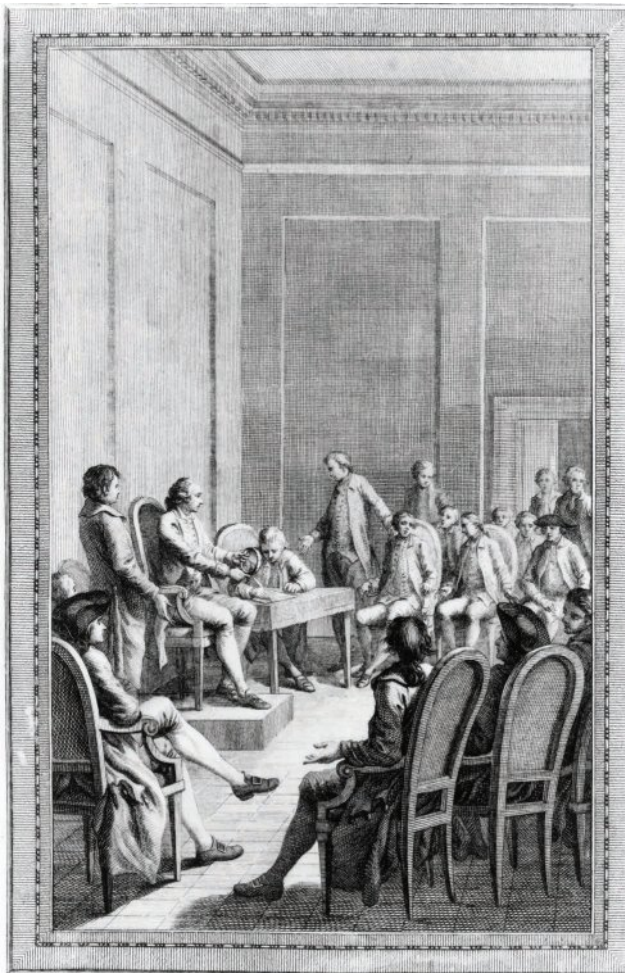
Such imagery represents Bernard Bailyn's argument about the flourishing revolutionary ideological concepts of liberty and tyranny, but in a visual form. As the cartoon *The Colossus of the North* and the original *Able Doctor* came from London (as did Source 3.12: Revere's imitation of the English cartoon of the Boston Massacre), we can see how these ideas, which we would normally associate with the American colonists, show that:

'rebelliousness was alive on both sides of the Atlantic' – in the words of historian Francis Jennings (p. 139).
British policies regarding the American colonies were under fire from multiple fronts.

Source 4.11 Adcock, M., 'Patriot Pictures: Ideological Images of the American Revolution', *Agora*, 40(3), 2005

4.4 First Continental Congress, 1774

The First Continental Congress, held in Philadelphia in September and October 1774, was attended by representatives of 12 of the Thirteen Colonies. Georgia was not represented, as the colony had 'Indian' troubles and needed the assistance of British troops to subdue them. This meeting was significant because, after 150 years of relative autonomy, the fiercely independent colonies came together in an attempt to solve mutual problems. This quasi-federal government structure would unify and control the offensive position of all the colonies in the upcoming war. However, it was not a smooth process and much infighting occurred between the members of the different colonies before the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776. Prior to the 1760s, most colonies jealously guarded their unique character and economic power, and distrusted many of the other colonies. Given that the *Coercive Acts* were directed only at Massachusetts, reactions were mixed across the colonies, but they recognised that a similar strategy could be used against any colony that defied the British.



▲ Source 4.12 Left: Engraving of the First Continental Congress by Francois Godefroy after le Barbier. Right: A journal outlining the proceedings of the First Continental Congress.

The best colonial assemblymen were selected from each colony, and included John Adams (representing Massachusetts), John Dickinson (Pennsylvania) and George Washington (Virginia). In the debate on the *Coercive Acts*, many delegates (particularly Southerners) argued that Boston was at fault thanks to its radicals and mob actions, but acknowledged that the British reaction was totally unacceptable. Ultimately, consensus was gained and 'Articles of Association' were drafted and passed. These outlined various grievances and included 14 measures to be adopted by all colonies in attendance; many of these resolutions were adapted from the Fairfax Resolves 1774



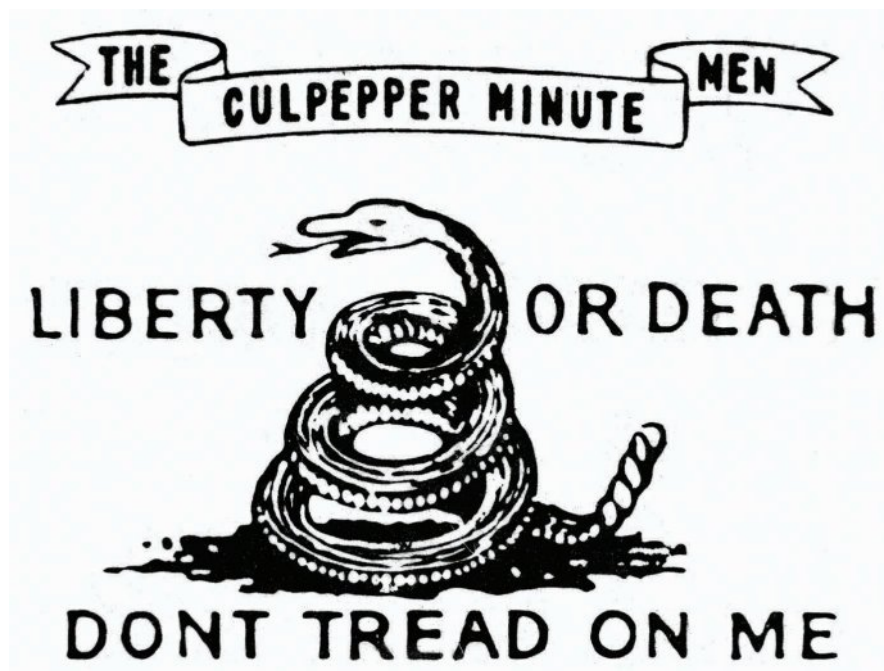
Committees of Safety

Patriot civilian groups who operated in the Thirteen Colonies from 1770 to the end of the Revolutionary War. They closely monitored the activities of British soldiers, and were especially active in the colony of Massachusetts in 1774–75

minutemen colonial militia prepared to arm themselves against the British in less than a minute's notice

and Suffolk Resolves 1774. Furthermore, the delegates agreed to meet in a year's time at what would become the Second Continental Congress in 1775.

In the meantime, each colony set up a Committee of Correspondence, Inspection and Safety, which were monitored by the Continental Association to ensure all colonies were complying with the agreed sanctions against Britain. The Committees of Correspondence controlled the propaganda war against Britain; the Committees of Inspection made sure no British products were bought in each colony; and the **Committees of Safety** stockpiled weapons and formed militias in each colony. The Massachusetts Committee of Safety was particularly active, storing large amounts of weapons and gunpowder across the colony, and drilling and training their militia. Their militia became known as the '**minutemen**' (see Source 4.13), reflecting the speed at which they could turn out to defend their colony.



► **Source 4.13** The Culpeper (or Culpeper) Minutemen were formed in 17 July 1775 in Culpeper, Virginia. They are perhaps best known for their flag featuring a rattlesnake alongside the phrases 'Liberty or Death' and 'Don't Tread on Me'. They disbanded in January 1776 by order of the Committee of Safety.



THE "MINUTE-MEN" OF THE REVOLUTION.

◀ **Source 4.14** An artist's interpretation of minutemen quickly preparing to defend their ideals

4.5 Powder Alarms

From August 1774, new Massachusetts Governor General Thomas Gage (see Source 4.15) ordered his Redcoats to perform weapons and gunpowder seizures throughout the colony. These seizures are today referred to as the 'Powder Alarms'. Gage's tactics were to confiscate gunpowder and weapons he knew were being stockpiled by the well-armed and aggrieved urban and rural population of Massachusetts in order to defuse any potential large-scale military uprising against Britain by local Patriots. One particularly cunning British raid in Middlesex County netted a considerable cache of weapons and powder without anyone realising until after the event.

The Powder Alarms were seen by Bostonian radicals and the underground press as the epitome of the ravages of a standing army, and represented the theft of people's property and liberty. They further raised the tensions in Massachusetts, but had not started a war – at least, until Gage's fateful decision to send his men to Concord.



▲Source 4.15 Thomas Gage, by John Singleton Copley, 1788



▲Source 4.16 A representation of Patriot soldiers carrying gunpowder from Fort William and Mary in December 1774

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

The sight of up to 260 Redcoats in formation stirred many rumours, including that the British had opened fire and killed citizens of Massachusetts Bay Colony. The rumours were untrue, but Gage's actions had ignited a colonial alarm system (the Powder Alarms) and the militia readied themselves for battle.



4.6 Battle of Lexington-Concord, 1775

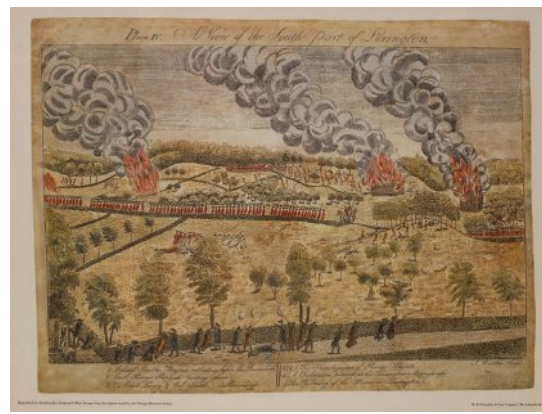
KEY EVENT



A year after the passing of the *Coercive Acts* and the formation of the First Continental Congress, Gage seriously underestimated the level of preparedness and support for the local militia. He ordered his troops:

with utmost expedition and secrecy to Concord, where you will seize and destroy ... all Military stores ... But you will take care that the soldiers do not plunder the inhabitants or hurt private property.

However, Gage was sending his men into a hornet's nest. Rumours were rife about a possible British expedition to Concord, and after Paul Revere discovered the British were on the march, he embarked on his famous 'midnight ride' on 19 April 1775, warning Patriots across Middlesex County. By the time the British forces arrived at Concord, they faced a considerable force of colonial militiamen. While the British were able to fight their way into Concord, and search the town for the caches of weapons and gunpowder (most of which had already been moved to safety), they were harassed all the way back to Boston, as increasing numbers of militiamen joined the fray. By the end of the day, Gage had started the Revolutionary War, witnessed 272 British troops killed or wounded (as opposed to 94 for the Massachusetts militia) and prompted thousands of well-armed militiamen to gather on the outskirts of Boston. The Boston press had a field day; soon each colony received an impassioned anti-British account of the event. Anti-British political and economic angst in the colonies now had a military edge.



▲**Source 4.17** These four coloured engravings by Amos Doolittle depict the 1775 battles of Lexington and Concord. Doolittle inspected the sites personally and spoke with the militia and residents of the towns before creating these representations of the battles.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Historians have questioned many aspects of Revere's account of his 'midnight ride'. A popular version of the story claims that as he furiously rode on horseback, he shouted to Massachusetts colonists that 'the British are coming!' However, most people from that colony had English origins, and would have still identified themselves as being British. Revere himself claimed to have said (not shouted), 'the Regulars are coming out' – which was backed up by eyewitness accounts.



▲ Source 4.18 *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere* is a much later depiction of the famous event painted by Grant DeVolson Wood in 1931.

4.7 Second Continental Congress and the Battle of Bunker Hill, 1775

Three weeks after the Battle of Lexington-Concord, in May 1775, the Second Continental Congress met. However, the battle did not unite the Congress as the *Coercive Acts* had done; this new military threat was a far more dangerous gamble. To take on the world's greatest army and navy when America had neither was obviously a major decision that was going to take much debate.



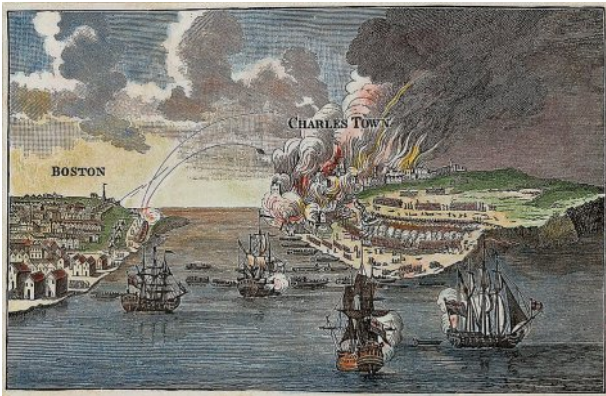
What is clear, though, is that the Second Continental Congress was beginning to act as a revolutionary federal American government. It sought and drew loans from foreign powers to finance the war, and eventually adopted the fledgling New England militia as its own quasi-national army. Furthermore, it dealt with practical issues, creating a postal service and issuing currency. According to historian Benjamin H. Irvin, in official pronouncements Congress for the first time began to refer to its constituents (members) as the 'United Colonies'.



Battle of Bunker Hill a famous hour-long battle fought on 17 June 1775 in Boston between the British and Massachusetts militia; even though the British won the battle, they suffered three times the casualties of the militia

The Battle of Bunker Hill, 1775

While the Second Continental Congress continued in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, British and militia forces met again in the **Battle of Bunker Hill** on 17 June 1775, in Boston Harbour. The first two British assaults were repulsed, but the British eventually took the peninsula. While it was viewed as a British victory at the time, they suffered heavy casualties, including many officers, and the battle gave the colonial forces confidence that they could match it with a professional army.



▲ Source 4.19 A depiction of the Battle of Bunker Hill



▲ Source 4.20 Dramatic painting of the Battle of Bunker Hill and the death of well-known Patriot and Boston Son of Liberty, Dr Joseph Warren by John Trumbull

Continental Army the professional or regular army raised by the Second Continental Congress and trained by Washington to fight the War of Independence

During this period, as the Revolutionary War had already begun post Lexington-Concord in April 1775, Congress was deciding to form a national army, the **Continental Army**. But the question remained of who was to lead it. On the day of this decision, 14 June 1775, John Adams nominated George Washington, who had conveniently been arriving at Congress for weeks in the full military attire of the Virginia militia – clearly prepared for war. Washington became the Commander in Chief of the Continental Army on 15 June 1775. His greatest test and greatest role in the Revolutionary War would be to take a fledgling, rag-tag collection of State militias and form an army and lead it against the might of the British Army. His success in completing this seemingly impossible task would make his name pre-eminent in the American national mythology.

▼ Source 4.21 *Washington appointed Commander in Chief*, by Nathaniel Currier, 1876



On 16 June, Washington rose before the Congress to state his acceptance, and offered these heartfelt sentiments:

Though I am truly sensible of the high honour done me in this appointment, yet I feel great distress that my abilities and military experience may not be equal to the extensive and important trust: however, as the congress desires I will enter upon the momentous duty, and exert every power I possess in their service for the support of the glorious cause: I beg they will accept my most cordial thanks for this distinguished testimony of their approbation.

Source 4.22 George Washington, speech to the Congress, 16 June 1775

The Siege of Boston, 1775

After the devastation of the Battle of Lexington-Concord in April 1775, the British suffered terrible losses and awoke a massive sleeping giant of revolutionary fervour in the New England Patriot population. After the Battle of Bunker Hill in May 1775, which was a **pyrrhic victory** for Britain against the New England militia, again with the British suffering terrible losses, Boston effectively was under siege for the next 11 months and effectively under a stalemate. Both sides squared off against each other and no side could really move without suffering catastrophic losses for no real gain. Washington left the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia and took control of the newly named Continental Army in Boston after Bunker Hill. Washington also sent Henry Knox to steal cannons from the British fort, Fort Ticonderoga. Washington then took the high ground around Boston, the Boston Heights, and aimed those cannons on the British base below. The British position in Boston was strong enough but ultimately untenable and they eventually moved to New York in March 1776 to pursue a greater strategy of cutting off New England from the rest of America.

Other achievements of the Second Continental Congress

Though it came shortly after the formation of the Continental Army, Congress also produced on the 5th July 1775 the **Olive Branch Petition**. This was a last-ditch peace offering to Britain approved by Congress, drafted by John Dickinson. This document sent a mixed message to King George III, pledging loyalty to him while simultaneously demanding autonomy, thereby subverting the authority of the British Parliament.

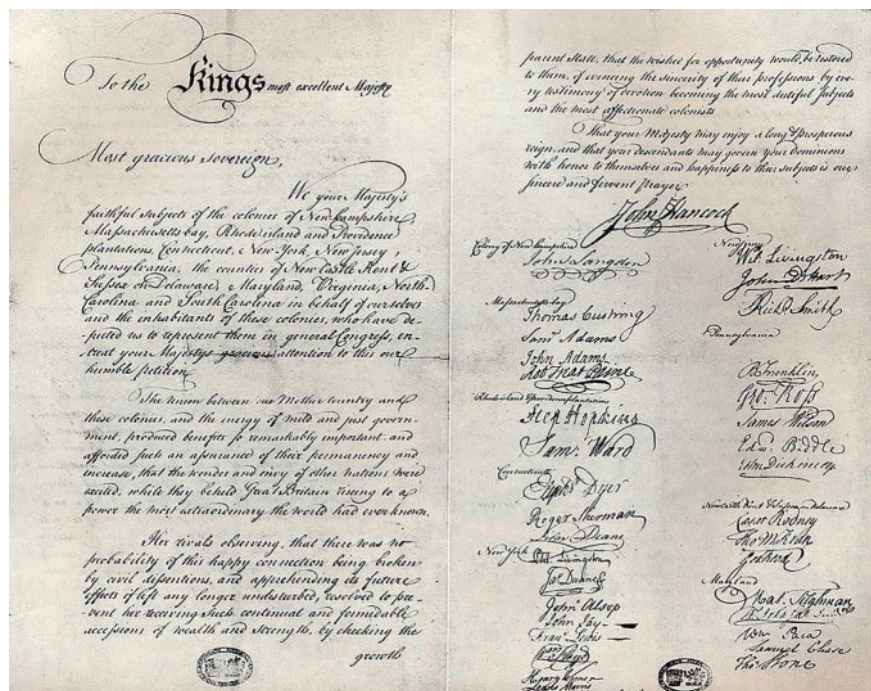
Finally, and significantly, the Second Continental Congress also embarked on one of its most significant acts: it voted to draft a *Declaration of Independence* in 1776 and set Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams to the task.

pyrrhic victory

a victory that is not worth winning because the victor has lost so much in winning it

Olive Branch Petition

a last-ditch peace offering sent by the Second Continental Congress to King George III in July 1775 to avoid going to war with Britain



► Source 4.23 The Olive Branch Petition, 1775



ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 4.1: DOCUMENT COMPARISON



The Olive Branch Petition was produced by the Second Continental Congress on 5 July 1775. This is how the document begins:

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty.

Most Gracious Sovereign: We, your Majesty's faithful subjects of the Colonies of New-Hampshire, Massachusetts-Bay, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Counties of Newcastle, Kent, and Sussex, on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, in behalf of ourselves and the inhabitants of these Colonies, who have deputed us to represent them in General Congress, entreat your Majesty's gracious attention to this our humble petition.

The union between our Mother Country and these Colonies, and the energy of mild and just Government, produced benefits so remarkably important, and afforded such an assurance of their permanency and increase, that the wonder and envy of other nations were excited, while they beheld Great Britain rising to a power the most extraordinary the world had ever known ...

The Olive Branch Petition reached London on 14 August 1775. George III's reply to the colonists, the Declaration of Rebellion, was issued on the 23rd of August.

Whereas many of our subjects in divers parts of our Colonies and Plantations in North America, misled by dangerous and ill designing men, and forgetting the allegiance which they owe to the power that has protected and supported them; after various disorderly acts committed in disturbance of the publick peace, to the obstruction of lawful commerce, and to the oppression of our loyal subjects carrying on the same; have at length proceeded to open and avowed rebellion, by arraying themselves in a hostile manner, to withstand the execution of the law, and traitorously preparing, ordering and levying war against us ...

... we do accordingly strictly charge and command all our Officers, as well civil as military, and all others our obedient and loyal subjects, to use their utmost endeavors to withstand and suppress such rebellion, and to disclose and make known all treasons and traitorous conspiracies which they shall know to be against us, our crown and dignity.

If Congress' Olive Branch Petition of 5 July 1775 sent a mixed message to the King, the document issued a day later on 6 July explaining the formation of the Continental Army, *Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms*, had a much clearer message. This document was also written by John Dickinson, with drafts by Thomas Jefferson:

... Our forefathers, inhabitants of the Island of Great Britain, left their native land, to seek on these shores a residence for civil and religious freedom.

... they effected settlements in the distant and inhospitable wilds of America, then filled with numerous and warlike nations of barbarians. Societies or Governments, vested with perfect Legislatures, were formed under Charters from the Crown, and a harmonious intercourse was established between the Colonies and the Kingdom from which they derived their origin.

... We fight not for glory or for conquest. We exhibit to mankind the remarkable spectacle of a people attacked by unprovoked enemies, without any imputation or even suspicion of offence. They boast of their privileges and civilization, and yet proffer no milder conditions than servitude or death.

In our own native land, in defence of the freedom that is our birth-right, and which we ever enjoyed till the late violation of it; for the protection of our property, acquired solely by the honest industry of our forefathers and ourselves, against violence actually offered, we have taken up arms. We shall lay them down when hostilities shall cease on the part of the aggressors, and all danger of their being renewed shall be removed, and not before.

continued...

...continued

- 1 Understanding the language of 18th-century documents requires practice. Describe the language of the Olive Branch Petition. Provide examples.
- 2 Why do you think Congress directed the Olive Branch Petition directly to the King and not to the British Prime Minister or Parliament?
- 3 How would you describe the response of George III? Where does he lay blame for the revolutionary situation that had developed in America by July 1775? Which significant events and individuals does he refer to? Provide example quotes from the text.
- 4 Who do you think the *Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms* is addressed to?
- 5 What reasons does Congress give to explain the need to take up arms against the British? Will the Continental Army be a colonial version of a 'standing army'? Why/why not?
- 6 To whom does the term 'barbarians' refer? How do you explain this perspective?

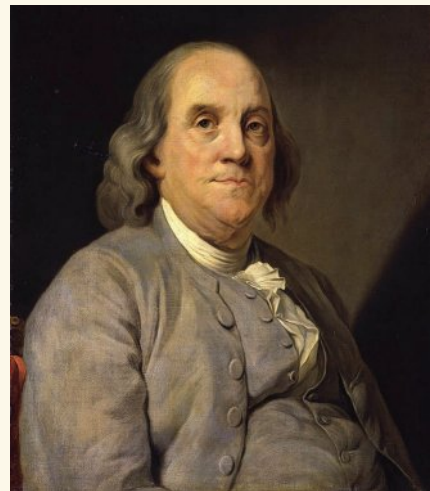
4.8

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



Benjamin Franklin (1706–90)

- Benjamin Franklin is one of the most famous Americans of this period. The son of a candle maker, he became a scientist, scholar and wily politician, epitomising the social mobility of the New World.
- Like many in the colonies, Franklin was initially very loyal to Britain, but his loyalty was tested and transformed during the imperial crisis.
- He was an early advocate of colonial unity through his Albany Plan in 1754, and through his famous 'Join or Die' cartoon.
- From 1764 to 1774, he was the Colonial Ambassador to the British Parliament, which ended when he was persecuted by Parliament for sending Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson's private letters (calling for Britain to suppress Boston) to Samuel Adams to print in the *Boston Gazette* (see Chapter 3).
- He attended the Second Continental Congress, and worked with John Adams and Thomas Jefferson on drafting the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776.
- He famously sponsored Thomas Paine, who eventually published the best seller, *Common Sense*, in 1776.
- In 1776 he was appointed to represent the colonies in France. After two years of hard work, he convinced Louis XVI to commit to the Revolutionary War against Britain in 1778, which helped to swing the outcome of the war (see Chapter 6).



▲ Source 4.24 Benjamin Franklin, by Joseph Siffrein Duplessis, circa 1778

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Sadly, families were sometimes divided over the Revolution. Patriot Benjamin Franklin's son, William, a Loyalist governor of New Jersey, supported the British effort during the war, and they rarely spoke afterwards.



4.9 Provincial congresses

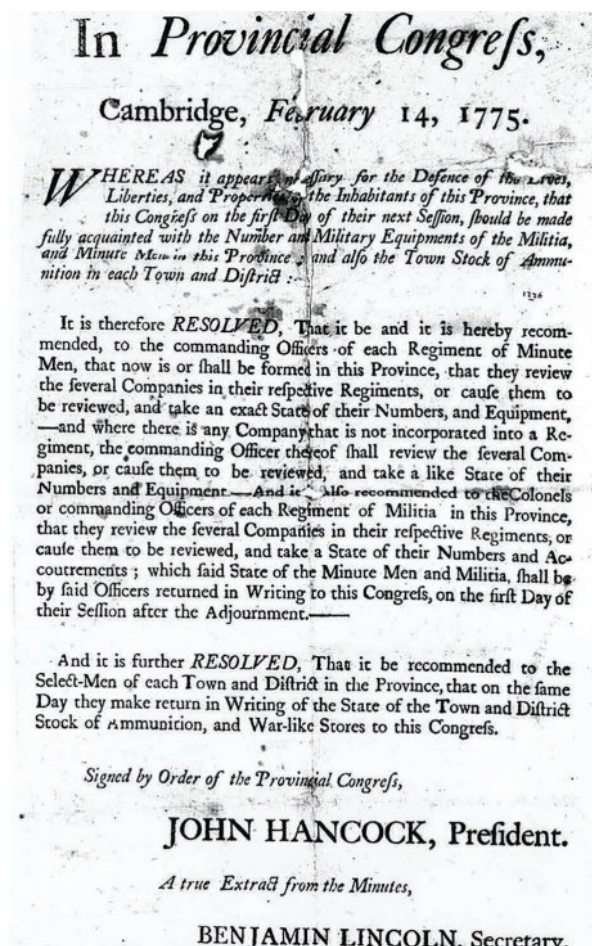
Another manifestation of the **republican** ideal (a concept introduced in Section 1.5) – that is, spreading the political decision-making process across a greater section of the population – was the provincial congress. These congresses effectively represented a third level of government, beneath the national Congress and the colonial assembly of each of the colonies.

republican referring to republic – a form of government where elected officials are chosen by and represent their citizens to enforce the rule of law; in modern parlance, a republic often means a government without a monarch

sovereignty the right of a government or a people to make decisions and form laws within its own borders

The long resistance to British rule over preceding decades, along with the events of the Revolutionary War, had blooded many men in the political process. Membership of resistance organisations (e.g. the Sons of Liberty; the Committees of Safety, Inspection and Correspondence; and the colonial militias), along with involvement in the Continental Army, colonial assemblies and Continental Congresses, had multiplied the number of people holding positions of leadership and responsibility. Within these organisations, people were embodying a vital ideal of the Revolution: that of **sovereignty** of the people over all branches of government and the accountability of all those elected officials to the people's will (the electorate).

Provincial congresses were elected by voters to discuss the big questions of the day, although their findings were not binding. It's noteworthy that the electoral system for provincial congresses was far more democratic and representative than their colonial assemblies. They were also much larger in size. In New Jersey and Maryland, for instance, the number of men in the provincial congress was twice that of the colonial assembly. In South Carolina it was triple. As David Conroy explores in the *Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, these organisations not only became seedbeds of revolt against the British but also breeding grounds for the embryonic federal government created after independence in 1789.



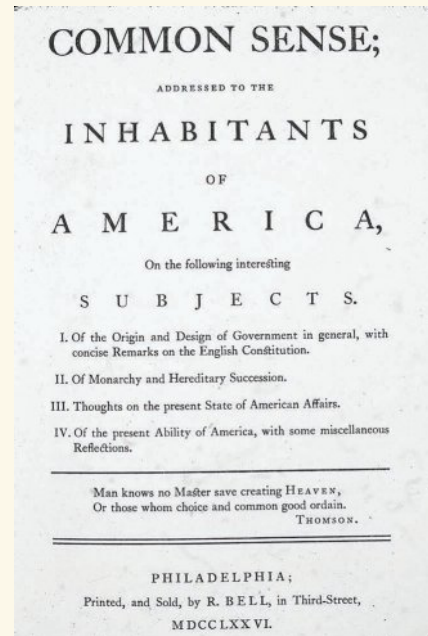
◀ **Source 4.25** A document from 14 February 1775, requesting that all 'commanding Officers of each Regiment of Minute Men' review the number of men and weapons they have available, and to report the numbers to the Provincial Congress.

4.10

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL

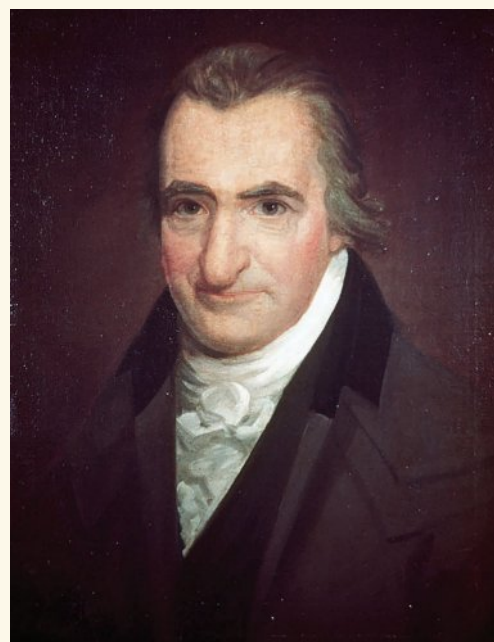


Thomas Paine (1737–1809)



▲ Source 4.26 Left: Thomas Paine, by George Romney, circa 1790; Right: Paine's famous pamphlet from 1776, *Common Sense*

- Thomas Paine was a disaffected Englishman who came to America in 1774 and became one of the most influential writers of the revolutionary period.
- His pamphlet *Common Sense*, published in 1776, came at a crucial stage in the Revolution where people were coming to believe that war with Britain could destroy them all. *Common Sense* would sway the argument for independence.
- *Common Sense* brought the ideology of the Revolution to the common man. Paine wrote his justification for revolution in simple and accessible language, which exposed revolutionary ideas and ideals to a much wider group of people than the intelligentsia that was prosecuting the struggle.
- Keeping the price down made it even more accessible, and it was an instant best seller, with 100 000 copies sold in the first month and half a million by the end of the Revolutionary War. Historian Gordon Wood claimed it was 'the most incendiary and popular pamphlet of the entire revolutionary era'.
- Washington had Paine travel with the Continental Army at one stage. Paine's brilliant *American Crisis*, written in December 1776, was read to soldiers on the eve of the Battle of Trenton, and had an astonishing effect.
- Paine participated in the Congress, sitting on the Congressional Committee on Foreign Affairs and travelled to France with Benjamin Franklin to raise funds for the war effort.



▲ Source 4.27 Thomas Paine, by John Wesley Jarvis circa 1805



AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

While Paine wrote further books, including *The Age of Reason* (1794) and *Agrarian Justice* (1797), his later years were obscure. By the time he died in New York in 1809, he was almost forgotten. Only six people turned up to his funeral.

4.11

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL

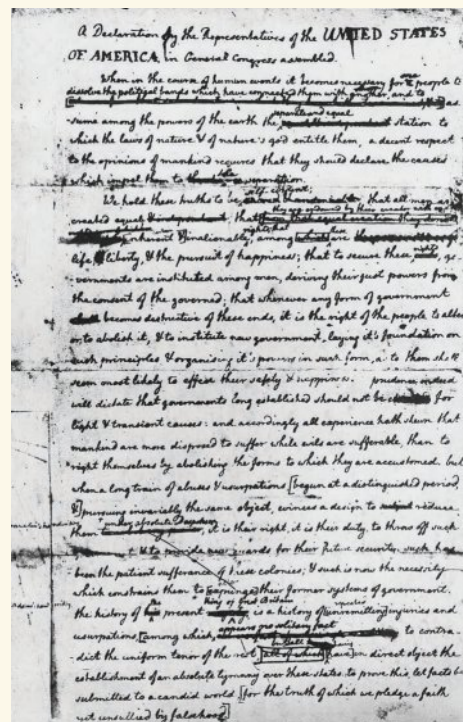


Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)

- One of the outstanding Founding Fathers, Thomas Jefferson significantly contributed to the Revolution through his prolific writings in the period.
- An Enlightenment-influenced scholar, he heavily used the writings of Locke, Rousseau and his own countrymen to form his argument against the British Empire.
- He was a member of the Virginian House of Burgesses and a delegate to the Second Continental Congress.
- In 1774 he penned *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*, arguing the illegality of the Coercive Acts and justifying the Boston Tea Party, thus creating support for Boston and the Revolution in the South.
- At the Second Continental Congress in 1775 he wrote *Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms*, justifying an armed resistance against Britain that helped to sway the contentious vote to form the Continental Army.
- By 1776 he had written some of the best parts (particularly the Preamble) of the *Declaration of Independence*, making a grand statement about universal human rights and calling for final dissolution of all political bonds with Britain.
- His *Declaration of Independence* paved the way for the creation of the United States of America as a separate nation, and for Congress to assert itself as its rightful government.



▲ Source 4.28 Thomas Jefferson by Mather Brown, 1786



► Source 4.29 A draft of the Declaration written by Thomas Jefferson in 1776

4.12 The *Declaration of Independence*, 1776



▲ **Source 4.31** *Declaration of Independence* by John Trumbull, 1818. For an interactive widget showing the key people in this painting, please see the Interactive Textbook.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Some of the most famous lines in the *Declaration of Independence* were inspired by Virginia's Declaration of Rights by George Mason (profiled in Chapter 7).

KEY EVENT



The *Declaration of Independence* is one of the cornerstone documents in American history. The Preamble is mainly Jefferson's doing and brilliantly captures a statement of universal human rights that revolutionaries have been using to overthrow unjust regimes for more than two centuries:

KEY QUOTE



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.

Recalling your reading on the Enlightenment in Chapter 1, it is clear how Jefferson has incorporated the work of Locke and Rousseau in the Preamble, and these ideals form the basis of many of the arguments used against Britain (and especially George III) in the rest of the document. In fact, most of the *Declaration of Independence* is a list of grievances against the King, accusing him of breaking the social contract and stating that, as a consequence, the people have the right to form a new government.

Essentially, the Declaration was an attempt to dissolve all political, economic and social ties with Britain, and provide a formal separation that implicitly is also a formal declaration of war.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

FOCUS QUESTION 4.1

ISBN 978-1-108-88706-9



▲ **Source 4.32** George III's statue, erected in New York City in 1766 to celebrate his greatness in repealing the *Stamp Act*, is pulled down, melted and turned into bullets for the Continental Army in 1776. This is a coloured engraving by Franz Xaver Habermann in the 18th century.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

After watching the statue of George III come down, Lieutenant Isaac Bangs of the Massachusetts militia wrote grimly to a friend: 'The lead we hear is to be run up into musket balls for the Yankees, when it is hoped that the emanations from the leaden George will make deep impressions in the bodies of some of his redcoated and Tory subjects'.

HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS

Upon the toppling of the statue of George III, a common bit of folklore states that the statue was divided into smaller pieces and shipped to Connecticut to make bullets for the Patriots. Other parts were taken by Loyalists – for example, the head of George III was recovered and sent to England. Other fragments have been found buried in Connecticut, leading some to believe these were kept by Connecticut Loyalists.



▲ **Source 4.33** A fragment of the horse's tail from the statue of George III in New York City.



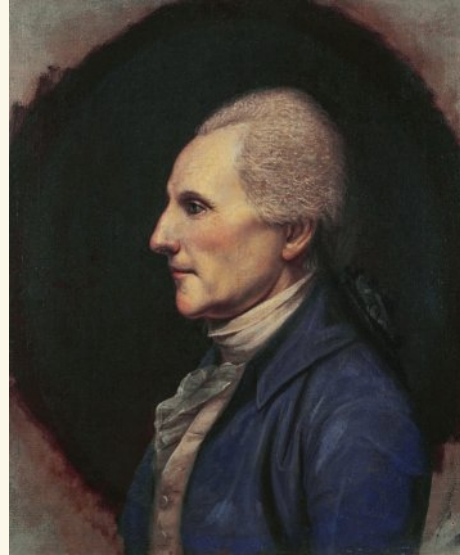
4.13

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



Richard Henry Lee (1732–94)

- Born in Westmoreland County, Virginia, in 1732, Richard Henry Lee was a Virginian statesman and radical voice in the early days of the Revolution.
- He organised anti-*Stamp Act* petitions and boycotts in Virginia in 1765, helped to form the Virginian Committee of Correspondence in 1773, and helped to organise a Day of 'Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer' in 1774 in response to the introduction of the *Coercive Acts* against Boston.
- In June 1776, he famously moved a motion at the Second Continental Congress that the colonies declare themselves independent of the British Empire.
- A critic of the proposed Constitution, he declined to attend the Constitutional Convention in 1787 and is considered a possible author of the anti-Ratification pamphlet *Letters from the Federal Farmer* in the same year.
- He served in the Virginian House of Burgesses (1758–75), was a delegate to Congress (1774–79 and 1784–87, serving as the sixth President of Congress in 1785) and eventually became a US Senator (1789–92).



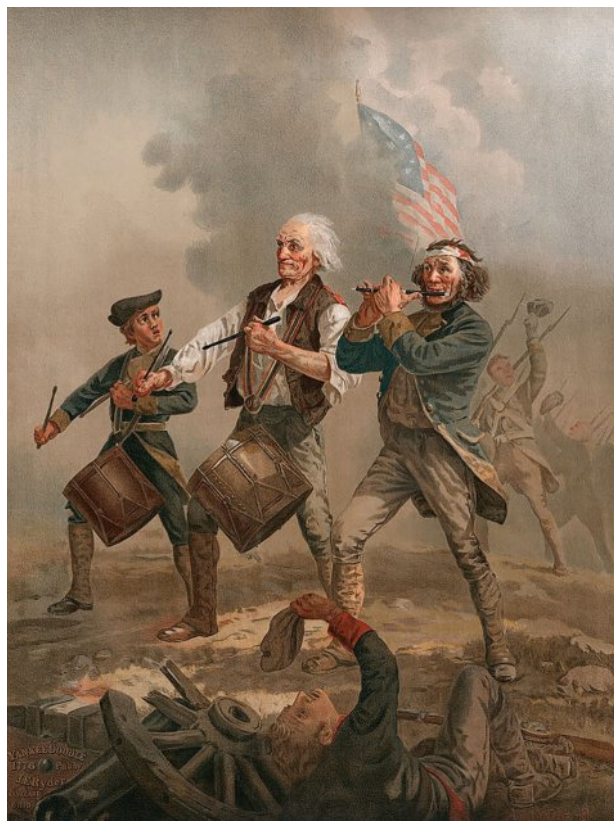
▲ Source 4.34 Portrait of Richard Henry Lee

4.14 American nationalism

One of the most surprising elements of the Revolution was the growing emergence of a separate American identity by people who had traditionally considered themselves to be British. Most of the colonists were English, or of English origin, but in the face of salutary neglect (discussed in Section 1.8) and then a punitive British taxation regime, they felt they had become disconnected. For those in colonies not of British heritage – including numbers from Scotland, Ireland, Holland, France and Germany – the emerging American patriotism transcended these cultural and ethnic boundaries.

The ability to make something of oneself in the New World was also transformative. Fewer European constraints, a better diet, a longer life expectancy, better literacy levels, a better standard of living, available land to work and endless employment opportunities helped white males to achieve social mobility levels unthinkable in Europe. Benjamin Franklin's transformation was a case in point.

► Source 4.35 The famous *Spirit of '76* image by Archibald MacNeal Willard, circa 1875, which captures the Revolutionary spirit of American nationalism.



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Originally a staunch Loyalist, after many years of travel through poverty-stricken parts of the Empire (such as Ireland), he re-evaluated his position and became a critical figure in the Revolution.

With the benefit of hindsight, one can see many of the critical moments on the path of American nationalism, particularly the failed Albany Plan in 1754, the successful Stamp Act Congress in 1765, the Continental Congresses of 1774 and 1775, the formation of the Continental Army in 1775 and the eventual *Declaration of Independence* in 1776. These indicated that on several major fronts, colonial boundaries were being transcended by a new national mindset and entity: the American nation. Britain had unwittingly created the foundations for a new nation that would come to dominate the world in the 20th century and the early 21st century.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 4.2: HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION



Regarding the *Declaration of Independence*, historian Francis Jennings has called it 'a magnificent statement of principle and fact that shows how strongly minds can be swayed by mere words when crafted by a master'. He argues that though colonists often blamed British politicians for their ill treatment in the 1700s, by the time the Declaration was being drafted by Thomas Jefferson in 1776, 'it had become clear that Parliament did what George III wanted done'. Jefferson therefore 'understood that no arguments could sway American opinions as well as the actions of George III'. Jennings first directly quotes Jefferson's words in the Declaration:

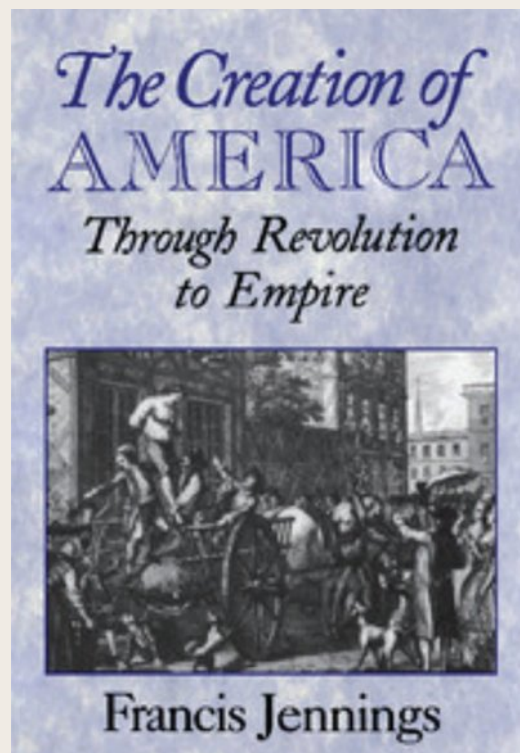
The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States.

Jennings continues, summarising the complaints of the Americans:

[King George] had assented to Parliament's 'acts of pretended Legislation,' besides refusing to assent to proper laws, 'the most wholesome and necessary for the public good'. He had dissolved colonial legislatures 'for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.' He had 'made Judges dependent on his Will alone.' He had harassed the people with 'a multitude of New Officers' and 'swarms of Offices.' He had sent standing armies 'to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.'

...

This royal criminal had 'abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the Lives of our people' and 'He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny ... with circumstances of Cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages.'



▲ Source 4.36 Francis Jennings' *The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire*

continued...



...continued

Jennings then presents a critique:

Even as propaganda, that last was a bit shrill. Jefferson knew history, and circumstances of cruelty and perfidy were among history's most common phenomena. But propaganda aims at effect rather than accuracy.

...

Maybe one should not raise questions about great propaganda documents. Despite its power, the Declaration was not perfect even in its bill of complaints. It is hardly necessary to note again the abysmal fault in its 'self-evident' truth 'that all men are created equal' coming from the pen of a slaveholder.

Source 4.37 Jennings, F., *The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2000, pp. 168–9

Write a short paragraph response for each of the following questions:

- 1 Why do you think Jennings calls the *Declaration of Independence* a 'great propaganda document'?
- 2 According to Jennings, the *Declaration* is both a 'magnificent statement' and a 'great propaganda document'. Can you explain how this is possible?
- 3 Though he calls Jefferson a 'master' writer, how does Jennings question the ethics of Jefferson being the author of the *Declaration*?

4.15 How did environmental conditions contribute to revolutionary events?

A large amount of discussion has been had on the political, social, cultural and economic factors that helped stoke the fires of the American Revolution, but little on the environmental contributions. In what ways did the environmental conditions of pre-1776 contribute to the outbreak of revolutionary events?

Distance

The sheer spatial distance between the Thirteen Colonies themselves, and between these colonies and England, had a significant impact on how revolutionary ideas were able to develop.

Internally, the distance between the colonies meant that some developed independently and differently to others. The southern colonies, due to their plantation economy, had much more widespread use of slavery compared to the north. The failure of Benjamin Franklin's Albany Plan to unite the colonies against the French in 1754 (see Chapter 1) reveals how the colonies had their own priorities above working together. These internal disputes could be seen as inhibiting revolutionary fervour, until England became more involved in the affairs of the colonies.

Externally, in terms of an international context, the sheer geographical distance between the American colonies and England meant that any armed conflict England committed itself to would cost the crown greatly in both time and resources. For example, during the French and Indian War, the historian Daniel Baugh estimates more than £45 million of England's £130 million war debt was spent on the navy alone. In response to this debt, the 150-year period known as salutary neglect ended and England began to focus attention again on America.

The spatial distance between America and England also caused problems when it came to representation. One of the main reasons representation was so important was that the colonists wanted to feel heard and participate in the governing of their newly founded colonies. Instead, they received multiple punitive measures in the form of Acts and taxes. The fact that these measures were delivered from England, far removed from the day-to-day activities of those living in America, only added to anger and resentments in the colonies.

Natural resources



▲ Source 4.38 Niagara Falls, painted by Richard Wilson, c. 1770–80

The unique North American landscape was full of natural resources that colonists were eager to exploit. The middle colonies supplied wheat and lumber to Europe and the West Indies, while the plantations of Virginia and North and South Carolina provided tobacco and rice throughout the Atlantic. The setup of the triangular trade between the colonies, Europe and Africa (as seen in Chapter 1) boosted the economy of the American colonies, making them more self-sufficient. However, west of the Appalachian Mountains lay further territory seen to be lush and fertile, particularly for animals and the fur and skin trade. This was land forbidden to the thirteen colonies by the Proclamation Line of 1763, creating tension between the colonists who wanted to expand and the British law that restricted this.

The necessity of guerrilla warfare

The land also provided tactical military advantages. As historian Jeremy Land notes: 'Conventional military forces could not penetrate the forests without taking weeks and months to lay out traversable roads. Therefore, when fighting broke out between France and Britain on the frontier, conventional military methods were ineffective.'

The military on all sides had to adapt to this new environment, encouraging a method of conflict that focused more on guerrilla warfare. This was a style of fighting that involved small-scale skirmishes and ambushes instead of traditional all-out warfare. The First Nations peoples of the time, who fought on both sides of the French and Indian War, had a deep understanding of the land and employed these tactics to their advantage. Washington saw the effectiveness of First Nations peoples' methods firsthand, and incorporated some into his own battle plans.

Guerrilla warfare was crucial in battles throughout the Revolutionary War, including the Battle of Lexington-Concord, and was only effective due to the environmental conditions of North America at the time.



▲ Source 4.39 18th-century engraving of the battle of Concord Bridge

Weather

The southern colonies were prone to heat, humidity and pouring rains, meaning soldiers on all sides could fall to heatstroke, sickness and poor morale. This meant that a majority of military effort was instead focused on the northern colonies, and in particular around Boston.

However, the northern colonies had their own unique problems caused by the climate. Johnathan T. Engel describes the problems faced by Washington once he assumed command of the American forces in 1775:



As summer moved into fall, Washington worried that a burst of especially rainy or cold weather might cause his troops to disperse. Rainy, unpleasant weather did more than tempt men to leave the army: it ruined the army's precious, limited stocks of gunpowder, without which it could not fight. Through a long wet period, Washington struggled to protect his army's gunpowder, its very ability to fight, or, failing that, to obtain more powder to replace it. He also faced a shortage of the firewood necessary for maintaining the army in the field through the chilly winter.

Source 4.40 Engel, J.T., *The Force of Nature: The Impact of Weather on Armies during the American War of Independence, 1775–1781*, Florida State University, 2001, p. 5

British forces faced the exact same challenges in both the north and south, and so the weather could easily turn the tide of battle one way or the other. While the importance of weather conditions would come into clearer view after 1776 (most infamously during the intense winter during the Battle of Valley Forge), it was still a significant factor in determining how the Revolution played out.



◀ **Source 4.41** Continental soldiers struggle to transport captured British cannons during the winter of 1775–76. 19th-century engraving by Felix Octavius Carr Daley

FOCUS QUESTIONS 4.2

- 1 What were some of the environmental factors that contributed to the outbreak of revolution?
- 2 Can you think of any other environmental factors that may have played a role?

THE STORY SO FAR

- The Boston Tea Party of 1773 provoked a heavy-handed response by Britain to punish Boston. However, the subsequent *Coercive Acts* of 1774 actually served to galvanise the Thirteen Colonies against the British, a stance that culminated in the Revolutionary War.
- Revolutionary ideology spread from London via the Whig political movement to the Thirteen Colonies, and back again. Ideas, especially about the concept of liberty, were transmitted across the Atlantic via political pamphlets and powerful visual representations.
- The Continental Congress operated as a quasi-federal American government in direct opposition to Britain's control of the colonies. By July 1776 it would be the official American Government.
- The Revolutionary War promised to be a test of wills and endurance. Congress did not know it at the time, but the appointment of George Washington would be a masterstroke that ultimately delivered victory to the colonies.
- The publication of *Common Sense* and the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776 helped to win over an ambivalent population within the Thirteen Colonies and set the stage for a new nation to be born. The new American nationalism would develop slowly and be soundly tested in the crucible of war.

Use the QR code or visit the Interactive Textbook and watch the video summarising the chapter.



Develop your historical understanding

Define key terms

Write explanations defining each of the following:

Significant ideas and events	Significant individuals
Coercive Acts (1774)	Lord North
Fairfax Resolves (1774)	Benjamin Franklin
Suffolk Resolves (1774)	Thomas Paine
Olive Branch Petition (1775)	Thomas Jefferson
First Continental Congress	Richard Henry Lee
Second Continental Congress	
Powder Alarms	
Battle of Lexington-Concord (1775)	
Battle of Bunker Hill (1775)	
<i>Common Sense</i> (1776)	
<i>Declaration of Independence</i> (1776)	
American nationalism	
Continental Army	

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Establishing historical significance

Explain how the actions of the First and Second Continental Congresses in 1774 and 1775 contributed to the development of the American Revolution.

Constructing historical arguments

British measures to gain more revenue from the American colonies were intended to solve its financial problems, but ultimately caused a revolutionary situation.

To what extent do you agree with this evaluation? Provide reasons for your answer.



Analysing historical sources as evidence

In the *Declaration of Independence*, Thomas Jefferson outlines the crimes the colonists believe George III has committed against them as follows:

He [George III] has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:

- *For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:*
- *For protecting them, by mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states:*
- *For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world:*
- *For imposing taxes on us without our consent:*
- *For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury:*
- *For transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offenses:*
- *For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule in these colonies:*
- *For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments:*
- *For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.*

Source 4.42 Excerpt from *Declaration of Independence*, Thomas Jefferson

- 1 Give three examples of British actions which are cited by Jefferson as an infringement of American Rights and liberties.
- 2 How might have George III perceived Jefferson's criticisms?

Using quotes as sources

Write a sentence using a short phrase from one of the quotes below, or contrast the views from a few quotes. You can also use any of the quotes used throughout this chapter. Quotes can be used directly or paraphrased into your own words.

Coercive Acts

However so far as the rebellious colonies were concerned, the Quebec Act was one more outrageous Coercive Act emanating from London. Liberties for Catholics ... was an evil device ... against the disaffected Protestant colonies. **Francis Jennings**

The Tea Party led to the Coercive Acts by Parliament, virtually establishing martial law in Massachusetts, dissolving the colonial government, closing the port in Boston, and sending in troops. Still, town meetings and mass meetings rose in opposition. **Howard Zinn**

First Congressional Congress

Such was the inception of the Continental Congress of 1774. It was the last achievement of the Sons of Liberty of New York. **George Bancroft**

The Continental Congress which governed the colonies through the war was dominated by rich men, linked together in factions and compacts by business and family connections. **Howard Zinn**

The colonial system was unsalvageable, and proposed a plan calling for a new American government. **Alan Axelrod**

The Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence set forth a philosophy of human rights ... that was essential in giving the American Revolution a universal appeal. **Gordon Wood**

The Revolutionaries had simply taken up one intellectual position after another as it suited their needs. **Edward Countryman**

The Declaration, like Locke's Second Treatise, talked about government and political rights, but ignored the existing inequalities in property. **Howard Zinn**

Online research suggestions

This activity provides students and teachers with links to valuable resources available online. These suggestions have also been briefly annotated to explain their value.

- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. History: Revolutions – Exams and Examination Reports (access via <http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/9507>).
Reviewing past exam papers is a must. You must have practice at completing Sections of the exam under timing. Have your teacher mark these attempts for you. For examples of exam style questions and sample answers, see Chapters 5 and 9.
- Alpha History: practice exams (access via <http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/9504>).
These exams are extremely challenging and not for the faint-hearted. You may need your teacher's help in deciphering some of these questions as they are pitched at a university student level. Note that practice exams are available via subscription only (the rest of the site is free).
- *John Adams*, HBO series, 2008, Episode 1 'Independence'.
This episode includes the establishment of both Continental Congresses, the operation of the unstable quasi-federal American Government, examples of colonies/states protecting their own interests, disputes between Adams and Dickinson, the formation of the Continental Army and the drafting of the *Declaration of Independence*.
- *Liberty*, Public Broadcasting Service series, 1997, Episode 3 'The Times that Try Men's Souls'.



5

AREA OF STUDY 1, 1754 – 4 JULY 1776 EXAM QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR SECTION A & B VCE REVOLUTIONS

An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.

– BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, *POOR RICHARD'S ALMANACK*

Overview

This chapter will provide some guidance on how to prepare for and complete the VCE Revolutions paper for the American Revolution in Section A or B of Area of Study 1: Causes of Revolution (1754 to 4 July 1776) as outlined in the current Study Design 2022–2026. The suggestions that follow can assist you to identify what you need to know, how you can revise and what the examiner is looking for in your final examination. The sample questions and responses can also provide models for responding to exam-style questions and can help you to identify how to structure a response, how to incorporate primary source evidence and historical interpretations and the kinds of arguments that you could make.

The examiner is looking for students to demonstrate a strong command of the key knowledge points identified in the study design as summarised below.

The American Revolution from 1754 to 4 July 1776 (French and Indian War to the signing of the <i>Declaration of Independence</i> 1776)			
Events and Conditions that led to the outbreak of Revolution:	Ideas that played a significant role in challenging the existing order:	Individuals who challenged or maintained the power of the existing order	Popular movements which mobilised society and challenged the existing order:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colonial experiences British mercantilist policy The French and Indian War British management of the colonies The <i>Proclamation Act</i> British tax revenue acts and colonial responses to these acts Objections to taxation without representation The Boston Massacre The <i>Coercive Acts</i> Powder Alarms The First and Second Continental Congresses Battles of Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill <i>Declaration of Independence</i> 	Enlightenment ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Rights Representative government Republicanism Liberty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> King George III George Washington Samuel Adams John Hancock John Adams Thomas Paine Thomas Jefferson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patriots Sons of Liberty Daughters of Liberty Committees of Correspondence Provincial Congresses

◀ Source 5.0 Portrait of Benjamin Franklin, by David Martin, circa 1767

In order to do this, it is important to develop a strategy for revising effectively. While this will look different for everybody, you may like to consider the model below:

Step 1: Audit

You will want to begin your revision by ensuring that you have notes that you can draw upon for each key knowledge point. You will want to utilise a table or checklist like the one below to methodically check off which points you have covered and which you might need to revisit. As you are working through the checklist, fill in any gaps in your notes as you go.

Step 2: Synthesise

The second step in this process is to organise and centralise your class notes into a uniform format. This will make your revision process much quicker, but it will also help you to refamiliarise yourself with all of the things you have learnt from Area of Study 1. You will have your own preferences for how you want to do this, but you want to make sure that your system includes a way to summarise key facts, primary source evidence, historical interpretations and comment on the significance of each.

Here is an example of a revision table that you may find useful:

Area of Study 1: Causes of the American Revolution				
1754 – 4 July 1776				
Event, idea, individual or group	Facts: What happened?	Evidence: How do we know?	Interpretations: What do historians say about it?	Significance: Why does it matter?
e.g. French and Indian War				

Step 3: Practice

Once you have synthesised your notes, it is time to begin practicing exam-style questions. Common question types include completing a Source Analysis or writing a historical essay. Therefore, you can target these two skills in your practice writing. Your teacher will be able to provide you with sample questions to assist in this, but you can also brainstorm possible questions based on what has been asked previously.

Step 4: Seek feedback

This part of the process is very important because it helps you to identify areas of strength and target areas that you can develop further. While your teacher is the obvious person to help you in this, you can also swap work with a classmate or use the marking guides in the next section to help you to polish your own work.

5.1 Section A of the examination

The exam paper is structured in two parts. Section A presents you with a source-based task, which covers both Outcomes 1 & 2 of the study design. You will be asked to answer questions (with subparts) on both of the revolutions you have studied over the year.

Section A: 50 marks (25+25)

Revolution topic 1 (i.e. America)

- Source Analysis (25 Marks)

Revolution topic 2 (i.e. Russia, France or China)

- Source Analysis (25 Marks)

Section B: Choose ONE revolution

- Historical Essay (20 Marks)

This means that you will be dealing with Area of Study 1: Causes of the American Revolution in the form of a source analysis and also potentially an essay.

For the source analysis questions in Section A, The examiner will generally present you with 2 or 3 sources that may take the form of a primary source document, a graphic or an extract from the work of a historian. You will be asked multiple questions that are weighted between 5 and 10 marks.

The examiner will use the following terminology to guide your discussion:

Identify	Just name the thing(s) asked by the question
Describe/Outline	Describe the main features
Compare	Establish points of similarity and difference between two things
Explain	Establish a relationship between things e.g. cause and effect
Analyse	Break into components and explain them. E.g. consider long-term causes, short-term causes and trigger causes
Evaluate	Make a judgement. Examine and judge the merit or significance of something including events, ideas, people and movements
How important ...	Make a judgement about importance (pivotal, instrumental, highly, partially, not very, not at all) and justify your position
To what extent ...	Indicate your level of agreement (completely, mostly, partly, not at all) and justify your position.

For a 5-mark response, the examiner will generally ask you to identify, describe, outline or compare and they may also ask you to draw upon your *own knowledge* in addition to the sources. You will be expected to fill around half an A4 page.

For a 10-mark response, the examiner will generally ask you to explain, analyse or make a more critical judgement in regard to cause and consequence or significance. They will ask you to draw upon evidence in your response which should include some reference to the sources provided but also go beyond these and utilise other primary source evidence and historical interpretations.



Sample questions and annotated answers

In the following section are some sample questions and answers that are included as examples of the types of questions asked in Section A: Source Analysis. Some examples of 5 mark questions and 10 mark questions are provided.

EXAMPLE 1

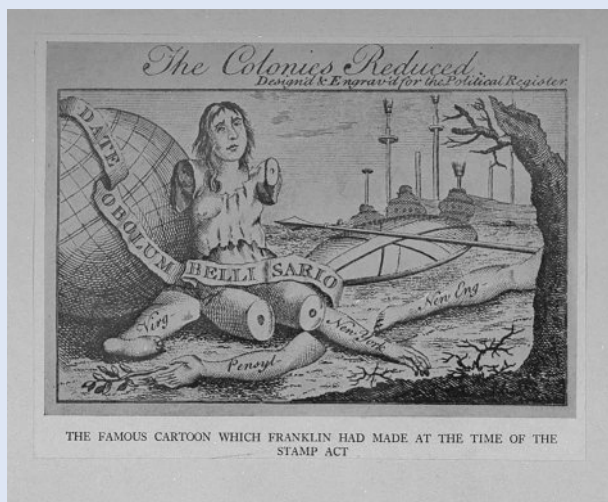
Source A: Extracts from the *Stamp Act* (1765)

By an act made in the last session of Parliament, several duties were granted, continued, and appropriated, towards defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing, the British colonies and plantations in America ...

It is just and necessary that provisions be made for raising a further revenue within your Majesty's dominions in America, towards defraying the said expenses: be it enacted that there be raised, levied, collected, and paid unto his Majesty, his heirs, and successors, throughout the colonies and plantations in America which now are, or hereafter may be, under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs and successor ... stamp duties on legal papers, commercial papers, liquor licenses, land instruments, indentures, cards, dice, pamphlets, newspapers, advertisements, almanacks, academic degrees, and appointments to office.

And be it further enacted ... that all the monies which shall arise by the several rates and duties hereby granted (except the necessary charges or raising, collecting, recovering, answering, paying, and accounting for the same, and the necessary charges from time to time incurred in relation to this act and the execution thereof) shall be paid into the receipt of his Majesty's exchequer, and shall be entered separate and apart from all other monies, and shall be there reserved to be from time to time disposed of by parliament, towards further defraying the necessary expenses of defending, protecting, and securing, the said colonies and plantations ...

Source B: *The Colonies Reduced*. Design'd and Engrav'd for the Political Register, 2 3/8 x 3 7/8 inches, 1767 – Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress. Benjamin Franklin arranged this image to be printed and circulated in British Parliament.



Source C: Resolutions of the Stamp Act Congress (1765)

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

That the late Act of Parliament, entitled, An Act for granting and applying certain Stamp Duties ... 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.

That the duties imposed by several late Acts of Parliament, from the peculiar circumstances of these colonies, will be extremely burdensome and grievous; and from the scarcity of specie, the payment of them absolutely impracticable.

That as the profits of the trade of these colonies ultimately centre in Great-Britain, to pay for the manufactures which they are obliged to take from thence, they eventually contribute very largely to all supplies granted there to the Crown.

That the restrictions imposed by several late Acts of Parliament, on the trade of these colonies, will render them unable to purchase the manufactures of Great Britain.

That the increase, prosperity, and happiness of these colonies, depend on the full and free enjoyment of their rights and liberties, and an intercourse with Great Britain mutually affectionate and advantageous.

1a Using Source 1 and your own knowledge, describe why the Stamp Act was enacted in 1765. **(5 Marks)**

This response begins with a clear topic sentence that responds directly to the question asked.

In **bold** you can see where the student has used precise and accurate own knowledge to contextualise the source.

In *italics* you can see how they have used extracts from the source.

The passing of the Stamp Act in **March 1765** was designed to levy a modest sum of **60 000 pounds** in order to pay for '*the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing*' the American Colonies. The Stamp Act was designed to apply to a wide variety of paper goods, ranging from '*legal papers, commercial papers*' to '*cards, dice*' but was considered a **minor reform by British officials where Stamp Duties had been applied since 1689**. Whilst the British had been saddled with a debt of over **130 million pounds** from the Seven Years War, the funds raised by the Stamp Act were to be held '*separate and apart from all other monies*' with the expressed purpose of helping to fund colonial affairs, the stationing of troops and administration of the colonies.

1b Using Sources B and C and your own knowledge, outline why the Stamp Act was perceived as an infringement on the rights of the colonists. **(5 Marks)**

This response begins with a clear topic sentence that responds directly to the question asked.

In **bold** you can see where the student has used precise and accurate own knowledge to contextualise the source.

In *italics* you can see how they have used extracts from the source.

When news of the Stamp Act reached the colonies in **April 1765** it was regarded as an infringement upon their constitutional rights for representation in the British parliament, and by extension the requirement that '*that no taxes be imposed on them, but with their own consent*' (Source C). Despite the fact that the Stamp Act would only raise a modest sum of **60 000 pounds**, it was perceived as '*burdensome and grievous*' (Source C) as it coincided with two other acts: **The Currency Act of 1764** which had led to a 'scarcity of specie' (Source C) in the Colony and the formation of **Vice Admiralty courts** which extended from the **Sugar Act of 1764** and removed the requirement for a trial by jury which demonstrated '*a manifest tendency to subvert the rights and liberties of the colonists*' (Source C). While Britain considered the colonists to be **virtually represented** in British Parliament, the Stamp Act gave the opportunity for colonists to demand more given their value within the **mercantilist system** which '*the profits of the trade of these colonies ... to pay for the manufactures which they are obliged to take from thence. contribute very largely to all supplies granted there to the Crown*'. Finally, the Stamp Act alienated the colonists from Britain as evidenced by the cartoon depicting Britain reflecting on her reduced empire. *Idle ships sit in the harbour signifying the potential consequences on trade that could eventuate from the Stamp Act, with the dismembered limbs of the colonies are strewn around, signifying the division caused by the Acts of British Parliament.*

continued...



...continued

- 1c Evaluate the significance of the Stamp Act in contributing to the outbreak of revolution. Use evidence in your response.

(10 Marks)

This response begins with a clear topic sentence that responds directly to the question asked.

In **bold** you can see where the student has used evidence throughout.

In *italics* you can see where the student has engaged in historical thinking such as identifying cause and consequence and significance.

The Stamp Act of 1765 had a profound impact on the relationship between Britain and her North American colonies as it revealed fundamentally different ideas about representation and rights which culminated in 'a crisis which had no precedent' (Middlekauf). The universal application of the Stamp Act, which covered such things as 'stamp duties on legal papers, commercial papers, liquor licenses, land instruments ... cards, dice, pamphlets, newspapers' raised the hackles of a wide variety of people from lawyers to dockhands, as well as merchants who were still griping about the greater regulation of trade and the Sugar Act. *Because of this* campaigns of non-compliance were initiated which culminated in the harassment and intimidation of royal officials. In August 1765 effigies of Andrew Oliver, the official appointed to implement the Stamp Act in Massachusetts, were hung and burned from the Liberty tree near Boston Common, with the angry mob then burglarising his home and subsequently forcing his resignation. This movement was led by the Boston Sons of Liberty who gained influence as a result and set in motion a series of popular movements. By November 1765, the Sons of Liberty had chapters in New York, Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina and groups of middle class women were organising meetings to facilitate non importation in protest of the Stamp Act. As articulated by Gordon Wood, the Stamp Act 'aroused and unified Americans as no previous political event had' with dissent spreading throughout the colonies. In Virginia, Patrick Henry introduced a series of five resolves that rejected any British authority to tax the colonies. He attacked the premise of virtual representation explaining that the colonists were entitled to 'all liberties, privileges and immunities' (Virginia Resolves) as the people of Great Britain, and perhaps more importantly that any tax applied to the colony should be consented to by the colony, coining the term 'no taxation without representation'. This led to the Stamp Act Congress in October 1765 which produced 'Declaration of Rights and Grievances' extracted in Source C, which argued that the Stamp Act had usurped colonial rights. *This is significant because it marks the first time that a body purporting to represent the American Colonies stood in direct opposition to British Policy and set a precedent for events to follow. As a result of ongoing opposition, Parliament repealed the Stamp Act in January 1766 but the damage was already done. Hence, the Stamp Act was a 'catalyst, touching off fundamental change' (Brogan) and setting in motion a chain of events that would culminate in revolution.*

EXAMPLE 2

Source A: Extracts from the *Coercive Acts* (1774)

Whereas dangerous commotions and insurrections have been fomented and raised in the town of Boston in the Province of Massachusetts Bay in New England, by diverse ill-affected persons, to the subversion of his Majesty's Government, and to the utter destruction of the public peace, and good order of the said town ... in which commotions and insurrections certain valuable cargoes of teas, being the property of the East India Company, and on board certain vessels lying within the bay or harbour of Boston, were seized and destroyed ... and whereas in the present condition of the said town and harbour, the commerce of his Majesty's subjects cannot be safely carried on there ...

From and after the first day of June 1774, it shall not be lawful for any person or persons whatsoever, to load or put, or cause or procure to be loaded or put off or from any quay, wharf, or other place, within the said town of Boston, or in or upon any part of the shore of the bay, commonly called the Harbour of Boston ... or in or upon any island, creek, landing place, bank, or other place, within the said bay, or headlands, into any ship, vessel, lighter, boat, or bottom, any goods, wares, or merchandise, whatsoever, to be transported or carried into any other country, province, or place whatsoever, or into any other part of the said Province of the Massachusetts Bay, in New England ...

Source B: *The Able Doctor, or America Swallowing the Bitter Draught*, Cartoon from 1774Source C: Extract from the *Articles of Association*, 1774

Several late, cruel, and oppressive acts have been passed, respecting the town of Boston and the Massachusetts-Bay, and also an act for extending the province of Quebec, so as to border on the western frontiers of these colonies, establishing an arbitrary government therein, and discouraging the settlement of British subjects in that wide extended country ...

To obtain redress of these grievances, which threaten destruction to the lives, liberty, and property of his majesty's subjects, in North-America, we are of opinion, that a non-importation, non-consumption, and non-exportation agreement, faithfully adhered to, will prove the most speedy, effectual, and peaceable measure ...

That from and after the first day of December next, we will not import, into British America, from Great-Britain or Ireland, any goods, wares, or merchandise whatsoever ...

We will, in our several stations, encourage frugality, economy, and industry, and promote agriculture, arts and the manufactures of this country, especially that of wool; and will discountenance and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation ...

continued...



...continued

That a committee be chosen in every county, city, and town, by those who are qualified to vote for representatives in the legislature, whose business it shall be attentively to observe the conduct of all persons touching this association; and when it shall be made to appear, to the satisfaction of a majority of any such committee, that any person within the limits of their appointment has violated this association, that such majority do forthwith cause the truth of the case to be published in the gazette; to the end, that all such foes to the rights of British-America may be publicly known, and universally condemned as the enemies of American liberty; and thenceforth we respectively will break off all dealings with him or her.

1a Using Source A and your own knowledge, outline why the Coercive Acts were introduced in 1774.

(5 marks)

This response begins with a clear topic sentence that responds directly to the question asked.

In **bold** you can see where the student has used precise and accurate own knowledge to contextualise the source.

In *italics* you can see how they have used extracts from the source.

The Coercive Acts were a direct response to the '*dangerous commotions and insurrections*' in Boston which had culminated in the **Tea Party of 16th December 1773**. Instigated by the **Sons of Liberty**, described in source A as '*diverse ill-affected persons*', **342 chests of tea** were '*were seized and destroyed*', dumped into the Harbour in protest of the **Tea Act of May 1763** which **had granted the British East India Company the right to ship tea directly to American cities, bypassing colonial merchants**. While the Tea Act actually cut the price of tea to the very **low cost of 9 pence per pound**, it incited '*commotions and insurrections*' which **spread to the colonies of New York and Pennsylvania with protestors leaving cartons to rot in locked warehouses**. The first of the 'Coercive Acts', the **Boston Port Act was enacted on 30 March 1774**, which closed all docks to private shipping and forbade colonists '*to load or put, or cause or procure to be loaded or put off or from any quay, wharf, or other place, within the said town of Boston, or in or upon any part of the shore of the bay, commonly called the Harbour of Boston*'. In effect, these Acts were a punitive measure to bring Massachusetts back into line and prevent further insurrection and destruction.

1b Using Source B and Source C and your own knowledge, describe how the colonists responded to the Coercive Acts.

(5 Marks)

This response begins with a clear topic sentence that responds directly to the question asked.

In **bold** you can see where the student has used precise and accurate own knowledge to contextualise the source.

In *italics* you can see how they have used extracts from the source.

The Coercive Acts were viewed by the colonists as fundamentally '*cruel, and oppressive*' (Source C) and as a result reinvigorated the **Committees of Correspondence and prompted the gathering of the First Continental Congress in September 1774**. Following the introduction of the Coercive Acts and the growing resentment of the occupation of Boston by **Thomas Gage and his redcoats**, there began a **proliferation of ideas via Committees of Correspondence and anti-British propaganda**. Source B depicts a violation of the colonies through the Coercive Acts as the allegorical lady liberty, is depicted as being force fed a '*bitter draught*' while being restrained against her will. This source is typical of the sentiments expressed by the colonists through the network of correspondence facilitated by **Samuel Adams**. In addition, the First Continental Congress implemented the **Articles of Association on October 20, 1774** in order to forbid the importation '*into British America, from Great-Britain or Ireland, any goods, wares, or merchandise whatsoever*'. This non importation agreement was to work alongside non consumption of British goods, which was to be serviced by '*frugality, economy, and industry*', to be enabled by the work of the **Daughters of Liberty**, and doing away with '*extravagance and dissipation*'.

- 1c Analyse the significance of the colonial response to the Coercive Acts as a cause of the revolution. Use evidence in your response. (10 marks)

This response begins with a clear topic sentence that responds directly to the question asked.

In **bold** you can see where the student has used evidence throughout.

In *Italics* you can see where the student has engaged in historical thinking such as identifying cause and consequence and significance.

The Coercive Acts set in motion a chain of events that culminated in the first shots of the Revolutionary War on the 19th April 1775. The Colonists viewed the Coercive Acts as a punitive action which imposed on the Lockean principles of 'lives liberty, and property' (Source C) and was viewed by Jefferson as 'a deliberate and systematical plan of reducing as to slavery'. The First Continental Congress responded on October 20 1774 by introducing non-importation and non-consumption agreements via the Articles of Association. Importantly, these Articles mobilised all colonists, but particularly women who took on the task of repurposing goods in order to mitigate the need to purchase British wares. The introduction of the Quebec Act of 1774 was instrumental in spreading revolution beyond Massachusetts and riled the colonists due to the restrictions it placed on internal migration thus 'discouraging the settlement of British subjects in that wide extended country ...' (Source C). While the Coercive Acts were concentrated on just one colony, the Quebec Act 'gave colonial propagandists the juiciest plumb since the Stamp Act' according to Miller. The proliferation of discussion and writing via the various Committees of Correspondence increased following the introduction of the Coercive Acts. Gordon Wood notes that by the end of 1774 these associations were controlling and regulating various aspects of American life. They helped to articulate revolutionary ideas, issue orders for local militia, requests for supplies and create 'alarm lists' of able-bodied men who could be called upon in an emergency. By the beginning of 1775, Thomas Gage and his regiment had prompted the colonists to undertake preparations for a colonial military response with the Massachusetts Assembly ordering a recruitment of 'minutemen' and improvements to militia organisation and command from their illegal meetings outside of Boston. Following a series of war scares via the Powder Alarms of 1774, it was evident that war was a likely proposition. This came to pass on the 19 April 1775 at the town of Lexington. As described by Gerraty, the Coercive Acts were 'unwise laws – they cost Britain an empire' as they served to fracture the relationship between Britain and her colonies beyond repair.



5.2 Section B of the examination

If you decide to undertake America for Section B of the exam paper, you will be required to write a historical essay. The examiner will be looking for you to respond directly to the question with a comprehensive, sophisticated and tightly controlled argument that is well supported by precise and accurate historical knowledge and evidence from primary and secondary sources.

The essay will be worth 20 marks and can cover Outcome 1 and/or 2 from the study design. Note: you only write one essay on your choice of either Revolution you studied over the year.

An ideal essay structure of 5 to 6 paragraphs might look like this:

- 1 **Introduction:** 1 paragraph addressing the question and setting up argument.
- 2 **Body:** 3 or 4 paragraphs of various arguments.
- 3 **Conclusion:** 1 paragraph wrapping up the case

Below are two examples of high-scoring responses.

EXAMPLE 1

'It was the contribution of popular movements that was the driving force behind revolution.' To what extent do you agree? (20 marks)

This response begins with an introduction that deals precisely with the question asked. It then signposts the key talking points of the essay.

In **bold** you can see where the student has used primary source evidence throughout.

In underline you can see how the student has used historical interpretations.

In *italics* you can see where the student has engaged in historical thinking such as identifying cause and consequence and significance.

Following the end of salutary neglect and the introduction of the tax revenue acts of 1765, popular movements became the driving force behind the revolution. With the inception of the Stamp Act in 1765, Samuel Adams worked to found the Sons of Liberty to challenge British authority, while women were drawn in after the passing of the Tea Act in 1773 in the form of the Daughters of Liberty. It was the responses to the Coercive Acts of 1774 that catalysed the outbreak of revolution in 1775.

*Although only intended to raise revenue for the colonies, the Stamp Act of 1765 increased tensions and heralded the rise of popular movements such as the Sons of Liberty. Despite being passed only to **generate 60 000 pounds of revenue**, the tax affected all colonists, and hence 'lost Great Britain the affection of all her colonies' (Smith), emblematic of how the Stamp Act began the erosion of Anglo-American relationships. In this climate of discontent, the Sons of Liberty, led by **Samuel Adams**, rose up in anger to **hang and burn the effigies of Andrew Oliver, the Boston Stamp Collector, and Governor Thomas Hutchinson in August 1765**. These acts of defiance set a precedence for the use of violence against British officials, allowing popular movements to become the foundation for revolution. Furthermore, **the Stamp Act Congress of September 1765** represented popular discontent with British policy, leading to the **repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766**, based on the principle of **'no taxation without representation'**. As argued by Countryman, these popular responses to British taxation were a 'major milepost along the road to imperial crisis'; popular movements were the motor of the American Revolution.*

In the aftermath of the tension caused by the Stamp Act in 1765, the **Tea Act of 1773** spread dissent across the colonies through the **Sons and Daughters of Liberty**. The passing of the **Tea Act of 1773**, which made British tea cheaper for colonists, was seen as a policy restricting colonial rights, leading the **Sons of Liberty to hurl 342 chests of tea into Boston Harbour in November 1773**; *popular movements undermined Parliamentary authority*. The Boston Tea Party marked the 'apotheosis of the Boston mob', as argued by Brogan, *as the Sons of Liberty became the leaders of growing movements against the British, with other chapters emerging in New York City and Philadelphia, hence spreading revolutionary fervour throughout the colonies*. Moreover, the **Daughters of Liberty** brought women into the political sphere after the **Tea Act of 1773** was passed. The **Edenton Ladies' Patriotic Guild**, formed in **October 1774**, declared that they '**cannot be indifferent on any occasion that appears nearly to affect the peace and happiness of our country**', emblematic of the power of nonimportation and nonconsumption agreements as a popular response to British tyranny, championed by American women. Thus, the '**final rupture began**' (Brogan) *as both men and women rose against British authority and pushed the colonies towards revolution*.

The colonial responses to the Coercive Acts of 1774, a deliberately punitive legislation, were the trigger for revolution, spurring colonists to unite against British authority. Through policy such as the **Boston Port Act and Massachusetts Government Act**, the Coercive Acts were perceived as a '**deliberate and systematic plan for reducing [the colonists] to slavery**' (Jefferson). In conjunction with the **Quebec Act (1774)**, which expanded the rights of French people in Canada, *the Coercive Acts propelled colonists to unite through Committees of Correspondence, founded by Samuel Adams in 1772, which spread revolutionary fervour and led to the First Inter Continental Congress of September 1774*. Declaring the Coercive Acts as those that '**threaten destruction to lives, liberty and property**' (1774) of colonists, *the Congress asserted the importance of colonial rights, marking the final erosion of Anglo-American relations*. Congress also placed a ban on importation and exportation through the **Articles of Association**, and through the work of the **Daughters of Liberty**, *the 'colonies at once began to act in concert' (Garraty); the Coercive Acts of 1774 united the colonists in common resistance to the British Parliament*. After the first shot of the revolutionary war on **April 19 1775 at Lexington**, popular movements marked the point of no return for the revolution. *Thus, the Coercive Acts of 1774 triggered colonial responses that would push the colonies towards declaring independence on July 4, 1776*.

Ultimately, popular movements drove the colonies to revolution in response to British policies from 1765 to 1774. The Sons and Daughters of Liberty, the Committees of Correspondence and the First Intercontinental Congress were monumental in uniting the colonies against British rule, and hence were the impetus behind the revolution, especially after the passing of the Coercive Acts of 1774.



EXAMPLE 2

'Ideas regarding natural rights and representation were the central cause of the American Revolution.'

To what extent do you agree?

(20 marks)

This response begins with an introduction that deals precisely with the question asked. It then signposts the key talking points of the essay.

In **bold** you can see where the student has used primary source evidence throughout.

In underline you can see how the student has used historical interpretations.

In *italics* you can see where the student has engaged in historical thinking such as identifying cause and consequence and significance.

*The implementation of British Acts from 1765 served to fundamentally challenge colonial ideas about natural rights and representation which ultimately culminated in revolution. By ending the period of 'Salutary Neglect', the introduction of British Tax Acts aroused anger in the colonies due to the concept of 'Virtual Representation'. Similarly, British Acts of parliament enacted through the 1770's posed a threat to colonists right to the Lockean ideals of 'life, liberty and property' in particular the **Coercive Acts of 1776**. These perceived threats to colonial rights spurred the colonists to resist and take action against British authority, culminating in the American Revolution.*

The first challenge to colonial ideas came in the form of the **Stamp Act of 1765** which highlighted differences in the perceptions of the concept of virtual representation. Though only passed to raise a **mere 60 000? pounds** for the colonies, the Stamp Act proved to be detrimental to Anglo American relations by challenging the principle of **'no taxation without representation'**. This sentiment was wide spread due to the universal application of the tax which was applied to a variety of goods from **playing cards to legal documents** and impacted all tiers of society. According to Smith, the Stamp Act 'lost Great Britain the affection of her colonies' which is clearly demonstrated in the actions of the **Sons of Liberty of Boston in August 1765** who took to harassing and intimidating those who were employed to enforce the act. This included, on **14 August**, the **burning of an effigy of Andrew Oliver**, who had been employed to oversee the implementation of the Act as well as the **ransacking of the home of lieutenant governor Thomas Hutchinson on the 26 August**. *Unhappy with the notion that the colonists were represented virtually in the British parliament, colonists also established the **Stamp Act Congress of October 1765** in order to express their discontent. During this Congress, colonists produced a 'Declaration of Rights' which explained how the King and the Parliament had usurped their rights to consent to their own taxes via their own colonial assemblies. As argued by Edward Countryman, the Stamp Act was a 'major milestone on the road to imperial crisis' as it fundamentally challenged colonists' perception of their right to representation and fomented considerable opposition.*

While the **Tea Act of 1773** theoretically provided Colonists with an abundant supply of cheap tea, *it served to challenge colonial beliefs about their entitlement to 'life, liberty and property'*. By enabling the **British East India Company to have a monopoly on trade**, the Tea Act imposed upon merchants and smugglers rights to income and was perceived as a **'violent attack upon the liberties of America'** (NY Meeting of the Sons of Liberty). *Further, colonists were angered at the willingness of the British to continue to impose taxes without their consent.* As the **Sons of Liberty dumped 342 chests of tea into the Boston Harbour**, *they marked a refusal among colonists to have their rights eroded by British actions.* Similarly, the instigation of **non-importation and non-consumption agreements** derived from the belief described by Abigail Adams, that **'tea was the weed of slavery'** and mobilised the **Daughters of Liberty** to engage in mending and spinning in order to supplant the need for purchasing British goods. According to Alan Farmer, the Tea Act served to threaten the independence of the colonial legislatures and it caused tensions and grievances to escalate, driving revolutionary actions.

*The most significant challenge to both natural rights and issues of representation came in the form of the **Coercive Acts of 1774**.* Through the instigation of the **Massachusetts Government Act and the Boston Port Act**, Parliament was accused of enacting a **'deliberate and systematic plan of reducing the colonies to slavery'** according to Jefferson. Parliament also passed the **Quebec Act in 1774** *which added insult to injury as colonists perceived that it was an infringement on their right to colonise newly conquered territory and pursue opportunities for economic expansion.* The meeting of the **First Continental Congress in September 1774** characterised these actions as **'threatening the lives, liberty and property'** of the colonists and instigated the **Articles of Association** as a defiant rejection of British Rule. **Committees of Correspondence** worked to spread word that the natural rights of the colonists were under threat by British tyranny and served to coordinate efforts to resist and respond. As a result, Gerraty describes the colonies as **'acting in concert'** through the establishment of minutemen and expansion of colonial militias. *Thus, the threat to ideological foundations of the colonies expressed in the Coercive Acts catalysed revolution.*

*Ultimately, ideas of representation and natural rights underpinned colonial responses to British policy. Through their willingness to protect their rights against oppressive acts such as the Stamp, Tea and Coercive Acts, the colonists created a revolution which was consummated with the outbreak of war on **April 19, 1775**.*

Area of Study 2

Consequences of Revolution: Challenges and responses, changes and continuity, significant individuals and experiences of groups in America, 4 July 1776 – 1789

America's Revolution was Britain's American War: a series of fateful moves in the high-stakes game of the European great powers.

– HISTORIANS EDWARD G. GRAY AND JANE KAMENSKY, 2013

Overview

confederation a group of nations or states that work together in an alliance while maintaining some independent power

Area of Study 2 focuses initially on the significant events of the American Revolutionary War. The period until 1789 has been divided into three chapters in order to assist an analysis of the peace settlement, the response to the crises of the 1780s that faced the new nation, and ultimately the Founding Fathers' solution: the creation of the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The embryonic government – known as the 'Articles of **Confederation** Government' – experienced varying fortunes from 1776 to 1789. It had been effective during the war, creating the Continental Army, conducting diplomacy with European powers and, despite significant problems, defeating or outlasting the British forces.

However, the new government was deeply flawed, plagued by economic problems (such as debt, inflation and inconsistent tariffs) and conflicts between (and in) the states, and lacking the legislative power to alleviate the problems that arose, particularly in the 1780s. How did the new nation and the leaders of this new nation deal with these problems?

Knowing that the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights provided the settlement that founded a new nation allows us to examine the period of the 1780s to highlight the Revolutionary undercurrents that led to their creation. How popular was their solution? How were they organised and who were the key leaders?

While Chapters 6, 7 and 8 are devoted to answering these questions, each chapter also deals with the responses of the opposition movement to the events and decisions of the conventions. This Area of Study concludes with a thematic analysis of the key tensions and conflicts within the newly formed United States. Was the creation of the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights the ‘crowning act of the revolution’, as asserted by historian Hugh Brogan, or merely ‘the work of certain groups trying to maintain their privileges, while giving just enough rights and liberties to enough people to ensure popular support’, as Howard Zinn would have it?

Chapter 9 offers a selection of VCE-type questions for Area of Study 2, and sample answers for your reference. Chapters 10 and 11 are good tools for revision, providing an overview of how different social groups experienced the Revolution as well as a Who’s Who of the major players.



▲ Source 6A *The Capture of the Hessians at Trenton, December 26 1776*, John Trumbull, c. 1786-1828

Timeline of key events 4 July 1776–1789

1776

- ▶ **July:** *Declaration of Independence*
- ▶ **August:** Battle of Long Island: the British take New York.
- ▶ **December:** The Continental Army flees to Pennsylvania, driven from New York by British Generals Howe and Cornwallis.

1777

- ▶ **September:** Battle of Brandywine Creek: the Continental Army is defeated by the British Army.
- ▶ **October:** Battle of Saratoga: a 7000-strong British Army under General Burgoyne is defeated by the Continental Army under General Horatio Gates.
- ▶ **November:** The Articles of Confederation are passed by Congress, providing a framework for government – providing the states will ratify it.
- ▶ **December:** The Continental Army creates a winter encampment at Valley Forge.

1778

- ▶ **February:** Prussian General Baron von Steuben trains the Continental Army at Valley Forge.

July

- ▶ France recognises the United States.
- ▶ France declares war on Britain.
- ▶ **December:** The British capture Savannah and Georgia.

1780

- ▶ **March:** The British hold New York and Savannah; complete the capture of Georgia and take Charleston.

- ▶ **May:** Mutiny occurs in the Continental Army as soldiers demand payment and rations.

1781

- ▶ **January:** Pennsylvanian soldiers refuse to take orders from any but the Pennsylvania State Assembly.
- ▶ **October:** Battle of Yorktown: Cornwallis forced to surrender in Yorktown, Virginia by an allied American–French force.

1782

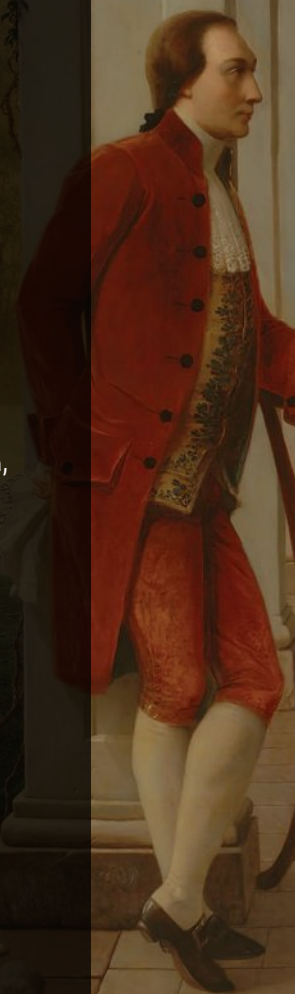
- ▶ **January:** Loyalists begin to flee the colonies.
- ▶ **November:** Final battles of the War of Independence: the Continental Army and militias fight First Nations and Loyalist militia groups.

1783

- ▶ **February:** The Treaty of Paris formally ends the Revolutionary War.

March

- ▶ The United States is recognised by Sweden, Denmark, Russia and Spain.
- ▶ The Newburgh Conspiracy.
- ▶ Washington alleviates tensions by delivering an impassioned speech to discontented officers.
- ▶ **June:** The Continental Army is disbanded.
- ▶ **December:** Washington visits Congress and volunteers to resign his commission as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army.



1786

- ▶ **August:** Shays' Rebellion, where 1200 rebels marching on Springfield led by Daniel Shays are repelled in their advance by state militia from Boston.

September

- ▶ A mob in New Hampshire marches on the state assembly and demands that it order a new issue of paper money.
- ▶ The Annapolis Convention is held to 'remedy defects of the federal government'.
- ▶ **October:** A 1400-person strong militia is mobilised by Congress to defend the federal arsenal stockpiled in Springfield, Massachusetts.

1787

- ▶ **May:** Fifty-five delegates attend the Philadelphia Convention to consider amendments of the Articles of Confederation.

- ▶ **September:** The Philadelphia convention closes, resulting in a final draft of the new constitution approved by all the delegates in attendance.
- ▶ **July:** The Northwest Ordinance is passed by Congress, providing for the creation of new states in the West instead of expanding the existing states' 'Madison Constitution'.
- ▶ **December:** The Ratification Debates begin.

1788

- ▶ **January:** The Ratification Debates continue.
- ▶ **July:** Congress formally announces the Constitution of the United States of America.

1789

- ▶ **April:** George Washington is inaugurated as the first President of the United States.
- ▶ **September:** Madison's 'Bill of Rights' is adopted.

▲ **Source 6B** *Washington and Lafayette at Mount Vernon, 1784 (The Home of Washington after the War)*, 1859, Thomas Pritchard Rossiter



6 **THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, 1776–83**

The use of force alone is but temporary. It may subdue for the moment;
but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again: and a nation is
not governed, which is perpetually to be conquered.

– EDMUND BURKE, SPEECH ON CONCILIATION WITH AMERICA, 1775

Overview

With the signing of the *Declaration of Independence* in the summer of 1776, the **rebels** displayed their intentions; however, it would become meaningless if they lost the war. The newly named and established states lacked an experienced army to face the British. Further, they had disparate ill-disciplined militias and a weak central government created by the Articles of Confederation that was unable to adequately supply or fund the new Continental Army and the war effort. Given these circumstances, how did the colonists win?

rebels colonists who fought against the British

Historians often refer to the American War of Independence as Britain's 'Vietnam'. There is much truth in the assertion, for Britain was militarily very successful, particularly in the South, and Washington's greatest achievement as a general was simply to keep the Continental Army cohesive and active as a belligerent force. It was not until the involvement of a colourful array of European and subcontinental allies – including France (1778–83), Spain (1789–83), the Netherlands (1780–83) and the Sultanate of Mysore (1780–84) that the tide really turned against the British. Their involvement effectively turned the war into a global conflict; the British Empire now had to deploy forces in theatres as diverse as India and Gibraltar as well as in the American colonies. Additionally, a direct French invasion of the British Isles was a real fear for the British Parliament. Despite distant supply lines, an increasing inability to win over the American populace and uninspiring military leadership, was British defeat inevitable?

The Battle of Lexington-Concord, the Battle of Bunker Hill and the Siege of Boston had been carried out by numerous motivated militias against a poorly led and heavily outnumbered British force in Boston. The British at this stage – and arguably during the majority of the war – completely underestimated the capability and resolve of the rebels to resist British forces. British commanders such as Thomas Gage, William Howe and Henry Clinton repeatedly misunderstood the nature of the conflict. Many of the initial engagements saw British commanders fail to follow up successes as they would have in Europe or India. At Breed's Hill (Bunker Hill), after capturing the Patriot's positions at heavy cost and driving them from it, Clinton failed to pursue the defeated Americans. Prior to and during this period, decisive military victories were actually gained in the pursuit of fleeing enemy forces, which are either easily captured or cut down. In an 18th-century frontal assault on a fortified position, the attacker could expect a 3:1 (attackers:defenders) exchange of casualties – which they could 'make good' in the pursuit of the defeated enemy. Without this reality, great military commanders such as Julius Caesar would have had a vastly different military career. Why didn't British commanders follow up their victories?

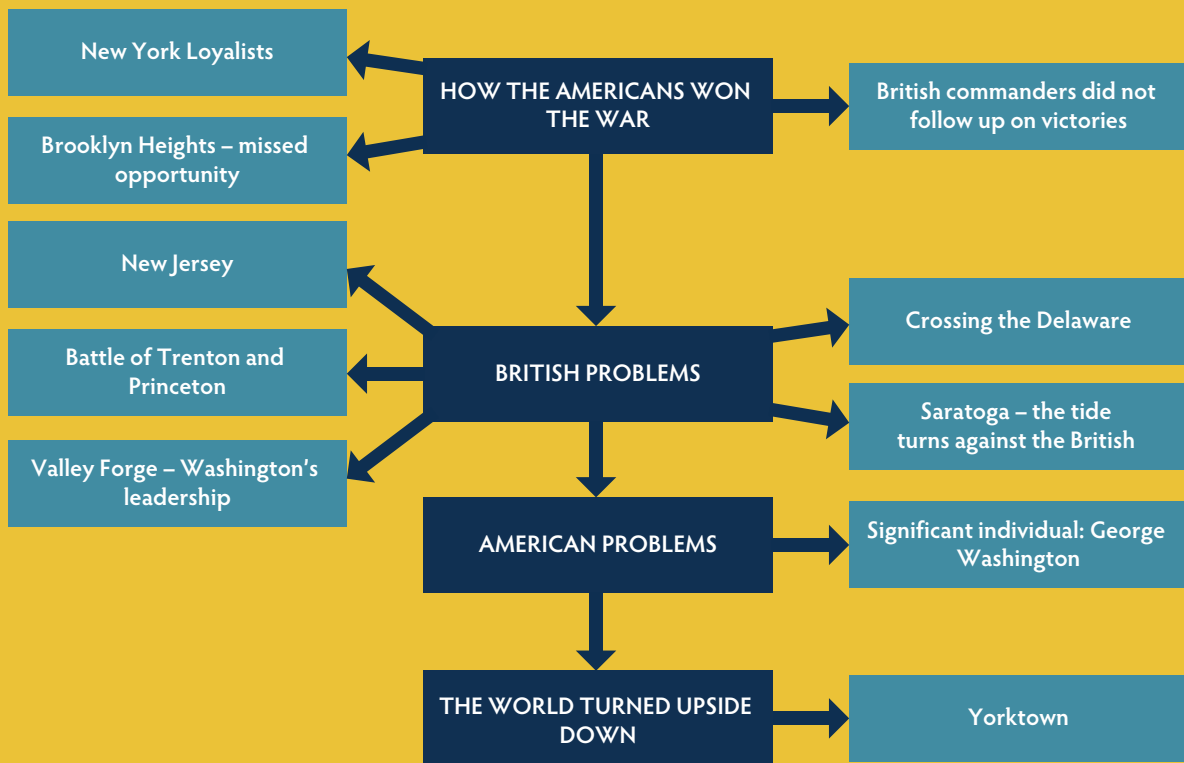
Key issues

- What were the problems that faced the British?
- What were the problems that faced American colonists?
- Why was any form of colonial military success so important?
- Why was British military success nearly irrelevant?
- Why was the actual presence of British troops during the war so damaging to the British cause?
- Who was George Washington (Part Two)?

◀ **Source 6.1** *Siege of Yorktown in 1781, the arrival of General Washington and the Count of Rochambeau's troops*, by 17th-century painter Jean-Antoine-Siméon Fort.

Flow of chapter

How is this chapter structured?



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Chapter timeline

What are the key events of the American Revolution covered in this chapter?

1775

Battle of Lexington-Concord

1775

Battle of Bunker Hill

1776

– *Battle of Long Island*

– *Battle of Trenton*

1781

Battle of Yorktown



1776

The Declaration of Independence published



1777

Battle of Saratoga
1777–78
Valley Forge



1782

Final battles

6.1 How did the Americans win the War?

Why didn't British commanders follow up their victories?

This is an interesting question for you to ponder as you work through the events of this chapter. In the early battles of the War of Independence, British commanders still held a belief that a sharp military defeat to the colonists would somehow bring them to their senses and to the negotiating table. Essentially, the British authorities were reacting much as they had in the recent past. For example, in 1769 during the Spitalfield Riots in London, British soldiers fired on a group of protesting weavers, killing two and wounding four, but allowing the others to flee. We must remember, after all, that the Americans were British subjects both in name and (largely) in ethnicity; a savage pursuit to annihilate a beaten opponent (as would have happened in India or Continental Europe) was unthinkable. To say the least, this was a bad calculation.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

British reaction to Australia's own Eureka Stockade in 1854 followed a similar pattern: after an initial assault, with 22 attendant deaths, the remaining rebels were allowed to flee, with the British refraining from following up with aggressive pursuit and wholesale slaughter.

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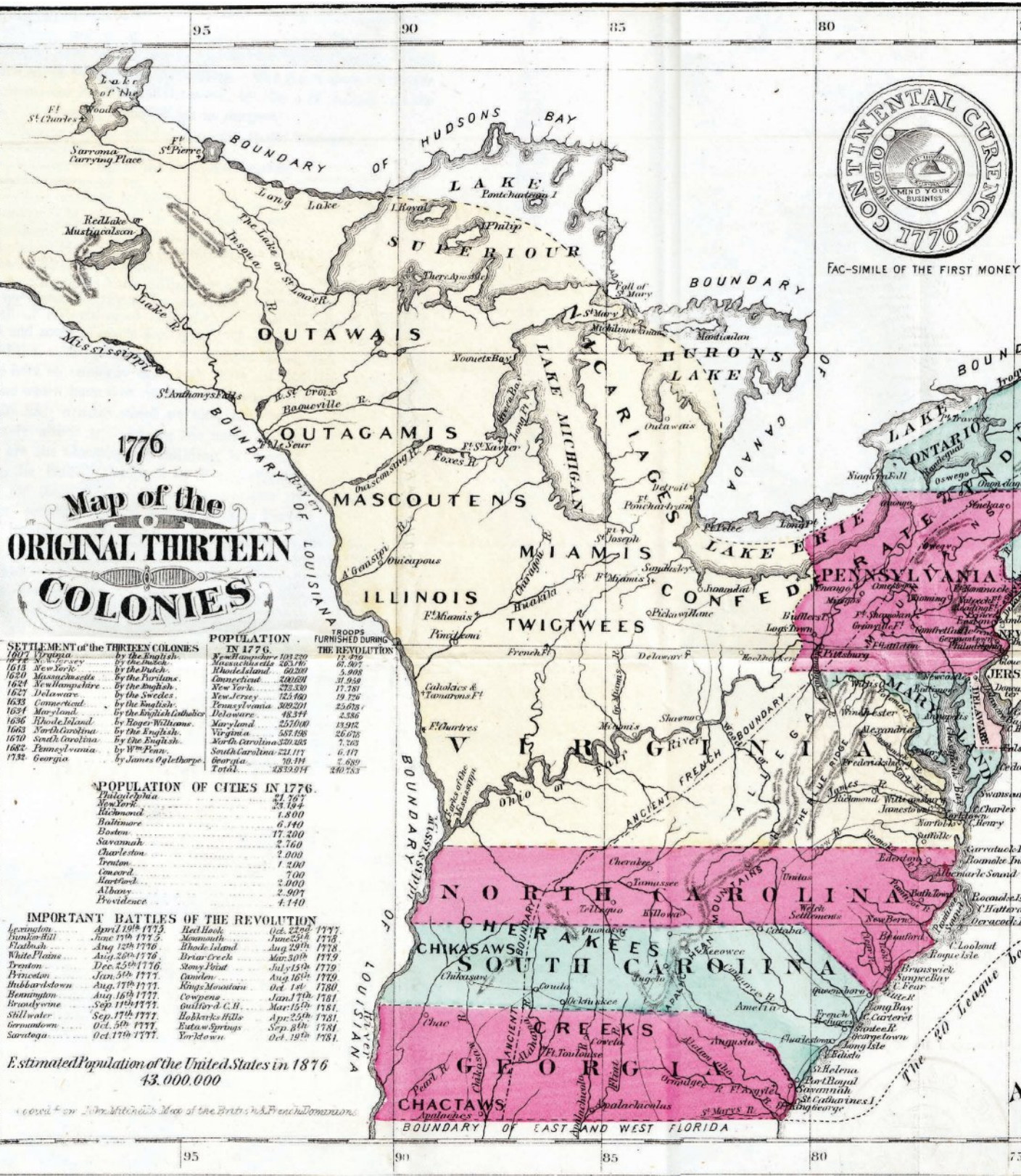
New York, 1776: enter the Loyalists

The British left Boston by sea after being besieged there and moved to a city known for its Loyalist sympathies: New York. With the knowledge that the recently signed *Declaration of Independence* would become irrelevant without victory in the war, throughout the summer and into autumn British commanders attempted to destroy the Continental Army in a series of battles around New York. The British possessed superior military power, with 32 000 troops, of whom one-quarter were the infamous German mercenaries known as **Hessians**. Arguably, British General Howe had the chance to end the Revolution at this point, and he resolved on a series of military actions in the greater New York area.

Hessians German soldiers who were in the paid employ of the British

▼ **Source 6.2** A copperplate engraving depicting mercenaries departing from Hesse in Germany to America.





▲Source 6.3 1776 Map of the Thirteen Original Colonies, produced in 1876 to celebrate the centenary of the revolutionary events of 1776



AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR BY THE NUMBERS

American Colonies on the eve of war

2 165 076 British North American colonies' population in 1770

KEY
STATISTIC



British Forces

133 000 troops comprised the British Forces at the height of the war

56 000 Regular British Troops

30 000 German Auxiliaries

13 000 Native-Americans

19 000 Loyalists

Continental Army

96 500 troops served in the Continental Army at the height of the war

35 000 Regular Army Soldiers

5000 Sailors

45 000 Militia

12 000 French

As many as 25 000 enslaved and freed African Americans fought on both sides of the war

Total Battles

1546 separate military engagements throughout the war

Washington

Led the Continental Army in 5 major battles, but only 1 was a decisive victory – the Battle of Yorktown, 1781

The aftermath

At least 50 000 soldiers died during the war.

British Forces

24 000 died – 3500 in battle

1700 Loyalists died

80 000 fled the colonies after the war

1200 German mercenaries died

Continental Army

25 000 died – 4435 in battle

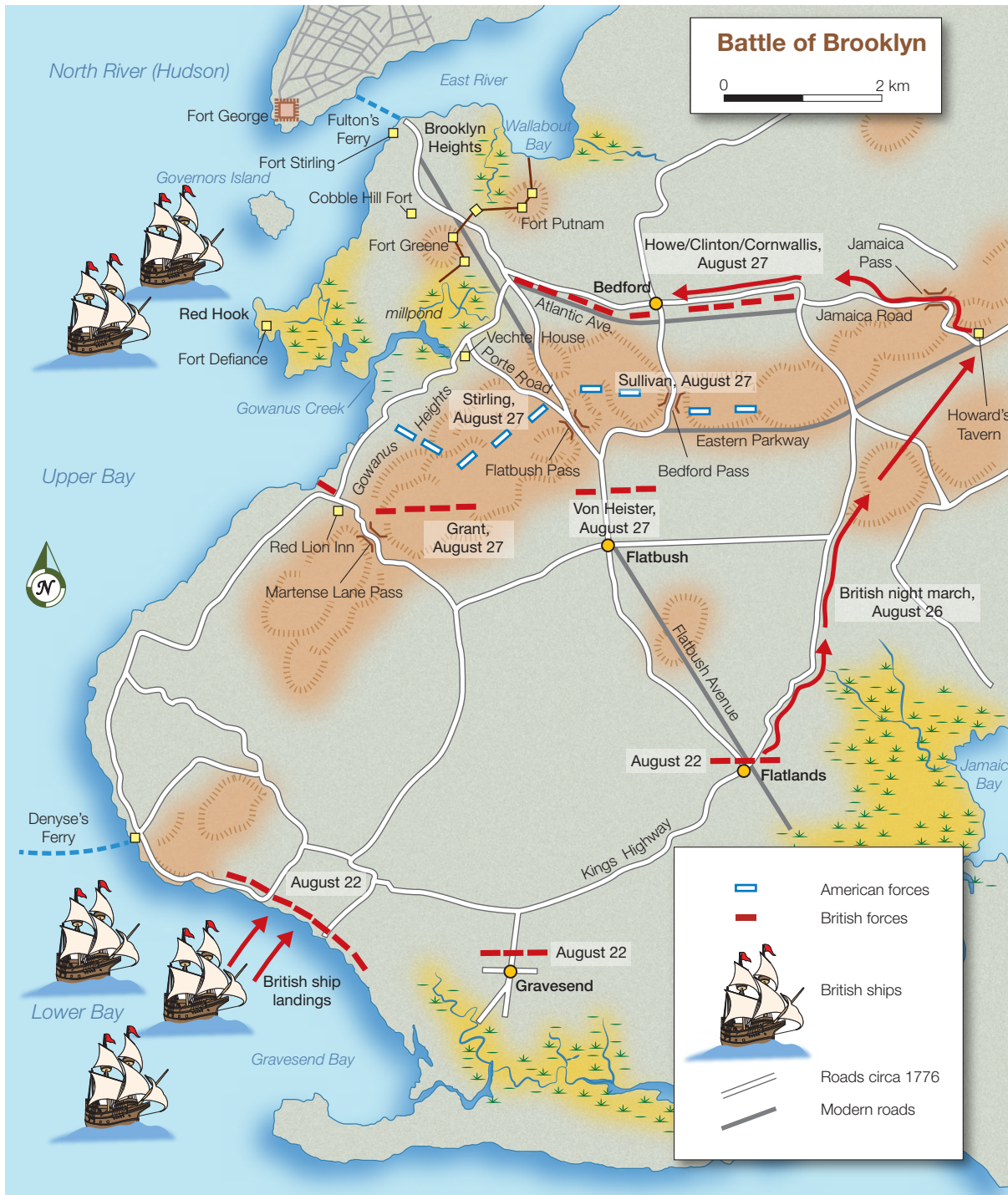
10 000 were killed off from disease

18 000 Colonial soldiers were captured

10 000 of these prisoners died in captivity

▲ **Source 6.4** Based on approximate figures from *The Journal of the American Revolution*, and *The Toll of Independence: Engagements and Battle Casualties of the American Revolution* by Howard H. Peckham, University of Chicago Press, 1974

Brooklyn Heights, 1776: a missed opportunity



▲ Source 6.5 A map of the site of the Battle of Brooklyn

In August 1776, 15 000 British troops marched from their base in Staten Island into battle at Brooklyn Heights, defeating Washington. Arguably, British General Howe could have pursued and destroyed the Continental Army and captured Washington; however, he refused to conduct an aggressive pursuit, wishing to limit the damage and bring the rebels to the negotiating table. In light of the opposition movement in Parliament at the time to the war, this was understandable, but ultimately fatal to the British cause.

As a result, Washington was able to escape and keep the Continental Army together until December; abandoning one position after another to British forces, employing **Fabian tactics**, while Howe incorrectly continued to believe that Washington was on the verge of negotiating.

6.2 British problems

The British Army in the 18th century was the most professional and experienced in the world. Having recently emerged victorious from the Seven Years' War it was confident, disciplined and well trained. However, there were problems:

- **Supplies** – the British military was fighting a war thousands of miles away from England (the 'tyranny of distance'). As a consequence, if supplies failed to reach them from Britain they needed to be taken from the American populace. In most cases they would be paid for, but undoubtedly looting occurred and the process was costly both financially and in terms of support from Americans.
- **Insurgent warfare** – while this is a term from the modern era, this campaign faced all the difficulties of a modern insurgency, the most obvious being: who is a Loyalist and who is a rebel?
- While the British Army was essentially trained to fight set-piece battles against European armies, the rebels generally avoided this, preferring to use the terrain and locality to their advantage as they had at Lexington-Concord, Bunker Hill and the Siege of Boston.
- In addition, many senior militia officers – and particularly Washington – had in-depth knowledge of British Army strengths and weaknesses, and generally employed tactics to exploit them. Washington had been involved in Braddock's disastrous expedition during the French and Indian War, where a superior force of Redcoats were defeated by a mixed French force of militia, regulars and First Nations allies. He knew the vaunted British Army was beatable.
- Given the nature of insurgent warfare, as long as there were organised forces opposing them, the occupying force (the British) was essentially losing. Therefore, all Washington had to do was keep the Continental Army in the field; he knew this and behaved accordingly.
- Consequently, any victories the British attained were basically just restoring control over a localised region. This tended to alienate American civilians (Loyalists, the unaligned and Patriots alike), due to the brutal behaviour of British soldiers: pillaging, looting and assaulting womenfolk. This in particular has strong parallels with the Vietnam War.
- In 1818, John Adams said, 'The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people'. By its very definition, a revolution or insurgency needs to win over the 'hearts and minds' of the populace. The very presence of British soldiers worked in favour of this. The Americans were particularly obsessed with the presence of the Hessians. For some colonists, the use of German Hessian mercenaries against them was the final sign that George III was a tyrant. What monarch other than a tyrant would use foreigners against his own people?
- Lurid accounts of sexual assault by British soldiers (Hessians included) were rife in the colonies; reports had been received by Congress of assaults on girls as young as 13.

You may ... traffic and barter with every little pitiful German Prince, that sells and sends his subjects [Hessians] to the shambles of a foreign country; your efforts are for ever vain and impotent – doubly so from this mercenary aid on which you rely; for it irritates, to an incurable resentment, the minds of your enemies – to overrun them with the sordid sons of rapine and plunder.

Source 6.6 William Pitt, Speech in the House of Lords in response to the 12th Earl of Suffolk Henry Howard's speech in favour of war against America's colonies, 18 November 1777

Fabian tactics

named for Fabian the 'Delayer', a Roman politician and general who avoided battles with the famous Carthaginian general, Hannibal, due to the superiority of the Carthaginian enemy; British Americans were well read in ancient history, and Washington knowingly employed these tactics

supplies resources such as food, water, clothing, bedding, ammunition and weapons

insurgent warfare a rebellion against an established authority, often armed and sometimes involving subterfuge or subversive tactics

Quite clearly, it wasn't just the colonists who were troubled by the use of German mercenaries. Undoubtedly, there was some exaggeration; however, armies of this period did have appalling reputations for rape and looting – and despite the British Army being the most disciplined in the world, incidents certainly occurred. Letters, broadsides and hearsay abounded among the American populace, Loyalist or otherwise, further eroding support for the British cause. This erosion was exacerbated by other factors:

- Any British military failure, or particularly the inability to protect Loyalists from the attacks of Patriots, disheartened their supporters.
- European support for the Americans against the British emerged as the campaign dragged on.
- British soldiers were prone to desertion, fleeing a life of savage discipline and sudden death, and merging into the American populace.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

The most famous Hessian today is probably the Headless Horseman in Washington Irving's gothic tale *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Hessians were named after the region of Hesse – which is now in south-west Germany. German troops fought in every major battle of the Revolutionary War on the side of the British, and almost half of them settled in America after the war.



◀ Source 6.7 An illustration of British Redcoats (left) and Hessian soldiers (right)

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 6.1: THE BRITISH OPPOSITION

As the War of Independence dragged on, the British Parliament became increasingly divided. Many saw it as an unjust war against their fellow countrymen. Prominent figures within this Whig movement were Edmund Burke and William Pitt (who later became prime minister). Both had repeatedly denounced British policy in the colonies during the days of the *Stamp Act* crisis of 1765. Below is an excerpt from a Pitt speech in the **House of Lords**:



▲ Source 6.9 William Pitt, 1st Earl of Chatham, by Richard Brompton, 1772

You have ransacked every corner of Lower Saxony; but forty thousand German boors never can conquer ten times the number of British freemen. You may ravage – you cannot conquer; it is impossible: you cannot conquer the Americans. You talk, my Lords, of your friends among them to annihilate the Congress, and of your powerful forces to disperse their army: I might as well talk of driving them before me with this crutch! ... If you conquer them, what then? You cannot make them respect you; you cannot make them wear your cloth: you will plant an invincible hatred in their breasts against you. Coming from the stock they do, they can never respect you.

Source 6.8 William Pitt, Speech in the House of Lords, 30 May 1777

House of Lords the upper house of the British Parliament, made up of upper nobility and clergy whose membership is a hereditary privilege. Holds less power than the House of Commons, as members only have the power to comment on or delay Bills already passed by the House of Commons.

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Quote sections of the extract to support your arguments when answering the following questions:

- 1 Who is Pitt referring to when he states, 'You have ransacked every corner of Lower Saxony'?
- 2 What does Pitt imply will be the result of using 'German boors' in the American colonies?
- 3 What reasons does Pitt give for why 'you cannot conquer America'?
- 4 What system (covered in Area of Study 1 of this text) is referred to when Pitt states 'you cannot make them wear your cloth'?
- 5 What is meant when Pitt states 'you will plant invincible hatred in their breasts against you. Coming from the stock they do ...'?

FOCUS QUESTIONS 6.1

- 1 To what extent did the presence of British soldiers, Hessian or otherwise, erode support for the British cause?
- 2 Why did British generals repeatedly fail to follow up early victories with an aggressive pursuit to destroy the Continental Army?

KEY HISTORIAN

Stephen Conway

For the European enemies of the British, as well as the British themselves, the war became a great deal more than a struggle for and in America. For the French government, it was an opportunity to reduce British power, which had been boosted considerably by the Seven Years War (1756–63), and to restore lost French territory and prestige. If Britain could be stripped of its North American colonies, its strength would surely be undermined. French ministers were not content with this outcome, however; they also wanted to improve France's position in the West Indies, West Africa and, above all, in Asia. For the Spanish government, the War of Independence likewise represented an opportunity to regain lost territory. Florida, which had been ceded at the end of the Seven Years War, was at the top of the list, but it also included lost possessions such as Gibraltar, Minorca and even Jamaica, annexed by the English in 1655.

Source 6.10 Conway, *A Short History of the American Revolutionary War*, 2013, Bloomsbury Publishing, p. 5-6

- 1 What is Conway's opinion of the nature and scope of the American War of Independence?
- 2 What were the reasons European belligerents entered the War?

New Jersey, 1776

In late December 1776, Washington staged a series of daring and remarkable attacks on British forces that, although they were minor, had a profound effect on rebel morale and began the mythical transformation of Washington from failed Virginian Militia Commander and British Army reject to patriotic military hero and father of the United States.

Crossing the Delaware and the battles of Trenton and Princeton, 1776–77

KEY
STATISTIC

Knowing that the Hessians would be celebrating Christmas – and basically drunk, homesick and full of food – on the night of 25 December 1776, Washington crossed the Delaware River with 2500 troops in preparation for a surprise attack on the Hessian forces at the town of Trenton. This famous event entered American mythology after it was commemorated in a mid-19th-century painting (see Source 6.13). As mentioned briefly in Chapter 4, Washington had Paine's *American Crisis* read aloud to the troops prior to the crossing, reminding them of the cause they were struggling for. Paine's pamphlet, written to inspire colonial troops, started with the words:

KEY
QUOTE

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

Source 6.11 *American Crisis*, Thomas Paine, 1776

FOCUS QUESTIONS 6.2

- 1 Why would Paine mention a 'summer soldier' or a 'sunshine patriot' at this particular time in a document written to inspire his readers? Describe his use of language.
- 2 Do you think Paine's words would have been inspirational to battle-weary soldiers?

Washington sent John Honeyman on a reconnaissance mission into Trenton posing as a Tory. Honeyman's service at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in Quebec under Major General James Wolfe in September 1759 made it easy for him to pass as a convincing Tory, and he was able to relay to Washington the disposition and vulnerability of the Hessian troops.

The Hessian forces were utterly surprised by Washington's men and were unable to organise an effective defence, ultimately surrendering 1000 soldiers. Washington followed this up by repulsing a British counter-attack at Trenton on 2 January 1777, and on the following day defeated a small garrison of 1200 men at the nearby town of Princeton with a force of 4500 men, although at the cost of Brigadier General Hugh Mercer (see Source 6.12). With several defeats in the space of three days, the British withdrew from New Jersey.

Although these engagements were not strategically significant, they increased enlistments and consolidated Washington's position as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army. They also demonstrated to the Americans that under the right circumstances they could stand up to the British Army.

Ultimately, the British occupation of the greater New York area was more damaging than the military setbacks they suffered because of the brutality of British and Hessian troops. In an attempt to improve the effect their troops were having on civilians, British officers decided to arm Loyalists, on the assumption that they would surely treat their countrymen better than the British forces. While good in theory, it backfired spectacularly; armed and with the support of the British Army, Loyalists took over much of the war effort in the lower Hudson Valley. They acted with as much or even more brutality than the British and the Hessians, settling old scores with neighbours.

Essentially, the brutal behaviour of British, Hessian and Loyalist troops in this region established a pattern that would continue throughout the war. By furthering the political education of the populace, converting both Loyalist and neutral civilians into Patriots, they effectively played into the hands of the Patriot cause.

FOCUS QUESTION 6.3

Did the British plan of arming Loyalists work?

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▲ Source 6.12 *The Death of General Mercer at the Battle of Princeton*, by John Trumbull, circa 1789–1831



ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 6.2: VISUAL ANALYSIS





◀ **Source 6.13** *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, by Emanuel Leutze, 1851

Examine Source 6.13 and answer the following questions:

- 1 Can you identify any elements that suggest Revolutionary ideals?
- 2 How does the artist represent the importance of Washington's leadership?
- 3 Using the representation and your own knowledge, explain the events leading up to the crossing of the Delaware and the significance of this event.
- 4 How has the artist depicted and implied that the crossing was not easy?

Saratoga, 1777: the tide turns against the British

Following Washington's victories in New Jersey in 1776–77, the British changed tack and General Howe planned a two-pronged campaign. A British force of 7700 would attack south from Canada – from the region of Lake Champlain to the Hudson River – under the command of General John Burgoyne – with the aim of taking the city of New York. Simultaneously, a British force would move up from the south, taking Philadelphia before marching into New York (see Source 6.16).

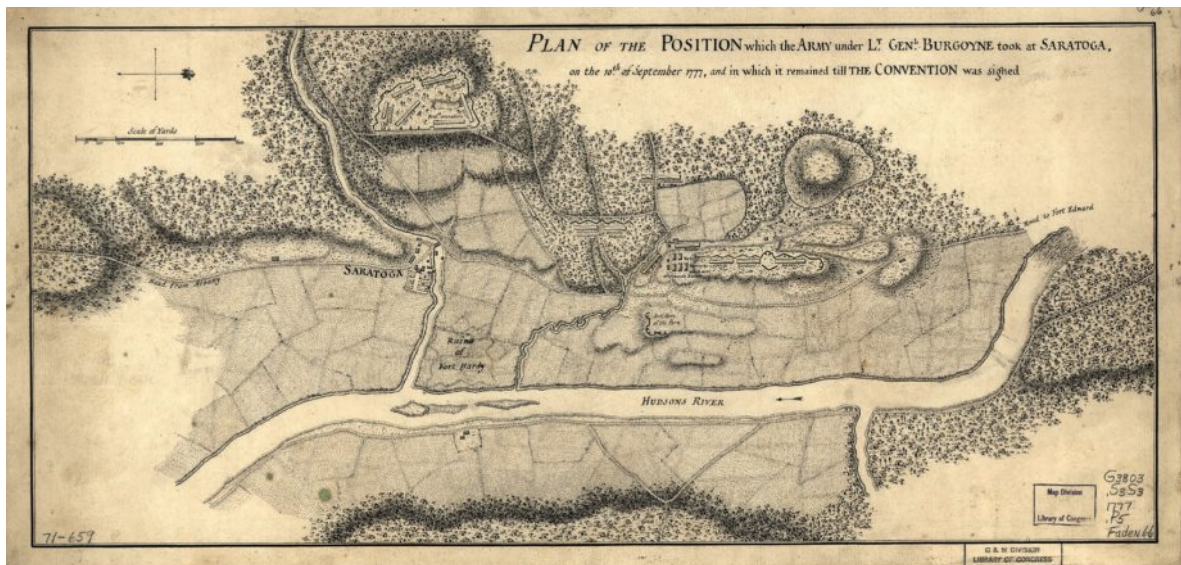


▲ Source 6.14 British generals Burgoyne, St Leger and Howe

▲ Source 6.16 A map of the major campaigns in New York and Pennsylvania, 1777

▲ Source 6.15 Continental Army generals Gates, Arnold and Washington

Howe's ultimate plan was for Burgoyne to cut New England off from New Jersey, thus dividing the resistance; however, British commanders, used to fighting in European theatres, failed to realise the difficulties they faced travelling through the wilderness of the area. Burgoyne's force was famously weighed down by camp followers and a somewhat ridiculous baggage train full of luxuries to keep the senior officers entertained (a senior Hessian officer even brought his wife on the campaign). Although this approach was fairly common in European campaigns, it proved disastrous in the swamp and woodland terrain of New England. In particular, their red uniforms made them ideal targets for shadowing American militia men, and by the time Burgoyne reached Saratoga (see Source 6.17) his men were exhausted, with their numbers severely depleted.



▲ Source 6.17 A map of the battle of Saratoga



▲ Source 6.18 *The Surrender of General Burgoyne* by John Trumbull, 1821. This painting depicts General Burgoyne surrendering his sword to the American general Horatio Gates, 10 days after the battle of Saratoga.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

The Battles of Saratoga were two closely related engagements in September and October 1777. The first was the Battle of Freeman's Farm and the second was the Battle of Bemis Heights. These victories for the Continental Army are often called the turning point of the war in favour of the Americans.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 6.3: VISUAL ANALYSIS



▲ **Source 6.19** This example provides excellent insight into some of the symbolism of the era whose meaning will soon change. *The Flight of the Congress*, Anonymous, London, 1777.

The squirrel: The squirrel up the top of the Liberty Tree throwing paper money down to the Congress is a clever **satire**, but needs some historical context. The Continental Congress issued paper money after 1775 (called the Continental currency), but the policy on issuing currency was a disaster. Having almost no experience in monetary policy, as well as a desperate need for cash, the Congress ended up printing way too much. Furthermore, individual colonies were not financially regulated and they issued their own money as well. And the British even created counterfeits with their superior press technology and circulated it. So you had hyperinflation, which brought the value down very quickly. And given the perception that America might lose the war, lots of people didn't want to take Congress-backed money anyway (since it might be worthless in a few years) and preferred gold, silver or pounds sterling. All this caused a lot of instability and hardship in the economy. Often soldiers were being paid in Continentals, only to return from duty and find that their cash was worth only a fraction its face value in towns and cities. 'Not worth a continental' became a popular saying. This squirrel dropping money was put in the cartoon deliberately to appeal to colonists – it was easily one of the most unpopular issues for the Continental Congress. It was fairly damaging for the Congress' reputation in foreign financial circles too (from whom they were trying to borrow to finance the war.) So liberty is being associated with irresponsibility and uncertainty.

The eagle: The eagle doesn't refer to America as we know it today – it actually refers to the Imperial Eagle of the Holy Roman Empire, which represents the Germans/Hessians employed by the British.

The snake: The American 'independence' is a snake and evidently uncouth and unreliable – an association you could probably make in 1777 but not in today's world.

continued...

satire the use of humour, irony or ridicule to criticise people or their behaviour

...continued

The 'Baboon King': Some historical context: according to historian John Arbuthnot, in English political satire of the 18th century, Frenchmen were referred to as monkeys, 'because of his chattering nature and scrawny physique'. By the end of the century, the derogatory label 'frog' had developed in its place. Who is the Baboon King?

The armadillo: Washington as an armadillo is quite interesting, and possibly a comment on his Fabian tactics in the early years of the war, hiding and attacking at opportune moments, avoiding open battle with the British.

Study Source 6.19 and answer the following questions:

- 1 Explain the viewpoint suggested by the representation (including its accompanying text). Is the creator for or against the Revolution? Why?
- 2 Referring to elements from the representation, what sort of symbols can you identify in the image, and what/who do they represent?
- 3 How does the naming and selection of animals reflect the creator's political point of view?
- 4 Using elements from the representation and your own knowledge, how does the representation reflect events from the time in which it was created?

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After two battles, and a failure to be relieved by British General Clinton, Burgoyne surrendered his remaining forces.

Essentially, the campaign was beyond the capability of 18th-century armies. The British moved too slowly; although Howe made it to Philadelphia, he took so long that he could not aid Burgoyne in the north. His mistake in approaching Philadelphia via Chesapeake rather than the Delaware demonstrated the immense advantage that Washington possessed in being familiar with the land. This action allowed Washington time to organise his troops, resulting in delaying actions of the British forces at Brandywine and Germantown. Ultimately, although Howe defeated Washington, and in spite of some innovative tactics at Germantown, he was disastrously late in taking Philadelphia, which resulted in the failure of the larger campaign.

Consequences in Europe and Asia

At this time Benjamin Franklin was on a diplomatic mission to France on behalf of Congress, and the American military success at Saratoga convinced the French King Louis XVI to enter into an alliance and trade agreement with the Americans in 1778. Spain, an ally of France, soon pledged its support for the United States (1789), followed by the Dutch and the Sultanate of Mysore in India (both 1780). In addition, other European nations distanced themselves from the British. Congress had hoped that the French would be eager to avenge themselves on the British after the Seven Years' War, and this proved to be the case. Further, Saratoga settled French fears about the potential of the colonists to defeat the British following the loss of the American capital of Philadelphia. The success at Saratoga, and the enlistment of the European powers in what was to become a global conflict against the British, turned the tide of the conflict, both in America and internationally. In the coming years, the American theatre of war would almost become of secondary importance to the larger battle between the European powers.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Benjamin Franklin was notoriously fond of women. His friendship with influential women in France, such as Countess d'Houdetot (who supported the American cause) and Duchess de La Rochefoucauld (who enjoyed talking politics with Franklin), gave him an introduction into and credibility with the French Court during his diplomatic mission. In France he embodied the 'American Spirit' and was tremendously popular. This 'spirit' would later emerge in France during their own revolution.



▲ Source 6.20 *Franklin's reception at the court of France, 1776*, by John Smith, circa 1869

Valley Forge 1777–78: Washington's leadership

Despite the modern realisation that Saratoga was the turning point in the war, this was not clear to the Americans at the time. With their capital, Philadelphia, under the control of the British, Congress fled so that it could continue to operate. The most important city in British America was now occupied by British soldiers, whose presence nearly doubled the population. Meanwhile, in spite of his able handling of the Continental Army, Washington was soon in trouble after he established his winter camp in late December 1778 at Valley Forge.



▲ Source 6.21 A coloured engraving depicting soldiers in winter at Valley Forge

Conditions in the camp were appalling for the soldiers; basic necessities such as food, clothing and shelter were lacking. Further, many men's enlistments were ending. These conditions and lack of pay for the Continental Army exposed the frailties of the Articles of Confederation (see Chapter 7). In fact, the only item sent by a member of Congress, John Hancock, was a barrel of salted fish for Washington's personal consumption. However, with the arrival of Prussian commander Baron Von Steuben, and his training of the American soldiers as professionals, Washington and the American cause received a substantial boost. Ultimately, the struggles of Washington and his men just became another chapter in the American creation myth.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 6.4: VISUAL ANALYSIS



▲ Source 6.22 *Washington at Valley Forge* by E. Percy Moran, c. 1911

Study Source 6.22 and answer the following questions:

- 1 What is the significance of the flag in the background?
- 2 Which elements of the image suggest Washington's leadership was important at Valley Forge?
- 3 How does the artist depict the difficulties encountered at Valley Forge?
- 4 Using elements from the representation and your own knowledge, identify the events leading up to the Valley Forge campaign in 1778.

6.3 American problems

When Washington took over American forces in New England in 1776, there was no regular force, but rather a series of rag-tag militia groups. Even though Congress had legislated to create a Continental Army to stand up to the British Regular Army, it was up to Washington to create it from militia men, urban workers, farmers, artisans and boys. This was a difficult undertaking for many reasons:

- Hardly any of the rank and file had experience from the French and Indian War.
- There was a lack of weapons and ammunition.
- The republican mood of the Revolution was not conducive to military discipline.
- There was a shortage of experienced officers to lead the men.
- Cultural divisions existed in the army, particularly between New Englanders and Southerners.
- Enlistments were slow because of fear, a lack of interest and colonial opposition to standing armies.
- Washington had to conduct an ongoing battle with Congress for weapons, clothing and food.

Given these constraints, the Patriot cause relied even more heavily upon Washington's leadership.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

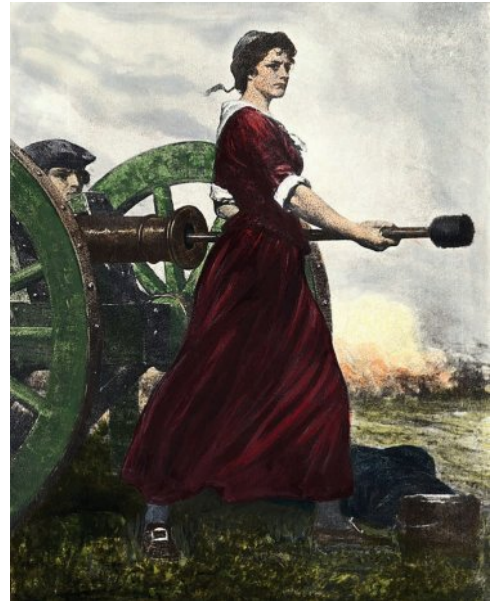
Von Steuben arrived at Valley Forge on 23 February 1778, and reported for duty as a volunteer. On General Washington's recommendation, Congress appointed him Inspector General of the Army soon after. The Prussian quickly whipped the Continental Army into a professional fighting force, and his training program and procedures became standards for the American military well into the 19th century.



▲ Source 6.23 Baron von Steuben drilling Continental Army recruits at Valley Forge in 1778. Painting by Edwin Austin Abbey, 1911

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Legend has it that at the Battle of Monmouth the wife of artilleryman William Hays, Mary Ludwig Hayes McCauly, heroically carried water to cool both the cannon and the soldiers in her husband's battery – hence the nickname 'Molly Pitcher'. Patriotic legend also asserts that when William Hays collapsed or was wounded, she took her husband's place in the gun crew for the rest of the battle.



► Source 6.24 Depiction of Molly Pitcher, after a painting by C.Y. Turner

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6.4

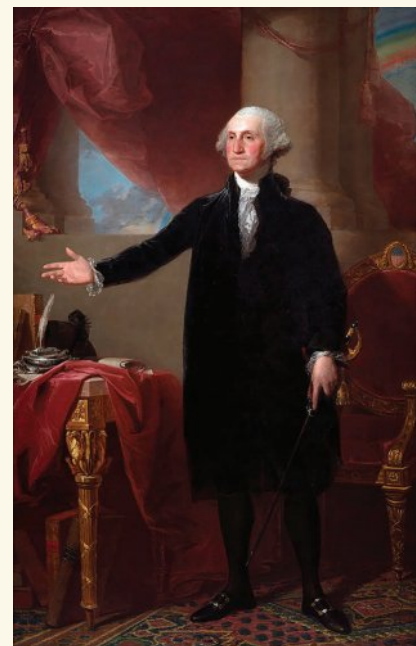
SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL**George Washington (Part 2)****Commander in Chief and President (1776–89)**

Much of what needs to be said of Washington from 1776 is covered throughout the discourse of his military campaigns; however, most significantly he was the founder and builder of the Continental Army. After arriving in Massachusetts, he decided to base the army on the Massachusetts Militia, as they had the most experience fighting the British at the Battle of Lexington-Concord, the Siege of Boston and the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Source 6.25 George Washington, trying to get his men to re-enlist, 31 December 1776

My brave fellows, you have done all I asked you to do, and more than can be reasonably expected; but your country is at stake, your wives, your houses and all that you hold dear. You have worn yourselves out with fatigues and hardships, but we know not how to spare you. If you will consent to stay one month longer, you will render that service to the cause of liberty, and to your country, which you probably can never do under any other circumstances.

Washington actively used patriotism, nationalism and political ideology to inspire and motivate his men. His use of Paine's *American Crisis* at Valley Forge and his speeches to his men entered into the mythology of the nation. He came to embody the Revolutionary spirit as his actions captured the hearts and minds of the American Patriot cause. During his campaigns around New York and New Jersey 1776, he employed 'Fabian tactics', realising that to meet the British Army in open battle would be disastrous. His actions definitively saved the army and the Revolution.



▲ Source 6.26 George Washington at around age 65, by Gilbert Stuart, circa 1797

continued...

...continued

Cincinnatus

(519–430 BCE) a Roman aristocrat and statesman who served as consul in 460 BCE and dictator in 458 and 439 BCE; he became a model of civic virtue primarily because he lay down military command and returned to civilian life after he served his term as dictator

separation of powers

a fundamental principle of the United States Constitution, whereby powers and responsibilities are divided among the legislative, executive and judicial branches

He realised early on the necessity to train the Continental Army properly:

Source 6.27 George Washington, Letter to the President of Congress, 9 February 1776

To expect ... the same service from raw and undisciplined recruits, as from veteran soldiers, is to expect what never did and perhaps never will happen. Men, who are familiarized to danger, meet it without shrinking; whereas troops unused to service often apprehend danger where no danger is.

At Valley Forge in 1778, the Prussian commander, Baron Von Steuben, brought much-needed European discipline, which held them in good stead for the remainder of the war.

Washington's friendship with the Marquis de Lafayette aided in the French Alliance. The support of French forces on land and sea (for example, the naval Battle of Chesapeake in 1781) facilitated Washington's victory, which effectively ended the war (see Section 6.5).

Using another classical example, he followed the Roman senator **Cincinnatus** in laying down his military command and returning to civilian life after the war, thus providing an example for future generations – and embodying the Enlightenment ideal of the **separation of powers**; that is, the military must remain distinct and under the control of an elected government. Washington also 'talked down' the conspirators at Newburgh in 1783 (see Section 7.6).



▲ **Source 6.28** George Washington with his family, by Edward Savage, circa 1789–96

Finally, after his retirement, and in the midst of the troubles of the 1780s (due to the flawed nature of the Articles of Confederation, under whose incompetence he had suffered at Valley Forge), he attended the Philadelphia Convention 1787 at the request of friends. He was elected chairman of the convention; he

...continued

presided over discussion rather than led it, although the wide support he enjoyed from the states due to his reputation allowed him to be an effective chairman. He fully supported the Constitution, becoming one of the most prominent and influential **Federalists**. The fact that he was a Virginian was a powerful motivator for the Southern states to eventually ratify the Constitution. The office of president of the new union was literally created with him in mind. He was inaugurated as the first President of the United States of America in 1789.

► **Source 6.29** An older President Washington, by Gilbert Stuart, circa 1795–96

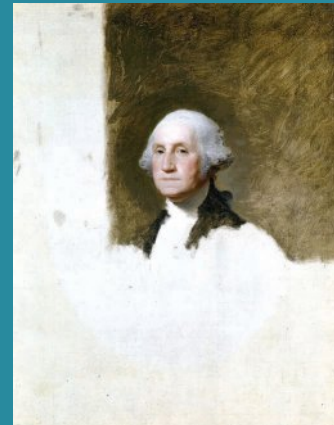


Federalist a person who supports federalism, which is a system of government in which power is divided between both a federal/national government and regional/state governments

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

The portrait artist Gilbert Stuart painted portraits of George Washington many times over the years. According to the painter Rembrandt Peale, Martha Washington was so happy with Stuart's portrait work that she convinced her husband to sit for another painting 'on the express condition that when it finished it should be hers'. However, Stuart was so taken with his portrait that he left it unfinished, and would use it as a reference when commissioned for paintings of Washington. The depiction of Washington on the American one-dollar bill is also based on this portrait.

► **Source 6.30** The unfinished portrait of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart, c. 1796



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6.5 The world turned upside down

Yorktown, 1778–83

Defeat, limited success and missed opportunities in the North caused the British to change tack. The decision was made to transfer the campaign to the South to take advantage of the presence of far greater numbers of Loyalists than in either New England or the mid-Atlantic region. Southern Loyalists had travelled to Britain to inform the government that the King's forces would fare better in the South.

General Clinton left New York on 26 December 1779 for Charleston. The British captured the most important city in the South, taking 5000 Continental soldiers prisoner. The British believed this would draw Loyalists to their cause and turn the tide of the war. For a while it did; from 1779 to 1781 the British won a series of victories – Savannah in 1778, Waxhaws in 1780 (with the aid of an exceptionally brutal Loyalist Commander Banastre Tarleton) and Guilford Court House in 1781 – while still holding strategic points in the North.

However, while the assumption of command by Lord Cornwallis worked well militarily, in terms of winning over the populace (which was the key in this insurgent-style war) he failed completely. Unlike his predecessors, such as Howe, Cornwallis was willing to ‘unleash the dogs of war’. He was far more prone to allow his troops to loot and pillage, shell towns and demand food from the populace.

In addition, Lord Dunmore had previously offered freedom to enslaved people if they fought for the British; this increasingly lost the support of the ruling elite of the South, who were all enslavers. Finally, in seeking to bring together British troops, Cornwallis ran across a massive Continental Army of 17 000 men, boosted by recently arrived French troops under Washington. Cornwallis was forced back to Yorktown. Even then, it was only the temporary blocking of naval supplies by the French fleet that compelled Cornwallis to surrender (see Source 6.31). The war continued on a small scale in the North, but the loss at Yorktown – in concert with the entry of foreign powers to what effectively was now a global conflict for the British – meant that the war effectively was over. Loyalists began leaving for Canada and Britain.



▲ Source 6.31 *The surrender of Lord Cornwallis*, by John Trumbull, 1820

THE STORY SO FAR

- When the war began, British commanders made poor calculations by initiating attacks in the hope of securing a harsh military defeat of the colonies. Due to its reputation as having a more Loyalist population, New York became the new destination for the British Army, which launched attacks in the surrounding area; however, the army suffered problems such as short supplies, territorial disadvantage and enemy knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses.
- Washington's successes in New Jersey in 1776 helped to establish him as a patriotic father and eventual President of the United States. Despite the successes of the British Army, their brutality only helped the Patriots' cause.
- The British plan to divide the resistance in 1777 failed at Saratoga due to the difficult terrain, the weight of their baggage, their slow speed and the red uniforms of the troops making them ideal targets for the harassing militia forces.
- Despite what we know now about the importance of Valley Forge (1778), at the time the awful conditions meant a hard struggle and heavy casualties for the American troops.
- After experiencing limited success in the North, the British decided to concentrate on the South in the hope of more victories due to the higher concentration of Loyalist forces. This was unsuccessful and the loss of Yorktown, combined with the entry by foreign powers into an international campaign against the British, effectively ended the War of Independence.

Use the QR code or visit the Interactive Textbook and watch the video summarising the chapter.



Develop your historical thinking skills

Define key terms

Write explanations defining each of the following:

Key concepts	Key leaders
Loyalists	George Washington
Fabian tactics	General William Howe
Patriots	General John Burgoyne
Strategy	Benjamin Franklin

Establishing historical significance

- 1 Who was a Patriot?
- 2 Why was the Battle of Saratoga so important?

Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 What was the main effect on British Americans of British troops campaigning in the colonies?
- 2 What were the difficulties that faced British forces in the Americas?

Constructing historical arguments

- 1 'Without George Washington's leadership the cause of the United States would have been lost.' Discuss this view, providing evidence for your own evaluation of the importance of George Washington, his conduct of the war and his success against the British.
- 2 *I know that the conquest of English America is an impossibility. You cannot, I venture to say it, you CANNOT conquer America ... As to conquest, therefore, my Lords, I repeat, it is impossible. (William Pitt, 1777)*

Discuss the reasons why the British did not win the War of Independence.

Analysing historical sources as evidence

THE CRISIS I. (THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY MEN'S SOULS)

THESE are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. 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: it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put 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; for so unlimited a power can belong only to God.

Source 6.32 *American Crisis*, Thomas Paine, 1776

- 1 Explain how Paine seeks to motivate the American people in this source.
- 2 What is meant by Paine's statement 'The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country'?

Analysing historian's interpretations

Debate: Why were the Americans successful in the War of Independence?

Name: David Hackett Fischer (1935–)

Fischer provides a step-by-step account of Washington's campaign after crossing the Delaware in 1776. He attributes much of the Americans' success to their open and flexible system, which gave them an advantage over the rigid and hierarchical system maintained by the British and German forces. Fisher proposes that not only did the success of Washington and his peers save the faltering American Revolution, but it also gave it new purpose and significance.

Point of view (perspective or argument)

Fisher proposes that the emergence of radical thinker Thomas Paine led to the use of political propaganda to mobilise and reinvigorate the people.

Reasons (evidence)

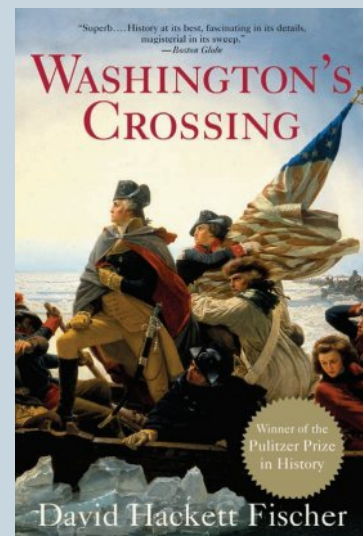
Concerned by the numerous defeats and pending ends to enlistments within the Continental Army, Thomas Paine penned, *The American Crisis*. With phrases such as

These are the times that try men's souls and 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

plus its widespread distribution and use by Washington (read aloud to the troops) helped to revitalise the Patriot cause.

Quote

The American Crisis was more than an exhortation. It was a program for action. Paine laid out the broad agenda for Congress and the states, for the army and the militia, for the merchants and farmers, and for Americans who were still free and others who were under the heel of a foreign conqueror.



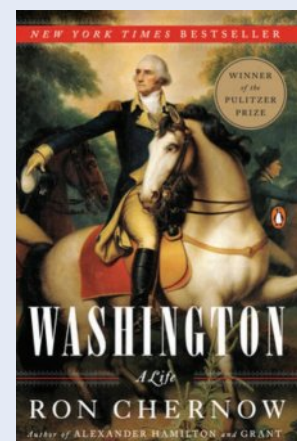
▲ Source 6.33 *Washington's Crossing* by David Hackett Fischer

Name: Ron Chernow (1949–)

Ron Chernow's book is a 'one-volume, cradle-to-grave narrative' that attempts to provide a fresh portrait of Washington as 'real, credible, and charismatic in the same way he was perceived by his contemporaries'. Note that reading the preface or introduction of history books is a brief way to see the historian's point of view, as it is there that he or she often explains why the book was written, how it was written and its main conclusions.

Point of view (perspective or argument)

Chernow emphasises the importance of Washington's leadership in the creation of the new nation; both with the War of Independence and the economic and political crisis which followed.



▲ Source 6.34 *Washington: A Life* by Ron Chernow

Reasons (evidence)

Washington's practical nature and realisation that the Continental Army was incapable of traditionally fighting the British Army led to his defensive strategy and policy of preserving his forces and the survival of the Patriot Cause. Further, his initial victories although minor were calculated to restore morale and enlistments and gain time, allowing for external factors to come into play against the British.

Quote

Washington said that he and his generals had resolved to wage a defensive war, a policy from which he would only periodically deviate. 'It has been even called a war of posts, that we should on all occasions avoid a general action or put anything to the risk unless compelled by a necessity into which we ought never to be drawn.' Never again, he swore, would he send young troops into 'open ground against their superiors both in number and discipline'. This strategy was neither glamorous nor particularly congenial to Washington's personality, but it might prove sure and effective. That Washington was able to adjust his strategic doctrine again showed his capacity for growth and his realistic nature.

Name: Francis Jennings (1918–2000)

For a concise and accessibly written left-wing academic account of the Revolutionary War, read chapters 31 to 39 of Francis Jennings's text.

Point of view (perspective or argument)

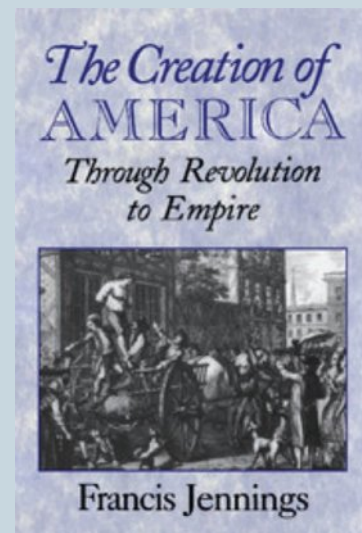
Jennings proposes that the alliance with France proved pivotal in the British defeat.

Reasons (evidence)

The American victory was predicated on an alignment of French interests with American needs. The French did not fight for freedom as some 'Patriot & Historian' American Park Rangers would have you believe (they were an *ancien regime* after all, that would shortly after the American victory undergo their own far bloodier transition into republicanism), but out of a desire to further French global and imperial interests.

Quote

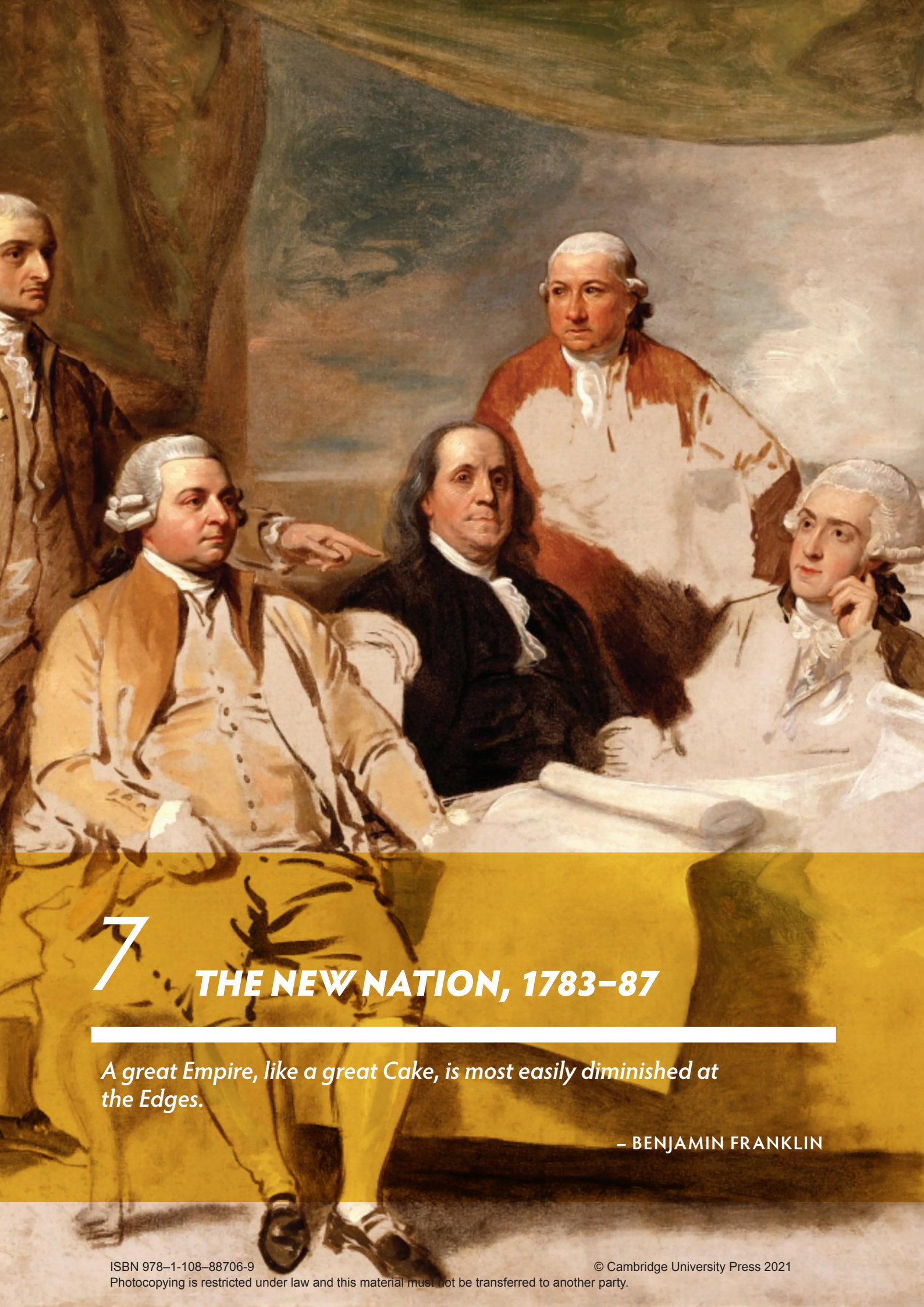
Saratoga was important to French statesmen, not because it showed Americans winning – it did not so long as Washington was still in Valley Forge – but rather because the victory demonstrated Americans as potentially valuable allies against Britain in France's long feud. When France declared war, it did not engage to help Americans – such a concept reverses reality – rather, France launched war all over the world wherever there were British targets, and France aimed to win French objectives. In this scheme, the American Revolutionaries presented a sideshow valuable for diverting British resources. It is quite relevant that just as French arms were critical for the victory at Saratoga, so the decisive final victory in America (when that time came) was won at Yorktown by French forces that outnumbered the Americans on land as well as at sea. (And the Americans wore French-donated uniforms.) True, the command was George Washington's, but he could not have dreamed of it with only his own resources.



▲ Source 6.35 *The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire* by Francis Jennings

What's your point of view?

Using the information above, what's your point of view as to why the Americans were successful in the War of Independence?



7

THE NEW NATION, 1783–87

A great Empire, like a great Cake, is most easily diminished at the Edges.

– BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Overview

The Treaty of Paris formally ended the war in 1783, but the majority of fighting had ceased by 1781. Prior to the ending of the war, the newly founded Articles of Confederation Government – with the vital and pivotal leadership of Washington – had blundered its way to victory. It is doubtful whether this would have occurred without him. The ‘New Society’ was now confronted with a vast array of problems: debt, inflation, unpaid and mutinous soldiers, and bickering between the states.



In fact, in some cases colonial unity was adopted only reluctantly in the face of a common enemy, but with the war at an end was there any need for a stronger union? During the period of ‘salutary neglect’ (see Chapter 1), the colonies may have pioneered and developed a shared sense of republicanism due to the reality of their ‘internal sovereignty’, but this was individualised to each colony. In a way, the period from May 1776, when Congress instructed the states to create individual state constitutions and declarations of rights, effectively encouraged the creation of a collection of separate republics. Ultimately, however, this period formed the framework that would see the creation of a strong federal government and the rise of what historians often call the ‘Revolutionary generation’ of the Founding Fathers.

Key issues

- What were the terms of the Treaty of Paris (1783)?
- What was the structure of the New Society?
- What was the Virginia Declaration of Rights?
- What was Jefferson’s Statute for Religious Freedom?
- What were the Articles of Confederation?
- What sorts of issues confronted the New Society?
- What was Shays’ Rebellion?

Digital resources for this chapter

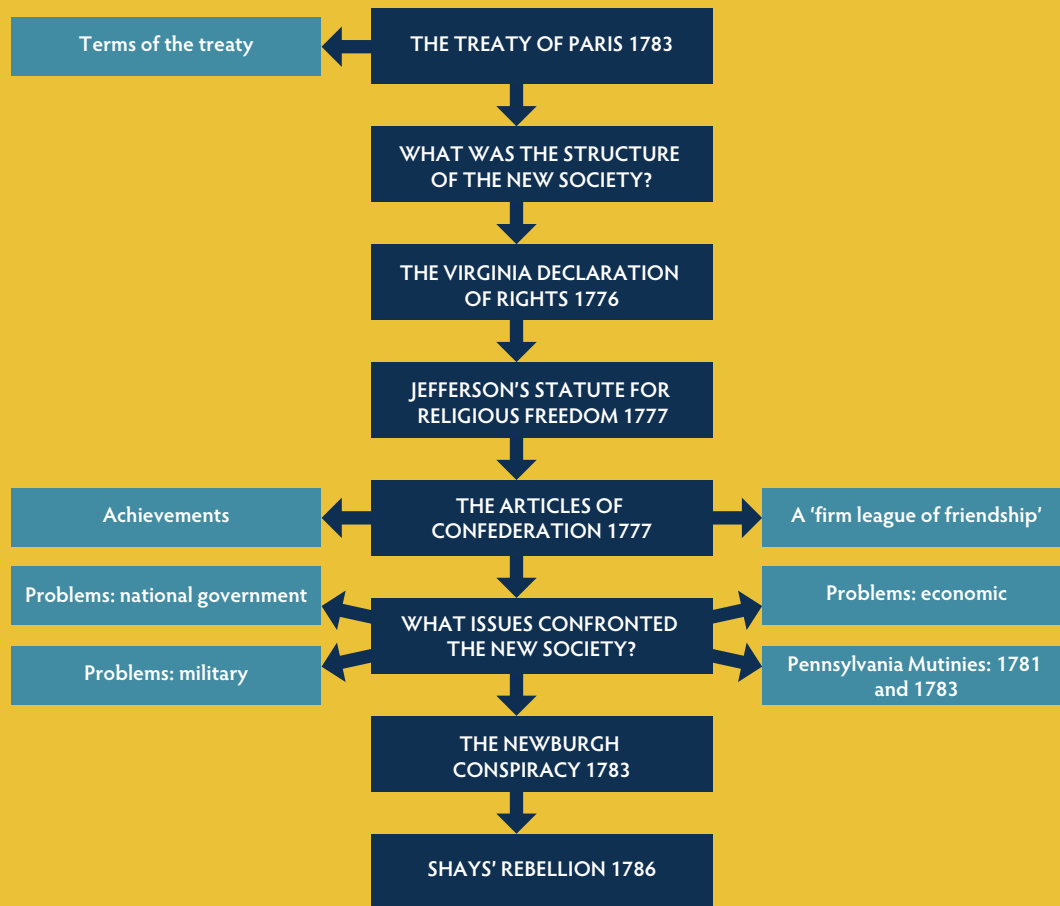
In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

◀ **Source 7.0** Benjamin West’s oil painting from 1783–84 of the delegations at the Treaty of Paris: Americans John Jay, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Laurens and William Temple Franklin are depicted. Perhaps understandably, the British delegation refused to pose, and the painting was never completed.

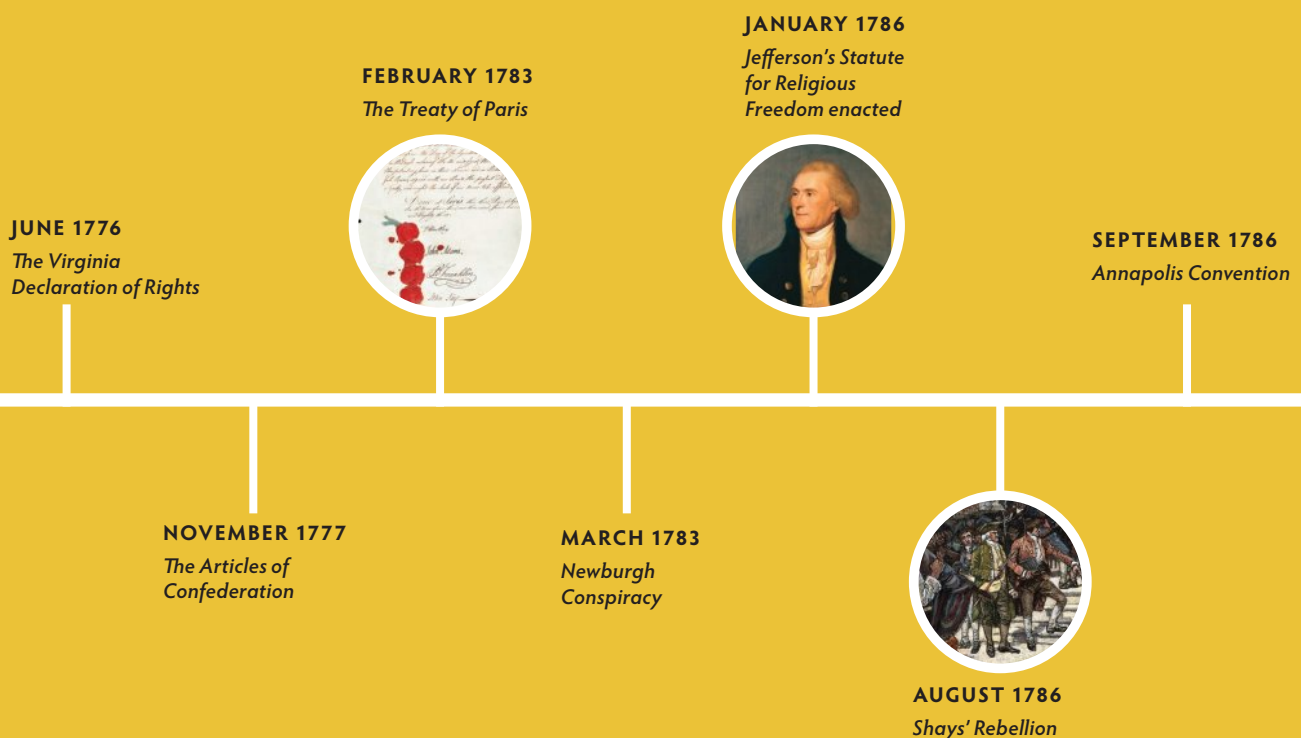
Flow of chapter

How is this chapter structured?



Timeline

What are the key events of the American Revolution covered in this chapter?



7.1 The Treaty of Paris, 1783

The Treaty of Paris formally ended the Revolutionary War and was very favourable to the United States, with the British conceding much territory. Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and John Jay negotiated with the British delegates Richard Oswald and David Hartley in Paris. It was a victory for the United States, but it did not solve all their problems.

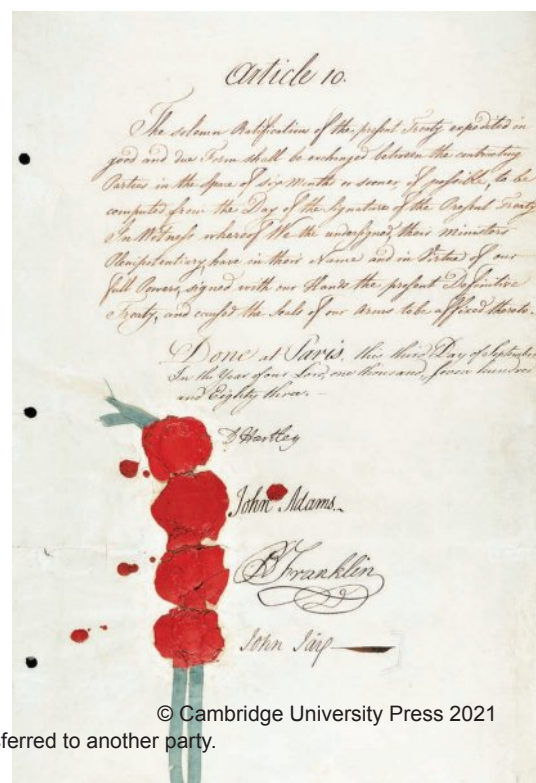


▲ Source 7.1 A depiction of the signing of the Treaty of Paris in bronze on a door

The terms of the treaty included:

- formal British acknowledgement and recognition of the independence and sovereignty of the United States
- the surrender to the United States of all British territory between the Appalachian Mountains and the Ohio River
- the drawing of borders between the United States and British-occupied Canada to the north
- American companies to enjoy fishing rights in the oceans to the east of British Canada and off the coast of Newfoundland
- the honouring of private and commercial debts in existence before the Revolution
- American states to enjoy unrestricted access to the Mississippi River, an important waterway for trade and transport for new settlers over the Appalachians.

► Source 7.2 The last page of the Treaty of Paris, including the signatures of David Hartley, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and John Jay

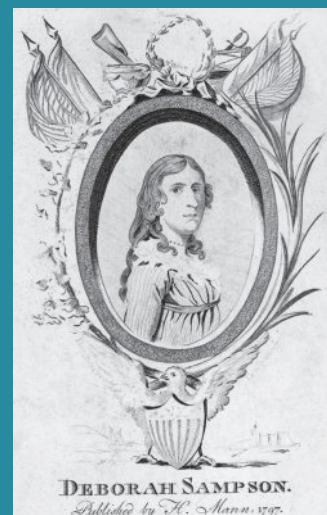




▲ Source 7.3 A map of United States and European territorial claims, 1783

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Though most of the fighting of the Revolutionary War was completed by 1781, smaller skirmishes were still reported until 1783. As women couldn't officially enlist to fight for the Continental Army, some determined Patriots disguised themselves as men to join in the fighting. One famous example was Deborah Sampson, from Plymouth, Massachusetts. Sampson served for 17 months from May 1782 under the name of 'Robert Shurtliff'. After falling severely ill with a fever in 1783, Sampson's secret was discovered when a doctor removed the bindings used to hide her breasts. He kept her secret safe, and Sampson went on to serve until her discharge from service in October 1783.



► Source 7.4 Engraved portrait of Deborah Sampson, female American Revolutionary War soldier by Herman Mann, circa 1797

7.2 What was the structure of the New Society?

With the *Declaration of Independence* turning all the Thirteen Colonies into states, Congress realised that some form of constitution was needed to establish control and provide a blueprint for future governance. Great Britain did not (and does not) have a constitution per se; rather, its constitution is considered to be embodied in the legislation, court judgments, treaties and parliamentary conventions developed over hundreds of years (that is, its **fundamental law**).

Quite clearly, the Americans could not follow this model. Instead, Congress decided that each state should establish a new government and write its constitution as a single document – effectively leaving the creation of the United States Government to the individual states.

In a way this was an adaptation and ‘correction’ of the British system. If the *Declaration of Independence* was, in the words of Winston Churchill, ‘a restatement of *Magna Carta*’, then each state would replicate what was central to the British Government – the constitution. This proved to be an exceptionally fruitful exercise, with 10 states writing constitutions between 1776 and 1778. They essentially embodied the revolutionary thought (based on Enlightenment ideals) that had been brought into existence by the conflict with Britain.

Each constitution laid out the branches of government and was written to correct perceived faults of the British Constitution; for example:

- Nearly all created governments with two houses, mirroring the British bicameral model (only Pennsylvania, New Hampshire and Georgia created unicameral governments).
- The states feared that if they had a powerful governor (executive), it would simply create a local version of British ‘tyranny’ (after all, the ongoing war had derived from a resistance to the British executive – George III and Parliament). These fears came to dominate the later ratifications debates, and to avoid this, the states legislated weak powers to state governors to limit the power of the executive. Further, governors served short terms, could not veto legislation and were advised by councils not of their own choosing.
- Each state’s constitution included a declaration of citizens’ rights, again mirroring the English Bill of Rights (1688).

Recognising the importance of a constitution – that it represented the introduction of fundamental law, and that it needed the consensus and approval of the population – the state of Massachusetts sent its draft constitution to 240 towns to be ratified. This process served as an example for the United States Constitution.

fundamental law

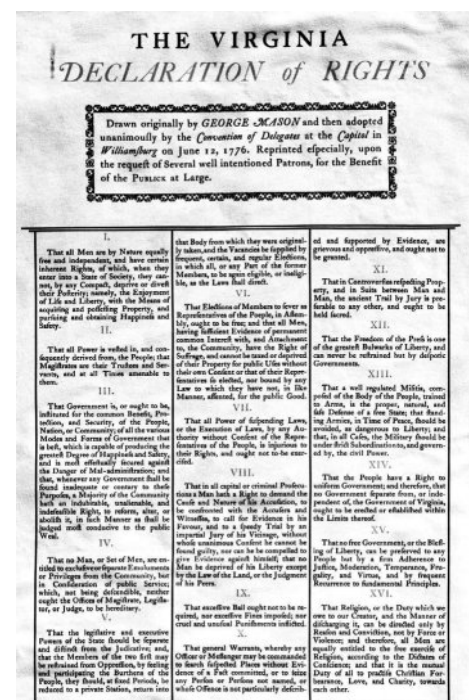
the law, written or unwritten, that establishes the character of a government by defining the basic principles to which a society must conform, by describing the organisation of the government and regulation, distribution and limitations on the functions of different government departments; and by prescribing the extent and manner of the exercise of its sovereign powers

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7.3 The Virginia Declaration of Rights, 1776

The Virginia Declaration of Rights (see Source 7.5) particularly embodied the ideals that had developed throughout the Revolutionary period. Written by George Mason, it was adopted by the Virginia Constitutional Convention on 12 June 1776. Extracts from the declaration and their relationship to Revolutionary and Enlightenment ideals (as discussed in Chapter 1) appear below.

DECLARATION OF RIGHTS made by the representatives of the good people of Virginia, assembled in full and free convention which rights do pertain to them and their posterity, as the basis and foundation of government.



► Source 7.5 The Virginia Declaration of Rights



Text	Revolutionary and Enlightenment ideals
Section 1. <i>That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.</i>	This is a direct reference to both John Locke's concept of 'natural rights' (which the American Patriots believed had been impinged) and the Enlightenment ideal of a 'social contract' that a government and a people enter into (see Section 1.5).
Section 2. <i>That all power is vested in, and consequently derived from, the people; that magistrates are their trustees and servants and at all times amenable to them.</i>	This relates to Rousseau's Enlightenment ideal that power derives from the people rather than the monarch, in a way echoing the English Bill of Rights, which limited the powers of the monarch in Britain – but not in the colonies.
Section 3. <i>That government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people, nation, or community; of all the various modes and forms of government, that is best which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety and is most effectually secured against the danger of maladministration. And that, when any government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community has an indubitable, inalienable, and indefeasible right to reform, alter, or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal.</i>	This expands on the nature of government, with the Enlightenment ideal of power emanating from the people. Further, it asserts that if the government in some way goes against the will of the people, they have both the right and the duty to replace it.
Section 4. <i>That no man, or set of men, is entitled to exclusive or separate emoluments or privileges from the community, but in consideration of public services; which, nor being descendible, neither ought the offices of magistrate, legislator, or judge to be hereditary.</i>	This is a direct reference to Thomas Paine's ideas in <i>Common Sense</i> (1776), repudiating the concept of inherited power and the British colonial system of royal favour and patronage when dealing with government positions and offices.
Section 5. <i>That the legislative and executive powers of the state should be separate and distinct from the judiciary; and that the members of the two first may be restrained from oppression, by feeling and participating the burdens of the people, they should, at fixed periods, be reduced to a private station, return into that body from which they were originally taken, and the vacancies be supplied by frequent, certain, and regular elections, in which all, or any part, of the former members, to be again eligible, or ineligible, as the laws shall direct.</i>	This is an enactment of John Locke's concept of the 'separation of powers'; it also restates the British idea established in the <i>Magna Carta</i> (see Section 1.5) that no one is above the law. Practically, this meant that the state governor and assembly would be separate and distinct from the judiciary, allowing them to act as a restraint on both arms of the government and protecting the American people from British-style tyranny. Further, the judges in the Virginia law courts would serve fixed terms and be subject to regular election to serve as a check on the corruption that resulted from royal favour and influence when appointing judges in the colonies prior to independence.

Text	Revolutionary and Enlightenment ideals
<p>Section 6. <i>That elections of members to serve as representatives of the people, in assembly ought to be free; and that all men, having sufficient evidence of permanent common interest with, and attachment to, the community, have the right of suffrage and cannot be taxed or deprived of their property for public uses without their own consent or that of their representatives so elected, nor bound by any law to which they have not, in like manner, assembled for the public good.</i></p>	<p>This relates to John Locke's Enlightenment ideal of natural rights: life, liberty and estate (property).</p>
<p>Section 7. <i>That all power of suspending laws, or the execution of laws, by any authority, without consent of the representatives of the people, is injurious to their rights and ought not to be exercised.</i></p>	<p>This was designed to prevent the <i>Coercive Acts</i> (or 'Intolerable Acts') of 1774, as a consequence of which colonial assemblies had been dismissed by the British.</p>
<p>Section 8. <i>That in all capital or criminal prosecutions a man has a right to demand the cause and nature of his accusation, to be confronted with the accusers and witnesses, to call for evidence in his favour, and to a speedy trial by an impartial jury of twelve men of his vicinage, without whose unanimous consent he cannot be found guilty; nor can he be compelled to give evidence against himself; that no man be deprived of his liberty except by the law of the land or the judgment of his peers.</i></p>	<p>Again, this relates to the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights; further, to prevent actions like the infamous <i>Administration of Justice Act 1774</i> (known as the 'Murder Act'), whereby the accused could be transferred to another British colony or to Great Britain to assure trials more conducive to the Crown by avoiding the prejudices of local juries.</p>
<p>Section 9. <i>That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.</i></p>	<p>Again, this relates to the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights.</p>
<p>Section 10. <i>That general warrants, whereby an officer or messenger may be commanded to search suspected places without evidence of a fact committed, or to seize any person or persons not named, or whose offense is not particularly described and supported by evidence, are grievous and oppressive and ought not to be granted.</i></p>	<p>This is effectively an answer to the 'Writs of Assistance' case by James Otis (1761; see Chapter 2) to protect individuals from illegal searches colonists believed had been conducted by the British.</p>
<p>Section 11. <i>That in controversies respecting property, and in suits between man and man, the ancient trial by jury is preferable to any other and ought to be held sacred.</i></p>	<p>Again, this relates to the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights.</p>
<p>Section 12. <i>That the freedom of the press is one of the great bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained but by despotic governments.</i></p>	<p>Again, this relates to the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights, as well as being reminiscent of the English Bill of Rights: 'the freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament'.</p>

continued...



...continued

Text	Revolutionary and Enlightenment ideals
Section 13. <i>That a well-regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, trained to arms, is the proper, natural, and safe defense of a free state; that standing armies, in time of peace, should be avoided as dangerous to liberty; and that in all cases the military should be under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power.</i>	This effectively echoes the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the subsequent English Bill of Rights (1689): 'no standing army may be maintained during peacetime without the consent of parliament'. This section also addressed commonly held American fears as expressed through opposition writers Trenchard and Gordon, in <i>Cato's Letters</i> , that standing armies represented a prelude to tyranny.
Section 14. <i>That the people have a right to uniform government; and, therefore, that no government separate from or independent of the government of Virginia ought to be erected or established within the limits thereof.</i>	Again, this relates to the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights, but is also an early embodiment of the 'state's rights' concept that would be a sticking point for opponents of the United States Constitution.
Section 15. <i>That no free government, or the blessings of liberty, can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue and by frequent recurrence to fundamental principles.</i>	'Fundamental principles' relates to Locke's concept of 'natural law'.
Section 16. <i>That religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity toward each other.</i>	This relates to the Enlightenment ideal of religious freedom.

▲ Source 7.6 Analysis of the Virginia Declaration of Rights

FOCUS QUESTIONS 7.1

- 1 What were the changes that were brought to the New Society by the state constitutions and Declarations of Rights?
- 2 In what ways was the Virginian Declaration of Rights designed to stop the rise of a 'tyrant'?
- 3 Which section of the Virginian Declaration of Rights eliminated the British system of **patronage**? How was this done?

patronage a system used in British America, whereby colonial officials were appointed through their connections to men of power and rank

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the English Bill of Rights (1689) was established shortly after the Glorious Revolution (1688) that had expelled a Catholic King, James II, from the throne in favour of the Protestant William III of Orange. The Bill limited the powers of the king, effectively subordinating them to the Parliament in Great Britain. However, it did not restrict the powers of the monarch in the colonies. Hence, the American Revolution shared many similarities with the Glorious Revolution.

7.4 Jefferson's Statute for Religious Freedom, 1777

Within this creative period, where Enlightenment and revolutionary ideals seemingly materialised into legislation for governance, Thomas Jefferson brought into being one of the pillars of the modern industrialised state: the Statute for Religious Freedom. It guaranteed, in law, the freedom to practise religion (or not) in any way an individual saw fit.

The first premise was really an embodiment of the Enlightenment ideal of the separation of church and state (the 'separation of powers'). At the time in Europe, the state religion legitimised the rule of the monarch; for example, the Catholic Church in France and Spain, the Orthodox Church in Russia and the Church of England in Great Britain. The state, in turn, supported the state religion through compulsory taxes.

Similarly, in Virginia, where the statute was enacted, people were required to pay taxes to support the clergymen of the Church of England, and their marriage ceremonies had to be performed by Church of England ministers.

While Jefferson's statement of the principles of separation of church and state supported complete religious freedom, it also undercut these longstanding connections of mutual support between church and state. These ideas were originally drafted in 1777 as the Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom. It stated, in part:

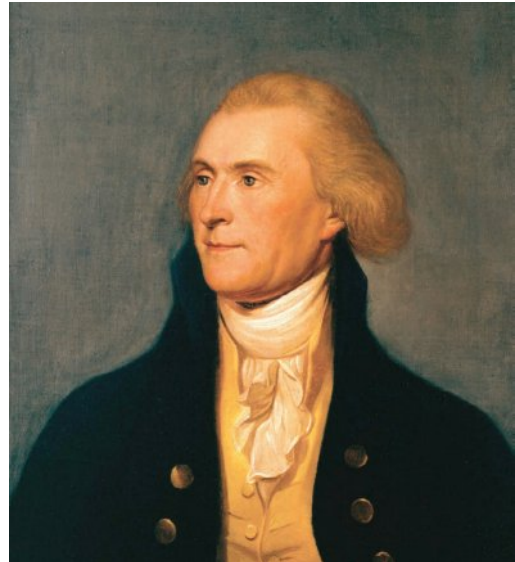
Be it enacted by General Assembly that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of Religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities.

Source 7.9 Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom, Thomas Jefferson, 1777

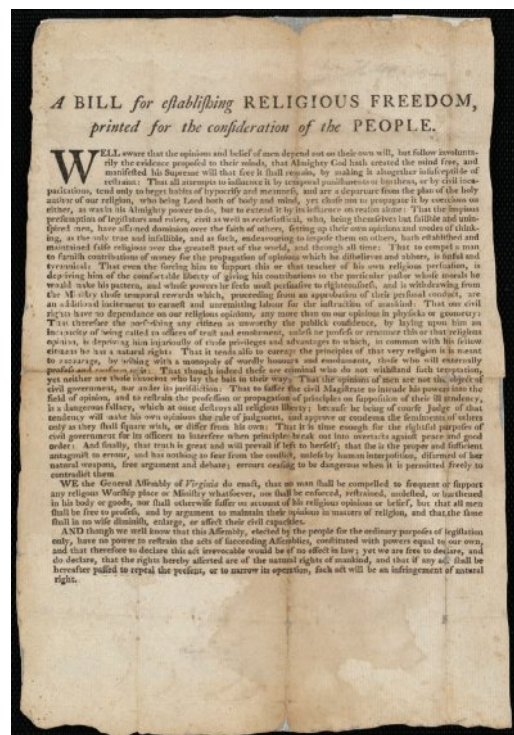
Although it was introduced in the Virginia General Assembly on 12 June 1779, it did not pass. James Madison, without whom it probably would never have been enacted, engineered its passage in the General Assembly in 1786 and thus shared with Jefferson the credit for detaching the church from the state in Virginia.

To understand the radical nature of this ideal, and its continuing legacy in the Western world, we need to remember that our **secular** society effectively was pioneered and created by Jefferson's statute.

Jefferson's belief was that real liberty – that is, freedom of thought – was impossible without this separation; essentially, he believed that no person could speak or give their real opinion



▲ Source 7.7 Thomas Jefferson



▲ Source 7.8 Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom

secular the state of being separate from religion, or not being exclusively allied with or against any particular religion



if there existed a state religion that they feared to contradict. Again, this legislation codified the Revolutionary ideal that grew from John Locke's natural right of liberty.

The statute disestablished the Church of England in Virginia and guaranteed freedom of religion to people of all religious faiths, including Catholics, Jews and members of all Protestant denominations.

The Virginia law was also one of the sources that Congress drew upon when drafting the US Bill of Rights in 1789.

FOCUS QUESTIONS 7.2

- 1 Explain what Jefferson considered to be 'real liberty'.
- 2 Explain or describe how the Statute for Religious Freedom brought change to the New Society.



▲ **Source 7.10** Jefferson believed that the Statute for Religious Freedom was of similar importance to his involvement with the *Declaration of Independence*. It was one of the three achievements he wished engraved on his tombstone.

7.5 The Articles of Confederation, 1777

'A firm league of friendship'

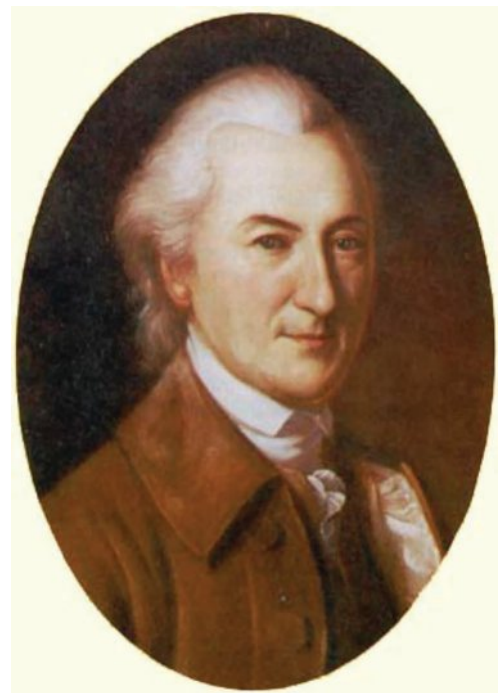
The Articles of Confederation formed the first federal government of the United States, and its successes and failures are essential to understanding both the latter stages of the War of Independence and the subsequent Constitution and Bill of Rights. The Thirteen Colonies had all been founded and governed independently of one another, and the first attempt at uniform government reflected this. Under instruction from Congress, the colonies, now known as 'states', had all written separate constitutions. Naturally, the states wrote constitutions that tended to reflect local needs, and little attention was paid to the formation and needs of the new national government. In time, this would nearly prove to be disastrous. As Edward Countryman notes, 'Congress had some of the qualities of a national government, but in other ways it was more like an alliance of sovereign republics'.

The Articles of Confederation were devised by committee in 1776. John Dickinson wrote the majority of them, which were then presented to Congress for debate. With the ongoing war, the Articles were not raised until 1777, when they were passed as 'a firm league of friendship with each other, for their common defense, the security of their liberties, and their mutual and general welfare'.

The Constitution was written for the purpose of forming a confederacy and governing the United States of America, but the states retained sovereign power except in issues of national importance. It contained 13 separate articles that outlined the structure of government, the responsibilities of the states, voting procedures, sources of revenue and matters of law, foreign affairs and defence. It also created a Confederation Congress, where each state had one vote, with a three-quarter majority (nine of Thirteen Colonies) required to pass laws and a unanimous vote was required for amendments of the Articles.

These provisions to maintain democracy created a weak central government that found it difficult to act due to the power of the states. That said, Congress was able to claim some successes:

- It successfully prosecuted and won the War of Independence.
- It managed to supply the army during the course of the war, although not always to the satisfaction of the generals (see the discussion of Valley Forge in Chapter 6).
- It ratified the Treaty of Paris in 1783.
- It passed the *Land Ordinance Act 1785*, under which public lands were surveyed and subdivided into townships and then sold privately, accelerating settlement.
- It passed the *North West Ordinance 1787*, which dealt with the political organisation of new lands, setting a pattern for the entry of future new states:
 - The Ordinance broke the new lands into states.
 - A state could send a non-voting representative to Congress once it reached a population of 5000 male adults; further, it could form its own constitution and legislature.
 - A state would assume full statehood when its population reached that of the smallest state in the Confederation.
 - Slavery would not exist in the new states, a decision that would later be fought over in the Ratification Debates (see Chapter 8) and the Civil War.



▲ Source 7.11 John Dickinson



Despite these positive steps, the new government faced numerous crises as the states came to bicker and fight among themselves, rebellions were sparked by unpaid salaries to army personnel, and fiscal and trade policies almost led to economic ruin.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 7.1: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS



The Articles of Confederation

The Articles of Confederation and perpetual Union between the states of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

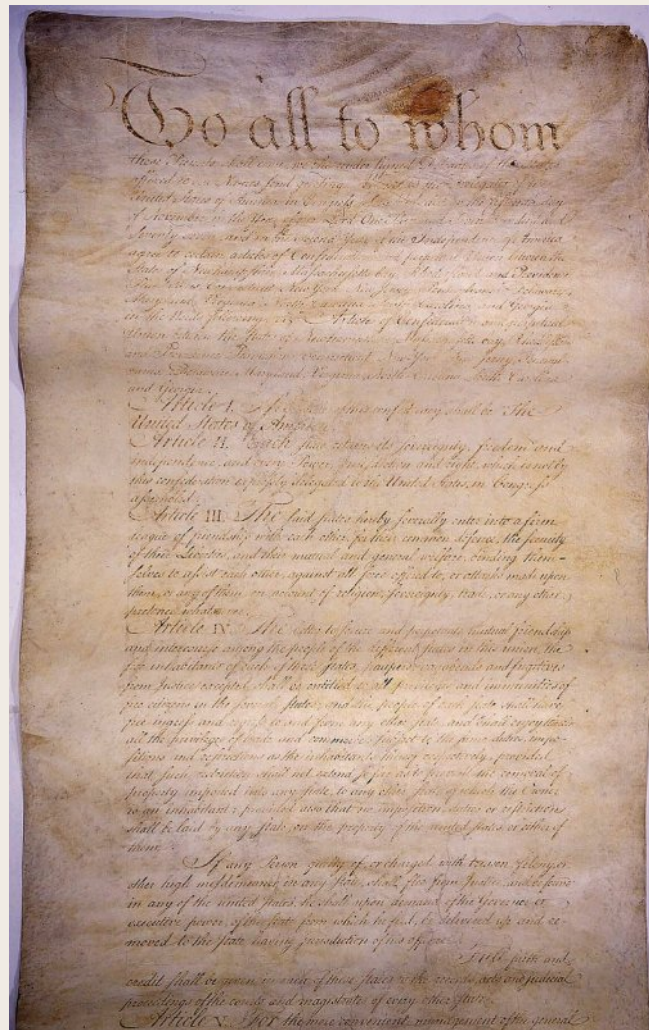
Article I. The style of this Confederacy shall be 'The United States of America'.

Article II. Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every power, jurisdiction, and right, which is not by this Confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled.

Article III. The said States hereby severally enter into a firm league of friendship with each other, for their common defense, the security of their liberties, and their mutual and general welfare, binding themselves to assist each other, against all force offered to, or attacks made upon them, or any of them, on account of religion, sovereignty, trade, or any other pretense whatever.

Article IV. The better to secure and perpetuate mutual friendship and intercourse among the people of the different States in this Union, the free inhabitants of each of these States – paupers, vagabonds and fugitives from justice excepted – shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of free citizens in the several States ... and shall enjoy therein all the privileges of trade and commerce, subject to the same duties, impositions, and restrictions as the inhabitants thereof respectively ... If any person guilty of, or charged with, treason, felony, or other high misdemeanor in any State shall flee from justice, and be found in any of the United States, he shall, upon demand of the Governor or executive power of the State from which he fled, be delivered up and removed to the State having jurisdiction of his offense ...

Article V. In determining questions in the United States in Congress assembled, each State shall have one



▲ Source 7.12 The first page of the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union

continued...

...continued

vote. Freedom of speech and debate in Congress shall not be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Congress, and the members of Congress shall be protected in their persons from arrests or imprisonments, during the time of their going to and from, and attendance on Congress, except for treason, felony, or breach of the peace.

Article VI. *No State, without the consent of the United States in Congress assembled, shall send any embassy to, or receive any embassy from, or enter into any conference, agreement, alliance or treaty with any King, Prince or State ... No two or more States shall enter into any treaty, confederation or alliance whatever between them, without the consent of the United States in Congress assembled, specifying accurately the purposes for which the same is to be entered into, and how long it shall continue ... No vessel of war shall be kept up in time of peace by any State ... No State shall engage in any war without the consent of the United States in Congress assembled, unless such State be actually invaded by enemies ...*

Article IX. *The United States in Congress assembled, shall have the sole and exclusive right and power of determining on peace and war, except in the cases mentioned in the sixth article ...*

Article XII. *All bills of credit emitted, monies borrowed, and debts contracted by or under the authority of Congress, before the assembling of the United States, in pursuance of the present confederation, shall be deemed and considered as a charge against the United States, for payment and satisfaction ...*

Article XIII. *Every State shall abide by the determination of the United States in Congress assembled, on all questions which by this confederation are submitted to them. And the Articles of this Confederation shall be inviolably observed by every State, and the Union shall be perpetual; nor shall any alteration at any time hereafter be made in any of them; unless such alteration be agreed to in a Congress of the United States, and be afterwards confirmed by the legislatures of every State.*

- 1 List the powers (quoting the source article) that the Articles of Confederation government possessed.
- 2 Explain what the purpose of 'the firm league of friendship' was. (Quote and discuss.)
- 3 In whose name would 'bills of credit ... monies borrowed, and debts contracted' be under? Using your own knowledge and the source (quote), explain why this became such a problem for the New Society.
- 4 Explain what the purpose of Article VI was. What problems did this article try to prevent?

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

It is interesting to note that the Southern states that seceded from the United States during the Civil War adopted the name the Confederate States of America. Quite clearly, 'an alliance of sovereign republics' that were free to govern themselves was exactly what the Southern states sought in order to maintain slavery.



7.6 What issues confronted the New Society?

National government problems

Because nearly all sovereignty (apart from foreign affairs) lay in the hands of the states, the national government had its hands tied in many spheres. The government could not pass laws, tax or even raise and pay for a national army without state approval.

However, the main problem was the law-making process: the Articles of Confederation stated that Congress required unanimity (all states to agree) before a change could be made to the Articles, and nine of the Thirteen Colonies had to agree for a law to be passed. This rarely (or never, in the case of Articles) occurred, with state interests overwhelmingly overriding the national interest. After direct hostilities in the War of Independence ceased in 1781, Congress was almost powerless in trying to oust the British, who refused to vacate forts and encouraged breakaway movements and insurrection.

Economic problems

[The] problems of trade could never be solved ... till Articles [were] re-drafted ... [N]ational government needed a thorough overhaul.

Hugh Brogan, 2001

Congress had no power to make trade agreements on behalf of the states, nor could it establish customs duties, trade regulations or industries. The states passed Acts serving their own interests and, with Congress legally unable to regulate this, trade between the states became a complex and expensive affair, with states establishing trade agreements, tariffs and subsidies that often directly disadvantaged other states; for example:

- New York and Pennsylvania created import duties that saw New Jersey farmers suffer.
- It cost more in taxes to send goods from Connecticut to Massachusetts than to England.

Internationally, America's reputation also slumped:

- Loans from foreign powers for the war had to be repaid, yet America (due to 150 years of British mercantilism) lacked the industries to create their own products for export.
- Because Congress had no taxation power, and the states could decide what they wished to contribute, unsustainable situations occurred. For example, in 1781 Congress planned to raise \$5 million from the states in order to run national affairs and the government; they raised \$422 000.
- All states, as well as the Continental Army, printed their own currency during the war. As more revenue was needed, Congress simply printed more banknotes, leading to massive inflation (see Source 7.13). This was never corrected and confidence in trade and business declined as a result.

► Source 7.13 Paper money issued by Congress



- Farmers were particularly hurt, as they could no longer sell their produce to the British market and were also punished by debtors' courts, which led to Shays' Rebellion (discussed later in this chapter).
- Congress had \$54 million in war debt.
- The states had \$21 million in war debt.
- There was no national currency or bank, making trade between states even more difficult.
- The states' balance of trade was damaging and unsustainable: the states imported far more than they exported as they lacked the capacity to manufacture and export goods.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 7.2: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS



Read the following extract from G.J. Lamb on weaknesses within the Articles of Confederation:

The war effort demanded a measure of central authority; the Second Continental Congress had organized a government under the Articles of Confederation for that purpose. Struggling to break free from a strong government, however, Americans were understandably reluctant to establish another strong government in its place. The notorious weakness of the Articles Government was probably intentional.

Once independence had been achieved, however, disturbing flaws began to appear. Shays' Rebellion in Massachusetts posed a threat to order; worthless paper money printed in Rhode Island clearly threatened property and the status of the wealthy. Threats like these could only be dealt with by a vigorous and competent central government. The Articles Government, moreover, had no authority to negotiate trade agreements; each of the new states was forced to negotiate on its own, with far less than satisfactory results. It was at a meeting in Annapolis called to deal with this latter problem that discussions soon focused on the need for a stronger central government.

Source 7.14 G.J. Lamb on the Articles of Confederation

- 1 According to Lamb, why were the Americans reluctant to form a strong central government?
- 2 What reasons does Lamb give to justify the need for a competent central government?
- 3 Which level of government had the power to negotiate trade?

Military problems

The national government's limited power to raise naval or military forces, along with its inability to control the states' militias, effectively saw the United States defenceless. Further, because American trading vessels were no longer under the protection of the British Royal Navy, they regularly fell victim to pirates. The government's inability to raise revenue also led to a serious domestic issue: mutinies by unpaid soldiers.

Pennsylvania mutinies: 1781 and 1783

There were two Pennsylvania mutinies. The Pennsylvania Line Mutiny of 1781 (see Source 7.15) protested the appalling conditions that the Continental Army soldiers



▲ **Source 7.15** *Mutiny of the Pennsylvania Line, 1781*



suffered, as well as payments owed: many had been paid no more than their initial \$20 bounty for three years' service. In contrast, the troops in other states had received enlistment bounties of hundreds of dollars – up to \$1000 in New Jersey. Even new Pennsylvania recruits were given large bounties, while the original recruits were given neither wages nor re-enlistment incentives.

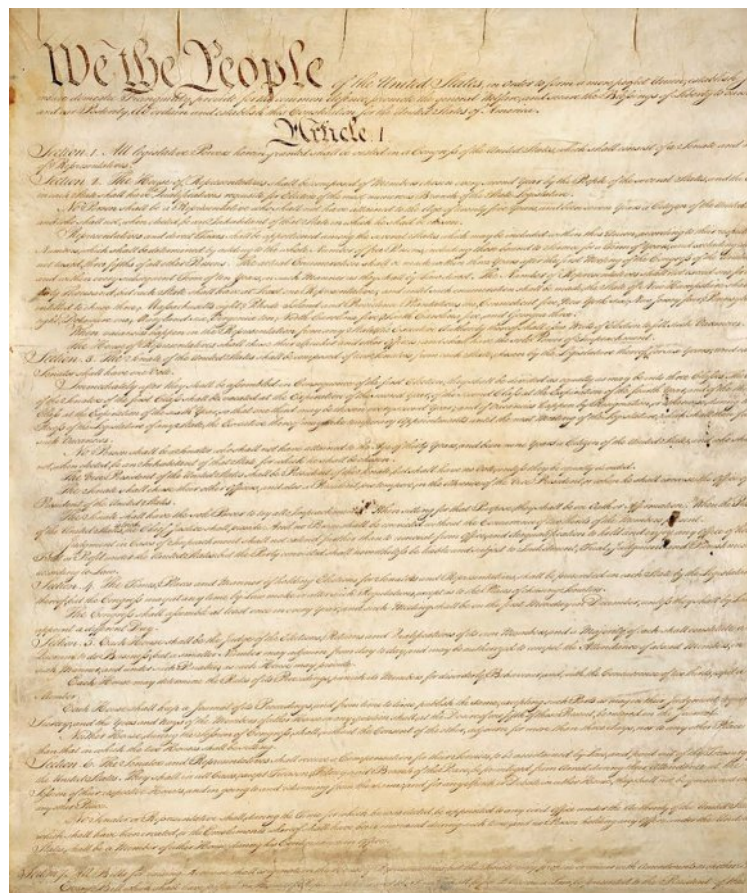
However, the circumstances of many soldiers did not change over the next two years. In the Pennsylvania Mutiny of 1783 (also known as the Philadelphia Mutiny), nearly 400 soldiers of the Continental Army protested over unpaid wages from the war. Alexander Hamilton, then a delegate from New York, persuaded the soldiers to allow Congress to meet later to address their concerns. Ultimately, they were paid, but inflation created further angst.

The Newburgh Conspiracy, 1783

In late 1782, the Continental Army was camped in a field near Newburgh, New York. They were there to sit out the winter, but supply shortages caused discontent among the junior officers, exacerbated by the conditions they had endured for most of the war, months of back pay still owed them and questions over pensions. Talk of action against Congress ensued:

- The officers circulated letters criticising Congress and raising the prospect of a coup.
- The discontented officers held a meeting at a local church in 1783. Here George Washington took the floor and calmed some of the officers, but the issue of back pay and pensions continued to fester.
- The officers drafted a petition, *Petition from Newburgh Officers*, which they sent to Congress in April 1783. They found some support in Congress from nationalists who desired a strong central government. This bloc would later take up the Federalist cause in the Ratification Debates (discussed in Chapter 8).
- However, the problems remained unresolved and in June 1783 almost 500 soldiers marched on Philadelphia. Gathering at Independence Hall, they threatened the Congress, which eventually relocated to Princeton, New Jersey.

▼ Source 7.16 A 19th-century print of Washington's headquarters at Newburgh



Historian John Phillips Resch suggests that, while the Newburgh Conspiracy was more ‘political bluff’ than serious coup, nonetheless it ‘reinforced popular perceptions that the Continental Army, like all regular armies, was ... corrupt, that it threatened liberty and that it deserved to be treated as a necessary evil’. Another historian, Richard Kohn, suggests it was stirred by conspirators in Congress itself:

They would incite a mutiny in the Army – spark the explosion – then make certain it was immediately snuffed out. It was a treacherous double-game fraught with uncertainty. But to the nationalists, the whole future of the country was at stake.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Prior to the United States Constitution, the federal government only commanded the Continental Army in times of war; relying on the state militias for defence. The Pennsylvania Mutiny of 1783, and the refusal of the Executive Council of Pennsylvania (the Pennsylvania Government) to stop it, highlighted just how vulnerable the federal government was to a possible coup. This ultimately resulted in Congress vacating Philadelphia and creating a federal district, the District of Columbia, to serve as the site of the nation's capital, Washington.

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7.7 Shays Rebellion, 1786

The manifold problems of the Articles of Confederation Government were not just played out in mutinies; an actual insurrection took shape in Massachusetts.

Many soldiers were returning to civilian life without pay and few received their promised land grants. In an attempt to make a living as farmers, many borrowed money from city creditors, yet poor prices for agricultural goods, due to the economic depression, led to many defaulting on these loans.

The creditors pressured the state governments to open debtors' courts, the most prominent of these being in Massachusetts. Courts had powers to enforce the payment of loans; if this was not achieved, they could seize property and jail offenders.

Many who fought in the Revolution saw this as unfair and unjustified: they were paying higher taxes than ever and many were disenfranchised, as the property requirement to vote was raised.

Daniel Shays was a captain in the Continental Army who became a farmer in western Massachusetts after the war. In 1786 his property was seized by a debtors' court, so he joined fellow countrymen in protesting against the debt recovery policy of the Massachusetts State Government.



▲ Source 7.17 Woodcut depicting rebel leaders Daniel Shays and Job Shattuck



They employed tactics that were used in the prelude to the war by such men as Samuel Adams. After distributing pamphlets, they met in town and in September 1786 several hundred men marched on the court at Springfield, closing it.

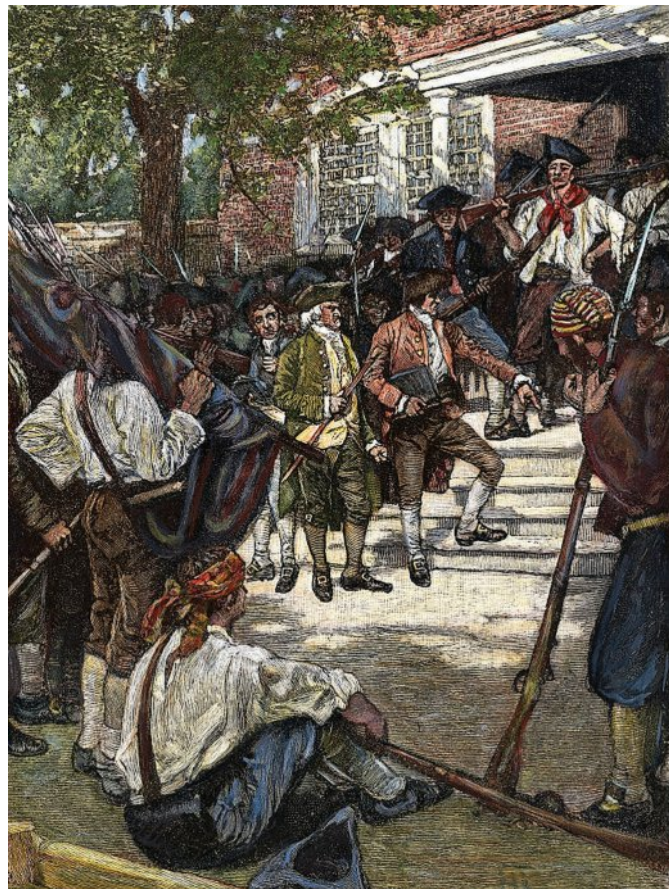
**KEY
EVENT**



Shays continued to gather supporters in what grew into a rebellion threatening Boston. With no national army to suppress unrest, Boston merchants paid to have a militia formed to fight the rebels. Ultimately the rebellion was crushed. Several hundred participants were indicted, but most of these were pardoned under a general amnesty. Eighteen were convicted and sentenced to death, but most of them had their convictions overturned on appeal, were pardoned or had their sentences commuted. Shays himself was pardoned in 1788 and he returned to Massachusetts from his exile in the Vermont woods; he died in poverty in 1825. General Henry Knox warned his former commander, George Washington, about the rebels:

They see the weakness of government; they feel at once their own poverty, compared to the opulent, and their own force, and they are determined to make use of the latter in order to remedy the former. Their creed is that the property of the U.S. has been protected from the confiscations of Britain by the joint exertions of all, and therefore should be the common property of all.

Ultimately, the rebellion was used by Federalists to argue for the formation of a stronger central government, both to solve economic problems and to protect the country against social unrest that a state on its own might not be able to suppress.



▲ Source 7.18 A depiction of a mob seizing a Massachusetts courthouse

▼ Source 7.19 A monument in a field in Southwestern Massachusetts commemorating the final battle of Shays' Rebellion



AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Of Shays' Rebellion, Washington wrote 'if three years ago any person had told me that at this day, I should see such a formidable rebellion against the laws & constitutions of our own making as now appears I should have thought him a bedlamite – a fit subject for a mad house.'

THE STORY SO FAR

- The Revolutionary War ended in victory for the United States and was formally concluded through the Treaty of Paris in 1783.
- The *Declaration of Independence* turned the Thirteen Colonies into states governed by the Articles of Confederation Government, which ordered the states to write their own constitutions. These separate constitutions served as the basis for the subsequent Constitution and Bill of Rights.
- The Virginia Declaration of Rights particularly embodied Revolutionary ideals, as did Thomas Jefferson's Statute for Religious Freedom, which legalised religious freedom for individual citizens.
- The first federal government was formed through the Articles of Confederation, which were passed as 'a firm league of friendship' between the once independently governed states. Apart from foreign affairs, the new national government had very little power compared to the states, and needed unanimity in order to pass any law. Furthermore, the states were separated by individual trade agreements as internal trade became expensive and complicated. The country was largely defenceless due to the national government's limited power to raise naval or military forces or to control the states' militias.
- To protest the appalling conditions and lack of pay suffered by soldiers, the Pennsylvania Line Mutiny occurred in 1781. By 1783, the Newburgh faction of the army decided to march on Philadelphia to threaten Congress with a coup. Additionally, Daniel Shays led an insurrection against the debt recovery policy in Massachusetts, which was an important precedent for the creation of a more robust central government.



Use the QR code or visit the Interactive Textbook and watch the video summarising the chapter.



Develop your historical understanding

Define key terms

Write explanations defining each of the following:

Significant ideas and events	Significant individuals
Constitution	Thomas Jefferson
Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776)	Daniel Shays
Statute for Religious Freedom (1776)	
Articles of Confederation (1777)	
Treaty of Paris (1783)	
Newburgh Conspiracy (1783)	
Shays' Rebellion (1786)	

Establishing historical significance

- 1 What was the impact of the Treaty of Paris on the new nation?
- 2 What was the significance of the Statute for Religious Freedom in establishing the New Society?

Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 Why were the Articles of Confederation in need of reform following the Revolutionary War?
- 2 How did economic and social problems challenge the New Society?

Constructing historical arguments

- 1 The structure of the New Society was deeply flawed. Discuss this view, providing evidence to support your answer.
- 2 'Shays' Rebellion was the real revolution.' Discuss how the problems in the New Society betrayed its people, providing evidence to support your answer.

Analysing historical sources as evidence

John Adams was heavily involved in the writing of the State Constitution of Massachusetts, on which the United States Constitution was based. Massachusetts had a bicameral – two house – congress.

A representation of the people in one assembly being obtained, a question arises: whether all the powers of government, legislative, executive, and judicial shall be left in this body. I think a people cannot be long free, nor ever happy [if their] government is in one assembly. My reasons for this opinion are as follow:

- 1 *A single assembly is liable to all the vices, follies, and frailties of an individual; subject to fits of humour, starts of passion, flights of enthusiasm, partialities, or prejudice, and consequently productive of hasty results and absurd judgments. And all these errors ought to be corrected ... by some controlling power.*

- 2 *A single assembly is apt to be avaricious [greedy] and in time will not scruple to exempt itself from burdens, which it will lay, without compunction, on its constituents.*
- 3 *A single assembly is apt to grow ambitious, and after a time will not hesitate to vote itself perpetual [continuing indefinitely]...*
- 4 *A representative assembly, although extremely well qualified and absolutely necessary as a branch of the legislative, is unfit to exercise the executive power, for want of two essential properties: secrecy and despatch.*
- 5 *A representative assembly is still less qualified for the judicial power because it is too numerous, too slow and too little skilled in the laws.*
- 6 *Because a single assembly, possessed of all the powers of government, would make arbitrary laws for their own interest, execute all laws arbitrarily for their own interest, and adjudge all controversies in their own favour.*

Source 7.20 *Thoughts on Government*, John Adams (1776)

- 1 Explain the problems Adams has with a government run by a single assembly.
- 2 What does Adams mean when he states that a representative assembly is ‘too numerous, too slow and too little skilled in the laws’?

Analysing historians' interpretations

Debate: How did the problems encountered within the New Society shape it?

Name: Howard Zinn (1922–2010)

Point of view (perspective or argument)

Zinn argues that the revolution merely replaced a British ruling elite with an American one.

Reasons (evidence)

Daniel Shays, a poor farm hand from western Massachusetts, joined the Continental Army; he fought at Lexington, Bunker Hill and Saratoga, and was wounded in action. In 1780, having not been paid – due to the Crisis of the 1780s and seeing the suffering of the people of the poor in Massachusetts – he rebelled. Authorities unleashed the militia upon him and his comrades. The Annapolis Convention occurred as a result of his insurrection.

Quote

The recent rebels against England, secure in office, were calling for law and order. Sam Adams helped draw up a Riot Act, and a resolution suspending habeas corpus, to allow the authorities to keep people in jail without trial. At the same time, the legislature moved to make some concessions to the angry farmers, saying certain old taxes could now be paid in goods instead of money.

Name: Edward Countryman (1944–)

Point of view (perspective or argument)

Countryman argues that the revolution was a complex struggle not just against the British, but domestically over what the shape of the New Society would be.

Reasons (evidence)

The Articles of Confederation government confronted myriad problems on topics as diverse as war, trade, tax, inflation, debt and differing social issues.

continued...



...continued

Quote

During the war years, from 1775 to 1781, and the Confederation Period. From then until 1788, American society confronted immense problems. Raising and disciplining an army was hard enough, for the surge of military enthusiasm that followed Lexington and Concord tapered off quickly. Financing the war was worse: Congress had no taxing power at all and the states had little, so the only recourse was to borrow abroad and to print paper currency at home, with the promise that someday the loans would be paid and the currency would be redeemed. The new governments had to deal with loyalists and neutrals, enough of them in some places to make it impossible to exercise any real authority.

Name: Gordon Wood (1933–)

Point of view (perspective or argument)

Wood argues that the republican ideology of the Revolution was impractical for the many of those involved. This would lead to an evolution in how public service would be rewarded within the New Society.

Reasons (evidence)

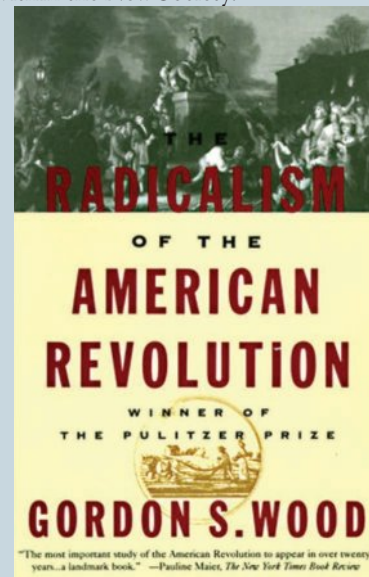
Republican beliefs lifted straight from antiquity suggested that public service should be out of a sense of duty rather than any financial gain; this saw ideology at conflict with practice.

Quote

From the outset of the Revolution the American gentry had been vulnerable to attacks on their leisured disinterestedness because for most of them, at least in the North, their leisure was something of a fraud ... Gentlemen were expected to staff the officer corps of the army and to provide their own rations, clothing, and equipment on salaries less than half British officers. Members of Congress were no better off. Many of them, especially those of 'small fortunes' continually complained of the burdens of office and repeatedly begged to be relieved of their burdens.

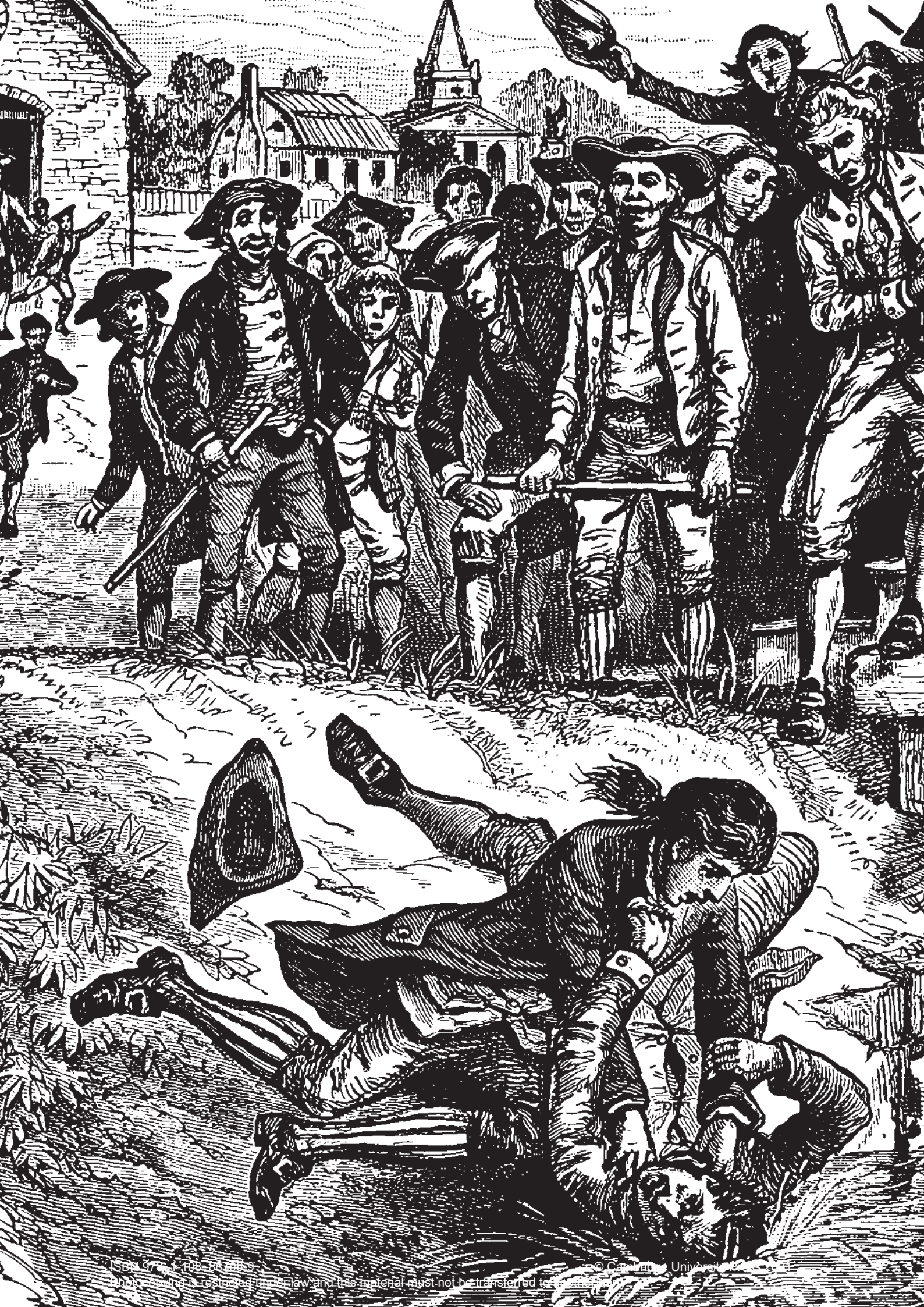
What's your point of view?

Using the information above, what's your point of view on how difficulties shaped the New Society?



▲ Source 7.21 *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* by Gordon S. Wood

► Source 7.22 A depiction of fighting during Shay's Rebellion, an insurrection led by Daniel Shays during the financial depression following the American Revolution, Massachusetts, 1786-87.





8

THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION AND THE BILL OF RIGHTS, 1787–89

What is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary.

– JAMES MADISON, 1788

Overview

The crises of the 1780s had at times threatened the existence of the newly founded nation, with the Newburgh Conspiracy and, in particular, Shays' Rebellion exposing in gory detail the flaws of the Articles of Confederation. The **conventions** at Annapolis in 1786 and Philadelphia in 1787 were the culmination of the efforts of the so-called 'Revolutionary generation' and produced the two critical documents of the new nation: the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

convention a formal assembly of representatives or delegates to discuss and take action on matters of common concern



The earlier process in which the states created their own constitutions – and, for most, a declaration of rights – provided an example for the federal cause. Further, it left the creative political process at the conventions to the states, thereby embodying basic Revolutionary and Enlightenment principles of power emanating from the people. However, the diversity of the states, both culturally and economically, made this process difficult. How did the Founding Fathers find a solution to govern so many differing interests?

Key issues

- What was the Annapolis Convention?
- Who was James Madison?
- Who was Alexander Hamilton?
- What was the significance of the Philadelphia Convention and the Constitution?
- What were the Ratification Debates?
- Who was George Mason?
- Who was Patrick Henry (Part 2)?
- What was the significance of the Bill of Rights?

Digital resources for this chapter

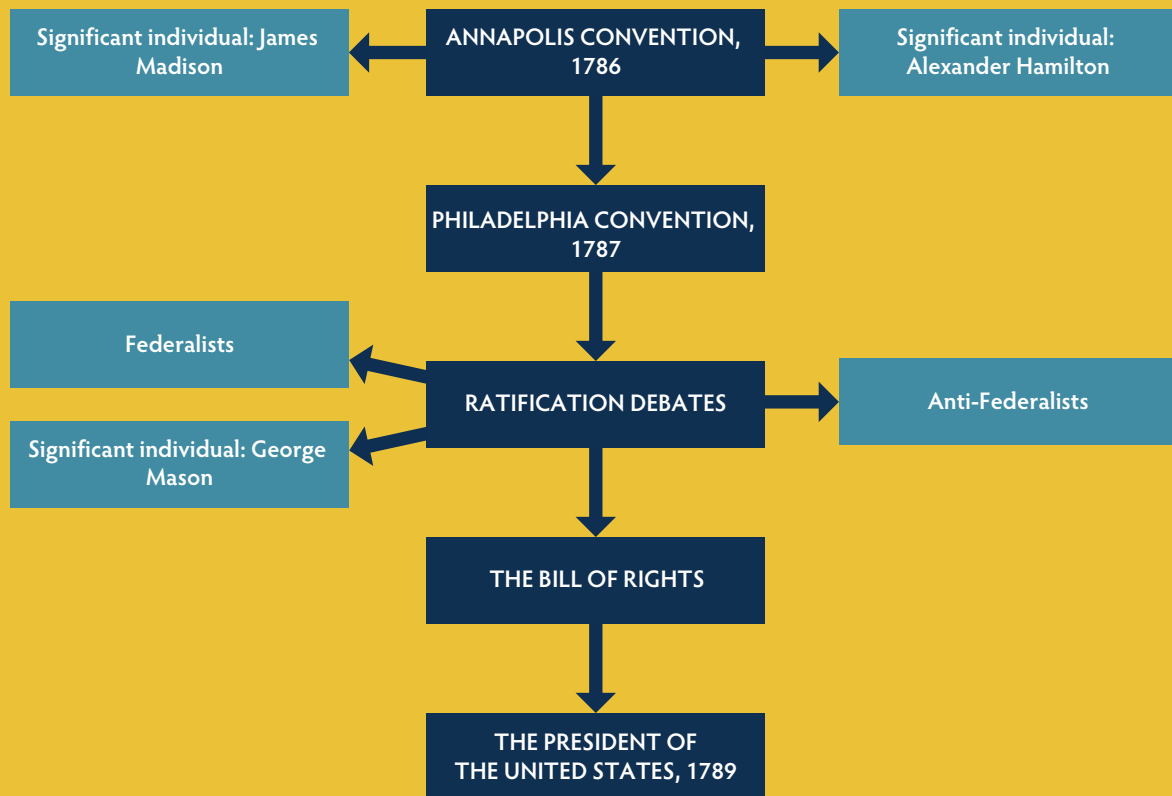
In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

◀ **Source 8.0** An interpretation of the signing of the Constitution at the Philadelphia Convention, by Howard Chandler Christy, circa 1940

Flow of chapter

How is this chapter structured?



Chapter timeline

What are the key events of the American Revolution covered in this chapter?

SEPTEMBER 1786
Annapolis Convention



27 OCTOBER 1787
The first of the Federalist Papers is published by Alexander Hamilton, under the pseudonym 'Publius'

25 SEPTEMBER 1789
Bill of Rights created



MAY–SEPTEMBER 1787
Philadelphia Convention and the drafting of the US Constitution



30 APRIL 1789
George Washington becomes the first President of the United States



15 DECEMBER 1791
Bill of Rights ratified

8.1 Annapolis Convention, 1786

With the shock of Shays' Rebellion clearly in the minds of all, a total of 12 delegates from the states of New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Virginia met at Annapolis, Maryland in 1786. The meeting was organised by Edmund Randolph and James Madison of Virginia and brought together the states that were calling for a constitutional convention. The proceedings were called the 'Meeting of Commissioners to Remedy Defects of the Federal Government'.



▲ Source 8.1 An engraving by John Vallance of the Maryland State House, where the Annapolis Convention took place

There were many such defects to address, but of particular concern were the barriers that limited trade or commerce between the largely independent states under the Articles of Confederation. Ultimately, however, the delegates felt that there were not enough states represented to make any substantive agreement, so they produced a report that was sent to Congress and to the states requesting the holding of a broader meeting to be held in Philadelphia. Their hope was that more states would be represented and that their delegates or deputies would be authorised to examine areas broader than simply commercial trade (i.e. the nature and detail of the Articles of Confederation themselves).

The direct result of the Annapolis Convention was the Philadelphia Convention of 1787; however, there was an indirect outcome that would hold arguably more significance. This was the meeting of James Madison and Alexander Hamilton. This 'meeting of minds' resulted in a powerful alliance that enabled them to dominate the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia and the later **Ratification** Debates.

ratification the declaration by which a nation formally accepts, with or without reservation, the content of a formal meeting such as a convention



8.2

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



James Madison (1751–1836)

- Madison was a lawyer, writer and politician who was the son of a wealthy Virginia tobacco planter. After graduating from college in 1772 as a young man, Madison entered the elite Virginia House of Burgesses.
- Despite his youth, Madison quickly proved to be a highly skilled legislator, with a peerless understanding of political history and Enlightenment thinking, and knowledge of what good government looked like.
- Madison was a major contributor to the Virginia state constitution, the Virginian Bill for Religious Freedom, the Second Continental Congress and the Annapolis convention.
- But Madison is most famous for his work in the 1787 Philadelphia Convention, which embraced his Virginia Plan as the basis for the new constitution. With Alexander Hamilton, Madison was a contributing author to the Federalist Papers that helped secure ratification of the Constitution.
- From 1789 he sat in Congress, where he played a leading role in developing and enacting the Bill of Rights, and later served two terms as the fourth President of the United States.
- Madison is today often remembered as the 'father of the Constitution' and the main author of the Bill of Rights.



▲ Source 8.2 James Madison at age 32, by Charles Willson Peale, 1783

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

After the events of the Revolution, James Madison became the fourth President of the United States. His wife, Dolley Todd Madison, was the official White House hostess, furnishing the White House and holding many social functions. This role developed into that of the First Lady, a position that exists to this day.



► Source 8.3 Dolley Madison, by Gilbert Stuart, 1804

8.3

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



Alexander Hamilton (1755–1804)

- Hamilton was a politician and lawyer who played an important role in the development of the new republic.
- Hamilton moved from his birthplace in the West Indies to the colony of New Jersey as a young man, and fast became swept up by the developing revolution, involving himself in colonial politics and enlisting in the New York militia.
- His military endeavours and sharp intellect earned Hamilton the honour of serving as George Washington's chief of staff, even though he was only in his early 20s.
- Hamilton was elected to the Confederation Congress in 1782, but was soon frustrated by its inability to tax, and its lack of control over the states.
- Hamilton became one of the leading advocates for constitutional reform and the strengthening of federal power, playing significant roles in the Annapolis Convention (1786), the Philadelphia Convention (1787) and the Federalist push for ratification (1787–88).
- Hamilton eventually served as the first Secretary of the Treasury under George Washington's presidency, but was killed in a duel with Vice-President Aaron Burr in 1804.



▲ Source 8.4 This is a later imagining by an artist of how Hamilton may have appeared during the Revolutionary War. *Alexander Hamilton in the Uniform of the New York Artillery*, by Alonzo Chappel, circa 1850s.

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AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Alexander Hamilton is also the subject of the popular musical *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda. The hip-hop musical covers the life and death of Hamilton, including events of the Revolution, and is based on the 2004 biography *Alexander Hamilton* by historian Ron Chernow.



► Source 8.5 The poster for the musical *Hamilton*



8.4 Philadelphia Convention, 1787

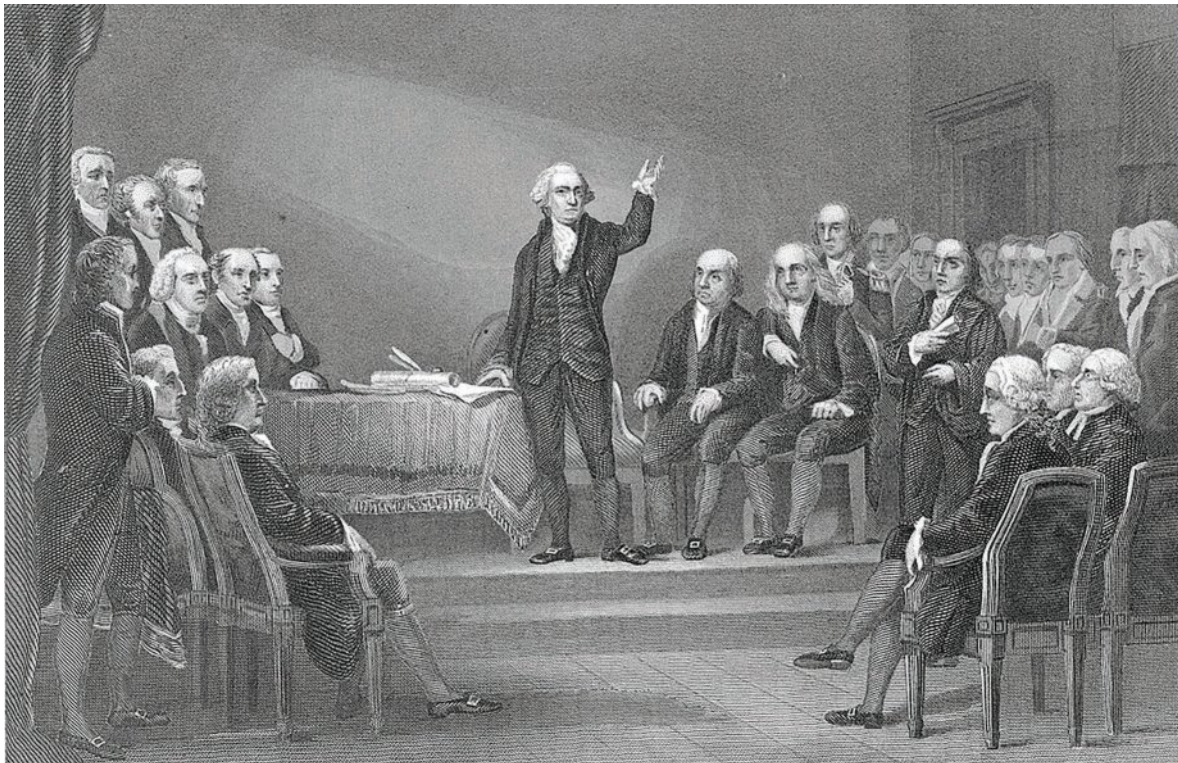
KEY EVENT

The Philadelphia Convention of 1787 was ostensibly designed to address problems in governance brought on by the Articles of Confederation; that is, it was intended to revise the Articles. However, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and other proponents set out to create a new government rather than fix the existing one. Their masterstroke was to ensure the election of George Washington as president of the convention. The states, more than ever, were keen to protect their rights. Only the authority and reputation of Washington, confirmed by his resignation as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, could bring a sense of order and respect to the delegations from the states.

Nonetheless, there were many disputes, including:

- the structure of the government (two houses or one)
- if a two-model structure was adopted, how the senate seats would be apportioned (by state or population)
- the method of election for senators
- how 'proportional representation' was to be defined (i.e. whether to include enslaved people or other property)
- how the division of executive power would be arranged (either between three individuals or with one elected president)
- if the presidential model was adopted, how the president would be elected, the length of his term, whether re-election was permissible and what offences would be **impeachable**
- whether to abolish the slave trade, and how to define the 'fugitive slave clause', which demanded an escaped enslaved person be returned to the state from which they escaped
- whether the selection of judges would be a legislative or executive decision.

impeachable making one subject to impeachment, which results from a crime or offence serious enough to warrant a public official losing their position and facing formal charges



▲ Source 8.6 Washington addressing the Convention

Four different plans regarding the structure of government were proposed:

- 1 The Large State Plan (or Virginia Plan) was written by James Madison and proposed two houses of Congress, both elected by apportionment according to population, which would result in the larger states dominating.
- 2 The Small State Plan (or the New Jersey Plan) was written by William Patterson and proposed a single house of Congress, with representation of one vote per state, which would ensure smaller states were not disadvantaged.
- 3 The Hamilton Plan (or the British Plan) was written by Alexander Hamilton and resembled the British system of strong central government. It was not considered as it too closely resembled the British model and took away all state authority.
- 4 The Charles Pinckney Plan was not debated, though he later claimed it formed the basis for the model ultimately adopted by the convention.

It was ultimately agreed to modify Madison's Virginia Plan with its separation of powers, **popular sovereignty**, social contract and natural rights. The famous Connecticut Compromise was the result of the modifications. It was written by Roger Sherman and combined elements of the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan. Its innovation was to create a House of Representatives (lower house), with the number of representatives from each state based on its population, and a Senate (upper house, made up of two Senators per state) that represented the states. Together, these two houses would be known as Congress. Benjamin Franklin proposed two main modifications so that it was acceptable to the larger states:

- 1 a requirement that revenue bills would originate in the House of Representatives, which kept economic power in the hands of the house that directly represented the people (though the Senate would hold the power to amend these bills)
- 2 the separation of Senate delegations from state legislatures, so Senators would not vote in blocs as instructed by their states, but instead would be free to vote as their conscience dictated.

popular sovereignty
the principle that the legitimacy or right to rule is found in the approval of the people; hence, all political power resides with the people

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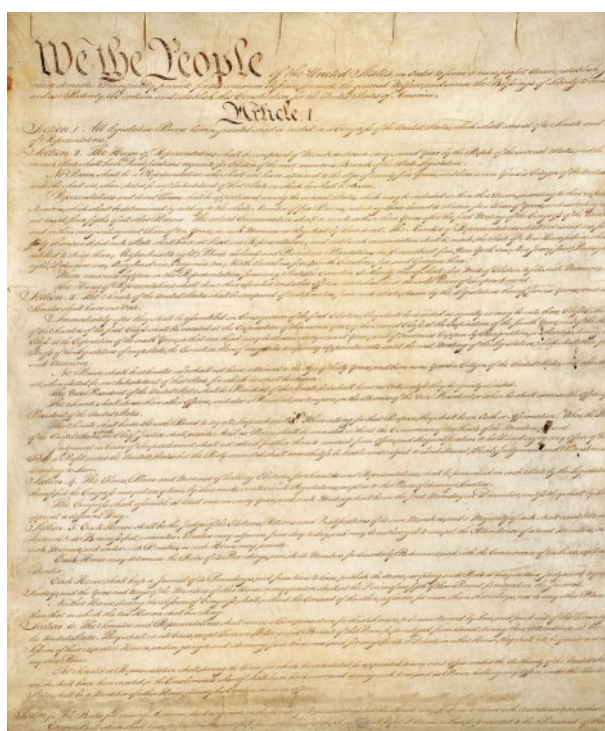
The United States Constitution

KEY
EVENT



The United States Constitution was the culmination of Revolutionary ideology and its application to governance. As previously mentioned, if James Otis believed there was a flaw in the British Constitution, then the Americans would set up a society based on 'English Liberty', and use Enlightenment-based revolutionary ideology to correct those flaws.

The structure of the New Society prescribed by the United States Constitution was based on the Enlightenment ideal of a 'Separation of Powers': the tripartite system suggested by Baron de Montesquieu in *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748), which described the separation of political power among a legislature, an executive and a judiciary. In the case of the United States, this meant Congress (the legislature), the President (the executive) and the Supreme Court (the judiciary). Each branch would act as a democratic check on the others. The powers of the three branches are outlined in the first three articles of the United States Constitution.



▲ Source 8.7 Page one of the United States Constitution



Article I: Congress (legislature)

EXTRACT	ANALYSIS
Section 1	
<i>All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.</i>	Governance would be based on the Enlightenment ideal of 'power emanating from the people' in the form of Congress, consisting of the Senate (representing the states) and the House of Representatives elected by voters, at least if you were free, had enough property and were male.
Section 2	
<i>The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.</i>	The method and rotation of appointment of the House of Representatives (the Lower House) was designed to avoid hereditary office and make members of the House of Representatives accountable to the populace through election. 'The Qualifications requisite for Electors [i.e. those allowed to vote] of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature', meant that electors for the federal House of Representatives would have to meet the same property qualifications as those allowed to vote in their respective state.
<i>Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons.</i>	This outlined the number of people each member of the House of Representatives would represent, and the amount of tax collected from them. Further, it stated (in somewhat veiled language) who would effectively miss out on the benefits of the New Society.
<i>The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.</i>	The power of impeachment (the ability to charge the president with an offence) was given to the House of Representatives, again built upon the Enlightenment ideal of power emanating from the people. Effectively, only direct representatives of the people could try the president.
Section 3	
<i>The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.</i> <i>The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that Purpose, they shall be on Oath or Affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no Person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present.</i>	This outlined the structure and length of office of the Senate (the upper house) and rotation of appointment, again forming a check on hereditary power and potential tyranny. This gave power to try all Impeachments to the Senate, again separating the powers: only the House of Representatives could charge the president and only the Senate could try him or her. Note the use of 'When the President of the United States is tried'. The Founding Fathers wished to create a system that would continuously self-correct.

EXTRACT	ANALYSIS
Section 8	
<i>The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;</i>	Congress had the power to deal with the economic problems that had crippled the Articles of Confederation government in the 1780s (see Section 7.6). It could now levy taxes in a way that the Articles of Confederation Government could not, thereby allowing for debts to be paid and a military force for defence to be supported.
<i>To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;</i>	Congress had the power to regulate trade with foreign nations and the states, remedying the ridiculous trade situations that had existed between the states during the Articles of Confederation Government. The statement 'and with the Indian Tribes' gives further insight into the perception of First Nation Americans as effectively a foreign nation.
<i>To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;</i>	The hyperinflation of the 1780s could effectively be avoided; instead of the 14 different currencies (one for each state and the Continental Army) there would now be one national currency (see Section 7.6).
<i>To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;</i>	This measure – whereby Congress had to approve funding for the army every two years – was designed to avoid the potential tyranny of a 'standing army' and to subordinate the military to civilian authority, thereby enacting Enlightenment ideals of the separation of powers.
<i>To provide and maintain a Navy;</i>	Congress could maintain a navy to protect the trade of the United States, which had been exposed to piracy in the 1780s due to the Articles of Confederation Government's inability to fund a navy (see Section 7.6).
<i>To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;</i>	Congress had the power to suppress insurrections such as Shays' Rebellion in 1786 (see Section 7.7).

Article II: The President (executive)

EXTRACT	ANALYSIS
Section 1	
<i>The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected</i>	In order to avoid tyranny and the British system of Royal Patronage, presidential terms would be restricted to four-year terms and subject to elections.

continued...



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EXTRACT	ANALYSIS
Section 2	
<i>The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States;</i>	In a further embodiment of Enlightenment ideals of separation of powers, the military would be subordinate to a civilian authority.
Section 4	
<i>The President, Vice President and all Civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.</i>	All office holders in Congress and the presidency would be subject to impeachment – a further democratic check against tyranny.

Article III: The Supreme Court (judiciary)

EXTRACT	ANALYSIS
Section 1	
<i>The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish.</i>	A Supreme Court would preside over the new federal government's judicial powers.
Section 2	
<i>The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution, the Laws of the United States, and Treaties made, or which shall be made, under their Authority;—to all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public ministers and Consuls;—to all Cases of admiralty and maritime Jurisdiction;—to Controversies to which the United States shall be a Party;—to Controversies between two or more States;—between a State and Citizens of another State;—between Citizens of different States;—between Citizens of the same State claiming Lands under Grants of different States, and between a State, or the Citizens thereof, and foreign States, Citizens or Subjects.</i>	The Supreme Court basically could interpret laws passed by Congress. It had authority with any matter that involved the Federal Government of the United States.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 8.1



The following extract is from historian Alan Taylor on who benefitted from the Revolution, the Constitution and the New Society.

Far from promoting an across-the-board liberation within American society, the Patriot cause appealed primarily to common white men with some property: artisans in the towns and farmers in the countryside. Patriot leaders promised to enhance their advantages in property, class, race, and gender over others. The British unwitting aided the Patriot cause by seeking military support from Indians and the enslaved, which increased American animus against them all.

Source 8.8 Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750–1804* (1980), pp. 185–6

- 1 Who does Taylor believe the Revolution appealed to? Why?
- 2 What was the result of British support for First Nations Americans and African Americans?

8.5 Ratification Debates

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**KEY
EVENT**

Following the Pennsylvania Convention, the draft Constitution was taken to the people for discussion and approval. This process, which came to be known as the ‘Ratification Debates’, was seen to be a physical embodiment of Enlightenment and Revolutionary ideals: that the Constitution would be a social contract with the people. Power in the New Society of the United States would emanate from them.

Anti-Federalists

However, the approval of the Constitution faced stern opposition from a group of men who came to be known as Anti-Federalists. Their concerns included:

- the need for a decentralised system of authority
- threats to personal liberties
- threats to states’ rights
- the potential for the misuse of corporate power
- that it would pave the way for a new aristocracy
- that the office of president could lead to the rise of another tyrant – this time indigenous.

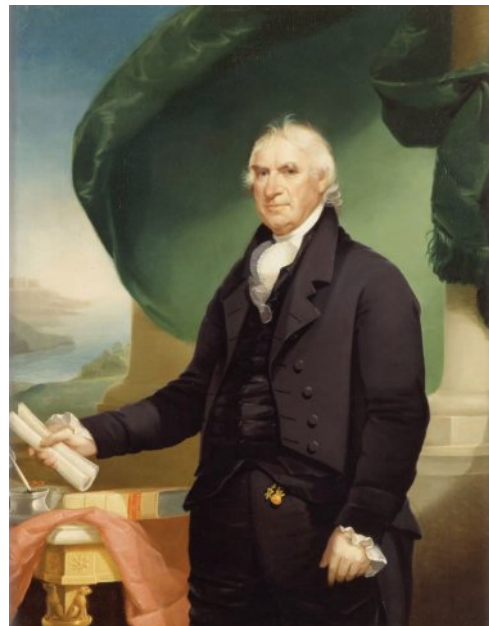
The various writings of Americans who raised doubts about the United States Constitution in the late 1780s through to the early 1790s became known collectively as the Anti-Federalist Papers. These were written in opposition to the Federalists’ papers.

▼ **Source 8.9** This image reflects the Connecticut debate over the Constitution. The state of Connecticut is represented by a wagon stuck in a ditch, while Federalists (on the left) and Anti-Federalists (on the right) pull the state in opposite directions.





Major authors included George Mason of Virginia, Cato (likely George Clinton of New York), Brutus (likely Robert Yates of New York), Centinel (Samuel Bryan of Pennsylvania), the Federal Farmer (either Melancton Smith of New York, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia or Mercy Otis Warren of Massachusetts) and Patrick Henry of Virginia.



► **Source 8.10** *George Clinton*, by Ezra Ames, circa 1814. George Clinton of New York most likely contributed to the Anti-Federalist Papers under the pen name of 'Cato'.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 8.2: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS



George Mason's objections: Letter to Washington, September 1787

Objections to The Constitution of Government formed by the Convention.

There is no Declaration of Rights; and the Laws of the general Government being paramount to the Laws and Constitution of the several States, the Declarations of Rights in the separate States are no Security. Nor are the people secured even in the Enjoyment of the Benefits of the common-Law which stands here upon no other Foundation than its having been adopted by the respective Acts forming the Constitutions of the several States.

In the House of Representatives there is not the Substance, but the Shadow only of Representation; which can never produce proper Information in the Legislature, or inspire Confidence in the people; the Laws will therefore be generally made by Men little concerned in, and unacquainted with their Effects and Consequences.

The Senate have the power of altering all Money-Bills, and of originating Appropriations of Money, and the Salaries of the officers of their own Appointment, in conjunction with the President of the United States; although they are not the Representatives of the People, or amenable to them. These with their other great powers (viz: their Power in the Appointment of Ambassadors and all public Officers, in making Treaties, and in trying all Impeachments) their Influence upon and Connection with the supreme Executive from these Causes, their Duration of Office, and their being a constant existing Body almost continually sitting, joined with their being one complete Branch of the Legislature, will destroy any Balance in the Government, and enable them to accomplish what Usurpations they please upon the Rights and Liberties of the People.

The Judiciary of the United States is so constructed and extended, as to absorb and destroy the Judiciaries of the several States; thereby rendering Law as tedious intricate and expensive, and Justice as unattainable, by a great Part of the Community, as in England, and enabling the Rich to oppress and ruin the Poor.

continued...

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The President of the United States has no constitutional Council (a thing unknown in any safe and regular government) he will therefore be unsupported by proper Information and Advice; and will generally be directed by Minions and Favourites – or He will become a Tool to the Senate – or a Council of State will grow out of the principal Officers of the great Departments; the worst and most dangerous of all Ingredients for such a Council, in a free Country; for they may be induced to join in any dangerous or oppressive Measures, to shelter themselves, and prevent an Inquiry into their own misconduct in Office; whereas had a constitutional Council been formed (as was proposed) of six members; viz two from the Eastern, two from the Middle, and two from the Southern States, to be appointed by Vote of the States in the House of Representatives, with the same Duration and Rotation of Office as the Senate, the Executive wou'd always have had safe and proper Information and Advice, the President of such a council might have acted as Vice President of the United States, protempore, upon any Vacancy or Disability of the chief Magistrate; and long continued Sessions of the Senate wou'd in a great Measure have been prevented.

From this fatal Defect of a constitutional Council has arisen the improper Power of the Senate, in the Appointment of public Officers, and the alarming Dependence and Connection between that Branch of the Legislature, and the supreme Executive. Hence also sprung that unnecessary and dangerous Officer the Vice President; who for want of other Employment, is made President of the Senate; thereby dangerously blending the executive and legislative Powers; besides always giving to some one of the States an unnecessary and unjust Pre-eminence over the others.

Source 8.11 George Mason's Letter to Washington, September 1787

- 1 What does Mason mean when he states 'the Judiciary of the United States is so constructed and extended, as to absorb and destroy the Judiciaries of the several States'?
- 2 What are three problems Mason has with the Constitution? Use quotes from the Source document in your answer.
- 3 What is Mason's greatest concern regarding the position of the president?

Federalists

The advocates of a strong central government came to be known as the Federalists. In response to the Anti-Federalist cause, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay released a series of papers known as the Federalist Papers: 85 articles published in opposition to the 'anti-authoritarian spirit of '76' evident in the Anti-Federalists' arguments. They answered the Anti-Federalists' critique, arguing that the Constitution would:

- empower people
- outline voting procedures
- provide for the separation of powers, preventing any one body or office from assuming authority.

They also argued that a strong federal government could properly defend the republic in a way that the Articles of Confederation government almost failed to (see the discussion in Chapter 7). Further, the 18th-century argument that republics were suited to small cities and would fail in large countries was irrelevant because of the adoption of an 'extended republic': in a small republic factions dominate, but in an extended republic they cancel each other out. According to Madison, 'Ambition must be made to counteract ambition'.

Ultimately, the Bill of Rights (discussed in Section 8.8) cooled the opposition of the Anti-Federalists and the larger states, with the 10th amendment to the Bill of Rights, which confirmed the residual powers of the states. Virginia and New York, the two largest states, would be among the last to ratify.



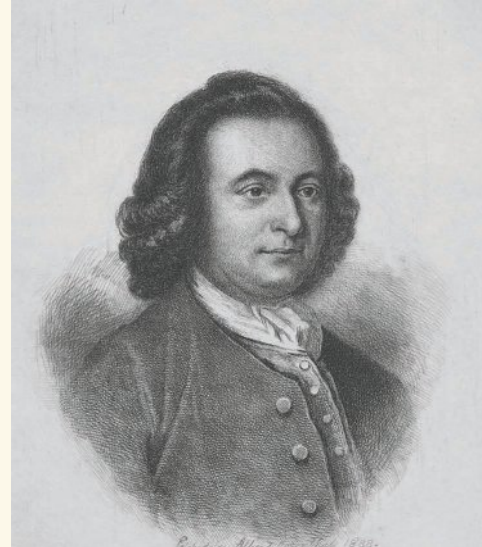
8.6

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



George Mason (1725–92)

- George Mason was elected to the Virginian legislature (the Virginia House of Burgesses) in 1759 and was a leader in the cause of American rights in opposition to British tyranny as the author of the 'Fairfax Resolves' in 1774.
- He was a member of the Virginia Convention of 1775–76, where he drafted the Virginian Declaration of Rights and a good part of the Virginian Constitution; he was also active in the work leading up to the Philadelphia Convention that framed the United States Constitution. However, he did not sign the Constitution and opposed its ratification due to fear of inadequate limits on federal power to prevent tyranny, and urged the addition of a Bill of Rights.
- Mason was also one of the principal enslavers (along with Washington and Jefferson) who deplored the existence of slavery and favoured abolition, with compensation by government to owners of freed enslaved people.
- His opposition to the Constitution formed the basis of the Anti-Federalists' cause. His letter to Washington (see Analysis Activity 8.2 earlier in the chapter) outlines the majority of the problems below; most other Anti-Federalists line up with at least one of his views.



▲ Source 8.12 An engraving of George Mason

Anti-Federalist	Their problems with the Constitution	Federalist response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Mason, Virginia 'Agrippa' (probably James Winthrop, Massachusetts) 	Lack of a Declaration of Rights: the Revolutionary and Enlightenment ideal that power emanated from the people means a declaration of rights is needed to protect them	The Bill of Rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Mason Agrippa Luther Martin, New York 	Believed that the Constitution didn't guarantee individual rights	The Bill of Rights Amendments I–IX
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Mason Patrick Henry, Virginia 	Believed that the Constitution didn't guarantee states' rights	<p>Federalist Paper 17: Hamilton states,</p> <p>The people of each state would be apt to feel a stronger bias towards their local governments than towards the government of the union.</p> <p>For this reason, Hamilton was of the opinion that the backing of the people would help state governments to resist interference with their state rights.</p> <p>Bill of Rights Amendment X</p>

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Anti-Federalist	Their problems with the Constitution	Federalist response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Mason 	Was critical of judicial powers; that the federal judiciary would be more powerful than the states' judiciaries	<p>Federalist Paper 78: Hamilton identifies the judicial arm of the proposed government as the weakest of the three branches for having</p> <p>no influence over either the sword or the purse ... It may truly be said to have neither FORCE nor WILL, but merely judgment.</p> <p>Congress was in control of the purse, while the president had ultimate power over the military, so there was little concern that the judiciary would be able to overpower either of them.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Mason 	Believed Senate terms were too long	<p>Federalist Papers 62 and 63: Madison argues that the Senate constitutes a necessary and stable element of the government that is vital to uphold strong and lasting relationships with other nations. He argues that the Senate's six-year terms gives Senators adequate time to be responsible for their actions and they themselves act as fair checks on the people; for even though they are usually just, they are also 'subject to the [periodic] infection of violent passions'.</p> <p>Madison provides historical examples of republics with Senators who were elected for life. It is this model that threatens the liberty of the people, and he uses this to justify the six-year terms in the Constitution, arguing the limited terms meant that the Senate combined stability with the principle of liberty.</p>



...continued

Anti-Federalist	Their problems with the Constitution	Federalist response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Mason 	<p>Critical that the office of President was not supported by a council (like Governor in Virginia), so could fall under the control of a 'minion' or the Senate.</p> <p>Further, the power of pardon of Article II would allow him to set free people with whom he had committed a crime.</p>	<p>Federalist Paper 69: Hamilton compares the President's powers with those of the King of Britain. He argues that while there are similarities, the King ultimately has much greater power than the President, for his power:</p> <p>would be nominally the same with that of the King of Great Britain but in substance much inferior to it. It would amount to nothing more than the supreme command and direction of the military and naval forces as first general and admiral of the confederacy; while that of the British king extends to the declaring of war and to the raising and regulating of fleets and armies; all which by the constitution under consideration would appertain to the Legislature.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard Henry Lee, Virginia The Federal Farmer (Likely Melancton Smith, New York; Richard Henry Lee, Virginia; or Mercy Otis Warren, Massachusetts) 	<p>Believed that the Federal government had too much power</p>	<p>Federalist Paper 23: The principal purpose of the Union, according to Hamilton, is:</p> <p>the common defence of the members – the preservation of the public peace as well against internal convulsions [e.g. Shays' Rebellion] as external attacks [e.g. the British]; the regulation of commerce with other nations and between the States; the superintendence of our intercourse, political and commercial, with foreign countries.</p> <p>Hamilton argued that giving the federal government less than complete power would be:</p> <p>improvidently to trust the great interests of the nation to hands which are disabled from managing them with vigor and success.</p>

FOCUS QUESTIONS 8.1

- 1 Of all of the arguments the Anti-Federalists proposed, which do you find the most convincing? Why?
- 2 Many of the Anti-Federalists came from Virginia and other Southern states. Why is that significant?

8.7

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



Patrick Henry (1736–99)

Part 2

- After his infamous 'Give me liberty or give me death' speech in 1775, Patrick Henry was elected Virginia's first governor, and served from 1776–79 and again from 1784–86.
- Henry, like George Mason, was staunchly anti-Federalist and feared that a federal government would simply replicate the tyrannical rule the colonists experienced under Britain. Because of this, he refused to attend the Philadelphia Convention.
- After the Convention, George Washington sent Henry a copy of the Constitution to look over. However, Henry was not pleased, stating:

I have to lament that I cannot bring my mind to accord with the proposed Constitution. The concern I feel on this account, is really greater than I am able to express.



▲ Source 8.13 An 1896 engraving of Patrick Henry

- During the Ratification Debates in 1788, Henry listed his concerns more clearly:
Here is a revolution as radical as that which separated us from Great Britain. It is radical in this transition; our rights and privileges are endangered, and the sovereignty of the states will be relinquished: And cannot we plainly see that this is actually the case? The rights of conscience, trial by jury, liberty of the press, all your immunities and franchises, all pretensions to human rights and privileges, are rendered insecure, if not lost, by this change, so loudly talked of by some, and inconsiderately by others.
- The Federalists won the debate, and Henry's feelings regarding the Constitution distanced him from people such as Washington, Madison and Jefferson. Henry left political office in 1790 and became a lawyer, but despite differences Washington rekindled contact with Henry in 1794 and offered him multiple high political positions including Secretary of State. Henry refused all offers.
- Henry died of stomach cancer at his home on 6 June, 1799. In his will, he left 67 enslaved people and multiple estates to his wife Dorothea and his children. Unlike his fellow anti-Federalist Mason, he freed none of those he enslaved.



8.8 The Bill of Rights

It came time to ratify the Constitution, to submit to a vote in state conventions, with approval of nine of the thirteen required to ratify it... The Constitution became even more acceptable to the public at large after the first Congress, responding to criticism, passed a series of amendments known as the Bill of Rights. These amendments seemed to make the new government a guardian of the people's liberties: to speak, to publish, to worship, to petition, to assemble, to be tried fairly, to be secure at home against official intrusion. It was therefore, perfectly designed to build popular backing for the new government.

What was not made clear – it was a time when the language of freedom was new and its reality untested – was the shakiness of anyone's liberty when entrusted to a government of the rich and powerful.

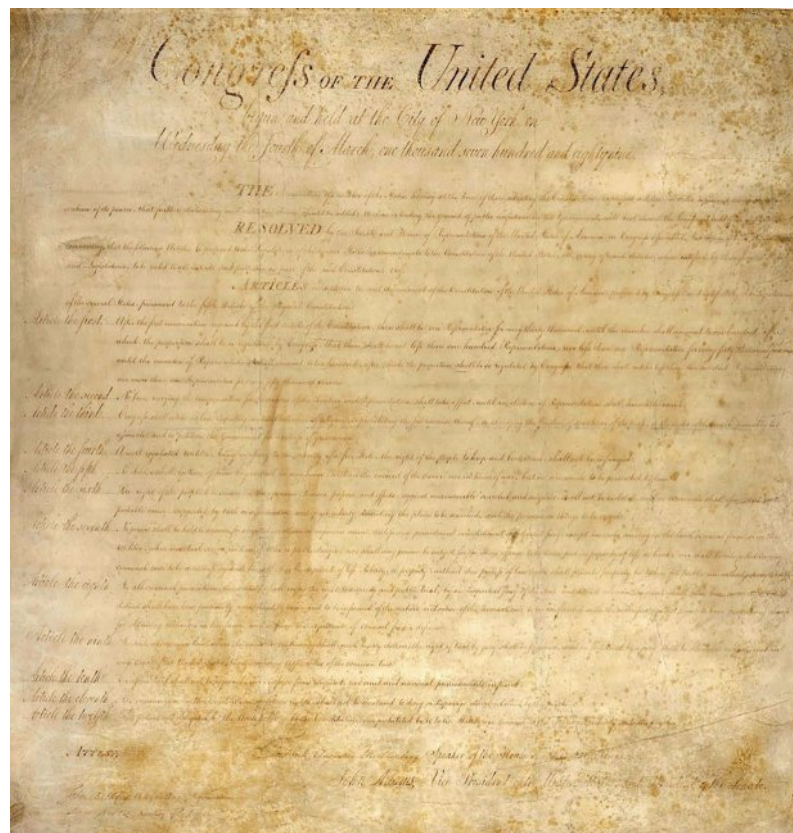
Source 8.14 Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States 1492–Present*, pp. 98–101

The adoption of the Bill of Rights served to answer many of the fears of the states and Anti-Federalists. The states wished to see clauses included that protected their rights; while the American colonists fought to retain their birthrights to English liberty under the law, causing George Mason to utter: 'We claim nothing but the Liberty and privileges of Englishmen.' Eleven states already had created declarations of rights alongside their constitutions, and James Madison pledged to Continental Congress to introduce a form of the Bill (only ratified afterwards). The response was immediate, the 'spirit of freedom aroused by the American Revolution had been rekindled'; it would become a 'symbol for the new nation's commitment to liberty under the law'.

Based on the Virginian Declaration of Rights and ratified in 1791 with 10 amendments, the Bill of Rights came to be known as the 'most admirable aspect of American law-making' and the 'cornerstone of American civil liberty'. Ultimately, the Bill of Rights protects three different types of human rights:

- 1 rights of conscience**, including the First Amendment's freedom of speech and religion;
- 2 rights of those accused of crimes**, such as the Eighth Amendment's protection against excessive bail and fines; and
- 3 rights of property**, such as the Fifth Amendment's provision that no one may be deprived of property without 'due process of law'.

► **Source 8.15** The first page of the original copy of the Bill of Rights



Text	Embodiment of Revolutionary ideology
<p>Amendment I</p> <p><i>Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.</i></p>	<p>This essentially incorporated Jefferson's Statute for Religious Freedom into the Bill of Rights.</p>
<p>Amendment II</p> <p><i>A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms shall not be infringed.</i></p>	<p>This reflected the needs of the period of 'salutary neglect', where 'internal sovereignty' was assured by the ability of each colony to defend itself with its own militia. According to the colonies, this was the only appropriate way to defend liberty (as opposed to a standing army). Further, actions taken by royal governors (such as in Lexington-Concord, where the British had attempted to disarm the local populace) were now illegal. There was now (famously – or infamously) 'the right of the people to keep and bear Arms'.</p>
<p>Amendment III</p> <p><i>No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.</i></p>	<p>British actions under the <i>Quartering Act</i>, whereby soldiers were quartered in towns across British America, were now illegal.</p>
<p>Amendment IV</p> <p><i>The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.</i></p>	<p>James Otis' 'Writs of Assistance Case' of 1761 was now embodied within the law.</p>
<p>Amendment V</p> <p><i>No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.</i></p>	<p>This reflected the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights: life, liberty and estate (property).</p>

continued...



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Text	Embodiment of Revolutionary ideology
Amendment VI <i>In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence.</i>	<p>This was a response to the infamous 'Murder Act' (the <i>Administration of Justice Act 1774</i>), whereby the accused could be transferred away to another British colony or to Great Britain to assure trials more conducive to the Crown, avoiding the anti-British prejudices of local juries.</p>
Amendment VII <i>In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.</i>	<p>This reflected the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights: life and liberty.</p>
Amendment VIII <i>Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.</i>	<p>This reflected the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights: life and liberty.</p>
Amendment IX <i>The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.</i>	<p>This ensured that the Constitution couldn't be used as a justification for denying others their natural rights, influenced by Enlightenment ideals.</p>
Amendment X <i>The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.</i>	<p>This ensured that the United States Government would differ from the British Parliament in that it would guarantee the sovereignty of the states, acknowledging their 'internal sovereignty' in a way the British Government had not.</p>

Source 8.16 The Bill of Rights, amendments

FOCUS QUESTIONS 8.2

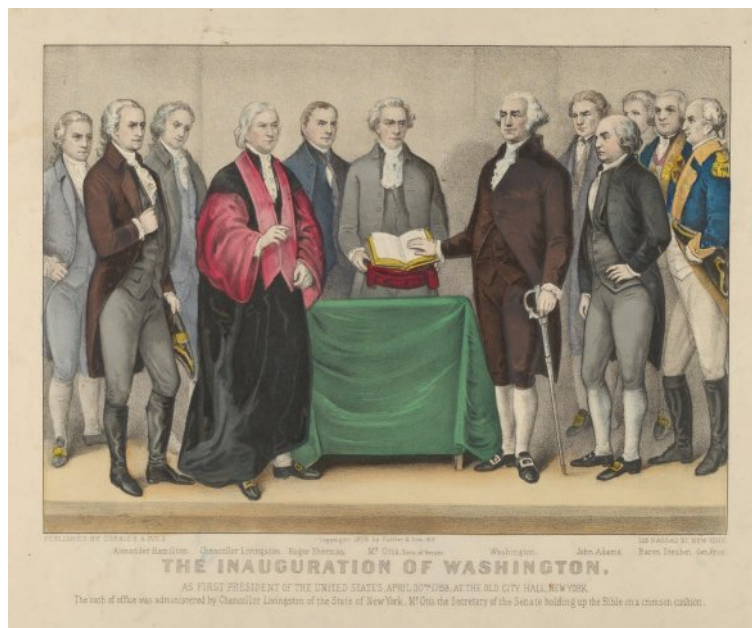
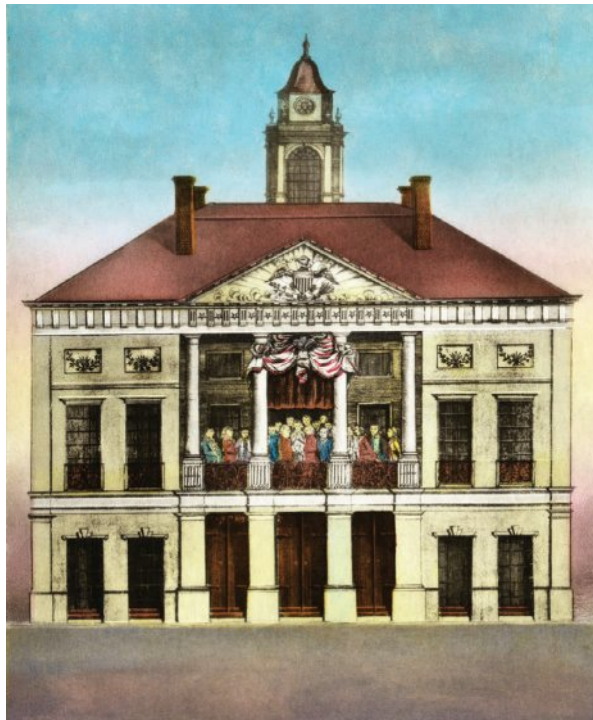
Discuss and explain how the Bill of Rights answered the Anti-Federalists' arguments.

8.9 The President of the United States, 1789

KEY EVENT



George Washington was inaugurated as the first President of the United States on 30 April 1789. Robert Livingston, the Chancellor of New York, swore him in, following the ratification of the Constitution. It was the first of Washington's two terms as President (with John Adams in the role of Vice President). The office had been essentially created with him in mind. His status as a war hero and vanquisher of the British, his action of laying down military office, his impartial chairing of the Philadelphia Convention and his Southern origins made him the mortar for the newly created nation.



▲ **Source 8.17** Two images of the inauguration of George Washington as President: *Top: Federal Hall, NY*, by Amos Doolittle, 1789; *Bottom: The Inauguration of President George Washington*, by Nathaniel Currier, 1876



THE STORY SO FAR

- After the blow of Shays' Rebellion, delegates from the states met for the Annapolis Convention in 1786, the 'Meeting of Commissioners to Remedy Defects of the Federal Government'. This meeting led to the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 where a new government was created through the Constitution.
- Despite contradicting Revolutionary ideology, slavery continued in the South, with enslaved people being recognised as only three-fifths of a citizen in the Constitution. The Revolution also failed to ease many restrictions on women, whose property and marriage rights remained unequal to men's. Conflict with First Nations Americans continued after the Treaty of Paris in 1783 and resulted in First Nations Americans having no standing in the American judicial system and suffering the continued dispossession of their lands.
- Ratification Debates began in the 1780s with Anti-Federalists opposing the Constitution in favour of decentralised authority and states' rights, and Federalists advocating strong central government with a Constitution to empower the people. George Mason, a prominent Anti-Federalist, insisted upon the existence of a Bill of Rights and refused to sign the Constitution due to his fear that federal power would not have adequate limitations.
- Eventually the Bill of Rights, comprising 10 amendments to the Constitution, was adopted as a way to address the fears of the states and Anti-Federalists. It became an enduring symbol of the United States' commitment to liberty.
- Subsequently, George Washington became the first President of the United States after being inaugurated in 1789.



Use the QR code or visit the Interactive Textbook and watch the video summarising the chapter.

Develop your historical understanding

Define key terms

Write explanations defining each of the following:

Significant ideas and events	Significant individuals
Annapolis Convention (1786)	George Mason
Philadelphia Convention (1787)	Alexander Hamilton
Ratification	James Madison
Anti-Federalists	Patrick Henry
Federalists	
Bill of Rights	
Presidency	

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Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 Why did the delegates at the Philadelphia Convention decide that they needed to go beyond reforming the Articles of Confederation?
- 2 Why were the Anti-Federalists concerned about the draft Constitution?
- 3 Why was the Bill of Rights necessary in ratifying the constitution?

Constructing historical arguments

- 1 Did the American Revolution cause major changes to their society? Discuss this view, providing evidence to support your answer.
- 2 ‘The society created by the Founding Fathers was to be based on liberty.’ To what extent do you believe this to be true? Provide evidence to support your answer.

Using quotes as sources

Write a sentence using a short phrase from one of the quotes below, or contrast the views from a few quotes. You can also use any of the quotes used throughout this chapter. Quotes can be used directly or paraphrased into your own words.

The Constitution

[On the three-fifths clause in the Constitution:] In various ways, the Revolution worked to weaken slavery.
Gordon Wood

[The Constitution was the] apotheosis of the revolution ... its ideological fulfilment. Bernard Bailyn

[The Constitution was] liberty's greatest protection. George Bancroft

[T]he Constitution neither strengthened nor undermined slavery; faced with a fundamental moral problem, the delegates chose ultimately to avert their gaze. Edward Countryman

The Constitution ... serves the interests of the wealthy elite. Howard Zinn

Online research suggestions

- ‘American Revolution Topics’, Alpha History (see the link at <http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/9508>).



9

AREA OF STUDY 2, 4 JULY 1776 – 1789 EXAM QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR SECTION A & B VCE REVOLUTIONS

*Knowledge is in every country the surest basis of
public happiness.*

GEORGE WASHINGTON, FIRST ANNUAL ADDRESS, 8 JANUARY 1790

Overview

This chapter will provide some guidance on how to prepare for and complete the VCE Revolutions paper for the American Revolution in Section A or B of Area of Study 2: Consequences of Revolution (4 July 1776 to 1789), as outlined in the current Study Design 2022–2026. The suggestions that follow can assist you to identify what you need to know, how you can revise and what the examiner is looking for in your final examination. The sample questions and responses can also provide models for responding to exam-style questions and can help you to identify how to structure a response, how to incorporate primary source evidence and historical interpretations and the kinds of arguments that you could make. The examiner is looking for students to demonstrate a strong command of the key knowledge points identified in the study design as summarised below.

The American Revolution from 4 July 1776 to 1789 (Declaration of Independence to the acceptance of the Bill of Rights)			
Challenges to the Revolution	Changes and continuities in political, social and economic conditions and their impact	Individuals	Revolutionary experiences and the extent of continuity and change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> War of Independence creating and maintaining a political system under the Articles of Confederation Treaty of Paris 1783 Shays' Rebellion the Philadelphia Convention 1787 and framing of the Constitution debates between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists ratification of the Constitution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> post-war recession opportunities for economic development debates on federal and state rights features of the Constitution Individual Rights the Bill of Rights slavery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Washington Alexander Hamilton Patrick Henry James Madison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patriots Loyalists Continental Army soldiers Women Native Americans African Americans and slaves

As discussed in Chapter 5, the four-step method of Audit, Synthesis, Practice and Seek Feedback may help in your revision.



9.1 Section A of the examination

See section 5.1 of chapter 5 (page 135) for general information on the structure of Section A of the examination.

Sample questions and annotated answers

In the following section are some sample questions and answers that are included as examples of the types of questions of those asked in Section A: Source Analysis. Some examples of 5 mark questions and 10 mark questions are provided.

9.2 Section B of the examination

See section 5.2 of chapter 5 (page 142) for general information on the structure of Section B of the examination.

Sample essay questions and annotated answers are also provided to assist you.

EXAMPLE 1

Source A: An extract from Benjamin Thompson, a loyalist and soldier in the British Army from 1776

The army, in general, is not very badly accoutred but most wretchedly clothed and as dirty a set of mortals as ever disgraced the name of a soldier. They have no clothes of any sort provided for them by the Congress ... though the army in general, and the Massachusetts forces in particular, had coats given them by way of bounty for enlisting. And the neglect of the Congress to fulfil their promise in this respect has been the source of uneasiness among the soldiers ...

The leading men among them, with their usual art and cunning, have been indefatigable in their endeavours to conceal the real state of the army and to convince the world that the soldiers were tolerably heavy. But the contrary has been apparent, even to a demonstration, to every person that had but the smallest acquaintance with their camp. So great was the prevalence of these disorders in the month of July that out of 4,207 men who were stationed on Prospect Hill, no more than 2,227 were returned fit for duty. The mortality among them must have been very great ... but the number of soldiers that have died in the camp is comparatively small to those vast numbers that have gone off in the interior parts of the country ... Notwithstanding the indefatigable endeavours of Mr Washington and the other generals to arrange and discipline the army, [there is no] tolerable degree of order and subordination ... in the rebel camp.

Source B: Extract from a letter from George Washington to John Adams dated September 1776

We are now, as it were, upon the eve of another dissolution of our Army ... It is in vain to expect that any, or more than a trifling part of this Army will again engage in service on the encouragement offered by Congress ... When men are irritated, and passions inflamed, they fly hastily and cheerfully to arms; but after the first emotions are over, to expect among such people as compose the bulk of an army, that they are influenced by any other principles than those of interest, is to look for what never will happen ... You must have good officers, there are, in my judgment, no other possible means to obtain them but by establishing your army upon a permanent footing; and giving your officers good pay ...

With respect to the men [non-officers], nothing but a good bounty can obtain them upon a permanent establishment; and they ought they to be engaged for no shorter time than the continuance of the war. As facts incontestably prove, the difficulty and cost of enlistments increase with time ... I shall therefore take the freedom of giving it as my opinion that a good bounty be immediately offered, aided by the proffer [promise] of at least 100 or 150 acres of land and a suit of clothes and blankets, to each non commissioned

officer and soldier. If this encouragement then is given to the men, and such pay allowed the officers as will induce gentlemen of character and liberal sentiments to engage ... we should in a little time have an Army able to cope with any that can be opposed to it, as there are excellent materials to form one out of ...

Source C: A 1902 portrayal of Daniel Shays' forces fleeing federal troops



2a Using source A and B and your own knowledge, outline the challenges faced in recruiting soldiers for the Continental Army.

(5 marks)

This response begins with a clear topic sentence that responds directly to the question asked.

In **bold** you can see where the student has used precise and accurate own knowledge to contextualise the source.

In *italics* you can see how they have used extracts from the source.

Throughout the War of Independence (19 April 1775 – 3 Sept 1783) it was challenging to recruit and retain soldiers due to a scarcity of resources, inadequate training and discipline. **The Articles of Confederation prohibited the levying of tax** and as a result congress never had enough money to resource their army. As a result, soldiers had *'no clothes of any sort provided for them by Congress' (A)* despite efforts of leadership to *'conceal the real state of the army'*. Moreover, **illness was rife**, as evidence at Prospect Hill with *'no more than 2,227 ... fit for duty' (A)* as well as during the **deadly winter at Valley Forge in December 1777**. This resulted in soldiers who flew *'hastily and cheerily to arms'* but quickly deserted once fighting began and led to no *'tolerable degree of order and subordination' (A)* within the camp. Washington asked Congress to incentivise men joining the Continental Army via introducing bounties, rationalising that *'a good bounty can obtain them upon a permanent footing' (B)* and retain soldiers for *'no shorten time than the continuance of the war' (B)*. Thus, soldiers were recruited upon the guarantee that they would receive *'100 or 150 acres of land, clothes and blankets' (B)* as well as **financial incentives, with soldiers from Virginia receiving an end of service bounty as high as \$750**.

2b Using source C and your own knowledge, describe why Daniel Shays led a rebellion in 1786. (5 marks)

This response begins with a clear topic sentence that responds directly to the question asked.

In **bold** you can see where the student has used precise and accurate own knowledge to contextualise the source.

In *italics* you can see how they have used extracts from the source.

Daniel Shays' led a rebellion in response to the seizure of his property by a debtors' court in 1786. Despite being a **veteran of Lexington, Bunker Hill and Saratoga**, he, along with other returned soldiers, found themselves in financial distress as **they had not received the entitlements of cash and land promised to them as part of their recruitment to the Continental Army and had subsequently borrowed from banks and creditors**. With the introduction of the **state's debt recovery scheme**, these men found themselves in debtors courts, which led **Daniel Shays to march on Springfield court in September 1786**. *The actions depicted in Source C depict a second assault led by Shays in January 1787, where he along with 1200 men attacked the federal arsenal at Springfield. As seen in the source, the rebels were confronted by a militia who ordered artillery be prepared to fire upon Shays and his men. In the image, the rebels are depicted as fleeing the militia, which they did, but were soundly defeated at Petersham in February 1787.*

2c Analyse how economic problems challenged the new regime. Use evidence in your response. (10 Marks)

This response begins with a clear topic sentence that responds directly to the question asked.

In **bold** you can see where the student has used evidence throughout.

In *italics* you can see where the student has engaged in historical thinking such as identifying cause and consequence and significance.

Economic problems created profound and wide-reaching problems for the new society. *The revolutionary war had effectively rendered the United States **bankrupt by the mid 1780s**, a situation which was exacerbated by the **lack of specie prior to 1775**. During the War of Independence, Congress had engaged in the practice of printing paper currency in order to fund the war. As these notes were not underpinned by material wealth, their value plummeted as more and more passed into circulation. This problem was also made more acute by attempts by the **British to sabotage the economy via circulating counterfeit Continental notes**. As a result, by 1779, Continental currency was essentially worthless, Congress had accrued a **\$54 million dollar war debt** and reform was essential. **While there were attempts to reform, it was held up by a lack of state co operation and the inability of congress to push through changes**. This inability to reform precipitated a significant social challenge as Congress was unable to pay the salaries and bounties that were promised to Continental Army soldiers as part of their service in the War of Independence (as seen in sources A and B). This led to furlough orders being issued which culminated in outrage from soldiers. **The Newburgh petition was published in April 1783 as a response to shortages and lack of pay, articulated that the soldiers had 'borne all that men can bear' in order to beg that 'a supply of money may be forwarded ... as soon as possible'**. In addition, the **Treaty of Paris of 1783** may have conceded American sovereignty, but it led to a refusal of Britain to negotiate a new commercial treaty with the United States which culminated in a significant trade deficit. Similarly, in lieu of national trade agreements, states had individually negotiated their own trade deals at the expense and exclusion of other states. By 1786, state taxes as well as the inability of congress to pay their debts had many ex-soldiers seeking financial relief by borrowing from private creditors and racking up large debts. This led to a huge increase in the use of debtors' courts to recoup lost money. These conditions led to uprising such as Shays' rebellion which culminated in the **arrest and trial of over 1000 men**. Howard Zinn describes this as 'the chief event' that demonstrated the need for a stronger central government, and indeed from 1787, economic problems had necessitated the need for reform of the Articles of Confederation.*

EXAMPLE 2

Source A: Extract from the United States Constitution, Article 1. Section 2. 'The Three Fifths Clause' ratified 1788.

The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The Number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty Thousand, but each State shall have at Least one Representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to chuse three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New-York six, New Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and Georgia three.

Source B: Extract from the Northwest Ordinance of 1787

1. No person, demeaning himself in a peaceable and orderly manner, shall ever be molested on account of his mode of worship or religious sentiments, in the said territory.

2. The inhabitants of the said territory shall always be entitled to the benefits of the writ of habeas corpus, and of the trial by jury...

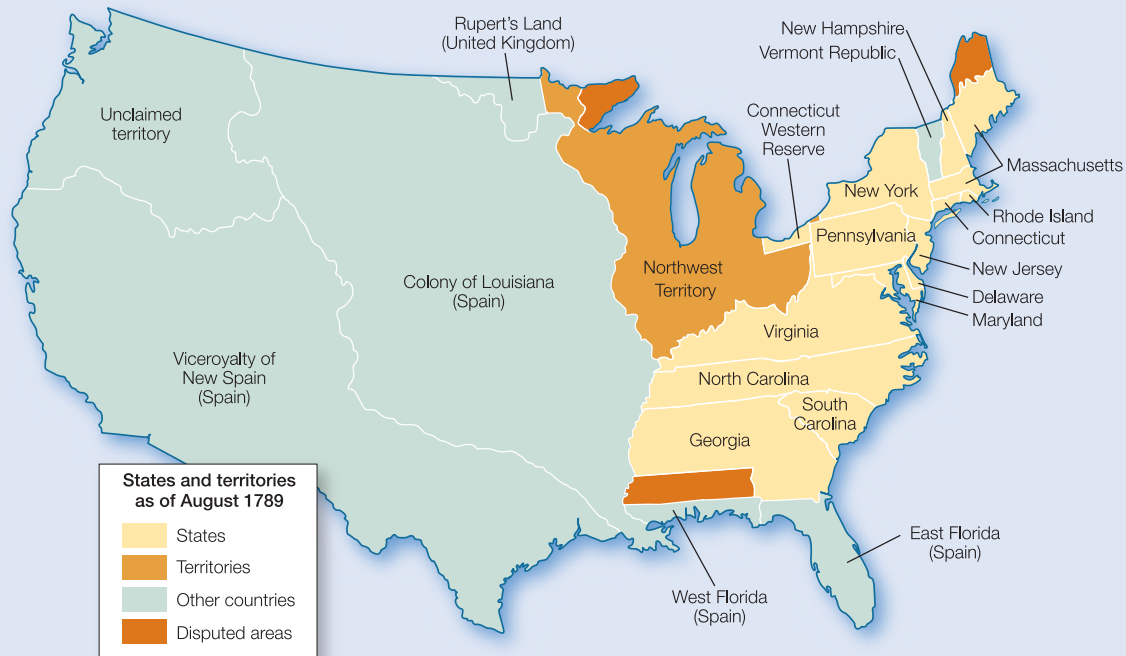
3. Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged. The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress; but laws founded in justice and humanity, shall from time to time be made for preventing wrongs being done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them.

...

6. There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted: Provided, always, That any person escaping into the same, from whom labor or service is lawfully claimed in any one of the original States, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labor or service as aforesaid.



Source C. Map depicting the Northwest Ordinance of 1787



2a Using source A and your own knowledge, outline where issues of slavery were present in the constitution.

(5 Marks)

This response begins with a clear topic sentence that responds directly to the question asked.

In **bold** you can see where the student has used precise and accurate own knowledge to contextualise the source.

In *italics* you can see how they have used extracts from the source.

The Constitution referred to **slavery in two sections** of the constitution, the *three-fifths clause* as seen in source A, and the **sunset clause** which determined a future end date for the importation of enslaved people. As articulated in source A, the three-fifths clause euphemistically identified those enslaved as 'other persons' who would count for '*three-fifths*' of a free man for the purposes of apportioning tax and determining representation. **This clause marked a compromise between the northern states who had a greater number of free white voters and the southern states who desired significant representation but did not want to pay tax on every enslaved person counted.** The three-fifths clause was an important clause in ratifying the constitution, particularly for the *states of Virginia and the Carolinas*. An additional compromise on the issue of abolition was sought in **the form of the sunset clause which set an end date for the importation of enslaved people for 20 years after the ratification of the constitution.** This clause was seen as **both entrenching slavery as a feature of the new society but also limiting the trade, even if it was deferred by two decades.**

- 2b** Using sources B and C and your own knowledge, describe the significance of the North West Ordinance to enslaved and Native American people. (5 marks)

<p>This response begins with a clear topic sentence that responds directly to the question asked.</p> <p>In bold you can see where the student has used precise and accurate own knowledge to contextualise the source.</p> <p>In <i>italics</i> you can see how they have used extracts from the source.</p>	<p>The North West Ordinance was introduced in July 1787 and had significant ramifications for both enslaved peoples and Native Americans. As seen <i>in source C</i>, the law regulated territory in the Ohio River Valley that had been gained as part of the Revolutionary War and gave Congress the power to regulate settlement of the Western Territories. The North West Ordinance determined that <i>'There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory'</i> but importantly it outlined that any enslaved peoples that might have escaped to the new territory could be apprehended and reclaimed by their master: <i>'such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labor or service'</i>. Similarly, while the North West Ordinance outlined that Native American people should retain sovereignty of their lands, and <i>'they shall never be invaded or disturbed'</i>, Congress retained the right to engage in <i>'just and lawful wars'</i>. Therefore, while the North West Ordinance articulated a need for <i>'peace'</i> and <i>'friendship'</i> it came with conditions for Native Americans and enslaved peoples.</p>
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- 2c** Evaluate the consequences of the American Revolution for enslaved and Native American people. Use evidence in your response. (10 Marks)

<p>This response begins with a clear topic sentence that responds directly to the question asked.</p> <p>In bold you can see where the student has used evidence throughout.</p> <p>In <i>italics</i> you can see where the student has engaged in historical thinking such as identifying cause and consequence and significance.</p>	<p>While the revolution certainly impacted both enslaved peoples and Native Americans, neither group shared in the spoils of the new nation. As many as 1200 warriors from various nations are estimated to have participated in the War of Independence with most siding with the British because they believed their fortunes to be more secure with the crown. When the British lost the war, <i>Americans therefore perceived native tribes as traitors as well as an obstacle to western expansion</i>. While <i>agreements such as the North West Ordinance claimed to protect the interests of both parties, it was evident that American settlers often ignored them and pursued their own interests</i>. American settlers continued to push west culminating in significant frontier violence.</p> <p><i>In many ways, the prevalence and nature of slavery changed due to the revolution</i>. In the north, Pennsylvania experienced an influx of skilled migrants which served to reduce the number of enslaved people. Similarly, abolitionists such as John Jay worked to illuminate the inherent contradiction that lay between slavery as an institution and a nation founded on the belief of in an entitlement to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'. These gains were modest however, as slavery was still the basis of the southern economies. <i>Because of this division between north and south, compromise became essential to the ratification of the constitution</i> and as a result the three-fifths clause was conceived in order to meet the concern that the southern states would be disadvantaged due to their lower population of free, white voters. The sunset clause also provided for the abolition of enslavement by 1808, however historians such as <u>John Patrick</u> have debated whether this served to protect and encourage the continuation of the trade. The demand for labour in the cotton industry following the introduction of the Cotton Gin in 1793 led to a resurgence in demand for enslaved people in the southern states, and despite a weakening in the northern states due to the work of abolitionists, the revolution itself served to institutionalise slavery for the immediate future.</p>
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10 THE DIVERSE EXPERIENCES OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL GROUPS IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Overview

One of the most important ‘consequences’ of the Revolution is surely to do with the way it affected the people who lived through it. Our understanding of the Revolution is incomplete if we do not finally decide what changed for Americans in political, social and economic terms. Put simply, were they better off, or not? In addition, historians often struggle to gain enough statistical information to draw a clear picture, and often have to try to build up their analysis from incomplete or contradictory interpretations.

The Study Design 2022–2026 asks us to consider specifically:

the diverse revolutionary experiences of social groups and their responses to the challenges and changes to the conditions of everyday life, including Patriots, Loyalists, Continental Army soldiers, Women, Native Americans, African Americans and slaves. (VCE History Study Design)

Obviously, those that lost the most in the American Revolution were the Loyalists. However, the founding of the new regime saw economic interests in the form of Southern tobacco plantation holders and land speculators both seeking land in the west, with the former intent on protecting the institution of slavery and bending the founding institutions to their will.

Alan Taylor suggests that:

few gentlemen sought to empower the poor, free the enslaved, or grant rights to women. While seeking home rule, they meant to still rule at home.

Source 10.1 Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750–1804* (Chapter 10, ‘Republics’), p. 185

He asserts that the revolution ‘appealed primarily to common white men with some property’. Likewise, Howard Zinn’s idea that the Constitution was

The work of certain groups trying to maintain their privileges, while giving just enough rights and liberties to enough of the people to ensure popular support.

Source 10.2 Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States: 1492 to Present*

In sharp contrast to this, George Bancroft states that

The American Revolution had been a struggle to secure American liberty, the constitution was liberty’s greatest protection.

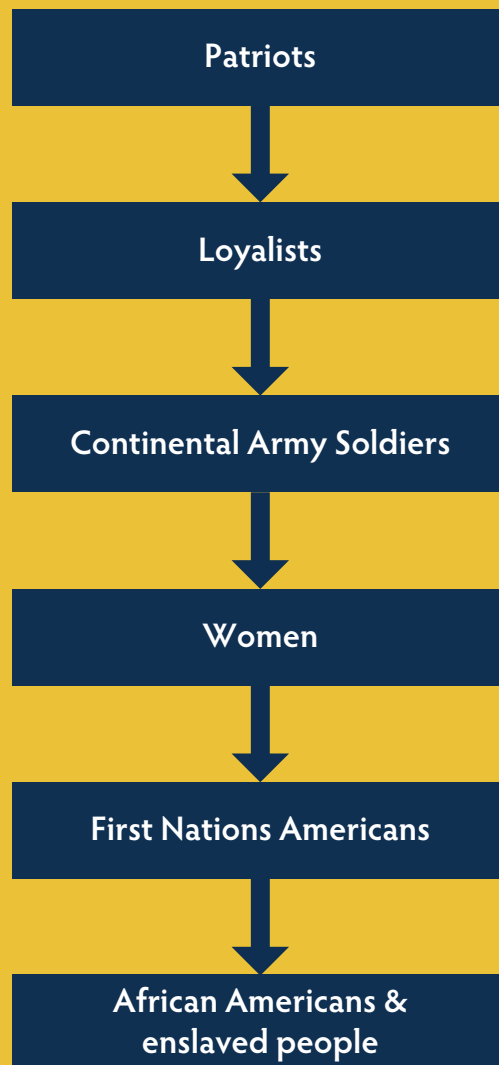
Source 10.3 George Bancroft, *History of the United States*

Quite obviously, enslaved people, First Nations Americans and women were not granted liberty under the United States Constitution; nevertheless, it would be foolhardy to merely focus on these groups and, indeed, the concept of liberty itself. The experiences of those involved in the Revolution were diverse. Loyalists, Patriots and Continental Army soldiers suffered greatly during the War, some gained liberty and power, others exile and dispossession, bankruptcy and even betrayal.

This chapter will attempt to offer a range of the diverse experiences of those social groups.

◀ Source 10.0 Top left: A portrait of Agrippa Hull, a free African-American soldier who served for over six years during the Revolutionary War. Top right: Engraving of a patriotic woman loading a musket. Bottom left: Engraving of a minuteman by George W. Maynard. Bottom right: A portrait of Thayendanegea (also known as Joseph Brant) by Gilbert Stuart, 1786. Brant was a Mohawk leader who associated with Britain during the war.

Flow of chapter



10.1 Patriots

The military experiences of Patriots were diverse and extreme. The war was filled with harsh conditions, desertions (Valley Forge 1777) and mutinies over pay and conditions, loss of life and general suffering. In fact, over the course of the Revolutionary War, casualties on the American side, according to historian Edwin G. Burrows, totalled 6800 dead in battle, 6100 wounded and 17 000 dead from disease. Initial enthusiasm led many men to join local militias where they often served under officers of their own choosing, with the attendant problems of both discipline and training evidenced by the early failures against the British. Furthermore, because most men preferred serving in the militia, the Continental Congress had struggled with recruitment to the Continental Army, which demanded longer terms and harsher discipline.

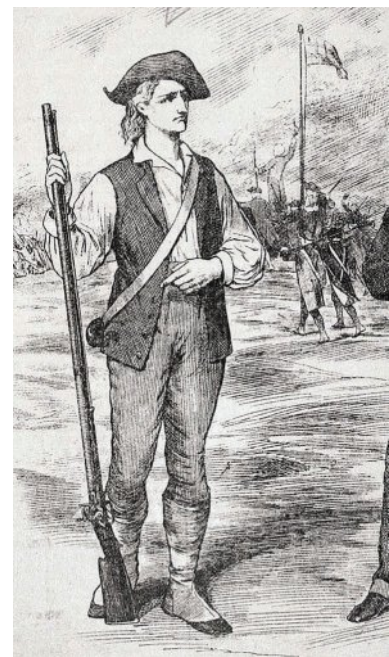
Economically, Patriots suffered greatly during the war. However, 'to the victor go the spoils' and the confiscation of Loyalist property was made legal after the Treaty of Paris in 1783. For historian Kimberly Nath:

the legislative acts and actions by which patriots seized loyalist wealth became crucial for rebels trying to understand citizenship – how not to be British – in time of the Revolution. By identifying who was not a citizen ... [legislatures] moved toward defining who was part of the new state and the new American nation.

Source 10.4 Kimberly Nath, *The American Revolution Reborn*, p. 80–1

Furthermore, the economic crisis of the 1780s which was the Patriots to suffer was mitigated by the Constitution.

Several Patriots had become key historical figures, including George Washington, who became Commander in Chief of the Continental Army and the first President of the United States. Lawyer Patrick Henry, who as Governor of the newly declared state of Virginia aided in the Revolutionary War, worked on the separation of church and state in Virginia and became a prominent Anti-Federalist. His background as a plantation owner is indicative of his stance. Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, also Patriots, were the famous authors of the Federalists Papers and the subsequent Bill of Rights.



▲ **Source 10.5** Woodcut depicting a minuteman during the Revolution

**KEY
STATISTIC**

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10.2 Loyalists

Historian Edward Larkin points out that:

Ever since the Revolution, it has also proved convenient for American nationalists to take the smaller estimates [of loyalists] at face value, to make the Revolution appear more consensual and unanimous than it was.

Source 10.6 Edward Larkin, 'Loyalism', 2012, cited in edited Edward G. Gray & Jane Kamensky, *The Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution*, p. 292

Ultimately, he determines that the war is:

an event we must now view as a civil war as well as an international conflict.

Americans loyal to the Crown during and immediately following the Revolutionary War (1776–83), collectively labelled as Loyalists, faced a dire problem within the New Society as they would become marginalised, persecuted and often divested of their property and possessions. As laid out under the terms of English common law, the property of 'traitors' could be removed by the Crown, a piece of legislation that the Continental Congress encouraged the States to utilise in 1777. Consequently, Loyalist land was forfeited to the state and used to fund



Continental loan certificates. Additionally, the possessions of Loyalists were confiscated and auctioned as the states targeted these individuals through acts that declared the group guilty of crimes and subject to punishment without trial or due process. This resulted in the banishment of individuals, families and even death sentences.

KEY STATISTIC

The negative experiences of loyalists within the New Society continued through Virginia's acknowledgement of 14th-century English law that declared all Loyalists enemies to the state, consequently seeing that 'Tory' merchants were given 40 days to leave the state. Further, the ability of these people to hold public office, serve on public juries and buy land was strictly forbidden, mirroring the maltreatment of minorities such as women, enslaved peoples and First Nations peoples. Given concerns raised by British delegates, the Treaty of Paris (1783) briefly raised the hopes of Loyalists, given the 'justice and equality' it provided for these people, though retreat became impending through Massachusetts passing the *Banishment Act* (1778), continuing well beyond 1783. An estimated 80 000–100 000 Loyalists would abandon the New Society, some choosing to return to England and the British West Indies, but many going to Nova Scotia and Ontario (46 000). Ultimately, the large exodus had a profound effect on the economic capability and stability of the New Society, encapsulating the challenging and changing Revolutionary experiences faced by Loyalists in the New Society.

Ironically, Canada would become an exile destination for many American Loyalists and would eventually achieve its independence through much more peaceful means.



▲Source 10.7 Engraving by E. Tisdale circa 1795, depicting two Loyalists in a carriage – one of whom is tarred and feathered – as colonists escort them and musicians play.

10.3 Continental Army soldiers

Established after the outbreak of hostilities at Lexington and Concord and the Siege of Boston, both in 1775, the Continental Army was a product of the Second Continental Congress (1775). It was first led by George Washington, who assumed command during the Siege of Boston.

The rank and file of the Continental Army were between the ages of 15 and 30, drawn largely from farmers, merchants and mechanics. Initially, it was based on the New England militia, particularly the Massachusetts militia which had laid siege to Boston. Militia had been present throughout the colonies since their founding, and required literally all military-aged white males to serve and maintain the necessary arms and equipment for military service. In addition to the militia, the Continental Army also included Provincial soldiers who were used widely during the French and Indian War.

Prior to 1777, enlistment in the Continental Army reflected the Provincial system of soldiering with various durations, but generally for a year of service. After 1778, Congress changed the rules and men served for either three years or the duration of the war. In some cases, bounties were paid to entice men to enlist or for men who chose to serve longer. Bounties could consist of additional money, additional clothing or land west of the Ohio River, where many veterans would settle after the war. A private in the Continental Army earned \$6.23 per month and pay would increase upon promotion of rank. Sometimes a promotion in rank brought an increase in food rations and in some cases more money in lieu of rations. Desertion was commonplace, since life in the Continental Army was exceptionally difficult. Continental Army soldiers served three duties other than combat: fatigue or manual labour

such as digging vaults (latrines), clearing fields and erecting fortifications. They also served on guard duty and drilled daily with their musket and in marching formations. Drills were increased after the arrival of Prussian officer Baron Von Steuben.

Von Steuben's influence was indicative of Washington's desire to gradually instil European-style discipline; although initially infused with the Revolutionary Spirit, opting to elect officers and avoid corporal or capital punishments, the Continental Army began to introduce severe punishments for infractions ranging from lashes to death. A soldier's execution could be delivered for desertion and was done in public as an example to others.

Further, rations were determined by Congress and shortages were common, as exemplified at Valley Forge. Soldiers also received two ounces of spirits a day, added to water in an early attempt to purify it and reduce the risk of disease. Despite this, sanitation was a significant concern in the Continental Army. For each soldier killed in combat, nine died of disease, mostly attributed to a lack of sanitation. Supply problems constantly plagued the Continental Army, and often men simply made do with whatever arms and equipment they could bring from home.

Often joining men in the camps or on the march were women and children known as camp followers. The women were mostly the wives of the enlisted men; however, some served in combat posing as men. Women and children were also doled out rations.

African Americans did serve in the ranks of the Continental Army, and General James Mitchell Varnum petitioned Congress to permit integration. Some fighting units were integrated, but this practice was abandoned after the War of Independence and not reintroduced until the US Army fought in Korea 175 years later. New England offered freedom to African Americans who enlisted in the Northern army to fulfil congress' quotas and one-fifth of its army was African American as a result. The 1st Rhode Island Infantry was an entirely African American regiment. Roughly 5000 African Americans served in the Continental Army.



▲ **Source 10.8** Engraving of a Continental Army soldier by John McRae, after a painting by Alonzo Chappel, circa 1820

10.4 Women

Throughout the war, organisations such as the Ladies Association of Philadelphia collected funds for the Continental Army, conveyed to George Washington by his wife, Martha, thereby acting as a continuation of the Daughters of Liberty (1765). This form of economic assistance provided by women would transform the Revolution through the raising of \$300 000 via female-run organisations during 1780, significant given the Articles of Confederation Government was only capable of raising \$422 000 in donations a year later (1781). Despite the negative stereotype surrounding female soldiers, Hannah Snell and Sally St Clare were able to mask their gender, while Molly Pitcher gained notoriety at the Battle of Monmouth, taking her husbands' post behind a cannon after he had been wounded. The Homespun movement further supported the soldiers through the creation of clothing and blankets, without utilising British materials. Militarily, it is estimated up to 20 000 women enlisted in the Continental Army as camp followers, employed in a variety of domestic roles such as cooking, cleaning and nursing.

Despite such ideological, economic and military support, the conclusion of the Revolutionary War saw women excluded from the benefits of the New Society. Marriage remained an uneven and biased contract between master (husband) and servant (wife), divorce was difficult to achieve, requiring a private bill passed by a colonial assembly. The Revolution constructed the concept of the 'Republican Mother' (see Source 10.9), meaning American women were reticent to return to the claustrophobia of the domestic sphere and forced subservience. Abigail Adams was an early advocate of women's rights, encouraging her husband, revolutionary John Adams, to 'Remember the ladies' (1776) when structuring the federal government, professing that 'all men would be tyrants if they could'. Her pleas were ignored in the development of the New Society. Women were politically invisible and disenfranchised, as well as being unable to hold state office or national government, practise law or enrol in tertiary education, thereby



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preventing them from engaging in public debate. This prompted Judith Murray's 'Equality of the Sexes' essay (1779), arguing the difference in intelligence between men and women was the result of the widespread prejudice endured by women. Ultimately, these pertinent injustices epitomised female subjugation from the natural rights and liberties that justified the Revolutionary cause, highlighting how they missed out on the benefits of the New Society.

▼ **Source 10.9** *The Artist and His Family*, by James Peale, 1795. A depiction of the ideal republican family, with the women in a nurturing domestic role.



10.5 First Nations Americans

Events such as Pontiac's Rebellion (see Chapter 2) and the massacres of peaceful Conestoga tribespeople by a vigilante group called the Paxton Boys in Pennsylvania in 1763 would suggest deep hostility existed between British Americans and First Nations Americans, but it really depended on where the colonists were living. For example, individuals who had extensive contact with 'natives' were often impressed by their knowledge of the American environment and their willingness to engage in trade (see Source 10.10).

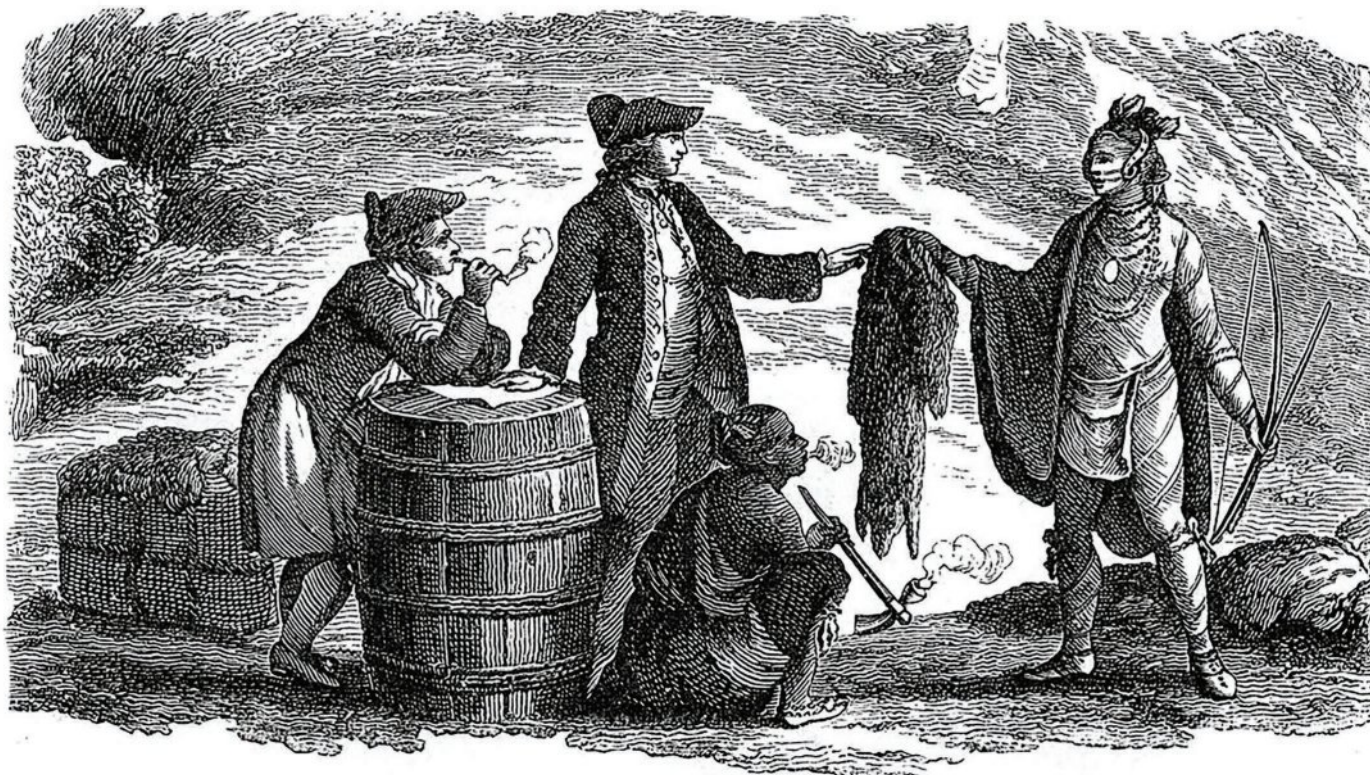
As war loomed, First Nations Americans wished to remain neutral, a stance that was supported by Congress; however, war inevitably came into First Nations territories and they were forced to take sides. Most groups sided with the British, because they believed their future would be more secure under the Crown. These alliances were used against King George III, who was accused of bringing

... on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

The Declaration of Independence, 1776

As a consequence, war between the Continental Army and the First Nations Americans was particularly brutal, and conflict between the groups continued after the Treaty of Paris in 1783, which ended the Revolutionary War. In fact, the Revolution actually increased the pace of the dispossession of the lands of First Nations Americans. For example, the Proclamation Line of 1763, which prevented settlers from moving beyond the Appalachian Mountains, was now defunct. In addition, Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution authorised Congress to 'regulate commerce with foreign nations ... and with the Indian tribes', effectively classing them as a foreign nation. As a result, First Nations Americans had no standing in the American judicial system, and they would suffer greatly because of this in the years after the Revolution. The dispossession of the lands of First Nations Americans would continue for another 150 years.

▼ **Source 10.10** Engraving of First Nations Americans trading furs





10.6 African Americans and enslaved peoples

Slavery is such an atrocious debasement of human nature, that its very extirpation, if not performed with solicitous care, may sometimes open a source of serious evils. The unhappy man who has been treated as a brute animal, too frequently sinks beneath the common standard of the human species. The galling chains, that bind his body, do also fetter his intellectual faculties, and impair the social affections of his heart ... To instruct, to advise, to qualify those, who have been restored to freedom, for the exercise and enjoyment of civil liberty ... and to procure for their children an education calculated for their future situation in life; these are the great outlines of the annexed plan, which we have adopted.

Source 10.11 An address to the public, from the Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and the Relief of Free Negroes, unlawfully held in Bondage, signed by Benjamin Franklin, 9 November 1789

Slavery was an obvious contradiction of the Revolutionary ideology; it clearly violated the spirit of the *Declaration of Independence*, but many of the most famous southern Founding Fathers – including George Washington, Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson – were enslavers. By the early 1780s, slavery had been abolished in New England and Pennsylvania, essentially because the climate didn't suit the labour-intensive crops of the Southern states. And in the newly opened-up lands of the Northwest Territories (today's American Midwest), slavery was prohibited. However, in the South, it remained the basis of the economy, and the need to 'unite' the Northern and Southern states through a process of ratification (consent) meant the issue was 'whitewashed' in the creation of the Constitution. For example, the 'Three-fifths Clause' of Article I counted an enslaved person as 'three-fifths of free other persons'. The effect of this was twofold: on the one hand it reduced the representation of the Southern states in the House of Representatives, which was based on proportional population; but on the other it reduced the apportioned tax liability of those same states. Compromises such as this would come back to haunt the Union. It also created yet another contradiction: how could property be counted towards direct representation in the House of Representatives?

▼ **Source 10.12** *The Old Plantation* – Slaves on a Virginia Plantation, Anonymous, circa 1785–95



AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

In a speech titled 'On the Compromises of the Constitution' in June 1788, Alexander Hamilton posed some questions about the constitutional treatment of enslaved people that harked back to the very reasons for revolution.

They are men, though degraded to the condition of slavery. They are persons known to the municipal laws of the States which they inhabit, as well as to the laws of nature. But representation and taxation go together, and one uniform rule ought to apply to both. Would it be just to compute these slaves in the assessment of taxes, and discard them from the estimate in the apportionment of representatives? Would it be just to impose a singular burden without conferring some adequate advantage?

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

John Trumbull's painting also depicts William Lee, Washington's enslaved personal servant, who for many years spent more time in Washington's presence than any other man. Lee was an expert horseman, and fought alongside Washington throughout the Revolutionary War. According to historian Fritz Hirschfeld, Lee 'rode alongside Washington in the thick of battle, ready to hand over to the general a spare horse or his telescope or whatever else might be needed'. Lee was also the only one of Washington's enslaved people freed outright in Washington's will.

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▼ Source 10.13 *George Washington*, by John Trumbull, 1780





11

WHO'S WHO OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Abigail Adams (1744–1818)

A true believer in the American Revolution and prolific letter writer to her husband John Adams while he was in Philadelphia during the Revolution. Her letters provide great insights into the struggles of women and the general population at the time. Abigail Adams accompanied her husband John to Britain after the Revolutionary War in his role as US Ambassador.

John Adams (1735–1826)

Born in Massachusetts, John Adams was a Harvard-educated man who was known for being a prolific writer and an articulate diplomat. In 1770 he famously and controversially defended British troops involved in the Boston Massacre and, much to the dismay of the Sons of Liberty, saw them acquitted. Additionally, John Adams represented Massachusetts and in particular his home town of Boston at both the First (1774) and Second (1775) Continental Congresses, following his support of the Boston Tea Party (1773), which he declared to be 'so bold, so daring'. His influence on the Congresses as a measured voice of reason gave immeasurable credibility to the Revolutionary cause. It also helped assure the Congress that the *Declaration of Independence* (1776) was a necessity and a beneficial course of action. Ultimately, John Adams' contribution to the Revolution can be associated with his articulate expression of Revolutionary ideology, and the measured and reasoned way through which he viewed and dealt with events at the time.

Samuel Adams (1722–1803)

A devout and loyal Bostonian, Sam Adams possessed an explicit anti-British bias which manifested itself through the course of the Revolution, and which underpinned its success. He prompted more physical Revolutionary activity than any other man, and was aptly named by King George III as 'the most dangerous man in the colonies'. Samuel Adams and James Otis established the Sons of Liberty, which harnessed the power of the mob to repel what they believed were illegitimate impingements upon the colonies. When the *Townshend Acts* (1767) were introduced, Samuel Adams promised to 'take up arms and spend our last drop of blood' to repel them. This proved to be the catalyst that led to the Boston Massacre (1770) and saw Adams publish *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre in Boston*. When Britain attempted to reduce excise taxes on tea, Sam Adams organised the Sons of Liberty to board the ships and dispose of approximately 92 000 pounds worth of tea by throwing it overboard. In response to this rebellion, Britain responded with the *Coercive Acts* (1774), which unified the colonies through the First Continental Congress (1774) and justified the *Declaration of Independence* (1776). Ultimately, Samuel Adams' contribution to the Revolutionary situation was that he prompted and took part in action in response to Revolutionary ideology that others had only written about or spoken of.

John Dickinson (1732–1808)

A prominent author during the Revolutionary period, Dickinson continued his measured sentiment against the British during the War of Independence, and the early years of the New Society. After serving in various roles, including battle during the Revolutionary War, John Dickinson was elected to the Delaware legislature and was later elected governor. He had refused to sign or vote for the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776, his calculated stance justified by the notion that the young nation was not ready for outright revolt against the most powerful empire on the earth. In 1779, after the Revolutionary War, in which he fought in varying roles, Dickinson served in the Confederation Congress and was elected President of Delaware two years later (in 1782 he was elected Pennsylvania's President). In 1786, he chaired the Annapolis Convention, convened to address concerns over the Articles of Confederation. The next year, Dickinson represented Delaware at the Constitution Convention in Philadelphia.

Benjamin Franklin (1706–90)

Benjamin Franklin was born into poverty as the son of a candlestick maker in 1706 in Boston. Franklin always had a love for England and a burning desire to be a part of their social elite, acting as a delegate to Britain from 1764 to 1775. During his time as a representative of the colonies in the British Parliament, Franklin's actions can be seen as largely anti-Revolutionary because, on several occasions, he achieved British-Colonial reconciliation. He acted as a great influence over William Pitt and proved to be a fundamental figure in the repealing of the *Stamp Act* in



1766. Becoming disillusioned, Franklin marked himself as a Revolutionary in 1773 when he famously sent a paper to Sam Adams intercepted from Thomas Hutchinson calling for 'an abridgement of what is called British Liberty'. He represented Pennsylvania at the Second Continental Congress (1775) where he was appointed a member of the committee to draft the *Declaration of Independence* (1776). Franklin would be instrumental in gaining French support for the American cause by 1778. Franklin, alongside statesmen John Adams and John Jay, represented the colonies at the negotiating table in Paris in 1783, against Britain's Richard Oswald. Though it was favourable, it didn't solve all of the problems faced by the colonies, by any measure. He was also a member of the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention in 1787, and helped draft the Constitution.

King George III (1738–1820)

King George III was the King of England who was responsible for the decidedly unpopular taxation upon the American colonies, sparking anti-British sentiment and ultimately full Revolution. While the tax of the *Sugar Act* (1764) only affected a specific section of the population, it was the tightening up on collection of these duties by endorsing 'Writs of Assistance' that saw a rise in anti-British sentiment. Instead of easing up on taxation to reduce tensions, King George III, in need of money to repay the over £130 million war debt Britain had incurred, imposed the *Stamp Act* (1765) on the colonies. Trans-Atlantic tensions were enflamed further by King George III's enacting the *Townshend Acts* (1767) and the *Tea Act* (1773). This anti-British sentiment solidified in the First Continental Congress (1774), where the colonial elite unified in the face of King George III's tyranny. During the Second Continental Congress (1775), a counter-Revolutionary extension of peace known as the 'Olive Branch Petition' was sent to King George III, where the colonies introduced themselves as his 'Majesty's faithful subjects'. King George III's rejection of this petition marked the ultimate severing of British-colonial relations, and contributed heavily to the Revolutionary situation by 1776.

Alexander Hamilton (1755–1804)

Moving to the state of New Jersey as a young man, Alexander Hamilton was a politician and lawyer who was inspired by the Revolution, engaging himself within colonial politics and enlisting himself in the New York state militia. His military endeavours and sharp intellect saw him become Washington's 'Chief of Staff' during the war. Following the effective end of the war, he was elected to Confederation Congress in 1782, but was quickly frustrated by the inability to tax and the subordinate nature of the Congress. As a result, he became a leading advocate for stronger centralised government and Constitutional reform, playing a significant role at the Annapolis Convention (1786), the Philadelphia Convention (1787) and the ongoing Federalist push for ratification (1787–88), which saw him work alongside the likes of James Madison in penning the 'Federalist Papers'. Hamilton eventually served as the first Secretary of the Treasury under President George Washington, but was killed in a duel with Vice-President Aaron Burr in 1804.

John Hancock (1737–93)

Known as the 'Financier of the Revolution', John Hancock inherited the largest fortune in Massachusetts along with a trading empire, and used his immense wealth to finance rebellion. Hancock was highly entrenched within the Sons of Liberty, financing them as the 'milch cow' of the Revolution. In response to the deployment of 1000 troops in Boston following the unrest caused by the *Townshend Acts* (1767), Hancock served on the committee demanding their removal. It was largely believed that it was 'Hancock's rum' along with Sam Adams that enflamed the mobs on the night of the Boston Massacre (1770). John Hancock was elected to the Second Continental Congress (1775) where he was appointed President and played a large role in forwarding the cause of the Revolution. It was his signature that appeared first on the *Declaration of Independence* (1776). Resigning as president of the Continental Congress in 1777, Hancock began work with the French navy, leading an unsuccessful military campaign to recapture Newport, Rhode Island from the British (1778). He became the first Governor of Massachusetts in 1780, and held office for the best part of five years, resigning due to bad health, his exit coinciding with Shays' Rebellion (1786). The following year Hancock also won the presidency of his state's convention, whose purpose was to ratify the US Constitution. Hancock ultimately pushed for constitutional approval despite some initial reservations, and also presented amendments endorsed by the Federalist Party.

Patrick Henry (1736–99)

Patrick Henry was born in Virginia and was an attorney, planter and politician who contributed greatly to the Revolutionary cause. Raucous and fanatical, Patrick Henry was a staunch proponent of America's independence, propelling the course of the Revolution forward. In 1765, after only 10 days of being elected into the Virginia House of Burgesses, Patrick Henry voiced the Virginia Resolves in response to the *Stamp Act* (1765). Patrick Henry's ideals were essentially an extension of 'no taxation without representation', which united the colonial elite in defence of colonial assemblies, and served as a precursor to the Stamp Act Congress (1765). At the First Continental Congress (1774), Henry claimed that 'I am not a Virginian but an American' and in the Second Continental Congress (1775), his catch-cry was 'Give me Liberty or give me death!', in a speech that emphasised the need for independence. His fervour resulted in him being outlawed from Virginia for leading militia protests; however, after the *Declaration of Independence* (1776), he returned to the post of Governor. Henry held strong anti-Federalist views, and in 1787 he turned down an opportunity to attend the Constitution Convention in Philadelphia. His opposition remained even after receiving a draft of the Constitution from George Washington after the convention. When it came time for Virginia to ratify the Constitution, Henry spoke out against the document, calling its principles 'dangerous'.

Thomas Hutchinson (1711–80)

The luckless American-born Loyalist and British official based in Boston would become the governor of the most contentious British colony and city in America. Hutchinson held many official British roles during the whole taxation crisis years of the early days of the Revolution and would be a nemesis and target of James Otis, Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty. His mansion was ransacked during protests against the *Stamp Act* (1765); and after the Boston Massacre in 1770 he published *A Fair Account of the Late Unhappy Disturbance in Boston*, which blamed the city's citizens for poor behaviour during the massacre, and commended the soldiers. Hutchinson's enforcement of the 1773 *Tea Act* led to the events of the Boston Tea Party in the same year. Hutchinson would be removed as governor by a British military governor General Thomas Gage during the *Coercive Act* period in 1774. Hutchinson left America then and would never return.

John Jay (1745–1829)

Responding to the anti-Federalist cause, Jay, alongside Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, released a series of papers known as the *Federalist Papers*: 85 articles published in response to the 'anti-authoritarian spirit of '76' perceived in anti-Federalist arguments. As minister plenipotentiary, Jay travelled to Spain in an attempt to garner more support for American independence – a visit that was largely unsuccessful. Jay next joined Benjamin Franklin in Paris, France, where they negotiated an end to the Revolutionary War with the Treaty of Paris (1783). With peace secured, Jay became foreign affairs secretary under the Articles of Confederation. Frustrated with the limited power of the state he represented, Jay supported a stronger central government, and thus a new Constitution. In 1789, George Washington appointed Jay as the Supreme Court's first chief justice, a role he held until 1795.

Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)

A wealthy Virginian and true mind of the Enlightenment era, Thomas Jefferson articulated the ideas that justified Revolution, with the coherency and sophistication to appeal to both the Revolutionary agitators and the colonial elite. Jefferson's articulation of the Revolutionary ideals of natural rights played a significant role in swaying the colonial elite to become party to the Revolutionary cause. Jefferson also served as a delegate at both the First (1774) and Second (1775) Continental Congresses, and penned the *Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms* (1775), which justified conflict with Britain and assisted in the formation of the Continental Army. Following this, Jefferson was chosen to head the committee which would draft the *Declaration of Independence* (1776). He also penned the *Statute for Religious Freedom*, which disestablished the Church of England within Virginia. Jefferson furthered the 'separation of powers' being solidified within the New Society, and was one of a number of Founding Fathers who were enslavers. This was a contentious issue that, following the Northwest Ordinance, actually saw the New Society move backwards, given the Constitution allowed slavery. Jefferson was an anti-Federalist, as a Virginian believing strongly in state power. He was therefore an important member of the ratification debates.



Marquis de Lafayette (1757–1834)

Lafayette was a French aristocrat who left his low rank in the French Army to travel to America. Here he convinced the Continental Congress, in 1776, to grant him a commission as a Major-General. Lafayette served the Continental Army with distinction during the American Revolutionary War, providing tactical leadership while securing vital resources from France. Lafayette's first major contribution came at the Battle of Brandywine (1777), during which he was shot in the leg while facilitating a retreat (during the employment of Fabian tactics). Commander in Chief George Washington instructed he receive special treatment, sparking an important bond between the pair. This was highly significant given the support which Lafayette offered to the Americans, particularly at the Naval Battle of Chesapeake (1781). After travelling to France to press Louis XVI for more aid, Lafayette assumed increased military responsibility, becoming commander of the Virginia Continental forces in 1781. He was integral in ensuring American victory at Yorktown against Cornwallis, winning the last major battle of the war.

Richard Henry Lee (1732–94)

A Virginian statesman, Lee voiced radical beliefs in the early stages of Revolution, organising anti-*Stamp Act* petitions in 1765. Lee was also a prominent member of the Virginia House of Burgesses from 1758 to 1776 and formed the Virginian Committees of Correspondence in 1773. He also organised activities in response to acts of the British Parliament that conflicted with the natural rights of colonials, such as a day of 'Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer' in response to *Coercive Acts* (1774). He moved the motion at the Second Continental Congress (1775) that the colonies declare themselves independent. Lee was a critic of the proposed constitution, and a possible author of *Letters from the Federal Farmer* (1787).

John Locke (1632–1704)

A famous and influential Enlightenment thinker, whose work *Two Treatises of Government* (1690) was a major influence on political thought in the colonies. The first treatise disputes the concept of a Monarch's divine right to rule, and claims that people are endowed with 'natural rights' (Life, Liberty, Property). The second treatise puts forth the social contract theory – the right to revolt against a government which has infringed natural rights.

James Madison (1751–1836)

The son of a wealthy Virginian tobacco planter, James Madison was a lawyer, writer and politician who at a young age entered the elite Virginia House of Burgesses. Here, he proved to be a highly skilled legislator, possessing a peerless understanding of political history and Enlightenment ideology, and thus knowledge of what a good government looked like. Madison was a major contributor to the Virginia *Statute for Religious Freedom*, the Virginia state constitution, the Second Continental Congress (1775) and the Annapolis Convention (1786). His most famous work was at the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention (1787), seeing the Congress embrace his 'Virginia Plan' (through the Connecticut Compromise), setting up the basis of the subsequent Constitution. With Alexander Hamilton, he was a major contributor to the *Federalist Papers* that solidified support, logical justification and ultimately the ratification of the Constitution. From 1789 he was a member of Congress, aiding in the creation of the *Bill of Rights* (1789) and later served two terms as the nation's fourth President. Madison is often known as the 'Father of the Constitution', and the main author of the *Bill of Rights*.

George Mason (1725–92)

George Mason was elected into the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1759, and led the pursuit of American rights in the face of British tyranny, penning the 'Fairfax Resolves' (1774). He was also a member of the Virginia Convention (1775–76), where he drafted the Virginia Declaration of Rights and a significant part of the Virginian Constitution, while also being active in the work leading to the Philadelphia Convention (1787). Mason did not sign the Constitution, given his already strong opposition to tyrannical governance. He believed the ratified Constitution did not put in place strong enough measures to deter such rule, and urged for the addition of the *Bill of Rights* (1789). His opposition to the Constitution formed the basis of the anti-Federalist's cause. His letter to Washington outlines the majority of the problems encasing the cause, seeing that most other anti-Federalists shared similar intrinsic beliefs and views.

Lord North (1732–92)

Frederick North, best known as Lord North, was a Tory British prime minister who led from 1770 until 1782 – for most of the American Revolutionary period. Following the Boston Tea Party in 1773, North proposed a number of legislative measures designed to punish the colony of Boston, known as the *Coercive Acts* in Britain, and dubbed the 'Intolerable Acts' in the colonies. North wanted to shut down the economy of Boston by cutting off trade in order to shake up the rebellious colonists. Instead, the Acts further fanned the flames of Revolution in Massachusetts, and eventually the other colonies. North remains one of the few British Prime Ministers to be forced out of office by a motion of no confidence in Parliament, resigning in March 1782. This was due to the result of the American Revolutionary War.

James Otis (1725–83)

Prominent in the early development of Revolutionary fervour, James Otis campaigned against British economic policy, penned several important documents and established anti-British groups at a grassroots level, thus assisting in the development of a Revolutionary situation by 1776. Otis planted the seed of Revolution with his famous catch cry of 'no taxation without representation' in *The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved* (1764), following the British infringements on the natural right to property with their enacting of the *Sugar Act* (1764). This catch-cry became key to Revolutionary fervour, and it was quoted regularly by opposition to the *Stamp Act* (1765) and the *Townshend Acts* (1767) that followed. Moreover, Otis co-founded the Sons of Liberty with Samuel Adams in response to the *Stamp Act* (1765), which employed the power of the mob and took Revolution to the streets, adding support for the fervour. In the same year, Otis headed the Stamp Act Congress (1765), which became an important precursor to the First (1774) and Second (1775) Continental Congresses and saw colonists unify in the face of British tyranny. It was Otis' early action against British infringements on natural rights that initially galvanised support for the Revolutionary cause and planted the seed of popular Revolution, thus adding to the development of a Revolutionary situation by 1776.

Thomas Paine (1737–1809)

A man of simple English background, Thomas Paine arrived in Pennsylvania in 1774, through a recommendation by Benjamin Franklin, where his ability to articulate complex ideologies in language accessible to all people persuaded many colonists to the Revolutionary cause. His works *Common Sense* (1776) and *American Crisis* (1776) were very influential and contributed to a Revolutionary situation, inspiring the *Declaration of Independence* to be passed.

Molly Pitcher

Up to 20 000 women attended to both the British Army's and the Continental Army's needs in the Revolutionary War as cooks, nurses, caretakers and camp followers. Molly Pitcher is possibly a mythical figure or a fusion on many different women that served the Continental Army. The story is that Molly Pitcher brought a pitcher of water to her husband while he was on the battlefield, and after he was wounded took up his role in the artillery in the Continental Army.

Paul Revere (1735–1818)

Paul Revere was a silversmith and colonial activist in Boston who played a key role in mobilising the colonial activism that led to the Revolution. A link between the working and middle classes, Paul Revere popularised the Revolution at a grassroots level. Through Revere, the colonial elite were able to reach an audience that could not read, and therefore permeate the Revolutionary fervour to a much larger strata of the people. Revere also led anti-British agitation after the passage of the *Stamp Act* (1765) and was an early member of the Sons of Liberty. Following the Boston Massacre (1770), Revere augmented Samuel Adams' propaganda-driven *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre in Boston* by engraving an equally propagandised and widely circulated account of the event. Revere then took part in the Boston Tea Party (1773) as a result of his connections to the Sons of Liberty. He also delivered the 'Suffolk Resolves' to the First Continental Congress (1774), resolving to boycott British imports, curtail exports and pay 'no obedience' to the *Coercive Acts* (1774). Perhaps Revere's most important contribution to the Revolution, however, was his 'midnight ride' (1775), wherein he rode to Lexington to warn the colonial militia, Sam Adams and John Hancock that the British troops were coming, enabling them to escape arrest and continue the Revolutionary cause.



Deborah Sampson (1760–1827)

Fighting in the Continental Army in the disguise as a man called Robert Shurtliff, Sampson famously served as a soldier until late in the Revolutionary War. Her identity was well hidden for almost the whole war, which is incredible to imagine. However, after contracting a fever the medical personnel discovered her ruse but kept it secret. She was discharged from the Army in 1783, and would later receive a pension for her war service.

Daniel Shays (1747–1825)

Daniel Shays was born into poverty, working as a farm labourer. He joined the Continental Army, but was frustrated by the underwhelming pay he received following his service in the army, given the hyperinflation occurring in the States. Shays, alongside other western Massachusetts farmers, borrowed money during the war. When the war ended, the demand for farmers decreased, leaving many unable to pay the money back, leading to debtors' courts seizing money, houses and property, even jailing those unable to pay. Shays, a community leader heading the local Committees of Safety, continually promoted resistance to this, eventually forming a militia in 1786. A group of 1000 of Shays' militiamen marched on the court at Springfield, closing it, in what is known as Shays' Rebellion, and burned the court to the ground. The insurrectionary group was arrested shortly following this, with many militiamen captured and tried, although Shays himself was acquitted. He died in poverty in 1825.

Baron von Steuben (1730–94)

Baron von Steuben was a Prussian military officer who ventured to British America and ultimately played a pivotal role in ensuring the American victory during the war. As a European military commander, he had a profound knowledge of the workings of a successful army, allowing him to use his much-needed knowledge to apply it to the forces of Washington's fledgling Continental Army. His service lasted five years, from 1778 to 1783. In this time, he worked at Valley Forge, seeing the effective victory of the Americans in 1781, and finishing at the war's official conclusion in 1783. Steuben brought much needed European discipline, overseeing the development of the army.

Dr Joseph Warren (1741–75)

A physician who wrote the 'Suffolk Resolves' in 1774, which called for a boycott of British goods and promoted the formation of a militia in each colony. Warren also participated in the Battle of Lexington-Concord in 1775, and was commissioned as a major-general before fighting and dying at the Battle of Bunker Hill on 17 June 1775 at the age of 34.

George Washington (1732–99)

Born in 1732 in Virginia to a wealthy plantation owner, George Washington is glorified as one of the most prominent Revolutionaries for his role as one of the first colonial elite to oppose Britain, and for his leadership in inspiring unity and colonial sovereignty. Washington initially held a pro-British stance. Over time, however, he began to agree with an increasing number of the colonial elite who were becoming disillusioned with Britain's near-tyrannical nature. This disagreement was further escalated with the passing of the *Proclamation Act* (1763), which Washington reasoned was a 'temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians'. Washington, along with Patrick Henry, called for the First Continental Congress (1774) in the Virginia House of Burgesses. His calls for unification of the colonial elite marked the 'gentrification' of the Revolution that gave the colonies the organisational power, finance and legitimacy to make it successful. Washington was a delegate for both the First (1774) and Second (1775) Continental Congresses, and was appointed Commander in Chief of the Continental Army in 1775. Washington's use of Fabian tactics, his ability to unify the separate colonial militias and inspire soldiers with speeches were some of his main contributions to the Revolution. In 1783 Washington stepped down from command of the Continental Army, and in the same year he also prevented the Newburgh Conspiracy military coup. Washington chaired the Philadelphia Convention in 1787 and helped draft the Constitution, and in 1789 was inaugurated as the first President of the United States.

Glossary



actual representation a form of democratic government in which every citizen is represented in the government by someone acting on his or her behalf (in Australia, your local, state and federal members perform this role for you and you can approach them directly)

Albany Plan a plan to unite the Thirteen Colonies proposed by Benjamin Franklin at the Albany Congress in July 1754

American dream the ideal that all American citizens are entitled to equal rights and the ability to realise their ambitions

Anglican relating to the Church of England

Appalachians a mountain range in eastern North America that bordered most of the Thirteen Colonies

aristocracy a rigid social system based entirely on one's hereditary or aristocratic connections (George Washington was refused entry into the officer class of the British Army because he didn't have these aristocratic class connections, no matter how competent a soldier/leader he became)

artisans skilled workers drawn from all levels of society, including poor shoemakers and tailors to elite metal workers or silversmiths

Battle of Bunker Hill a famous hour-long battle fought on 17 June 1775 in Boston between the British and Massachusetts militia; even though the British won the battle, they suffered three times the casualties of the militia

Bill of Rights a declaration of individual rights and freedoms, usually issued by a national government; a list of fundamental rights included in each state constitution. The most well known in history is the American Bill of Rights

boycott the deliberate choice to avoid purchasing goods as a protest against their manufacturer or country of origin

British Parliament the official political body that ran Britain and all British colonies in partnership with King George III

broadside a large poster-sized article that could be displayed in a public place, usually containing a scathing attack on one's enemies; the Americans used this form of media very successfully against the British

Chancellor of the Exchequer the title held by the British Cabinet minister who is responsible for all economic and financial matters, equivalent to the role of Treasurer or Minister of Finance in other nations

Cincinnatus (519–430 BCE) a Roman aristocrat and statesman who served as consul in 460 BCE and dictator in 458 and 439 BCE; he became a model of civic virtue primarily because he lay down military command and returned to civilian life after he served his term as dictator

civic virtue the belief that a society of virtuous citizens could run a nation and voluntarily subordinate their private interests to the common good of the whole society; together they could resist the corruption or tyranny of an oppressive force

class consciousness a term to describe a section of society all holding the same ideas or values

colony a place governed by another country and settled by their people

Committees of Correspondence organised letter-writing civilian groups that circulated news, intelligence and revolutionary ideas around the Thirteen Colonies after their formation in 1772

Committees of Safety Patriot civilian groups who operated in the Thirteen Colonies from 1770 to the end of the Revolutionary War. They closely monitored the activities of British soldiers, and were especially active in the colony of Massachusetts in 1774–75

confederation a group of nations or states that work together in an alliance while maintaining some independent power

Continental Army the professional or regular army raised by the Second Continental Congress and trained by Washington to fight the War of Independence

Continental Congress an assembly of delegates representing the Thirteen Colonies in North America that met twice in Philadelphia, in 1774 and 1775

convention a formal assembly of representatives or delegates to discuss and take action on matters of common concern

Currency Act one of several acts created by the British Parliament designed to regulate the use of paper money in America

Declaratory Act British legislation passed in 1766 granting Parliament the authority to pass all laws for its American colonies. Initially, it did not cause much of a reaction but came to be viewed as a dangerous sign of British intentions.

deference the act of recognising a 'superior' class of people; in America before the Revolution, people were expected to stop and let a 'gentleman' pass or to tip their hat to them in recognition that they were of a superior class. This practice fell away during and after the Revolution in America when revolutionary ideology started to take effect.

dissident a person disagreeing with the established government or system

divine right the idea that a king or queen is placed in their position by God and that all others below them are inferior

economic the theme that involves any issues to do with money, such as taxation, inflation, unemployment, wages and prices of goods

effigy a model of a person, often used for the purpose of protest

empire a group of nations ruled by a single leader (usually a monarch – a king or queen) or government

English Bill of Rights an Act of the British Parliament passed in 1689, which declared the rights and liberties of citizens; it also settled the succession of Mary II and William III

Enlightenment an English and French philosophical movement in the 18th century whose ideas would inspire many of the American Founding Fathers

Fabian tactics named for Fabian the 'Delayer', a Roman politician and general who avoided battles with the famous Carthaginian general, Hannibal, due to the superiority of the Carthaginian enemy; British Americans were well read in ancient history, and Washington knowingly employed these tactics

Fairfax Resolves 1774 a set of resolutions adopted by a committee in Fairfax County in the colony of Virginia on 18 July 1774, in the early stages of the American Revolution; written primarily by George Mason, the resolutions rejected the British Parliament's claim of supreme authority over the American colonies

Federalist a person who supports federalism, which is a system of government in which power is divided between both a federal/national government and regional/state governments

First Nations the pre-settlement indigenous communities of North America; a respectful alternative term for 'Native Americans'

Founding Fathers men such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin and others of the Revolutionary era who created the foundations of the American nation

Franklin, Benjamin (1706–1790) one of the Founding Fathers; he negotiated the 1783 Treaty of Paris (ending the Revolutionary War) and helped to draft both the *Declaration of Independence* and the Constitution of the United States

frontier land undiscovered by colonialists beyond an established border

fundamental law the law, written or unwritten, that establishes the character of a government by defining the basic principles to which a society must conform, by describing the organisation of the government and regulation, distribution and limitations on the functions of different government departments; and by prescribing the extent and manner of the exercise of its sovereign powers

George III the reigning King of England for the entire American Revolutionary period (1763–1789)

Glorious Revolution the union of English parliamentarians and William III of Orange-Nassau that overthrew King James II of England, leading to his daughter Mary II and William III jointly taking the throne (also known as the Revolution of 1688)

government the official political body that runs a country

Great Awakening a religious revival in American colonies from the late 1730s to the 1760s sparked by George Whitfield (1714–70), an itinerant English Methodist preacher whose evangelical fervour and eloquence led to many conversions

Grenville, George the British Prime Minister who devised the *Sugar Act 1764* and the *Stamp Act 1765* to raise colonial revenue for Britain; these were spectacularly unsuccessful in America and cost him his job as Prime Minister

Henry, Patrick (1736–99) a lawyer, politician and plantation owner who became known as a great orator and advocate for American independence

heredity the passing of traits to offspring from parents or ancestors

Hessians German soldiers who were in the paid employ of the British

historians men and women who attempt to make sense of the past and usually specialise in one country or period of history

historiography the writing and interpretation of the past

House of Commons the lower house of the British Parliament. Holds more power than the House of Lords, as the people elect its members, and it is where the Prime Minister leads the ruling party. This is the House that made the key decisions affecting the Thirteen Colonies during the Revolution.

House of Lords the upper house of the British Parliament, made up of upper nobility and clergy whose membership is a hereditary privilege. Holds less power than the House of Commons, as members only have the power to comment on or delay Bills already passed by the House of Commons.

Hutchinson, Thomas (1711–80) a businessman and governor from Massachusetts, who became hated for not publicly opposing the *Stamp Act*

ideology a governing set of ideas or beliefs held by a group

impeachable making one subject to impeachment, which results from a crime or offence serious enough to warrant a public official losing their position and facing formal charges

impressment the forced membership of colonists into the British Army or Navy

insurgent warfare a rebellion against an established authority, often armed and sometimes involving subterfuge or subversive tactics

intelligentsia the well-educated thinkers, writers and artists of a society

justified revolution the idea that revolution is both justified and right if those in power have trespassed on a citizen's rights

leaders significant individuals (men and women) who influence ordinary people

legislature the political body or assembly which is empowered to make and change laws (legislation), like a parliament

Loyal Nine a hard-line anti-British group in Boston that became the core and the drivers of the Sons of Liberty activities in that city in the period 1765–75

Loyalist a colonist loyal to Britain

manifest destiny the 18th- and 19th-century American establishment belief that all of America would eventually be conquered and be rightfully theirs

mercantilism an economic system whereby the first priority of setting up new colonies is that they enrich the Mother Country (Britain in the case of America)

meritocracy a society based on being recognised for one's talents and ability and not from hereditary connections

middling sort or middling class was an 18th-century term for people with wealth, land or property who engaged in commerce. The origin of the modern term 'middle class'.

militia the part-time army of each colony, often having had limited training and very poorly equipped in comparison to the British Army

minutemen colonial militia prepared to arm themselves against the British in less than a minute's notice

natural rights John Locke's idea that people are entitled to certain privileges and basic freedoms simply because they exist

Navigation Acts a series of British laws dating from the early 1600s designed to help the British mercantilist system operate successfully; the British Parliament, Navy and customs officials had sweeping powers to enforce these laws but many American merchants like John Hancock successfully flouted these policies

'No taxation without representation' a popular revolutionary slogan that argues that taxes can only be levied on a populace by its own elected representatives

Old World the rigid and claustrophobic class-based social structure of Europe. Small numbers of elites like kings and queens at the top and the masses of poor at the bottom.

Olive Branch Petition a last-ditch peace offering sent by the Second Continental Congress to King George III in July 1775 to avoid going to war with Britain

Oliver, Andrew (1706–74) a merchant and official in Massachusetts who became responsible for enforcing the *Stamp Tax* there

Patriot 18th-century colloquial term for anyone who supported the Revolution

patronage a system used in British America, whereby colonial officials were appointed through their connections to men of power and rank

Pontiac's Rebellion led by Chief Pontiac, an attempt by an alliance of warriors from various First Nations tribes to drive British soldiers and colonial settlers out of their lands in 1763

popular sovereignty the principle that the legitimacy or right to rule is found in the approval of the people; hence, all political power resides with the people

president the leader or head of state of a republic – a government in which power resides with the people who elect their own representatives

prime minister the elected leader of the ruling party in the British Parliament

property qualification an assets-based criterion of attaining a certain amount of property or money before one qualifies to vote or to be elected to government

pyrrhic victory a victory that is not worth winning because the winner has lost so much in winning it

ratification the declaration by which a nation formally accepts, with or without reservation, the content of a formal meeting such as a convention

rebels colonists who fought against the British

Redcoats or 'lobsterbacks'—slang for British soldiers, especially during the Revolutionary period

republic a form of government where elected officials are chosen by and represent their citizens to enforce the rule of law. In modern parlance, a republic often means a government without a monarch.

republican referring to republic – a form of government where elected officials are chosen by and represent their citizens to enforce the rule of law; in modern parlance, a republic often means a government without a monarch

revolution a process of massive political upheaval that changes the way in which a country is governed; often a vertical shift in power from an absolute monarch to a popular government ruling on behalf of the people

Royal Proclamation Line a border that ran the length of the Appalachian Mountains, skirting the western border of most of the Thirteen Colonies, which Britain forbade Americans to cross; created by the British *Proclamation Act 1763*, arising out of the Treaty of Paris (1763)

salutary neglect a term in American history that refers to the unofficial and long-term 17th- and 18th-century British policy of lenient or lax enforcement of parliamentary laws meant to keep American colonies obedient to England

satire the use of humour, irony or ridicule to criticise people or their behaviour

secular the state of being separate from religion, or not being exclusively allied with or against any particular religion

Seider, Christopher a member of a large mob that attacked a custom official's house, and who was shot and killed by the owner, the Loyalist Ebenezer Richardson

separation of powers a fundamental principle of the United States Constitution, whereby powers and responsibilities are divided among the legislative, executive and judicial branches

slavery the forced labour of human beings without payment; in the American context this refers to African people taken from their homeland against their will. In what was termed 'chattel slavery', enslaved people were the personal property of the 'master' and could be bought and sold on a whim. Husbands, wives and children could all be split and sold separately. The children of enslaved people were also enslaved for life, and so were their children.

social contract a contract between those in power and their people or followers; the American colonists felt King George III had violated the social contract, which justified the Revolution

social mobility an ability to move up the social hierarchy on the basis of talent, as opposed to royal patronage

Sons of Liberty a collection of underground groups that formed to fight the *Stamp Tax* and later became aggressive supporters of American independence

sovereignty the right of a government or a people to make decisions and form laws within its own borders

Stamp Act a British law of 1765 to raise funds from the Thirteen Colonies. This proved to be greatly unpopular and was a key source of revolutionary tension through the 1760s.

Stamp Act Congress the first unified mass meeting of nine of the Thirteen Colonies in North America, to determine a course of collective action against Britain's *Stamp Act*

standing army an army of professional soldiers that is always combat ready and can be used at any moment; seen as an affront and risk to liberty under Enlightenment ideals

Suffolk Resolves 1774 a declaration made on 9 September 1774 by the leaders of Suffolk County, in the colony of Massachusetts; the declaration rejected the *Massachusetts Government Act*, resolved on a boycott of imported goods from Britain unless the 'Intolerable Acts' were repealed and promoted the formation of a militia for each colony

Sugar Act a revenue-raising Act passed by the British Parliament in 1764, which alarmed the colonists about the intent of the British and helped fuel the growing discontent

supplies resources such as food, water, clothing, bedding, ammunition and weapons

tarring and feathering an act of public humiliation and shame involving pouring hot and sticky tar onto a victim then covering them in feathers, and parading them around the town square. Could be fatal and, if not, would be definitely physically and emotionally painful.

Tory a member of the dominant party in power in the British Parliament at the time of the Revolution; the party survived to become the modern Conservative Party, whose members are commonly still referred to as Tories; 'Tory' also became the term for any pro-British sympathiser during the Revolution

treatise a formal and systematic written work that examines and explains a specific subject

Treaty of Paris a peace treaty signed in Paris in 1763, ending the Seven Years' War between France and Britain fought mainly in North America (not to be confused with the next Treaty of Paris in 1783 signed between Britain and America recognising American independence after the Revolutionary War)

Vietnam War the conflict that took place between 1962 and 1975 where the powerful armed forces of the United States fought against the resourceful (North) Vietnamese in their homeland in South-East Asia. Used in the context of the American Revolution, this is a historical analogy that refers to the way that Britain had great military superiority over the Thirteen Colonies, but still lost the war.

Virginia House of Burgesses the representative colonial assembly of Virginia

Virginia Resolves a set of resolutions decreeing that the only taxation valid in Virginia was that enforced by a parliamentary assembly elected by Virginians, which effectively invalidated the British Government's taxes

virtual representation a system where the citizens are loosely represented by the entire legislature; the citizen is not involved in the election process

Washington, George (1732–1799) the first President of the United States, who fought in the early stages of the French and Indian War on the side of the British, then led the colonial forces to victory against the British in the War of Independence

Whig a member of a political faction and then a political party in the Parliaments of England, Scotland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom; between the 1680s and 1850s, they contested power with their rivals, the Tories. Whig can also mean anyone liberal minded or progressive who was sympathetic to the cause of independence.

Writ of Assistance a search warrant from the British Government permitting a search for contraband items in American homes, warehouses, shops, ships etc.

zealot an ardent and fanatical follower of a religious creed or idea

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