

Focus on U.S. History:

The Era of Revolution and Nation-Forming

Kathy Sammis

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Date _____

Map: Eastern North America





The Road to War

The objectives of this unit are for students to understand what caused the American Revolution and the principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence. English imperial policy toward the colonies changed when the Treaty of Paris ended the war with the French in 1763. This new, more intrusive imperial policy sparked debate in the colonies about rights to representation and freedom from taxation. A chain of British imperial moves and colonial protests ultimately led colonials to debate the question of declaring independence from the

mother country. Even after the Revolutionary War started at Lexington and Concord in April 1775, that question was still unresolved. Delegates at the Second Continental Congress made the fateful decision on July 2, 1776. Thomas Jefferson enunciated the colonists' justifications for their split with Great Britain in the Declaration of Independence, adopted on July 4, 1776. The activities in this unit are designed to help students understand these aspects of the road to revolution in the colonies.



Student Activities

The Peace of Paris shows students visually how colonial territory changed hands with the Treaty of Paris in 1763. The Extra Challenge offers students another way to visualize the changes by creating contrasting maps of eastern North America before and after the French and Indian (Seven Years') War.

Steps to Revolution challenges students to arrange major events leading up to the Revolution in chronological order, with the incentive of solving a word puzzle at the same time. Students then construct a time line showing these and other significant events in the chronology of the Revolution.

Voices of Dissent and **Voices of Consent** offer students original source quotes, from colonists who objected to British imperial policies and from colonists and Englishmen who supported the policies. Students use the readings to summarize the positions of both sides. Both summaries and readings are the basis for the next activity.

Loyalist or Patriot? has students imagine themselves as different colonists with particular interests

and decide whether to support the Loyalist or the Patriot side. For an extra challenge, students can role-play a debate between Loyalists and Patriots.

One Event, Two Pairs of Eyes has students consider how various major events of the Revolutionary era would be differently described from the Patriot and from the Loyalist viewpoint.

Two Patriots presents the argument of Thomas Paine for independence from Great Britain and the argument of John Dickinson, a leading moderate Patriot, against independence. Students use these two views, as well as any others they have investigated, in role-playing a class debate about declaring independence.

Understanding the Declaration of Independence offers selected phrases from the Declaration of Independence. Students work in small groups to develop explanations of these phrases, which they share with the rest of the class.

Why Independence? presents the specific grievances set out in the Declaration that Jefferson used to justify breaking with Great Britain and its king. Students identify the actual events that Jefferson alluded to.

Slavery and the Declaration of Independence examines why a Declaration proclaiming equality,

liberty, and inalienable rights failed to condemn slavery. Students study a paragraph condemning slavery and the slave trade that Jefferson originally included in the Declaration. After they decipher the difficult-to-read language, they explain why Jefferson dropped this condemnation paragraph in his final version of the Declaration.

Name _____

Date _____

The Road to War

War Ends and a New Policy Begins

The French and Indian War wracked the American colonies from 1754 to 1760. France, with many Native American allies, fought England for control of the continent. England won. The Treaty of Paris formally ended the war in 1763. Half the continent changed hands. England was securely in control of almost all of North America, including Canada.

American colonists were delighted. The frontiers now seemed safe. British troops had done most of the fighting, and the British treasury had paid most of the costs. But what

seemed like blessings to the colonists soon turned to burdens.

No longer distracted by fighting a powerful enemy, England turned its attention to colonial affairs. The war had been expensive, so England had a large national debt to pay off. England's new, vastly larger North American empire would be vastly more expensive to administer. Clearly, English politicians felt, the colonies should help pay those expenses. So, the British government began a series of attempts to control the colonies and get money from them—a series that led to revolution.

1761 Writs of Assistance

General search warrants in Massachusetts to search for smuggled goods, collect tax.

Proclamation of 1763

Closes western frontier to colonists; saves money, prevents Indian trouble.

1764 Sugar Act

Tariffs on sugar, other items imported into colonies. Other trade laws are enforced.

1765 Stamp Act

Tax stamps on all kinds of printed material.

1765 Quartering Act

Colonials must house and feed British troops in America.

Colonial Protests

Colonists objected to the Writs of Assistance. Smuggling to evade taxes on imports was a way of life in New England port towns. The Proclamation of 1763 angered colonists who itched to move into the bountiful lands west of the Appalachian Mountains. The Sugar Act and other taxes and restrictions on trade caused protests. Colonists also saw no reason for British soldiers to be stationed in a land at peace.



The Stamp Act outraged colonists. It was a direct tax. What right did Parliament have to tax colonies that had no representation in the House of Commons? Mobs rioted, destroying stamps, and the homes of stamp masters. Colonists refused to use the stamps.

Opposition brought the colonists together. The colonies met in a Stamp Act Congress. The radical Sons of Liberty began organized protests. Americans stopped buying British goods. Parliament, urged on by London merchants, gave in and repealed the Stamp Act.

(continued)



Name _____

Date _____

Even though their policies were causing colonial rebellion, the British politicians pressed on. They didn't understand Americans. They thought colonials were inferior and needed to be ruled by their betters. So King George III and his ministers had more laws passed:

1766 Declaratory Act

England can make any law it wishes for the colonies.

1767 Townshend Acts

Many new duties on imported goods.

1767 Customs Courts

Trade laws enforced by trial without jury.

Violence Breaks Out

Dissent spread. England was trampling on their "rights of Englishmen," and the colonists objected. Scuffles and brawls increased between residents of New York and Boston and the British troops stationed there. In March 1770, an unruly Boston crowd threw snowballs at British soldiers, who fired and killed five Americans. But things cooled down after this "Boston Massacre" when Parliament repealed the Townshend Acts—except for the tax on tea.

Samuel Adams and other radical Patriots formed "committees of correspondence" and began planning organized intercolony resistance. In November 1773, to protest the tea tax, a group of patriots dressed as Indians destroyed boatloads of British tea in Boston Harbor. Parliament's response was the Coercive Acts, which the colonists called the Intolerable Acts. Among other things, the acts

UNIT 1

STUDENT BACKGROUND SHEET

- Closed Boston Harbor until citizens paid for the dumped tea;
- Severely cut back on Massachusetts self-government.

Resistance Becomes Revolution

Great Britain had made a big mistake. It thought of each colony as a separate unit. But now the colonies united in defense of Massachusetts. The colonies

- Met at the first Continental Congress in Philadelphia in 1774;
- Sent a list of grievances to Parliament;
- Organized a boycott of all British trade in the colonies.

Minutemen—local citizens—began drilling with their militia units throughout Massachusetts and elsewhere.

It all came to a head in April 1775. Parliament responded to the colonists' grievances by declaring that Massachusetts was in a state of rebellion. British troops marched out of Boston toward the town of Concord to seize ammunition supplies stored there. Patriots Paul Revere and William Dawes rode ahead of the soldiers, rousing the minutemen all along the route. When the British redcoats and the colonial militia faced each other on the green at Lexington, shooting began. In a moment, eight Americans lay dead. Later that day, American militiamen struck back, killing scores of British soldiers as they marched back to Boston.



With these killings, the American Revolution had begun. Still, not all colonials favored independence from Great Britain. Thomas Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense*, published in January 1776, pushed a lot of people into the split-with-England column.

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UNIT 1

STUDENT BACKGROUND SHEET

The colonists met again at the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia, in May 1775. On July 2, 1776, they voted:

“...all political connection between them [the colonies] and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.”

On July 4, 1776, the delegates adopted the Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson. Then, as now, the Declaration is a great statement of the right to rebel against unjust government and to secure the rights of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”



Paul Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre, as seen through Patriot eyes



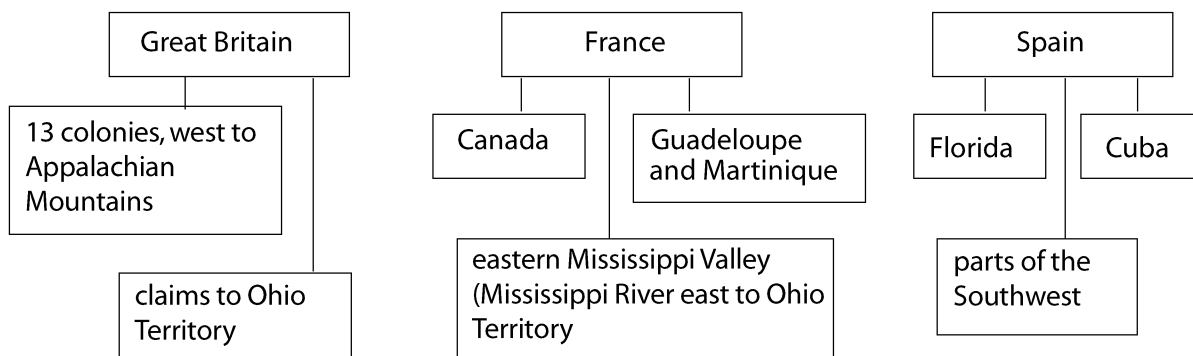
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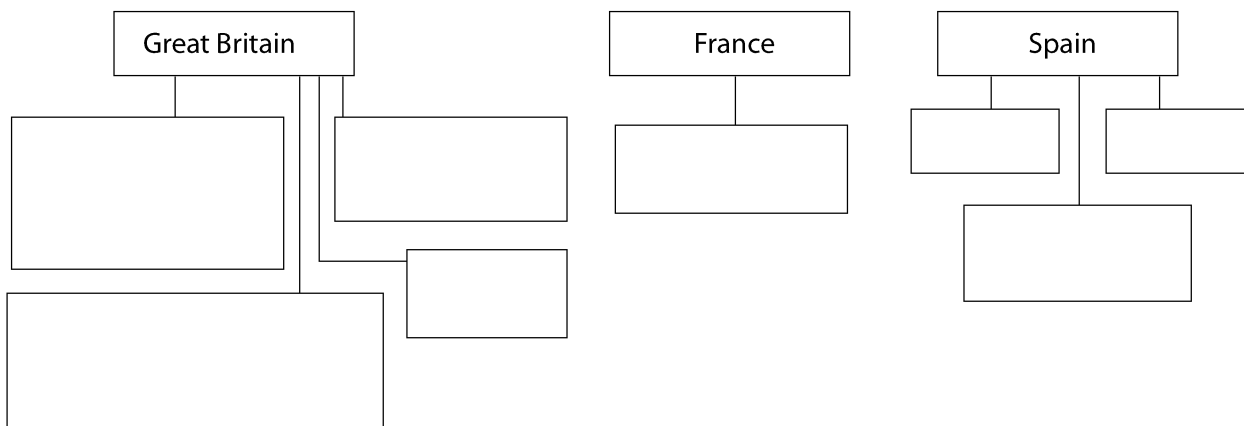
The Peace of Paris

Directions: The Treaty of Paris formally ended the French and Indian War in 1763. The terms of peace radically changed the colonial power picture. The first group of boxes below shows which colonial powers controlled different areas of America when the war started. Fill in the blanks in the second set of boxes to show how control of these areas changed after the French and Indian War ended.

Before 1754:



After 1763:



Challenge Question: What was the major result of the war for the American colonies?

Extra Challenge: Show visually how the territory changed hands. Use two copies of your map of eastern North America (page *x*). On the first, use different colors to show territory claimed by England, France, and Spain before the French and Indian War. On the second map, show the territories claimed after the Peace of Paris in 1763. Do the two maps look very different?

