

The War for Independence

*Revolution and the New
Nation (1754–1815)*



Tea and taxation

The Revolutionary War

Independence

Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

Icons: For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will learn about how the American colonies fought and won independence, and be able to answer these key questions:

- What were the major battles and turning points after the Declaration of Independence?
- What support did the Patriots have and how did this influence the outcome of the war?
- How did the Revolutionary War end and what were some of the outcomes?



After the Declaration of Independence, the Revolutionary War continued in the 13 colonies until October 1781. Watch this animation to find out more about the key battles and turning points of the War from 1776. Press **start** to begin.

start



Can you explain Britain's changes in strategy?



Drag these key battles in the
Revolutionary War into the correct
order from earliest to latest.

Press **start** to begin.

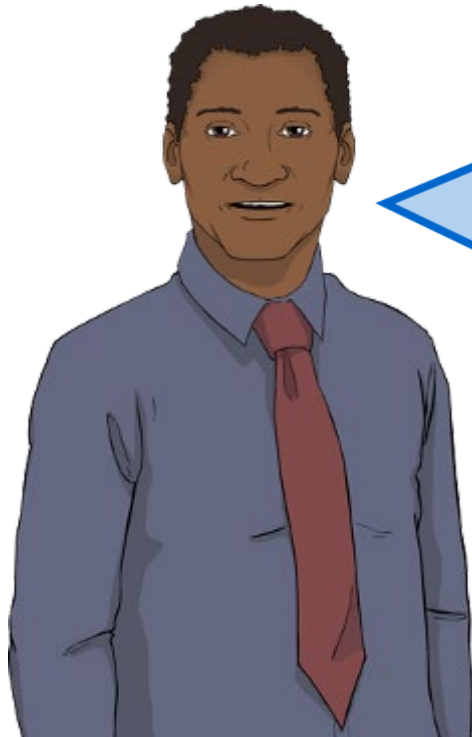
start



Which side was successful in each battle?



Following Cornwallis's surrender, Britain still held strategic positions in the North American colonies, but support for the continuation of the war was dwindling at home.



Discontent at home became so strong that members of parliament forced Prime Minister North out of office on March 20, 1782. A new parliament, headed by Lord Rockingham, was created, which was more sympathetic toward the rebels and pushed for peace negotiations.

For what reasons do you think Britain was not able to defeat the rebels? Was this outcome inevitable?





One crucial factor in Britain's defeat is that there are a range of problems associated with fighting in a foreign land.

The base of supplies and intelligence is further away

Soldiers will likely be less devoted than those defending their home



Troops are not as familiar with the terrain as the native soldiers

Native soldiers often engage in **guerrilla** tactics – this can cause a lot of damage



How important do you think geography is as a factor?





On their own, the American rebels were greatly outnumbered by the military might of Britain. With the support and backing of international allies their cause became less hopeless. Read this passage about the significance and extent of international support and select the correct word to fill each blank.

Press **start** to begin.

start



Why do you think France and Spain joined the war?





Before the war, colonial women were influential in boycotting British goods and many began making handmade clothes.

During the war, women still played crucial roles including:

- managing farms and businesses for the men fighting at the front
- caring for the sick and wounded
- supporting troops, e.g. Sarah Franklin Bache organized a group of women to mend soldiers' clothing
- participating in **sabotage** missions.



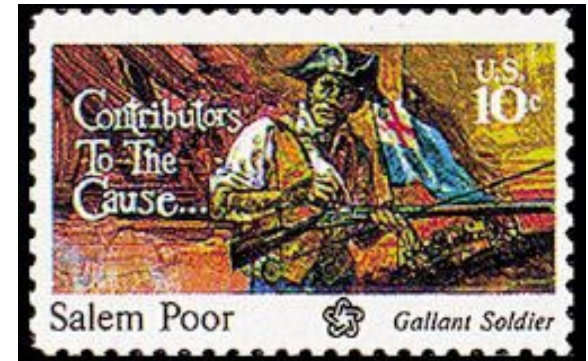
What other roles did women play in the war?



During the Revolutionary War, both the Continental Army and British forces offered freedom to black slaves in exchange for their enlistment.

Black Americans fought in every major battle of the War and many were minutemen. Some key figures include:

- Lemuel Haynes, who wrote a popular poem about the Battle of Lexington
- Salem Poor, who earned recognition during the Battle of Bunker Hill
- Prince Whipple, who crossed the Delaware with Washington in 1776.



How else did black Americans uphold revolutionary ideas?



Although the surrender at Yorktown saw the end of major military battles in the North American colonies, the War continued elsewhere, such as in the East and West Indies.



Both Britain and the American colonies were eager to settle, but they also had to include France and Spain in the treaty.

As part of their alliance with France in 1778, the colonies had agreed not to sign a separate peace with England.

After two years of negotiation, the **Treaty of Paris** was signed on September 3, 1783.



What do you think each party wanted from this treaty?



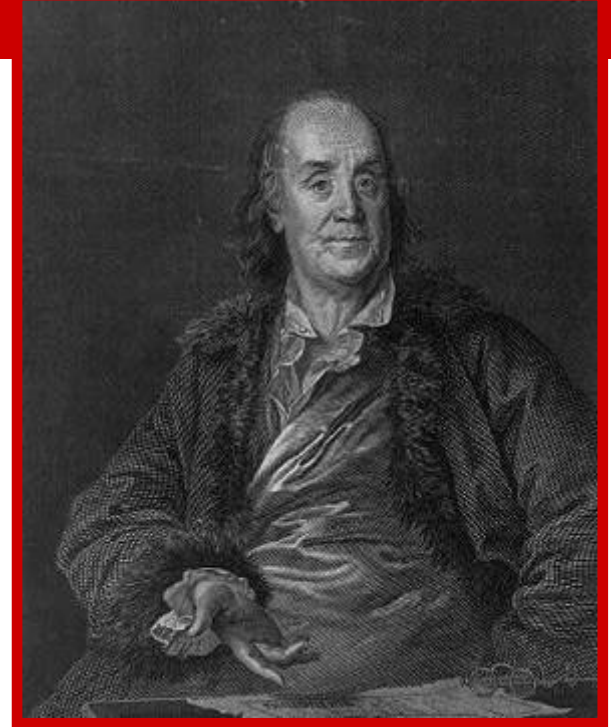


Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and John Jay were very able peace negotiators for the colonies. They held their own against the European diplomats.

They only began negotiations after Britain recognized their independence.

The Treaty of Paris, and subsequent peace agreements, gave:

- Americans territory stretching to the Mississippi River
- Spain retention of the Gulf of Mexico
- France rule of Tobago and Senegal.



What else did the peace treaties cover?



Beyond independence



By winning the Revolutionary War and getting other nations to officially recognize their independence, the American colonies secured the right to determine a new political course.

The colonies had inspired the entire world with their political rhetoric and their ideals of liberty and **egalitarianism**. They had emphatically rejected one system of government, but many wondered what they would replace it with. Many decisions still had to be made, such as who should be represented in government.



Did winning independence change the colonists' lives?





Test your knowledge of the war for independence with this quiz. Choose the correct answer to each question to see how much you can remember about the Revolutionary War.

Press **start** to begin.

start





Test your understanding of the Revolutionary War by recapping key terms and important people using this glossary. Press on the tabs and then each term to see a definition.

Press **start** to begin.

start

