The American Revolution

1776-1781

“I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!”

~Patrick Henry, 1775
Politics of Independence

 tuyến The Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in the summer of 1775.

 tuyến Delegates attempted to appeal to King George III for the final time through the Olive Branch Petition.

 tuyến King George III refused to acknowledge any of the requests made by the colonists.
Politics of Independence

- The American public remained indecisive until Thomas Paine published his pamphlet *Common Sense*.

*Common Sense* was the most important source of propaganda during the revolution because it made King George III the sole enemy of the colonists.
Politics of Independence

On July 4, 1776 at the Continental Congress Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence in response to the pro independence movement sparked by Common Sense.

The declaration established the colonies as a sovereign, united country.
Politics of Independence

- Americans who remained loyal to Great Britain became known as Tories. There was a popular sentiment which resented the creation of a strong federal government through the declaration.

- This led to the formation of the Articles of Confederation in 1777 which allocated most power to the states and made the central government weak.
Preparing for War

- Congress created the **Continental Army** and appointed **George Washington** as general.

- General George Washington proved to be an effective general, since he won several decisive victories and kept Patriot morale up during tough times.
Preparing for War

Patriot advantages during the war:

1. Americans fought on familiar topography.
2. Patriot morale was high since they were fighting for their right to freedom.
3. The Americans received substantial foreign aid from France.
Preparing for War

**Patriot disadvantages** during the war:

1. Colonial industry lacked sufficient men and supplies for the army.
2. The government did not have the power to tax citizens to fund the war.
3. Paper currency was weak and created high inflation.
Preparing for War

**British advantages** during the war:

1. The Royal Navy was the most powerful navy in the world during the 1700s.
2. Great Britain had a surplus of supplies and soldiers.
3. There was a thriving economy in Great Britain.
4. Great Britain had economic incentive to keep their colonies.
Preparing for War

**British disadvantages** during the war:

1. British soldiers fought on unfamiliar topography.
2. Morale among British soldiers was very low, because they were fighting away from home for a cause that many of them did not care about.
New England:

The first battles of the American Revolution occurred on April 19, 1775 at Lexington and Concord, where British General Thomas Gage was forced to retreat to Boston.

The Battle of Bunker (Breed’s) Hill occurred on June 17, 1775.

The British lost substantially more men and suffered the worst amount of casualties. This demonstrated to the British that the colonial forces would not be easily defeated.
The War for Independence

- With American forces surrounding Boston, British troops evacuated to Nova Scotia.
- A British invasion of the south was prevented when American forces crushed a loyalist uprising at Moore’s Creek Bridge, NC, in 1776.
- The Tories did not supply the amount of resistance the British had hoped for.
- American forces under Arnold and Montgomery attempted an unsuccessful offensive in Quebec during the winter of 1776.
The British offensive resumed in 1777 as Howe moved north up the Hudson River to Albany, while Burgoyne moved south from Canada and meet Howe.

On May 10, 1775, a small force of Connecticut militia called the Green Mountain Boys led by Ethan Allen captured Fort Ticonderoga in NY.
Burgoyne ran short of supplies while he was cornered between Continental troops in Vermont and Benedict Arnold and Horatio Gates in New York.

At the Battle of Saratoga Burgoyne was surrounded by Gate’s forces, who easily defeated the British and took control of the fort. Burgoyne surrendered on October 5, 1777.

The victory at Saratoga was pivotal for the continental army because the patriot victory convinced France to offer support to the Patriots.
Washington faced the toughest struggle of the entire war during the winter of 1777-78 at **Valley Forge**.

While the British occupied Philadelphia, 2,000 Patriot soldiers died of cold and disease.

During the winter at Valley Forge, Prussian General **Friedrich von Steuben** implemented new training regimens which helped win the war.
Mid Atlantic:

- The British Navy under command of General Howe threatened New York Harbor with 32,000 troops and hundreds of ships. He offered for a colonial surrender in exchange for an armistice, which Washington declined.

- With far superior forces, Howe easily captured New York Harbor and drove out the small, 19,000 strong Continental Army south to New Jersey and Pennsylvania.
During the winter of 1776, British troops took refuge in New Jersey while Hessian troops held Trenton.

Washington and his army crossed the Delaware River on Christmas Eve and launched a surprise attack on the Hessians.

Washington crushed the British at the Battles of Trenton and Princeton which was a major boost for Patriot morale.
The South:

Focus on the south was a huge failure. British overestimated loyalist sentiment and there were many more Patriots than the British predicted.

The biggest mistake was when the British enlisted slaves, causing southern farmers to rally against the loyalist cause.
General Benedict Arnold surprised American forces when betrayed the Patriot stronghold at West Point. His plan to become a traitor failed and he hid in a British camp for the rest of the war.

Cornwallis abandoned the Carolina campaign and retreated to Yorktown.
Siege of Yorktown, 1781

Washington trapped Cornwallis in Yorktown, VA between Washington’s troops and the French troops led by General Rochambeau at sea.

Cornwallis’s defeat caused an anti-war sentiment in England.

The Treaty of Paris was signed on September 3, 1783. The treaty recognized US sovereignty by Great Britain and ceded British held territory in the US.
Women’s Role During the War

1. Lots of women went to Patriot camps to help the cause.
2. Women increased army morale and performed necessary tasks such as cooking, laundry and nursing.
3. “Molly Pitchers” were nicknames for women who were active on the battlefield.
4. Abigail Adams wrote to John Adams to “remember the ladies” while Adams attended the Second Continental Congress.
5. Equal education was called for by Judith Sargent Murray.
The Effect of the War on Society

✉ Effect on Women

1. In colonial society married women could not vote, deal in legal transactions, or own land separate from her husband.

2. The revolution did little for women’s rights.

3. The role of “Republican Motherhood” which was for mothers to instill becoming ideals in their children was reinforced after the war.
The Effect of the War on Society

Jennifer Smith

The Loyalists’ Plight

- These people were hounded and harassed by patriots, up to 100,000 fled the country, others fled to Canada, some managed to reenter American life.

- Social changes arose as Patriots were able to take their property and positions in state government.
The Effect of the War on Society

Effect on the Church

- The **Anglican Church** survived after the war, however it was greatly weakened.

- The war strengthened the **Catholic Church**. Most American Catholics supported the Patriot cause during the war, and as a result the church gained strength as an institution.

- Virginia enacted the **Statute of Religious Liberty** written by **Thomas Jefferson**, which called for complete separation of church and state.
The Effect of the War on Society

Effect on Slavery:
1. Many slaves were freed.
2. Slaves were exposed to the new concept of liberty.
3. Open wide resistance to slavery increased among slaves.
4. The South’s commitment to slavery was kept alive by the Church, which created a rationale for keeping slavery.
The Effect of the War on Society

Importation of slavery was banned in North, however slavery remained prominent in the South due to:

1. racist assumptions among whites about the inferiority of blacks
2. the enormous economic investments many white southerners had in their slaves
3. the belief that free African Americans could not be integrated into society
The Effect of the War on Society

Effect on Native Americans

- Native Americans were encouraged to remain neutral, however many Natives took up arms with the British. Great Britain forbade the colonists from expanding into Native lands. As a result:
  1. Demand among whites for western land increased.
  2. White sentiment towards the tribes grew more bitter.
The Effect of the War on Society

‡ The Iroquois Confederacy declared itself neutral in the war, although there were Indians who wanted to get involved such as Mohawks Joseph and Mary Brant who contributed men to the British cause.
The Effect of the War on Society

- The alliance showed divisions in the confederacy.
- The century old confederacy was weakened as a result of the French and Indian War.
- At the Battle of Fallen Timber in 1794, General Anthony Wayne defeated Little Turtle and the Miami Tribe in a battle over lands that had been granted to the United States in the Treaty of Paris. The Native Americans were eventually forced to cede their land to the US.
The Effect of the War on the Economy

- After the war, America’s economy was independent from Great Britain’s, which meant no aid and greater competition.
- The end of British restrictions on trade strengthened America’s economy immensely.
The Effect of the War on the Economy

- When English exports to America were cut off, there was a higher demand for domestic manufacturing.

- Although no great industrial expansion resulted, some domestic manufacturing was stimulated such as the growth of textile mills.
The Creation of State Governments

- A greater desire for individual freedom from an overbearing government was reflected in state constitutions.

- The vision of the small landowner was idealist to American political ideology.
The Creation of State Governments

- State constitutions forbade the governors or any other executive officer from holding a seat in the legislature, thus ensuring separate executive and legislative branches.
- In the late 1770s, state governments were in too much discord, and it was clear that a central government was needed.
The Search for a National Government

- The Articles of Confederation
  - The Articles of Confederation were drafted by the Continental Congress in 1781 in response to the call for a national government.
  - Powers of the new central government were limited to:
    - conducting war
    - managing foreign relations
    - borrowing money
  - The government could not:
    - regulate interstate commerce
    - draft troops
    - levy taxes
The Search for a National Government

- The Articles of Confederation included the **Northwest Ordinances of 1784 and 1785**.
  - The ordinances established a plan for dividing and distributing land in the frontier.
  - Allowed for a territory to apply for statehood once that territory reached a population of **60,000**.
The Search for a National Government

Problems with the Articles of Confederation:

1. A postwar depression from 1784-1787 was caused by an insufficient money supply.
2. In 1786, mobs of angry farmers revolted against the lack of paper currency and inability to off pay debt in Massachusetts and Connecticut in Shay’s Rebellion.

Shay’s Rebellion highlighted the need for a stronger central government.