

CHAPTER 8

America Secedes from the Empire, 1775–1783

PART I: REVIEWING THE CHAPTER

A. CHECKLIST OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to

1. describe how Americans engaged in major military hostilities with Britain after April 1775, even while proclaiming their loyalty to the British crown.
2. explain why Paine's *Common Sense* finally propelled Americans to declare their independence in the summer of 1776, and outline the principal ideas of "republicanism" that Paine and other American revolutionary leaders promoted.
3. explain the specific reasons and general principles used in the Declaration of Independence to justify America's separation.
4. understand the American Revolution as a civil war as well as a war with Britain, and describe the motivations and eventual fate of the Loyalists.
5. describe how the British attempt to crush the Revolution quickly was foiled, especially by the Battle of Saratoga.
6. describe the military and political obstacles Washington and his generals faced, and how they were able to overcome them.
7. outline the course and conduct of the Revolutionary War after 1778, and describe the key role played by France in the final victory at Yorktown.
8. describe the terms of the Treaty of Paris and explain why America was able to achieve such a stunning diplomatic victory.

B. GLOSSARY

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms:

1. **mercenary** A professional soldier who serves in a foreign army for pay. "... the Americans called all the European mercenaries Hessians." (p. 143)
2. **indictment** A formal written accusation charging someone with a crime. "The overdrawn bill of indictment included imposing taxes without consent. . . ." (p. 148)
3. **dictatorship** A form of government characterized by absolute state power and the unlimited authority of the ruler. "The [charges] included . . . establishing a military dictatorship. . . ." (p. 148)
4. **neutral** A nation or person not taking sides in a war. "Many colonists were apathetic or neutral. . . ." (p. 148)
5. **civilian** A citizen not in military service. "The opposing forces contended . . . for the allegiance . . . of the civilian population." (p. 148)

6. **traitor** One who betrays a country by aiding an enemy. “. . . they regarded their opponents, not themselves, as traitors.” (p. 152)
7. **confiscate** To seize private property for public use, often as a penalty. “The estates of many of the fugitives were confiscated. . . .” (p. 152)
8. **envoy** A messenger or agent sent by a government on official business. “Benjamin Franklin, recently sent to Paris as an envoy, truthfully jested that Howe had not captured Philadelphia. . . .” (p. 155)
9. **rabble** A mass of disorderly and crude common people. “This rabble was nevertheless whipped into a professional army. . . .” (p. 155)
10. **arsenal** A place for making or storing weapons and ammunition. “About 90 percent of all the gunpowder . . . came from French arsenals.” (p. 155)
11. **isolationist** Concerning the belief that a country should take little or no part in foreign affairs, especially through alliances or wars. “The American people, with ingrained isolationist tendencies, accepted the French entanglement with distaste.” (p. 156)
12. **hereditary** Passed down from generation to generation. “They were painfully aware that it bound them to a hereditary foe that was also a Roman Catholic power.” (p. 156)
13. **blockade** The isolation of a place by hostile ships or troops. “Now the French had powerful fleets. . . in a position to jeopardize Britain’s blockade and lines of supply.” (p. 157)
14. **privateer** A private vessel temporarily authorized to capture or plunder enemy ships in wartime. “More numerous and damaging than ships of the regular American navy were swift privateers.” (p. 159)
15. **graft** Taking advantage of one’s official position to gain money or property by illegal means. “It had the unfortunate effect of . . . involving Americans, including Benedict Arnold, in speculation and graft.” (p. 159)

PART II: CHECKING YOUR PROGRESS

A. True-False

Where the statement is true, circle T; where it is false, circle F.

1. T F George Washington was chosen commander of the American army primarily because of his military abilities and experience.
2. T F Following the Battle of Bunker Hill, King George and the Continental Congress made one last attempt at reconciliation.
3. T F The American army that invaded Canada falsely believed that oppressed French Canadians would join them in revolt and make Canada the fourteenth state.
4. T F Tom Paine’s *Common Sense* was most important because it pushed the colonies into violent rebellion against the king as well as against Parliament.
5. T F The Declaration of Independence was especially important because it enabled the Americans to appeal for direct aid from France.
6. T F American militiamen proved politically very effective in pushing their apathetic or neutral fellow citizens into supporting the Patriot cause.

7. T F The Loyalists considered the “Patriots” to be the traitors to their country and themselves to be the true patriots.
8. T F Most Loyalists were executed or driven from the country after the Patriot victory.
9. T F The Loyalists were strongest in New England and Virginia.
10. T F General Burgoyne’s defeat at Saratoga in 1777 was critical for the American cause because it led to the alliance with France.
11. T F Americans’ enlightened revolutionary idealism made them reluctant to enter into a military and political alliance with monarchical France.
12. T F During much of the Revolutionary War, the British controlled cities like New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston, while the Americans conducted their campaigns primarily in the countryside.
13. T F At Yorktown, the Americans finally showed that they could win an important battle without French assistance.
14. T F American diplomats were successful in guaranteeing American political independence but failed to gain the territorial concessions they wanted.
15. T F American success in the Revolutionary War and the peace treaty was due in significant measure to political developments in Europe.

B. Multiple Choice

Select the best answer and circle the corresponding letter.

1. During the period of fighting between April 1775 and July 1776, the colonists claimed that their goal was
 - a. the removal of all British troops from America.
 - b. to restore their rights within the British Empire.
 - c. complete independence from Britain.
 - d. to end the power of King George III to rule them.
2. George Washington proved to be an especially effective commander of American forces in the Revolution because
 - a. he was able to rally previously skeptical New Englanders to the Patriot cause.
 - b. of his exceptionally brilliant military mind.
 - c. of his integrity, courage, and moral forcefulness.
 - d. his humble background inspired the ordinary soldiers in the Revolutionary army.
3. The bold American military strategy that narrowly failed in December 1775 involved
 - a. a two-pronged attack on British forces in New Jersey.
 - b. an invasion of Canada by generals Arnold and Montgomery.
 - c. an attack on British forts in the Ohio country.
 - d. a naval assault on British warships in Boston harbor.
4. Many of the German Hessian soldiers hired by King George III to fight for the British
 - a. hated the American revolutionaries and their cause.
 - b. helped draw in the Prussian King Frederick II as a British ally.
 - c. were ineffective in battle against American militiamen.
 - d. had little loyalty to the British cause and ended up deserting.

5. Thomas Paine's appeal for a new republican form of government attracted many Americans because
 - a. they believed that social class differences promoted by monarchy were wrong.
 - b. their own experience with local and colonial democratic governance had prepared them for the idea.
 - c. they were impressed that Paine was drawing on the best classical ideas from Plato's *Republic*.
 - d. they were fearful that wealthy southern planters like Washington wanted to establish nobility in America.
6. Paine's *Common Sense* was crucial in convincing many Americans that what they should fight for was
 - a. American representation in the British Parliament.
 - b. an alliance with the French against Britain.
 - c. a federal constitution and bill of rights.
 - d. an independent and republican America separate from Britain.
7. The Loyalists were particularly strong among
 - a. conservative and well-off Americans.
 - b. the younger generation.
 - c. Presbyterians and Congregationalists.
 - d. citizens of New England.
8. Besides George Washington, the most militarily effective American officer in the early campaigns of 1776 and 1777 was
 - a. General Nathanael Greene.
 - b. General von Steuben.
 - c. General Benedict Arnold.
 - d. General William Howe.
9. The Battle of Saratoga was a key turning point of the War for Independence because
 - a. it prevented the British from keeping control of the key port of New York City.
 - b. it brought about crucial French assistance to the Revolutionary cause.
 - c. it ended the possibility of a peaceful settlement with Britain.
 - d. it effectively destroyed British military power in the middle colonies.
10. The primary reason that Americans were willing to enter a military and diplomatic alliance with France in 1778 was
 - a. the practical self-interest of needing assistance to defeat the British.
 - b. to spread republican government and the principles of the Declaration of Independence among the oppressed French people.
 - c. that Benjamin Franklin was able to construct an alliance treaty based completely on revolutionary idealism.
 - d. that the French king agreed that the United States could seek a separate peace with Britain if it wanted to.
11. The British especially relied on the numerous Loyalists to aid them in fighting the Patriots
 - a. in Rhode Island and the rest of New England.
 - b. in the western Illinois country.
 - c. in the warfare at sea.
 - d. in the Carolinas.

12. Most of the Six Nations of the Iroquois under Joseph Brant fought against the American revolutionaries because
 - a. they disagreed with the principles of the Declaration of Independence.
 - b. they believed that a victorious Britain would contain westward American expansion.
 - c. they were paid as mercenary soldiers by the British government.
 - d. they hoped to drive the American colonists off the North American continent.
13. The British defeat at Yorktown was brought about by George Washington's army and
 - a. the French navy under Admiral de Grasse.
 - b. the American navy under John Paul Jones.
 - c. the American militia under George Rogers Clark.
 - d. the Armed Neutrality under Catherine the Great.
14. In the peace negotiations at Paris, the French wanted the Americans
 - a. to stop short of demanding full independence.
 - b. to negotiate a separate peace with Britain.
 - c. to acquire only the territory east of the Appalachian Mountains.
 - d. to help them regain Quebec from the British.
15. The British yielded the Americans a generous peace treaty that included the western territories primarily because of
 - a. the desire of the weak Whig ministry in London for friendly future relations with the United States.
 - b. the threat of further war with France.
 - c. the military power of the United States.
 - d. the willingness of the Americans to yield on other issues like trade and fishing rights.

C. Identification

Supply the correct identification for each numbered description.

1. _____ The body that chose George Washington commander of the Continental Army
2. _____ The British colony that Americans invaded in hopes of adding it to the rebellious thirteen
3. _____ The inflammatory pamphlet that demanded independence and heaped scorn on "the Royal Brute of Great Britain"
4. _____ The document that provided a lengthy explanation and justification of Richard Henry Lee's resolution that was passed by Congress on July 2, 1776
5. _____ The term by which the American Patriots were commonly known, to distinguish them from the American "Tories"
6. _____ Another name for the American Tories
7. _____ The church body most closely linked with Tory sentiment, except in Virginia
8. _____ The river valley that was the focus of Britain's early military strategy and the scene of Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga in 1777
9. _____ Term for the alliance of Catherine the Great of Russia and other European powers who did not declare war but assumed a hostile neutrality toward Britain
10. _____ The region that saw some of the Revolution's most bitter fighting, from 1780 to 1782, between American General Greene and British General Cornwallis

11. _____ “Legalized pirates,” more than a thousand strong, who inflicted heavy damage on British shipping
12. _____ British political party that replaced Lord North’s Tories in 1782 and made a generous treaty with the United States
13. _____ The western boundary of the United States established in the Treaty of Paris
14. _____ The irregular American troops who played a crucial role in swaying the neutral civilian population toward the Patriot cause
15. _____ The other European nation besides France and Spain that supported the American Revolution by declaring war on Britain

D. Matching People, Places, and Events

Match the person, place, or event in the left column with the proper description in the right column by inserting the correct letter on the blank line.

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| 1. _____ | George Washington | a. British general who chose to enjoy himself in New York and Philadelphia rather than vigorously pursue the American enemy |
| 2. _____ | Bunker Hill | b. Brilliant American general who invaded Canada, foiled Burgoyne’s invasion, and then betrayed his country in 1780 |
| 3. _____ | Benedict Arnold | c. American naval commander who successfully harassed British shipping |
| 4. _____ | Thomas Paine | d. Author of an explanatory indictment, signed on July 4, 1776, that accused George III of establishing a military dictatorship |
| 5. _____ | Richard Henry Lee | e. Shrewd and calculatingly “homespun” American diplomat who forged the alliance with France and later secured a generous peace treaty |
| 6. _____ | Thomas Jefferson | f. Mohawk chief who led many Iroquois to fight with Britain against American revolutionaries |
| 7. _____ | Loyalists | g. The decisive early battle of the American Revolution that led to the alliance with France |
| 8. _____ | General Burgoyne | h. Military engagement that led King George III officially to declare the colonists in revolt |
| 9. _____ | General Howe | i. Americans who fought for King George and earned the contempt of Patriots |
| 10. _____ | Benjamin Franklin | j. A wealthy Virginian of great character |
| 11. _____ | George Rogers Clark | |
| 12. _____ | John Paul Jones | |
| 13. _____ | Saratoga | |
| 14. _____ | Yorktown | |
| 15. _____ | Joseph Brant | |

- and leadership abilities who served his country without pay
- k. The British defeat that led to the fall of North's government and the end of the war
 - l. Leader whose small force conquered key British forts in the West
 - m. A radical British immigrant who put an end to American toasts to King George
 - n. Fiery Virginian and author of the official resolution of July 2, 1776, formally authorizing the colonies' independence
 - o. Blundering British general whose slow progress south from Canada ended in disaster at Saratoga

E. Putting Things in Order

Put the following events in correct order by numbering them from 1 to 6.

1. _____ Lord North's military collapses, and Britain's Whigs take power ready to make peace.
2. _____ Thomas Jefferson writes an eloquent justification of Richard Henry Lee's resolution.
3. _____ Burgoyne and Howe are defeated both by the generalship of Washington and Arnold and by their own blundering.
4. _____ The Treaty of Paris is signed, guaranteeing American independence.
5. _____ The British launch a frontal attack on entrenched American forces near Boston and suffer drastic losses in their "victory."
6. _____ Washington's army and the French navy trap General Cornwallis, spelling the end for the British.

F. Matching Cause and Effect

Match the historical cause in the left column with the proper effect in the right column by writing the correct letter on the blank line.

Cause	Effect
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ The Battle of Bunker Hill 2. _____ Thomas Paine's <i>Common Sense</i> 3. _____ Jefferson's <i>Declaration of Independence</i> 4. _____ The Patriot militia's political education and recruitment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Led to American acquisition of the West up to the Mississippi River b. Caused King George to proclaim the colonies in revolt and import Hessian troops to crush them c. Led to a favorable peace treaty for the United States and the end of French

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|---|--|
| <p>5. ____ The blundering of Burgoyne and Howe and the superb military strategy of Arnold and Washington</p> <p>6. ____ The Battle of Saratoga</p> <p>7. ____ Clark's military conquests and Jay's diplomacy</p> <p>8. ____ The trapping of Cornwallis between Washington's army and de Grasse's navy</p> <p>9. ____ The collapse of the North ministry and the Whig takeover of the British government</p> <p>10. ____ Jay's secret and separate negotiations with Britain</p> | <p>schemes for a smaller, weaker America</p> <p>d. Caused the British to begin peace negotiations in Paris</p> <p>e. Inspired universal awareness of the American Revolution as a fight for the belief that "all men are created equal"</p> <p>f. Caused the British defeat at Yorktown and the collapse of North's Tory government</p> <p>g. Led to the failure of Britain's grand strategy and the crucial American victory at Saratoga</p> <p>h. Made France willing to become an ally of the United States</p> <p>i. Stirred growing colonial support for declaring independence from Britain</p> <p>j. Won neutral or apathetic Americans over to the Patriot cause</p> |
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G. Developing Historical Skills

Distinguishing Historical Fact and Historical Meaning

Some historical events can be understood as simple facts requiring little explanation. But other historical events have meaning only when their significance is analyzed. The text on pp. 142–148 contains examples of both kinds of historical events. Comparing them will help sort out the difference between the two.

Indicate which of these pairs of historical events is (a) a simple factual event requiring little explanation and which is (b) an event whose meaning needs to be interpreted in order to be understood. In each case, list the meaning the text gives to the second kind of event.

1. The British burning of Falmouth (Portland), Maine, and King George's proclamation that the colonies were in rebellion.
2. Tom Paine's *Common Sense* and the death of General Richard Montgomery.
3. Richard Henry Lee's resolution of July 2, 1776, and Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence.

H. Map Mastery

Map Discrimination

Using the maps and charts in Chapter 8, answer the following questions.

1. *Revolution in the North, 1775–1776*: Which two British strong points in Canada did the American generals Arnold and Montgomery attack in 1775?
2. *New York-Pennsylvania Theater, 1777–1778*: When Washington recrossed the Delaware River before the Battle of Trenton on December 26, 1776, which state did he come from, and which state did he go to?
3. *New York-Pennsylvania Theater, 1777–1778*: Which of the three British generals who were supposed to meet near Albany, New York moved in the opposite direction and failed to get to the appointed gathering?
4. *Britain Against the World*: Besides France, which two European nations directly declared war on Britain during the American Revolution?
5. *War in the South, 1780–1781*: Name three cities in the South occupied at one time or another by General Cornwallis.
6. *George Rogers Clark's Campaign, 1778–1779*: Which river did George Rogers Clark move down as he went to conquer western forts from the British?
7. *George Rogers Clark's Campaign, 1778–1779*: Which three British posts did Clark capture?

Map Challenge

Using the maps on p. 144 and p. 154 as a basis, write a brief essay explaining why control of the Hudson River–Lake Champlain Valley was strategically crucial to both the British and the Americans in the Revolutionary War.

PART III: APPLYING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

1. Why was the Battle of Saratoga such a key to American success in the Revolutionary War?
2. What were the causes and consequences of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776?
Why were Americans so long reluctant to break with Britain? How does the Declaration of Independence explain their reasons for separation (see Appendix)?
3. Describe the different courses of the Revolutionary War in New England, the middle Atlantic states, and the South. What role did the battles in each region play in the eventual American victory?
4. Why did Americans choose not only to break from Britain, but to adopt a republican form of government in 1776? What republican ideas did they share, and what did they disagree about?
5. In what ways was the Revolution a civil war among Americans as well as a fight between Britain and those Americans seeking independence? Why have the Loyalists generally been “forgotten” in the story of America’s beginnings?
6. How did the idealism and “self-evident truths” of the Declaration of Independence shape Americans’ outlook and conduct during the Revolutionary War? Why did so many Americans believe that they were establishing “a new order for the ages”?
7. Argue for and against: the idealistic American Revolution was really because of the self-interest of the reactionary French monarchy.
8. Argue for and against: Washington was a great general not so much because of his victories but because of his brilliant strategic retreats.
9. How did economic and social self-interest compete with revolutionary idealism during the course of the Revolution? In what ways was the conflict about economic self-interest and social class as well as the principles of liberty and equality?