**CHAPTER 6**

**The Revolution**

**Learning Outcomes**

* 1. Describe the long-term causes and more immediate events that led the colonists into a true war for independence against Britain.

**Objectives**

1. Discuss both the underlying causes and the precipitating events leading to the American Revolution.
2. Explain the reasons why many colonists remained loyal to Britain, and contrast their situation to that of the colonists who rebelled.
3. Describe the drafting of the Declaration of Independence, and include an analysis of the two distinct parts of the document.
   1. Enumerate the various phases of the American Revolution, and analyze the circumstances that eventually helped the colonists win a conflict that Britain, by rights, should never have lost.

**Objectives**

1. Compare and contrast the colonial and British armies at the beginning of the Revolution.
2. Describe the events that took place during the first phase of the war, up to 1779.
3. Explain how and why the French entered into the conflict on the side of the rebels.
4. Describe the changes in operations that occurred during the third phase of the war, from 1778 to 1781.
5. Describe what Britain hoped to accomplish by moving the war into the Southern Colonies, and explain why that strategy did not work.
6. Explain how Britain came to lose the war in America, and evaluate the peace treaty signed in Paris.
   1. Assess the significance of the American Revolution to the following groups: colonists, slaves, Native Americans, and women.

**Objectives**

1. Evaluate the impact of the war on the development of American politics and nationalism.
2. Evaluate the war’s impact on slaves, Native Americans, women, and religious minorities.

**Chapter Summary**

Although the majority of people supported the resistance, many Loyalists supported the Crown, which caused numerous problems in the colonies. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*—which was an influential political pamphlet that was published in January 1776—containing a simple wording of republican ideals, persuaded the patriots to embrace the ideology and break permanently from Britain. The Declaration of Independence was a statement adopted by the Second Continental Congress declaring that the thirteen American colonies, then at battle with Britain, constituted a free and independent state. Penned mostly by Thomas Jefferson, the Declaration of Independence consisted of two parts: (1) a preamble justifying the revolution on the basis of natural rights, as espoused in the language of republicanism; and (2) a list of grievances accusing George III of tyranny and therefore justifying revolt. Heretofore, the colonists’ complaints had all been directed toward Parliament. By accusing the king of tyranny, the Declaration signified a tremendous, even treasonable, break.

Little did the combatants realize that it would be followed by six years of grueling war. Washington commanded a Continental Army that lacked training, equipment, and often food. Operating without a central authority, the Congress struggled with efforts to fund the army. They had neither the power to levy taxes nor the infrastructure of a treasury. The main way they raised money was simply to print it and hope people would accept the bills. The Continental Congress issued these bills of credit throughout the war. The British countered with the best trained and equipped army in the world and hired controversial foreigners, the Hessians. The war began with a series of losses for the Americans, including the disaster at New York in the summer of 1776. On Christmas night that year, the army crossed the ice-filled Delaware River and captured Trenton, New Jersey, which at the time was held by 1,500 Hessian mercenaries working for the British Army. The following summer, in 1777, the Americans, in part due to Benedict Arnold, shocked the world with the surrender of British forces at the Battle of Saratoga. The American victory there proved two things: (1) that the patriots could defeat sizeable regiments of the larger British Army and (2) that, if the British were to win this war, it was going to be a long, expensive affair. Impressed with the victory, France and other European nations agreed to support the colonists. The young Marquis de Lafayette played a crucial role as a military leader and a go-between with France for the Americans. Warfare in the West led to clashes between militiamen and Native American tribes, causing brutal attacks by the colonists such as the Gnadenhutten Massacre. Several militiamen refused to participate in the slaughter, but the violence and the uncertainty that surrounded it suggest the frightful nature of the war in the West. At Valley Forge, the Continental Army suffered from hunger and freezing conditions in a war mostly paused in the north. Later in the war, in 1779, the army encamped at Morristown, New Jersey, nearly disbanded so that soldiers could search for food and clothes during a particularly harsh spell of winter, when supply lines were impenetrable. For many soldiers, Morristown was truly the low point of the war. When the snow finally melted, colonists realized the British had changed tactics once again, this time in response to Saratoga. The Parliament then made a peace offering that would have maintained the colonial status of America but abandoned British attempts to tax the colonists—returning things to the way they had been in 1763. To the patriots, this offer was unacceptable; they wanted freedom. The war shifted to the south after the British gave up on New England to implement their plan to connect with Loyalists in the southern colonies. After a major loss at Charlestown, Nathanael Greene led the British further inland, away from their supplies and loyalist supporters. This plan caused the British to maneuver themselves into a vulnerable position at Yorktown, the site of the climactic battle of the war. Washington, with assistance from France, forced the British commander, Cornwallis, to surrender. The King admitted defeat. Still, before enemy troops returned home after the signing of the Treaty of Paris, Washington saved the fledgling nation from the threat of a potential officers’ revolt. There were five major parts to the Treaty of Paris of 1783: (1) American independence; (2) American expansion west to the Mississippi River and north to the Great Lakes; (3) freedom of all parties to travel the Mississippi River; (4) Spanish control of Florida; and (5) “no lawful impediment” placed on British merchants seeking to recoup debts from America.

The Revolutionary War had an impact on everyone in the new nation. Some Americans fought to limit the power of churches in the process of changing from colonies to states. Awareness of a new national identity—as Americans—expanded among the people. Citizens of the northern states outlawed slavery either outright or gradually, a trend not followed in the south. In the border regions, clashes with Americans diminished the power of Native Americans, such as the Iroquois. Despite their wartime contributions, women did not receive the full extent of liberties granted to the male citizens. Also, Thomas Jefferson drafted a bill that called for the disestablishment of the Episcopal Church. Jefferson’s Virginia Statute on Religious Freedom said that no Virginians would be “compelled” to go to any church or form of religious worship against their will and that all Virginians were free to profess their own opinion “in matters of religion.” The new nation had to determine the extent to which independence would also bring revolutionary social changes and how far republican democracy would reach.

**Chapter Outline**

I. From Rebellion to Revolution

* 1. Underlying Causes
  2. Precipitating Events
     1. The Widening War
     2. Uncompromising Britain
     3. The Shift in American Opinion
  3. Choosing Sides
     1. The Loyalists
     2. The Revolutionaries
  4. The Declaration of Independence
     1. The Drafting
     2. The Declaration
     3. The Signing

II. The War for Independence

1. The Opposing Sides
   * 1. The Continental Army
     2. The Revolutionary Government and Finances
     3. The British Army
2. The Second Phase of the War, 1776–1779
3. Early British Successes
4. Crossing the Delaware
5. The Battle of Saratoga
6. The French Alliance
7. The War in the West
8. The Winter of 1777–1778
9. The Third Phase of the War, 1778–1781
   * 1. Giving up on New England
     2. Britain’s Southern Plan
     3. Washington and Greene’s Strategy for Victory
     4. Yorktown and Victory
     5. Newburgh Conspiracy
10. Peace Negotiations, 1782–1783
11. The Treaty of Paris

III. Significance of the War

1. The Impact on Politics
2. The Impact on American Nationalism
3. The Impact on Slavery
4. The Impact on Native America
5. The Impact on Women
6. The Impact on Religious Minorities

IV. Looking Ahead…

**Suggested Lecture Topics**

1. How Britain’s Treatment of the Colonies Came to Be Seen as Unacceptable
2. Revolutionaries and Loyalists: Together Yet Not Together
3. Britain versus America: How Much Did Determination Count?
4. Washington and His Army at Valley Forge
5. The French Weigh In—After Saratoga
6. Nathanael Greene: A Leader Worthy of General Washington
7. Changes (Besides Independence) in America after the War
8. Benedict Arnold: His Success, His Downfall

9. African American Slaves and Soldiers during the War

10. The War from Native Americans’ Perspective

(6-1c). Colonists were reluctant to withdraw from the British Empire for at least six reasons:

* + - * 1. Personal connections in Britain
        2. Economic ties
        3. Geopolitical concerns
        4. Fears of what American independence might mean
        5. Personal motives
        6. Uncertainty about American success

In groups of three, have students come up with one type of person that would personify one of the reasons why. For example, a recent upper-class immigrant from England would have recent and direct connections to Britain. After the students have completed this task, have them determine where in the colonies this person may or most likely would have lived. Analyze any patterns that come from their distribution.

**The Reasons Why**

**Research Topics—Projects and Papers**

Students might choose to complete a project to be presented in class or to write a more traditional research paper. Or the instructor could decide which task they would prefer to have them do. Below are a few topics that are relevant to this chapter. The instructor may, of course, choose to develop his/her own topics.

1. Trace the locations of the major battles of the Revolution. Students may prepare a chart that gives casualties and results for each side for each battle and write a one- to two-page paper summarizing their results.
2. Explore the long-term results of the war on those who remained Loyalists, and write a paper detailing the treatment of those who remained in the United States.
3. Research the assistance given to the Revolutionaries by the French, and prepare a detailed list of what students consider to be their greatest contributions.
4. Explore the familial relationships among the major military leaders of the Revolutionary era. Search for letters from some of those people and analyze their writings.
5. Examine the role women played in the Revolution, and write a paragraph about at least five women who are remembered for their contributions.
6. Delve into the framing of the Declaration of Independence, including who was on the committee and how they made their decisions about what to include.

**Additional www Resources**

“The American Revolution.” TheAmericanRevolution.org

<http://www.theamericanrevolution.org/>

“Liberty! The American Revolution.” PBS website.

<http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/>

James Chalmers (Candidus) “Plain Truth” UMBC website.

<http://www.umbc.edu/che/tahlessons/pdf/historylabs/Should_the_Colo_student:RS07.pdf>

**Primary Source Discussions**

**Assignment Name: Lord Dunmore and His Proclamation on Slavery**

*Introduction:* The American Revolution caused a great deal of hesitancy among many of those involved on both sides. Stories of family members on opposite sides in the conflict may have been exaggerated, but people often felt torn, no matter which side they chose. One can see this in Dunmore’s proclamation, where he speaks of “this at present most unhappy Country.” Read the description of how his proclamation came to be, and then click the link to read the proclamation text.

*Visit URL:* *http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/2h42.html*

[Learn more about Lord Dunmore and read his proclamation](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/2h42.html) and then take the brief quiz to check your understanding.

*Reflection Questions*:

* 1. What did the Earl of Dunmore say that his hopes were at the beginning of the conflict? What had made him lose hope?
  2. How do you think Dunmore would reconcile the fact that he was a slaveholder himself yet was willing to free slaves who would agree to fight on Britain’s side?
  3. To what nineteenth-century document is Dunmore’s proclamation similar?

**Assignment Name: Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense***

*Introduction:* Thomas Paine’s life was an interesting one. He seems to have been successful only in the field of writing and journalism, and he might not have been noticed there, had it not been for the affable Benjamin Franklin. Paine is perhaps best known for *The Crisis,* but in *Common Sense* he made an impassioned plea for the colonists to stand up for their rights.

*Visit URL:* *http://www.ushistory.org/paine/*

[Read *Common Sense*](http://www.ushistory.org/paine/) and then take a brief quiz to check your understanding.

*Reflection Questions*:

1. The *philosophes* of the Enlightenment period have sometimes been described as thinkers rather than doers. From the brief biographical sketch provided here, do you think that would have been an apt description of Paine?
2. Read the first paragraph of Paine’s new introduction to *Common Sense*. What does Paine have to say about the justification for revolution?
3. Paine’s “conclusion” gives several reasons why he thinks the only logical course for the colonies at that time is revolution. Briefly summarize each of those reasons in your own words.

**Assignment Name: Primary Source Assignment: Declaration of Independence 1776**

*Introduction:* The Declaration of Independence, as approved by the Second Continental Congress, was drafted by Thomas Jefferson and revised by a small committee of delegates to the Congress before it was presented to the entire Continental Congress for further revision and approval. This document officially announced the colonies’ independence and outlined the colonists’ justification for this dramatic action.

*Visit URL:* *http://college.cengage.com/history/wadsworth\_9781133309888/unprotected/ps/declarationindep.html*

[The Declaration of Independence (1776)](http://college.cengage.com/history/wadsworth_9781133309888/unprotected/ps/declarationindep.html)

*Instructions:* After reading the introduction and the primary source provided, answer the questions below.

1. What natural rights does the Declaration mention?
2. How was Jefferson influenced by the writings of John Locke and Thomas Paine?
3. In your opinion, what are the four most important charges levied against the king?
4. In what ways does the Declaration seek to appeal to logic?
5. Can the Declaration of Independence be consider in part propaganda? What are the target audiences of the propaganda?

**Assignment Name: A Quaker Delegation Argues Against Slavery**

*Introduction:* Quakers in the American colonies were known for their pacifist views and their contempt for those who supported slavery. Shortly after America gained its independence from Britain, attendees of the annual meeting of Quakers in Philadelphia drafted and signed this petition to the new American Congress. This copy has been posted on an Ancestry.com page. It is brief and to the point.

*Visit URL:* *http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~quakers/petition.htm*

[Read the Quakers’ 1783 attempt to point out the inconsistencies between American freedom and American slavery](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~quakers/petition.htm) and then take a brief quiz to check your understanding.

*Reflection Questions*:

1. What are some phrases used in this document to describe the condition of slavery that the authors witnessed in America?
2. What do the petitioners seem most concerned about?
3. What is it that they are admitting to in the first paragraph of the document? What has pleased them so much?