

LEVELED BOOK • R

King George III

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Focus Question

Who is King George III, and why is he important?

Words to Know

American
Revolution
defeated
government
ministry

nobleman
Parliament
protest
rebellion
taxed

Front cover: A portrait shows George III, king of Great Britain and Ireland, in military attire.

Title page: A portrait shows young Prince George III.

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England, Ireland, and Scotland



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John Adams (left), from the United States, meets with George III of England (right) in 1785.

Meeting George III

John Adams, one of America's first leaders, traveled to England and stood before King George III. The year was 1785, and Adams had the difficult task of making peace between the two countries. America had recently won its freedom in a war against Great Britain.

Adams spoke with the king, offering America's friendship. He spoke highly of the king and wished him good health and happiness. The king smiled. George III may have lost the American colonies, but he knew he would make Great Britain strong again.

Early Life

King George III was born on June 4, 1738. His father and mother were the Prince and Princess of Wales. His grandfather, King George II, was the king of England.

Young George grew up in an unhappy family. His father, Frederick, was first in line to be king. Frederick argued with *his* father, the king. George disliked hearing his father and grandfather fight.

Then, at just twelve years old, George's father died, making George first in line to the British throne. Someday, he would be king.



As a young prince, George was shy and awkward.



John Stuart, the third Earl of Bute, known as Lord Bute, was a main advisor to the king.

To prepare to be king, George studied harder. Lord Bute, a **nobleman**, taught George about how British **government** worked. As king, George would have a **ministry**, or group of advisors. Another group, called **Parliament**, made laws for the nation. The king and Parliament often disagreed. George would need to know how to solve problems.

In 1760, George's grandfather died, and George became king of Great Britain and Ireland at the age of twenty-two. At the time, Britain was fighting France and other countries in a European battle called the Seven Years' War. Soon the war spread to North America.

A Huge Empire

In North America, the war was called the French and Indian War. Great Britain was already powerful, but when they **defeated** the French in North America and in Europe, they controlled more land than ever before.

The war caused fighting between Lord Bute and William Pitt, one of the king's ministers. Pitt wanted to keep fighting, but Bute didn't. The king sided with Lord Bute and gave him the top job in his ministry. From there, Bute brought an end to the war in 1763 and quit his position shortly after that.



A Royal Family of His Own

Not long after becoming king, George married German princess Sophia Charlotte in 1761. Their marriage lasted for more than fifty years, and they had fifteen children.

Happy at home, the king continued to learn all he could and studied more about history and government. He learned the names of all the ships in the Royal Navy. He took his job as king seriously, and he faced big problems.



King George chose Sophia without meeting her. She arrived in England, met the king, and married him within a day.

Simple Tastes

Even though he was from a royal family, King George enjoyed simpler things. He loved agriculture and spent many days inspecting his kingdom's farms. His favorite activities included horseback riding, music, attending the theater, and playing cards.



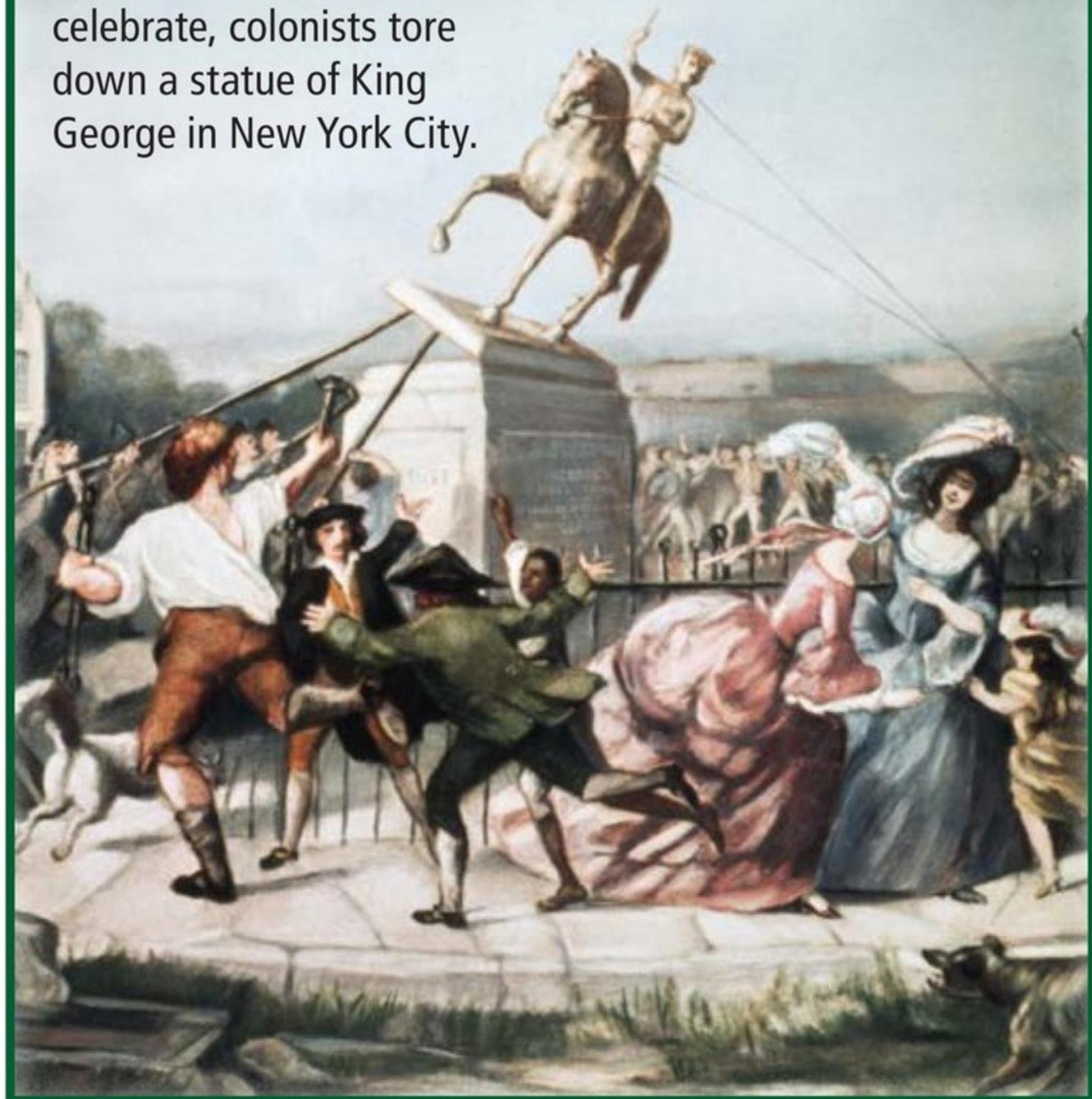
Trouble in America

The British colonies in America challenged the king more than any others. A huge problem there was about to begin. Great Britain needed money to pay bills from the Seven Years' War. To get money, England **taxed** items bought by the colonists. Colonists now had to pay taxes on molasses, printed paper, paint, glass, and tea. They became angry and refused to buy British goods.

To **protest** the taxes, they planned the Boston Tea Party. One night in 1773, a group of colonists climbed aboard a British ship carrying tea in Boston Harbor. The colonists dumped the tea into the water below.



America declared its freedom from Great Britain in 1776. To celebrate, colonists tore down a statue of King George in New York City.



The colonists' actions angered the king. Soon the tensions boiled over into war. For Great Britain to win, King George realized he needed more fighting men. He hired a group of German soldiers to help in the fight. Thirty thousand Germans fought next to British troops against the American colonists.

The American Revolution went on for seven years. The Americans won the war in 1781. The king said the defeat was not his fault.

In the years after the American Revolution, the king started acting strangely. He seemed nervous all the time, said odd things, and was confused. He shouted at others and pushed them.

Doctors helped the king using the latest treatments. Over time, the king seemed to get better. He returned to his leadership role.

At times King George III's illness resulted in violent outbursts, and he was held down.





The political cartoon “The Rival Gardeners” shows how both George III and Napoleon had their own gardens (lands) to attend to.

More Conflicts

King George soon faced more challenges, including another war with France. By 1799, France had a new leader—Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon wanted to take over Europe, including Great Britain. King George did not want to lose his country. Great Britain and France fought until 1815, when France lost the war.

At the same time, a fight started in Ireland. People there felt that Great Britain passed unfair religious laws. The Irish started a **rebellion**, but Great Britain defeated them.

Later Years

King George III was in his fiftieth year as king in 1809, and the country celebrated. The joy would not last long, however. In 1810, the king's youngest daughter died, which left George heartbroken. George again became mentally and physically ill.

The king was unable to finish his royal duties. Parliament allowed Prince George, his son, to rule Great Britain in 1811. In January 1820, King George III died, and his son became King George IV.





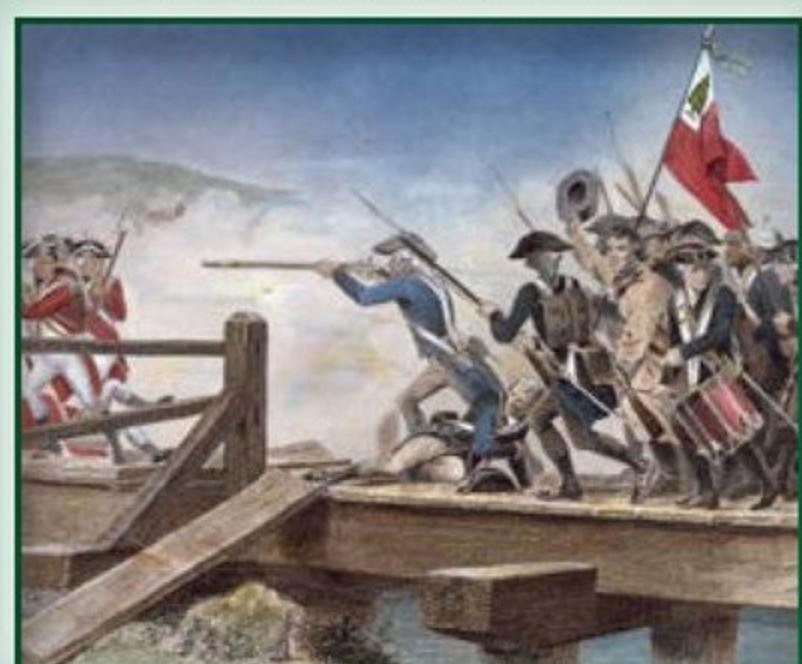
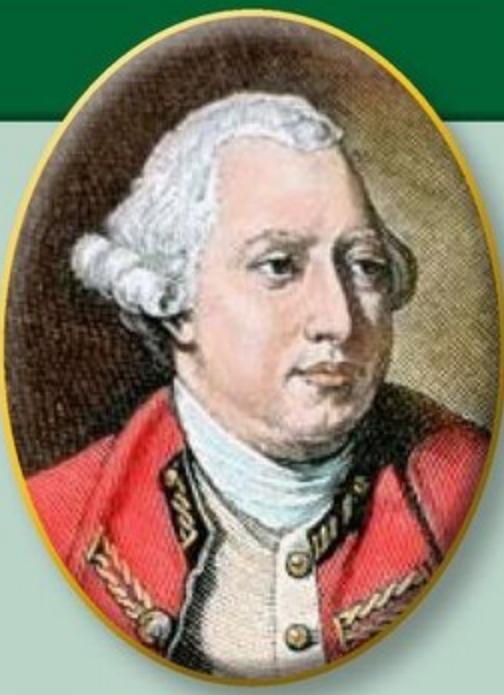
King George III reigned longer than any king or queen before him. He is remembered for his victories.

New Opinions

During his time in power, King George III lost the war with America and slowly became mentally ill. For a long time, many historians thought he was a bad king. Recently, they have changed their opinions of him.

George III won two major wars—the Seven Years' War and the wars with Napoleon. He served as king for sixty years, and he led his country to greatness. Through it all, he remained a good husband and father, and he always put his country first.

The Life of George III



1730
1740
1750
1760
1770
1780
1790
1800
1810
1820

1751: Frederick,
Prince of Wales and
George's father, dies

1756: Seven Years'
War begins

1763: Seven Years'
War ends

1775: First shots of the
American Revolution

1798: Britain stops
the Irish Rebellion

1809: The king
celebrates fifty years
on the throne

1815: The British
defeat Napoleon

1738: George is
born on June 4



1760: King George II,
George's grandfather, dies,
and George becomes king

1781: The British surrender
to the American colonists
at Yorktown

1788: George III shows signs
of a serious mental illness;
resumes duties a year later,
appearing to be cured



1820: Thousands attend
George III's funeral

Glossary

American

Revolution (*n.*)

the conflict between Britain and the American colonies that resulted in the United States' independence; Revolutionary War (1775–1783) (p. 10)

defeated (*v.*)

won a victory over another; beat or conquered (p. 7)

government (*n.*)

a group of people who have the power to make and enforce laws for a country or area (p. 6)

ministry (*n.*)

a government department led by a minister, or the building in which it is housed (p. 6)

nobleman (*n.*)

a man who is part of the ruling class; a male aristocrat (p. 6)

Parliament (*n.*)

the lawmaking body of the government of the United Kingdom (p. 6)

protest (*v.*)

to express strong disagreement or disapproval (p. 9)

rebellion (*n.*)

a fight against authority or power; an uprising (p. 12)

taxed (*v.*)

collected a fee to pay for government services, operations, or functions (p. 9)

King George III

A Reading A-Z Level R Leveled Book

Word Count: 900

Connections

Writing

What do you think was the greatest challenge King George III faced as king? Why? Write an essay using details from the book to support your answer.

Social Studies

Research the British monarchs since King George III. Create a timeline starting with King George III and ending with the current British monarch.

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