**AP United States History: The American Revolution**

**The Colonies Fight for Their Rights**

**I. The French and Indian War**

**A.** The conflict between the French and English over dominance in Europe in the late 1600s and 1700s finally spilled over into America.

**B.** In 1740 a common interest in the Ohio River valley led to tensions between the French and the British. Both sides began building forts to claim the territory.

**C.** George Washington was asked to intervene for the British and expel the French. The American troops started toward the Ohio River in the spring of 1754. After a brief battle, Washington and his troops retreated.

**D.** The British government suggested that the American colonies form an alliance with the Iroquois. During a meeting called the Albany Conference between the colonists and the Iroquois, the Iroquois agreed to remain neutral and the colonists agreed that Britain should name one supreme commander of all the British troops in the colonies. The conference issued the **Albany Plan of Union**—the first suggestion that the colonies unite to form a federal government.

**E.** British commander in chief, General Edward Braddock, appointed George Washington to serve as his aide. In 1755 French and Native American forces ambushed the British troops near Fort Duquesne in western Pennsylvania. Washington’s leadership saved the British from disaster. For the next two years, the **French and Indian War** was fought on the frontier.

**F.** In 1756 fighting between Britain and France spread to Europe and became known as the Seven Years’ War. Britain’s allies fought the French in Europe. Britain’s prime minister sent most of Britain’s forces to North America and India to fight the French.

**G.** The turning point of the war in North America occurred with a British victory at Quebec. The **Treaty of Paris** finally ended the war in 1763, and for the most part eliminated French power in North America.

**II. The Colonies Grow Discontented**

**A.** The British victory caused an enormous British debt. Britain looked to its colonies to help pay for the war.

**B.** In the spring of 1763, **Pontiac,** chief of the Ottawa people, united several Native American groups, including the Ottawa, Delaware, Shawnee, and Seneca peoples, to go to war against the British. They attacked forts and towns along the frontier.

**C.** The British government did not want to pay for another war, so it issued the **Royal Proclamation of 1763** that limited western settlement. Colonists were not allowed tosettle in certain areas without the government’s permission. The proclamation angeredmany farmers and land speculators.

**D.** In an effort to reduce Britain’s debt and pay for the British troops in North America, **George Grenville,** the British prime minister and first lord of the Treasury, implemented new tax policies in the colonies.

**E.** Merchants smuggled goods in and out of America to avoid **customs duties,** or taxes paid on imports and exports. Grenville convinced Parliament to pass a law that sent smugglers to a new vice-admiralty court in Nova Scotia run by naval officers who were unsympathetic to smugglers.

**F.** Grenville also introduced the **Sugar Act** in the colonies. This act changed tax rates for raw sugar and molasses imported from foreign colonies. It placed new taxes on silk, wine, coffee, pimento, and indigo. Merchants felt the Sugar Act hurt trade and argued that it violated traditional English rights. Colonists argued that they were being taxed without representation in Parliament.

**G.** To slow **inflation**—a general rise in the prices of most goods and services because money has lost its value—Parliament passed the **Currency Act of 1764.** This banned the use of paper money in the colonies, angering colonial farmers and artisans who used paper money to pay back loans.

**III. The Stamp Act Crisis**

**A.** To raise more money to pay for the war, Parliament passed the **Stamp Act** in 1765. Stamps were required on most printed materials. The stamp tax was the first direct tax Britain had ever placed on the colonists.

**B.** The **Quartering Act,** passed by Parliament in 1765, forced the colonists to pay more for their own defense by providing places to stay for British troops in the colonies.

**C.** By the summer of 1765, mass meetings and demonstrations against the stamp tax took place in the colonies. When the Stamp Act took effect, the colonists ignored it. A movement began to boycott British goods. Colonial merchants signed a **nonimportation** **agreement,** agreeing not to buy any British goods until the Stamp Act was repealed. The protests led to the Stamp Act being repealed in 1766.

**D.** Parliament, in an effort to assert its control over the colonies, passed the **Declaratory Act,** which gave them the power to make laws for the colonies.

**IV. The Townshend Acts**

**A.** In 1767 British finance minister **Charles Townshend** introduced a new set of regulations and taxes known as the **Townshend Acts.** One of these acts, the **Revenue Act of** **1767,** placed new customs duties on glass, lead, paper, paint, and tea imported into the colonies. The Revenue Act legalized the use of general search warrants called **writs of** **assistance.** The Townshend Acts gave British officials the right to seize property without following due process.

**B.** John Dickinson published a series of essays called *Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer*, which stressed that only assemblies elected by colonists had the right to tax them. Dickinson called on colonists to resist the Townshend Acts.

**C.** Virginia’s House of Burgesses passed the **Virginia Resolves,** stating that only the House had the right to tax Virginians. Britain ordered that the House of Burgesses be dissolved. Leaders of the House of Burgesses called a convention and passed a nonimportation law blocking the sale of British goods in Virginia.

**D.** The **Sons of Liberty** encouraged colonists to support the boycott of British goods. In 1769 colonial imports from Britain declined sharply from what they had been the year before.

**E.** On March 5, 1770, British troops fired into a crowd of colonists in Boston. A man of African and Native American descent was the first colonist to die in what became known as the **Boston Massacre.** The British were viewed as tyrants who were killing people standing up for their rights. In response, Britain repealed the Townshend Acts, leaving only one tax—on tea—to uphold its right to tax the colonies.

**The Revolution Begins**

**I. Massachusetts Defies Britain**

**A.** In the spring of 1772, the British government introduced several new policies that angered American colonists.

**B.** Britain sent customs ships to patrol North American waters in order to intercept smugglers. In 1772 the British customs ship, the *Gaspee*, ran aground and was seized by colonists and burned. The British took suspects to England for trial. Colonists felt this was a violation of their right to a trial by a jury of their peers.

**C.** Thomas Jefferson thought each colony should create a **committee of correspondence** to communicate with other colonies about British activities. This helped unify thecolonies and coordinate plans for British resistance.

**D.** England’s new prime minister, Lord North, helped the **British East India Company,** which was almost bankrupt. To assist the company with tea sales, Parliament passedthe **Tea Act** of 1773, which made East India’s tea cheaper than smuggled Dutch tea.American merchants feared it was the first step by the British to force them out ofbusiness. In December 1773, tea ships from the East India Company arrived in BostonHarbor. Colonists boarded the ship and dumped the tea into the harbor. This became

known as the **Boston Tea Party.**

**E.** The Boston Tea Party led to the British passing four new laws called the **Coercive Acts.** These acts were an attempt to stop colonial challenges of British authority. TheCoercive Acts violated several English rights, including the right to trial by a jury ofone’s peers and the right not to have troops quartered in one’s home.

**F.** The **Quebec Act** gave more territory to Quebec and stated that a governor and council appointed by the king would run Quebec. This further angered the colonists because if they moved west, they would be living in territory with no elected assembly. The Coercive Acts and the Quebec Act became known as the **Intolerable Acts.**

**G.** The **First Continental Congress** met in Philadelphia in 1774. The congress wrote the **Declaration of Rights and Grievances,** which expressed loyalty to the king but condemned the Coercive Acts and announced that the colonies were forming a nonimportation association. The delegates also approved the Continental Association, a plan for every county and town to form committees to enforce a boycott of British goods.

**II. The Revolution Begins**

**A.** In the summer and fall of 1774, the British officials lost control of the colonies as the colonists created provincial congresses and militias raided military depots for ammunition and gunpowder. The town of Concord created a special unit of **minutemen,** trained and ready to fight the British at a minute’s warning.

**B.** The American Revolution was not just a war between Americans and British but a war between Loyalists and Patriots. Americans called **Loyalists,** or Tories, remained loyal to the king and felt British laws should be upheld. The group included government officials, prominent merchants, landowners, and a few farmers. The **Patriots,** or Whigs, thought the British were tyrants. Patriots included artisans, farmers, merchants, planters, lawyers, and urban workers. There was a group of Americans in the middle who did not support either side and who would support whomever won.

**C.** On April 18, 1775, British General Gage and his troops set out to seize the militia’s supply depot at Concord. To get there, they had to pass through Lexington. Patriots **Paul Revere** and **William Dawes** were sent to Lexington to warn the people that the British were coming. **Dr. Samuel Prescott** went on to warn the people of Concord. When the British arrived in Lexington, about 70 minutemen were waiting for them. The British fired at the minutemen, killing 8 and wounding 10.

**D.** The British moved on to Concord where they found 400 minutemen waiting for them. The minutemen forced the British to retreat.

**E.** After the battles at Lexington and Concord, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia to address the issue of defense. The Congress voted to adopt the militia army around Boston and named it the Continental Army. On June 15, 1775, Congress appointed George Washington to head the Continental Army.

**F.** The **Battle at Bunker Hill** resulted in turning back two British advances. The colonial militia only retreated due to a lack of ammunition. It was a huge boost to American confidence that the untrained colonials could stand up to the feared British army. The situation reached a stalemate with the British trapped in Boston surrounded by militia.

**III. The Decision for Independence**

**A.** In 1776, frustrated by British refusal to compromise, Patriot leaders began to call for independence.

**B.** In July 1775, the Continental Congress sent a document known as the **Olive Branch Petition** to the king. It stated that the colonies were still loyal to King George III andasked the king to call off the army while a compromise could be made. At the sametime, radicals in Congress had ordered an attack on the British troops in Quebec. Thisconvinced the British that there was no hope of reconciliation. King George refused tolook at the Olive Branch Petition.

**C.** Two Loyalist armies were organized to assist the British troops in Virginia. One was composed of all white loyalists, the other of enslaved Africans. The Africans were promised freedom if they fought for the Loyalist cause. Southern planters, fearing they would loose their lands and labor force, wanted the colonies to declare independence.

**D.** Patriot troops defeated the British in Norfolk, Virginia; Charles Town, South Carolina; and Boston, Massachusetts.

**E.** In December 1775, the king shut down trade with the colonies and ordered the British navy to blockade the coast. The British began recruiting mercenaries from Germany.

**F.** In January 1776, the persuasive pamphlet called ***Common Sense,*** by Thomas Paine, caused many colonists to call for independence from Britain. On July 4, 1776, a committee of Patriot leaders approved a document written by Thomas Jefferson that became known as the **Declaration of Independence.** The American Revolution had begun.

**The War for Independence**

**I. The Opposing Sides**

**A.** General **William Howe** was the commander of a disciplined, well trained, and well equipped British army. The Continental Army was inexperienced, poorly equipped, and had difficulty keeping soldiers.

**B.** The Continental Congress lacked the power to tax, so it had a difficult time paying for the war. A wealthy Pennsylvania merchant, **Robert Morris,** pledged large sums of money to the war effort.

**C.** The British forces had to fight the Continental Army and local militias. These militias often used **guerrilla warfare,** in which they hid among trees and behind walls and then ambushed the British troops.

**D.** The British needed to win the war quickly or opinion in Parliament might shift to oppose the war. The United States did not have to defeat Britain but only survive until the British became tired of paying for the war.

**II. The Northern Campaign**

**A.** In order to win, the British had to convince Americans that the war was a hopeless cause and to make it safe for them to surrender. General Howe’s strategy had two parts—to build up a massive military to intimidate the Americans and to invite delegates from the Continental Congress to a peace conference. The Americans realized that Howe was only interested in negotiating a surrender, so they quit the talks.

**B.** George Washington’s troops showed their inexperience by fleeing when British troops landed on Long Island in 1776. The British moved slowly, allowing the surviving American troops time to escape to Manhattan Island. The British captured New York City, which became their headquarters for the rest of the war.

**C.** Disguised as a Dutch schoolteacher, American Captain **Nathan Hale** was sent to spy on the British. He was caught and hanged by the British. His last words were “I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.”

**D.** The British troops forced Washington and his troops to retreat at the Battle of White Plains in October 1776.

**E.** Thomas Paine wrote the pamphlet *American Crisis* to help boost American morale.

**F.** George Washington planned unexpected winter attacks against the British troops at Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey. Washington and his troops won the attacks and then headed into the hills of northern New Jersey for the remainder of winter.

**G.** In 1777 King George III approved a plan developed by General John Burgoyne to isolate New England from the other American states. The British, however, did not coordinate their efforts, and the three-pronged attack on New York was a failure.

**H.** On September 11, 1777, British General Howe’s troops defeated Washington at the Battle of Brandywine Creek and captured Philadelphia. The Continental Congress, which he had hoped to capture, had escaped. Howe had failed to destroy the Continental Army, which camped at **Valley Forge** for the winter.

**I.** Brutal conditions at Valley Forge did not stop Washington from training his army. European military officers, **Marquis de Lafayette** from France and Baron Friedrich von Steuban from Prussia, helped Washington increase morale and improve discipline among the American troops.

**J.** General Burgoyne surrendered at **Saratoga,** and over 5,000 British troops were taken prisoner. The American victory was a turning point because it improved American morale and convinced France to send troops to the American cause.

**K.** In February 1778, Americans signed two treaties with France. As a result of the treaties, France became the first country to recognize the United States as an independent nation, and the United States and France formed an alliance.

**III. The War in the West**

**A.** By February 1779, the British in the West surrendered to Patriot **George Rogers Clark,** giving the United States control of the region.

**B.** Chief Joseph Brant convinced four Iroquois nations to help the British. In July 1778, British and Iroquois forces attacked western Pennsylvania, destroying villages and killing militia troops.

**C.** In July 1779, American troops defeated the British and Iroquois forces in western New York, destroying the power of the Iroquois people.

**D.** The Cherokee attacked settlers in Virginia and North Carolina. By 1780 American militias had burned hundreds of Cherokee towns.

**IV. The War at Sea**

**A.** American warships attacked British merchant ships to disrupt trade. Congress began issuing **letters of marque,** or licenses, to private ship owners authorizing them to attack British merchant ships. The cargo seized by privateers seriously hurt Britain’s trade and economy.

**B.** An American naval officer, **John Paul Jones,** was involved in the most famous naval battle of the war. Jones’s ship almost sank when it was heavily damaged by the British. Instead of surrendering, Jones attached his ship to Britain’s ship, boarded, and after a three-hour battle the British surrendered.

**V. The Southern Campaign**

**A.** After being defeated at Saratoga, the British focused their attention on the South where they felt they had the strongest Loyalist support.

**B.** In December 1778, British troops captured Savannah, Georgia, and returned Georgia to British power.

**C.** British General Henry Clinton was sent to capture Charles Town, South Carolina. It became the greatest American defeat as British troops surrounded the town, trapping the American forces. General **Charles Cornwallis** took over for Clinton.

**D.** Loyalist troops commanded by two British cavalry officers were known for brutal attacks. The Loyalists troops went too far when they tried subduing people in the Appalachian Mountains. Americans in this region formed a militia force. The militia intercepted the Loyalist forces at the **Battle of Kings Mountain.** The militia destroyed the Loyalist army. This battle was a turning point in the South. Southern farmers began organizing their own militia forces.

**E.** American commander General Nathaniel Greene organized the militia in the South into small units to carry out hit-and-run raids against British camps and supply wagons. “Swamp Fox” **Francis Marion** led the most famous of these units.

**VI. The War Is Won**

**A.** In the spring of 1781, the British invaded Virginia, hoping to keep control of the South. British General Cornwallis and his forces linked up with British commander Benedict Arnold (formerly an American commander) to conquer Virginia. In June 1781, American General **Anthony Wayne** and his troops forced Cornwallis to retreat to Yorktown.

**B.** On September 28, 1781, American and French troops surrounded Yorktown. On October 14, Alexander Hamilton led an attack to capture key British defenses. On October 19, 1781, British troops surrendered.

**C.** In March 1792, Parliament voted to begin peace negotiations. The **Treaty of Paris** was signed on September 3, 1783. In the treaty, the British recognized the United States as a new nation with the Mississippi River as its western border. Britain gave Florida back to Spain. The French received colonies in Africa and the Caribbean.

**The War Changes American Society**

**I. New Political Ideas**

**A.** By declaring its independence, America had established a **republic,** a form of government in which power resides with a body of citizens with the right to vote. In an ideal republic, all citizens are equal under the law and the government gets its authority from the people.

**B.** John Adams felt that democracy hurt a republican government. He argued that government needed checks and balances to stop any group from getting too strong and taking away minority rights. Adams wanted a mixed government with a separation of powers among separate executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Adams said that the legislature should have two houses. His ideas influenced many state constitutions.

**C.** Many states attached a list of rights to their constitutions.

**D.** The Revolution led to an expansion of voting rights. After fighting side by side, people’s belief in equality increased. Many states allowed any white male who paid taxes to vote, regardless of owning property.

**E.** In 1786 Virginia Governor Thomas Jefferson asked Congress to pass the **Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom.** It declared that Virginia no longer had an officialchurch and the state could no longer collect taxes for the church.

**II. The War and American Society**

**A.** Although African Americans and women had helped with the Revolutionary War effort, greater equality and liberty after the war applied mostly to white men.

**B.** Women played an important role in the Revolutionary War at home and in battle. Some women ran the family farm during the war. Others traveled with the army to cook, wash, and nurse the wounded. A few even joined the battlefield. **Molly Pitcher** became well known for carrying water to Patroit gunners during the Battle of Monmouth. After the Revolution, women made some advances. They could more easily obtain a divorce. They also gained greater access to education.

**C.** Thousands of enslaved African Americans obtained their freedom during and after the war. **Emancipation** became a major issue. Many American leaders felt that enslaving people conflicted with the new views on liberty and equality. Although free, these African Americans faced discrimination, segregation, and voting restrictions.

**D.** In 1816 African American church leaders formed the first independent African American denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church.

**E.** Southern leaders were uninterested in ending slavery because they felt slaves were needed to sustain their agricultural economy.

**F.** Virginia was the only southern state to take steps to end slavery. In 1782 the state passed a law encouraging **manumission,** or the voluntary freeing of enslaved persons, especially those who had fought in the Revolution.

**G.** After the war, Loyalists were often shunned by their friends and occasionally had their property seized by state governments. Many fled to England, the British West Indies, or British North America.

**III. An American Culture Emerges**

**A.** The Revolution created nationalist feelings because all Americans were fighting a common enemy. This feeling gave rise to many patriotic symbols and American folklore.

**B.** American painters **John Trumbull** and **Charles Willson Peale** depicted heroic deeds and American leaders of the Revolution in their works. They helped build an American culture.

**C.** American leaders thought that an educated public was critical to the success of the new republic. Many state constitutions provided government-funding for universities. In 1795 the University of North Carolina became the first state university in the nation.