

America at War

Social Studies Week #7

As time went on and taxes were mounting, many colonists believed that their problems with Britain could not be worked out peacefully. They prepared to fight. They formed groups of soldiers called **minutemen**. The minutemen were to be ready to fight “at a minute’s warning.”

In April 1775 Britain sent a force to seize the colonists’ military supplies in Concord, Massachusetts. **Paul Revere** and William Dawes rode through the countryside to warn the colonists that the British soldiers were coming. On April 19 a group of minutemen met the British in Lexington, a town on the way to Concord, Massachusetts. After a short fight, the British moved on to Concord. Another group of American soldiers forced them to turn back. The Battles of Lexington and Concord began the American Revolution.

The Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in May 1775. It brought together the military forces of the colonies to form the Continental Army. It put **George Washington** in charge of the army. Washington spent months preparing his troops for battle.

Meanwhile the first major battle of the war took place at Bunker Hill, near Boston, Massachusetts. The British captured Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775. But they lost so many soldiers that the colonists claimed victory. The battle encouraged the colonists.

Before 1776, most colonists did not want to break free from Britain. They only wanted to get Britain to do something about their complaints. But as the fighting spread, more colonists became convinced that they had to separate from Britain. On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress approved the **Declaration of Independence**. With this document, the 13 colonies became the United States of America.

The Americans struggled against the larger and better-equipped British Army. In the summer and autumn of 1776, the British forced George Washington’s troops out of New York. The Americans were driven across New Jersey into Pennsylvania. On Christmas night, however, Washington crossed the Delaware River to return to New Jersey. He had 2,400 troops with him, and they soon won important battles at Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey. These victories kept the struggle for independence alive.

The turning point of the war was the Battle of Saratoga, in New York. On October 17, 1777, General Horatio Gates led the Continental Army to a great victory over the British. The victory helped to bring France into the war on the side of the new United States. France sent ships and soldiers.

The winter of 1777–78 was very hard for the Americans. Washington and his troops camped at Valley Forge, near Philadelphia. They suffered terribly from hunger and illness. But they emerged in the spring as a stronger fighting force. They defeated the British in Monmouth, New Jersey, on June 28, 1778.

In the last years of the war most of the fighting took place in the South. In 1780 the British, led by General Charles Cornwallis, won battles in South Carolina. But in 1781 American and French forces trapped Cornwallis in Yorktown, Virginia. Cornwallis surrendered on October 19, 1781. The fighting was over.

The peace treaty was signed on September 3, 1783, in Paris, France. It was called the Treaty of Paris. By signing the treaty, Britain agreed that the United States was an independent country.

Now that you have all the facts, have a little fun! Watch how one teacher taught this material.

<https://safeYouTube.net/w/wn3G>

And after many years, lives lost, and property destroyed, a treaty was signed in Yorktown, Virginia. American was born!

<https://safeYouTube.net/w/OB3G>

Choice Board –

Choose 1 or more activities and email or text a picture or file to your teacher.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Create an illustration of one of the American Revolution battles. | Create a diorama of one of the important battles of the American Revolutionary War. | You have a newspaper. Write an article about the events at Yorktown at the end of the war. |
| Create a colorful brochure that shows life in one of the colonies during the war. | Write a poem that incorporates the events or ideas during the American Revolution. | Create an acrostic poem using the word REVOLUTION. Have each line of the poem relate to the American Revolutionary War. |
| You are a soldier at Valley Forge with General Washington. Write a letter home telling your family of the hardships you are living with. | Design a flag that would represent us if we had not won the war. | Think about and then write your thoughts. If we lost the war, what would the State of Washington or Washington, D.C. be called? What would stand where the Washington and Jefferson Memorials? How would things be different? |