

COUNTDOWN TO INDEPENDENCE

Causes of the American Revolution

1 videocassette 24 minutes

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INTRODUCTION

This video is designed to help students understand the causes of the American Revolution. The video covers the period from the Boston Tea Party in 1773 through the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Students also learn about events leading up to the Boston Tea Party, including passage of the Stamp and Townshend acts and the Boston Massacre. The program examines the economic and political causes of the frictions between the mother country and its colonies that led to war. Students learn about British trade policies and the taxes imposed by the British Parliament on the American colonies without their consent and see the fighting begin with the "shot heard round the world" at Lexington and Concord and the Battle of Bunker Hill. The countdown to revolution ends with the new nation's founders' preparing their formal statement of liberty, the Declaration of Independence.

English voices provide the British perspective on the issues separating colonists from King and Parliament. Native American, African American, and female voices offer a multicultural perspective on the causes of the conflict and on the frustrations of women and powerless minorities as well. Eyewitness accounts of battles add authenticity and excitement.

Throughout the program segments with students help reinforce information about the causes of the American Revolution. Students are seen in classrooms and other school settings talking about the topics discussed in the video and responding to questions. Quiz frames reinforce the students' learning by offering questions. Immediate answers are given to quiz questions.

OBJECTIVES

To trace the impact of British colonial trade policies on the American colonies

To examine the responses of the colonists to the Intolerable Acts and show how these responses affected relations with Britain

To identify the purpose of the Constitutional Congresses

To describe the causes of the battles of Lexington and Concord and then- outcome

To explain why the Declaration of Independence was written and how it changed the conflict between the colonists and Britain

To appreciate the significance of the Declaration of Independence as a statement of democratic principles

SUMMARY

The video program opens with a noisy crowd in Boston Commons marking the anniversary of the Boston Massacre of 1770. The tensions arising from passage of the Sugar Act, the Stamp Act, and the Townshend Acts are recalled along with the colonists' anger over the Quartering Act. Public protest over the Townshend Acts leads to their repeal, with the exception of a tax on tea. Bostonians expressed their dissatisfaction with the remaining tea tax by dumping English tea into Boston Harbor.

The Boston Tea Party brings a quick and angry reaction from the English. The British Parliament issues a series of laws which the American colonists call the Intolerable Acts. Under these laws, Massachusetts loses its right to elect its own colonial government, the port is closed, and British soldiers are sent to guard Boston. With the help of colonial Committees of Correspondence a boycott of English goods is organized. In September 1774, Patriot leaders assemble in Philadelphia for the First Continental Congress. At this meeting the delegates agree to support a boycott of British goods and to disobey the Intolerable Acts. At the same time, towns and villages across the Thirteen Colonies begin recruiting and training militia.

Tensions turn to armed conflict in April of 1775 at the Battles of Lexington and Concord. Paul Revere and William Dawes ride off to warn the Minutemen of the approach of British troops and a British officer at the Concord battle site gives an eyewitness account of the fighting. By the end of this brief but bloody conflict, war seems almost inevitable. Representatives of the colonies meet again in Philadelphia for the Second Continental Congress. The delegates create the Continental Army and make Virginian George Washington its commander-in-chief.

While the delegates deliberate in Philadelphia, the fighting resumes in Massachusetts. At the Battle of Bunker Hill, the patriots suffer a defeat, but their courageous stand against the

more powerful British army gives them confidence in their military skills. A pamphlet by Thomas Paine called *Common Sense* provides a forceful and widely read propaganda piece which leads many American colonists to believe that breaking away from England is the best course for the colonies.

The delegates to the Second Continental Congress choose a committee which includes John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson to write a statement of the colonies' grievances against King George and to explain why the colonists intend to govern themselves. Young Thomas Jefferson writes the new nation's first political document, one of the greatest importance, the Declaration of Independence. Members of the Continental Congress vote to accept it on July 4, 1776. With its official signing about one month later, the countdown to revolution ends. A new nation, the United States of America, is born, and the fight to make independence a reality continues. The video ends with a review of the long road to independence from 1763 to 1776.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the Boston Massacre?

The Boston Massacre 'was a violent clash between colonists and British soldiers, in March 1770, which resulted in the loss of colonial government for Massachusetts and the quartering of British soldiers in Boston to keep order.

2. What does the phrase "taxation without representation" mean?

Colonists believed it was unfair for the British government to impose taxes on the colonies -without their consent. Because the colonists could not elect delegates to represent them in Parliament, they had no representation in government.

3. Why did Parliament adopt the Quartering Act?

The Act was intended to force the colonists to pay part of the costs of maintaining British troops in North America.

4. Despite the repeal of the Townshend Acts, many colonists no longer trusted the British. Why was this?

After each repeal of a previous tax, Parliament had eventually passed another, so there -was little reason to think the issue of taxation -without representation was resolved.

5. Why were the Committees of Correspondence formed? What did they do?

They were formed to coordinate responses to British actions. Participants maintained communications between colonies by writing letters.

6. How did Bostonians show their opposition to the tax on tea?

They dumped tea into the Boston harbor.

7. How are the ways people protest government policies today similar to and different from the tactics used by the Patriots?

Similarities include 'writing letters, boycotts, meetings, and staged events such as the Boston Tea Party. Differences include the modern-day techniques of media manipulation, use of polls to influence public opinion, and, in extreme cases, terrorism.

8. What were the Intolerable Acts? Why did they anger the colonists?

The Intolerable Acts were laws passed by the British Parliament to punish the colonists for the Boston Tea Party. They included the banning of town meetings in Boston, the closing of the port of Boston, and the stationing of British soldiers in the city. The colonists saw these Acts as a denial of their liberty or basic freedoms as English citizens.

9. Why was the First Continental Congress held? What was the response of the Congress to the Intolerable Acts?

Delegates met to plan opposition to the Intolerable Acts. They responded by voting to disobey the Intolerable Acts and cut off all trade with Britain, and by refusing to buy or sell British products until the Acts were repealed.

10. What started the Battles of Lexington and Concord?

The British decided to use force to crush the rising spirit of rebellion in the Massachusetts colony by moving against local militia men who were stockpiling weapons and organizing for war.

11. Did General Gage's show of force succeed?

No, the deaths of Patriots and Redcoats united the colonists and encouraged armed resistance.

12. What advantages and weaknesses did the American militia have in facing the British army?

The British army was composed of professionally trained, well

supplied forces. The American Patriots had little training, no combat experience, and few supplies. However, they -were familiar with the terrain on which they would fight, close to their supply lines, had the sympathy of the civilian population, and a strong commitment to their cause.

13. How did Thomas Paine contribute to the Patriot cause?

His pamphlet Common Sense was very effective propaganda for the American cause. It was widely read and convinced many Americans that the colonies could survive on their own and did not have to be economically dependent on England.

14. Who was the primary writer of the Declaration of Independence? According to Jefferson, what rights do American citizens have that cannot be taken from them?

Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. The inalienable rights of Americans include life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

15. Could the countdown to Independence have been stopped? If so, under what circumstances? If it had been, how might the relationship between the U.S. and Britain be different today?

Answers will vary, but some students may argue that conflict and separation were inevitable because of the distance and differences between the colonies and their rulers, the independent spirit of the American colonists, and their experiences with representative assemblies. Others might suggest that through negotiation, the American colonies, like Canada, might have eventually become apart of the British Commonwealth and won a peaceful separation from the mother country.

ACTIVITIES AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

These activities are designed to encourage students to learn more about topics covered in the video. The activities vary in difficulty. Some of the research suggestions may be more appropriate for older or more advanced students.

1. History Makers

a) The following people participated in various ways in events leading up to the American Revolution. Students might research those lives and present their findings in panel discussion, question and answer interviews, or reenactment of significant events in those lives.

Edmund Burke	John Hancock	Peter Salem
Samuel Adams	Abigail Adams	Paul Revere
Benjamin Franklin	Mercy Otis Warren	John Adams
Thomas Jefferson	Richard Henry Lee	
George Washington	Tom Paine	

b) African American Crispus Attucks was the first colonist to be killed by the British in the Boston Massacre. African American Prince Estabrook fought at Lexington and Concord. He was wounded at Concord. Other African American soldiers who fought at Concord were Pomp Blackman and Lemuel Hayes. Have students research the life of Attucks, Estabrook, or one of the others who fought at Lexington or Concord and prepare an historical marker commemorating the part this person played in the first battles of the war.

c) Peter Salem was another African American participant in the early battles. Salem was a former slave who won his freedom by joining a local militia. His fast-thinking turned defeat into victory at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Have students research Salem's life or the roles of other African Americans in

the American Revolution and design a monument honoring the contributions they made to the war effort.

2. Quotable Quotes

a) After the Boston Tea Party, John Adams wrote in his diary:

"This destruction of tea is so bold, so daring, so firm... it must have such important and lasting consequences that I can't help considering it a turning point in history."

Ask students whether they agree with Adams' observation that the Boston Tea Party was a "turning point" in history. Ask students what they consider to be the turning point in the movement toward independence. Make sure they can explain and justify their choices.

b) These famous words from the Declaration of Independence have continued to inspire oppressed peoples around the world into the twentieth century:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,—That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it.

Point out that this statement expresses important ideas of the American democratic tradition. Help students paraphrase the quotation. Then focus discussion on the phrase "consent of the governed," asking students to explain how the form of government envisioned by Jefferson differed from the kind of government the colonists had under King George III.

c) In 1779 in the middle of the American Revolution, eight African slaves belonging to William Browne of Salem, Connecticut, asked the General Assembly of Connecticut to give them their freedom. In their petition they wrote:

"We hope that the State of Connecticut, engaged in a war with tyranny, will not sell honest friends of freedom and independence, as we are."

Ask students why they think the petitioners refer to the "war with tyranny" in their petition. How were the struggles of the colonists and the enslaved Africans alike? Different? In what ways did the practice of slavery conflict with the goals the American patriots were fighting for?

3. Thinking Visually

a) Have students imagine they are members of Committees of Correspondence. Their job is to write to colonists in other states informing them about the Intolerable Acts and urging them to take a stand against these acts. The letter should include some kind of drawing to catch the reader's attention and remind the reader why British laws should be opposed. Allow ten minutes for each group to prepare its letter. Then have groups pass their letters to other groups and write responses to the letters they receive.

b) Divide students into groups. Tell half the groups to imagine they are Loyalists, while the other groups are Patriots. Ask each group to create a political cartoon, expressing its reactions to an event such as the Boston Tea Party, the Battle of Lexington and Concord or Bunker Hill, the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Groups might also prepare newspaper headlines that describe these events, from a Patriot or Loyalist perspective.

4. Time Lines

a) Divide students into groups. Have each group prepare a time line of events for the countdown to revolution. The time line can include dates for the period from 1763 to 1776. Students might use encyclopedias and books on the American Revolution to add dates to their time lines. Then ask each group to debate the question of whether the American Revolution was inevitable. Have groups study their time lines

and decide at what point in time, the countdown to revolution could have been halted. Have students give reasons for their choices and propose a scenario, such as, negotiation between the colonies and England, limited self government, or concessions by the British, which might have stopped or delayed independence.

b) Have students create a time line for the period from 1772 to 1776 which includes not only events in the American colonies at this time, but events in Europe, Africa, and Asia as well. Students can compare and contrast the concerns and achievements of peoples in different cultures at that time.

5. Thinking Critically

a) Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* caused a revolution in the minds of the American colonists and persuaded many thousands to join the Patriot cause. Ask students to suggest other books that have had a similar impact on the way people think. Do students think a book would have the same impact today on American beliefs and values? Why or why not? What media are most important today in influencing political decision making by American voters?

b) Have students locate Lexington and Concord on a map of Massachusetts. If possible, show them the route taken by Paul Revere and William Dawes. Ask students to imagine they are traveling with Revere on his urgent mission. Have them write a journal entry describing what they see, as well as their thoughts and feelings, as they hurry towards Lexington.

c) Point out that in 1776 American colonists were willing to risk their lives for liberty, independence, and democratic self-government. In a famous speech to the Virginia House of Burgesses, Patrick Henry cried, "Give me liberty or give me death." Ask students what values or beliefs they think Americans are willing to fight and even die for today. Are all Americans willing to fight for the same beliefs? What are some ways Americans today show their patriotism?

GLOSSARY

boycott - refusal to buy a product or service as a protest

Continental Congress - meetings of representatives of the colonies in Philadelphia before the revolution began

intolerable - cannot be endured or put up with

loyalist - colonist remaining loyal to Britain and opposed to the fight for independence.

massacre - brutal, bloody killing of many people militia

- army of volunteers who fight in emergencies

minutemen - group of civilians willing to fight the British at a minute's notice

monopoly - sole control of a product by a person or company

Parliament - British lawmaking body

rebel - person who fights against, or will not obey, authority

repeal - do away with officially

tyranny - cruel use of force or authority

unalienable rights - rights that cannot be taken away or transferred

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COUNTDOWN TO INDEPENDENCE

March 5, 1772. A noisy crowd filled Boston Commons to remember a fateful incident, two years earlier, called the Boston Massacre. That night, Massachusetts leader Josiah Quincy recalled when five Americans were killed by British soldiers.

"Words cannot express the pain we felt when our streets were stained with the blood of our brothers, when our ears heard the groans of the dying and our eyes saw the twisted bodies of the dead."

Conflict between the American colonies and Great Britain centered on the issue of taxation without representation. Since 1764, the thirteen American colonies had resisted taxes such as the Sugar Act, the Stamp Act and most recently the Townshend Act.

In each case, the British Parliament had taxed, without the consent of the colonists, goods brought into the American colonies. Americans had no vote or voice in Parliament.

The anniversary of the Boston Massacre also reminded American colonists about the Quartering Act. This law required the colonists to support British soldiers stationed in their colonies. Tension between some colonists and Redcoats had started the Boston Massacre.

To calm colonial anger, Parliament repealed all its new taxes, except for the tax on tea.

Most colonists were loyal to the King. But by the time Parliament ended the Townshend Acts, many Americans no longer trusted the British government.

In Boston, Samuel Adams began organizing groups known as Committees of Correspondence to coordinate responses to British actions. They helped to build links across the long distances between colonies, and to focus their grievances against Britain.

QUIZ:

Q. What was the Boston Massacre?

A. The Massacre was a violent clash between colonists and British soldiers in March, 1770.

Q. Explain the meaning of "taxation without representation."

A. It meant taxes imposed by the British Parliament, in which Americans had no vote or voice.

Q. Why did Parliament adopt the Quartering Act?

A. The Act was intended to force the colonists to pay part of the costs of maintaining British troops in North America.

STUDENT DISCUSSION:

GILLIAN: I didn't realize how important the Boston Tea Party really was. I thought it was just a bunch of guys throwing some tea into the harbor.

AKUA: Yeah, the colonists were really angry about being taxed so much by Britain.

GILLIAN: And also by the monopoly created for the East India Tea Company.

AKUA: I guess they just wanted to have control over their own trade.

GILLIAN: I think it was a real act of defiance.

In the spring of 1773, a new tax on tea again stirred up trouble between the colonists and Parliament. The British government wanted to create a monopoly for an English business called the East India Company.

Once again, the British misjudged the colonists. Most Americans resented Parliament's controlling their trade. Others denounced taxation without representation.

Four cities were targeted to receive the first shipments of East India tea: New York, Boston, Charleston, and Philadelphia. American Patriot leaders decided to resist delivery. The only question was: where would conflict come?

Not New York: the ships carrying the tea were late arriving. Not Philadelphia: the captain of the tea ship was "persuaded" to sail back to England. In Charleston, South Carolina, the tea was unloaded, stored, and later destroyed.

The real showdown took place in Boston. On December

16, 1773, an angry crowd of over 5,000 people filled the Old South Church. Three tea ships sat in Boston Harbor, but all efforts to send them back to England had failed. Suddenly someone in the crowd yelled:

"Boston Harbor: a tea-pot tonight!"

Soon, about 60 men quietly slipped out of the church. Dressed as Indians, they reappeared at the dock where the three tea ships were anchored. They boarded the ships and dumped 342 chests filled with tea into the Boston harbor. Patriots called this the Boston Tea Party.

The British Prime Minister, Lord North, called it treason. In the spring of 1774, town meetings were banned in Boston, the port was closed until all the tea was paid for, and 4,000 British soldiers arrived to put the city under military rule.

Parliament stripped Massachusetts of the right to elect its own colonial government, and British officials and soldiers accused of a crime could be sent back to England for trial. Parliament then passed a new Quartering Act, giving British officers more power to house their troops in American homes.

Colonists everywhere in America were furious over these new laws. They called them the Intolerable Acts. If Parliament could deny political liberty in Massachusetts, liberties everywhere were threatened.

Committees of Correspondence sprang into action. Letters flew from one colony to another, urging a new boycott on all

British goods. Patriot leaders met in Philadelphia in September, 1774. This gathering was called the First Continental Congress. They voted to disobey the Intolerable Acts, and not to buy or sell British products.

Committees searched out merchants still trading British goods, printed their names in local newspapers, and forced them to stop or leave town. Soon, these committees became the unofficial government in their cities and towns. They organized volunteer soldiers, called militias, and gathered weapons. Though all this was against the law, these Patriot committees had strong community support.

As the militia grew, some patriots sought the support of the Indians. In the South, the leaders of the Creek nation gave them this advice:

"We thought all the English people were as one, but now we hear that they have a difference among themselves. We hope that they drop their quarrels and not fight with one another."

Some people, known as Loyalists, agreed. They had close ties with Britain and opposed breaking with the mother country. Many were government officials, soldiers in the British army, religious leaders in the Anglican church, or merchants who depended on trade with England.

Back in England, most members of Parliament were very angry at the Patriot actions. A few British leaders, led by Edmund Burke, did speak up for compromise. Burke warned

that force might slow the American colonists, but ultimately it would fail because:

"The spirit of liberty is stronger in the English colonies than in any other people of the earth."

But most British leaders were in no mood for compromise. Instead, they went on the offensive. In April, 1775 Parliament told Thomas Gage, the Commanding General in Boston, to move against the "rude rabble" who were gathering weapons and preparing for war:

"You had better act now while a small group of your soldiers can still stop this ragged bunch of poorly armed troublemakers. If you wait, you will most certainly face a larger and stronger force later."

General Gage agreed. His spies told him that in nearby Concord village, colonists were hiding guns and supplies. The time had come to act! Gage decided to send 700 British troops to seize those supplies. On the way, they were to stop in Lexington and arrest two Patriot leaders: Sam Adams and John Hancock.

But the Patriots had their own spies, and sent two messengers, Paul Revere and William Dawes, to warn the "Minutemen" in Lexington and Concord. The Minutemen were the members of the local militia, who chose that name because they could be ready to fight with a minute's warning. Paul Revere described his night-time ride:

"I set off upon a very good horse, it was about eleven o'clock, I saw two men on horseback under a tree. When I got near them, I discovered they were British officers. One tried to get ahead of me, and the other to take me. I turned my horse very quick and galloped away. In Medford, I awakened the captain of the Minutemen, and after that I alarmed almost every house till I got to Lexington."

Paul Revere did his job well. Samuel Adams and John Hancock had time to escape, and when the Redcoats reached Lexington, they faced 70 armed Minutemen. The British commander ordered them to go home. The American captain, John Parker, saw that he was outgunned, so he called on his men to withdraw. But suddenly a shot was fired! The British soldiers returned fire. Eight Americans lay dead.

Quickly, the British moved on to Concord, five miles away, but the news from Lexington spread even faster. Other Minutemen grabbed their muskets and headed for Concord. After a brief clash at North Bridge near Concord, the British decided to return to Boston. On their march back, thousands of militiamen fired on them from behind trees, bushes, and houses along the road. By the end of the day 70 Redcoats had been killed and over 200 wounded. One British officer there would never forget the scene:

"The hills on each side of us were covered with rebels. A very hot fire came down on us without stopping. We at first kept marching in order and returned their fire as

hot as we received it, but when we came within a mile of Lexington we began to run out of ammunition. Our soldiers became frightened and started to run instead of marching in order."

Over the next few days, thousands of volunteers from all over New England poured into Boston. None had uniforms and not everyone had a gun or sword. But they were ready to fight!

QUIZ:

Q. Why was the First Continental Congress held?

A. Delegates met in Philadelphia to plan opposition to the Intolerable Acts.

Q. What caused the Battles of Lexington and Concord?

A. Parliament decided to use force to crush the rising spirit of rebellion. The British planned to seize stockpiled weapons from the colonists.

Q. Did General Gage's show of force succeed?

A. No, the deaths of Patriots and Redcoats united colonial resistance.

STUDENT DISCUSSION:

ANNA: Hi Stacy.

STACY: Oh, hi Anna. Gosh, history. I didn't understand a

word he was talking about today. Do you understand what the First Continental Congress is?

ANNA: Yeah. The First Continental Congress voted to disobey the Intolerable Acts passed by the British.

STACY: So what did these people do about the Acts?

ANNA: Well, they formed committees to find people still trading with the British and make them stop. They built up the local militias and stockpiled weapons and gunpowder.

STACY: Oh, so that's why the British wanted to march on Lexington and Concord... to get the weapons.

ANNA: Yeah.

Outright war now seemed inevitable. News from Lexington and Concord quickly spread to other colonies. More colonists joined the ranks of the Patriots.

In May 1776, excited colonial leaders met again in Philadelphia for the Second Continental Congress. John Adams complained:

"So many questions, political, commercial, and military, press and crowd upon us so fast that we know not what to do first."

Abigail Adams, John's wife, wrote to her husband in Philadelphia:

"I desire you remember the ladies and be more generous to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power in the husbands. If attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to rebel. We will not be bound by laws in which we have no representation."

Congress soon created a new American army, and named a 43 year old Virginia planter, George Washington, as Commander-in-Chief. Washington had won the respect of many Americans for his part in the French and Indian War. Now his tough job was to turn young farm boys into skilled soldiers.

In fact, fighting had already flared again in Boston. The British tried to take control of nearby Charlestown. The Patriots dug in on a high point called Breed's Hill. British General William Howe ordered his men to take the hill back from the Americans.

Crowds of Bostonians climbed up on rooftops, in church steeples, and even on the masts of ships in the harbor to get a good view of the fighting. As drums and fifes played, the British soldiers marched up the hill in straight lines. Although the American soldiers had little training and few supplies, they did have one advantage. They were hidden in their trenches and could fire down on the British.

Twice, the rapid and deadly fire of American muskets stopped the British from advancing. But as the British tried a third time to capture the hill, the Americans ran short of ammunition, and were forced to retreat. When he heard the order, one young volunteer said:

"I jumped over the walls and ran for about half a mile while all around me balls flew like hailstones and cannons roared like thunder."

This battle was called Bunker Hill, named for a hill close to where the fighting actually took place. Although it was a British victory, they did not celebrate. The Americans showed that they could stand up to the mighty British army.

Rhode Island patriot General Nathanael Greene was pleased with the American performance:

"I think we have little reason to complain. I wish we could sell them another hill at the same price."

Thanks to Bunker Hill, many more Americans began to think that independence might really be won.

But not all the Patriot soldiers were equally excited by the American victories. African American Prince Whipple told his master:

"You are going to fight for your liberty, but I have none to fight for."

STUDENT DISCUSSION:

NICK: I can't imagine what it would have been like to be a delegate at the Continental Congress.

PAYTON: I guess it would have been pretty tough.

NICK: How so?

PAYTON: Well, the British needed money and they wanted to get it from the Americans.

NICK: But the Americans had no representatives in Parliament. So, that's what they mean by no taxation without representation.

PAYTON: Yeah.

Despite the bloodshed, most Americans still hoped that a permanent break could be avoided. But as they wished for peace, the Patriots also prepared for war. The Second Continental Congress continued its work—building an army, finding new trading partners in Europe, and printing money to buy military supplies.

Then in January 1776, an English customs agent who had lived in America for only two years wrote a powerful pamphlet that changed the minds of many Americans about independence. The man was Thomas Paine, and his pamphlet was called "Common Sense". Within three months, 120,000 copies had been sold: a huge number for those days.

Thomas Paine said that Britain had taken advantage -of the colonies, and that America would actually be stronger once it was independent:

"I have heard it said by some that since America prospered because of her ties to Great Britain in the

past, the same is necessary for her future happiness. Nothing can be more wrong. I say that America would have done just as well if no European power had noticed it. There will always be a market for American goods as long as eating is the custom in Europe."

Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" seemed like perfectly good sense to many Americans. By the spring of 1776, British authority in the colonies was collapsing. Royal governors sailed for home. The Second Continental Congress asked the colonies to write new constitutions to govern themselves.

On June 7 in Philadelphia, a Virginia delegate to the Second Congress, Richard Henry Lee, made a daring proposal:

"These United Colonies are, and of right ought to be free, and independent States"

With these words, the final countdown to independence began. A committee was appointed to write a Declaration of Independence. The committee included some well known Patriots: John Adams, Ben Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson.

The committee gave the job of writing the Declaration to Thomas Jefferson. The 34-year-old Virginia lawyer was one of the youngest members of the Congress, but he was known for his fine and forceful writing style. In a letter to a friend, John Adams explained why Jefferson was chosen:

"You may wonder why so young a man as Mr. Jefferson was picked to head the committee for writing

a Declaration of Independence. Mr. Jefferson came into Congress with a reputation for literature, science, and a happy talent for writing. Though he did not talk much in Congress, he was so prompt, frank, and decisive in committees and conversation that he soon seized upon my heart and I gave him my vote."

The Declaration has three main parts. The first part, or preface, declares that all human beings possess "unalienable rights", rights that cannot be taken away.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

The middle section tells why the colonists are angry at King George III. It accuses the King of trying to destroy representative government, of taxing the people without their agreement, and of cutting off colonial trade. Finally, the document declares the former colonies independent from Mother England.

Late in the afternoon of July 4, 1776, Congress approved the Declaration. Americans found many ways of celebrating their nation's birth. Pulling down statues of George III was popular!

About one month later, 56 members of Congress assembled to sign the Declaration. After placing his name on it, Franklin warned:

"Now we must all hang together or we shall all hang separately."

FINAL REVIEW

The long road to independence began in 1763 at the end of the French and Indian War and ended in Philadelphia with Jefferson's declaration of human rights. Along the way, Americans found themselves growing apart from the mother country because of:

- * the vast distance across the Atlantic Ocean, and between colonies,
- * differences in religion, countries of origin,
- * languages, and ways of making a living,

They also grew apart as they:

- * established their own representative legislatures After

the French and Indian War, the colonists resented:

- * The Proclamation of 1763
- * The Currency Act
- * Britain's Trade Policies, including the Sugar Act, Stamp Act, Townshend Acts, and Tea Act.

The colonies resisted these taxes through boycotts and other forms of protests, because they considered them forms of:

- * Taxation without representation

Resistance to the Tea Act resulted in the:

- * Boston Tea Party.

The colonists also resented the British decision to station troops in their cities and towns, the:

- * Quartering Act Resentment

against this act flared in the

- * Boston Massacre

The Boston Tea Party was Boston's response to the tea tax and led to the

- * Intolerable Acts The first battles of the war, and

the decision to sign a

- * Declaration of Independence

It would take a long and bloody war to make Jefferson's words a reality. The American Revolution signalled the birth of the first new nation in modern history, and a symbol of hope for our country, . . . and for people seeking freedom ever since.

CLOZE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

COUNTDOWN TO INDEPENDENCE: CAUSES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

NAME _____

DIRECTIONS: Select the correct word from the four choices given by circling the correct letter.

1. One of the first important incidents in which American blood was spilled in the name of liberty occurred in 1770. The _____ resulted in the killing of four colonists. The incident was a symbol of fighting for freedom and would inspire others to risk their lives as well.
 1. A. Boston Massacre
 - B. Intolerable Acts
 - C. Battle of Lexington
 - D. Boston Tea Party
2. One of the many concerns that the colonists had was over the issue of trade. A favorite phrase used by the colonists was _____ which spread throughout the 13 colonies. The concern here was the lack of representation in the British Parliament.
 2. A. No Stamp Tax
 - B. No Quartering Act
 - C. No Tea Tax
 - D. No taxation without representation
3. There were a number of strong colonial leaders. One of the most influential was _____. His opposition to acts of Parliament like the Townshend Acts was one of many protests. He was important in increasing the opposition to the acts of Parliament.
 3. A. Thomas Jefferson
 - B. George Washington
 - C. Sam Adams
 - D. John Adams
4. There were a number of colonial acts of opposition. One of the most famous was the _____ in which tea was dumped into the Boston Harbor. This event happened in 1773 when colonists disguised as Indians decided to show their protest to British trade policies. England responded and punished the colonists.
 4. A. Boston Massacre
 - B. Boston Tea Party
 - C. Battle of Lexington
 - D. Stamp Act Congress
5. The British decided to punish the Boston patriots for their act of defiance. Parliament passed the _____ which closed the Port of Boston. This strained the relationship even more.
 5. A. Intolerable Acts
 - B. Quartering Act
 - C. Stamp Act
 - D. Port Act
6. The colonists decided to resist the punishment for the Boston Tea Party. They had a meeting called the _____ in which they voted to disobey the Intolerable Acts. This meeting was held in Philadelphia and brought the colonists closer to rebellion.
 6. A. Stamp Act Congress
 - B. Meeting of War
 - C. Act of Rebellion
 - D. Continental Congress
7. Not all of the colonists wanted to separate from Great Britain. There were a number of colonists called _____ who supported the laws of England. These colonists were soon identified and many had to leave the country because of the growing opposition to England and its laws.
 7. A. patriots
 - B. loyalists
 - C. fans
 - D. British subjects
8. After Paul Revere warned the colonists, an important battle that led closer to war occurred. This was the battle of _____ in which minutemen fired on the British troops as they marched toward Boston.
 8. A. Lexington
 - B. Concord
 - C. Lexington/Concord
 - D. Bunker Hill
9. The colonists now had to make definite plans for war. They had to appoint a commander in chief who turned out to be _____. His leadership skill and inspiration for his troops made him an excellent choice. He had the difficult job of turning farmers into soldiers.
 9. A. Sam Adams
 - B. George Washington
 - C. Patrick Henry
 - O. Nathan Hale
10. By the year 1776 much more was being written about the need to separate from Great Britain. One of the world's most famous documents listing the reasons for rebellion was written by Thomas Jefferson. His _____ listed the reasons why the colonies had a right to be free and independent of Great Britain. His words were so inspirational that future governments would use them to justify the right to rebel and fight for freedom.
 10. A. Bill of Rights
 - B. Ten Amendments
 - C. Act of Defiance
 - D. Declaration of Independence

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