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Analysing the American Revolution

Vincent Toohey
and Andrew Butcher

INTERACTIVE TEXTBOOK INCLUDED

Foreword by Nick Frigo

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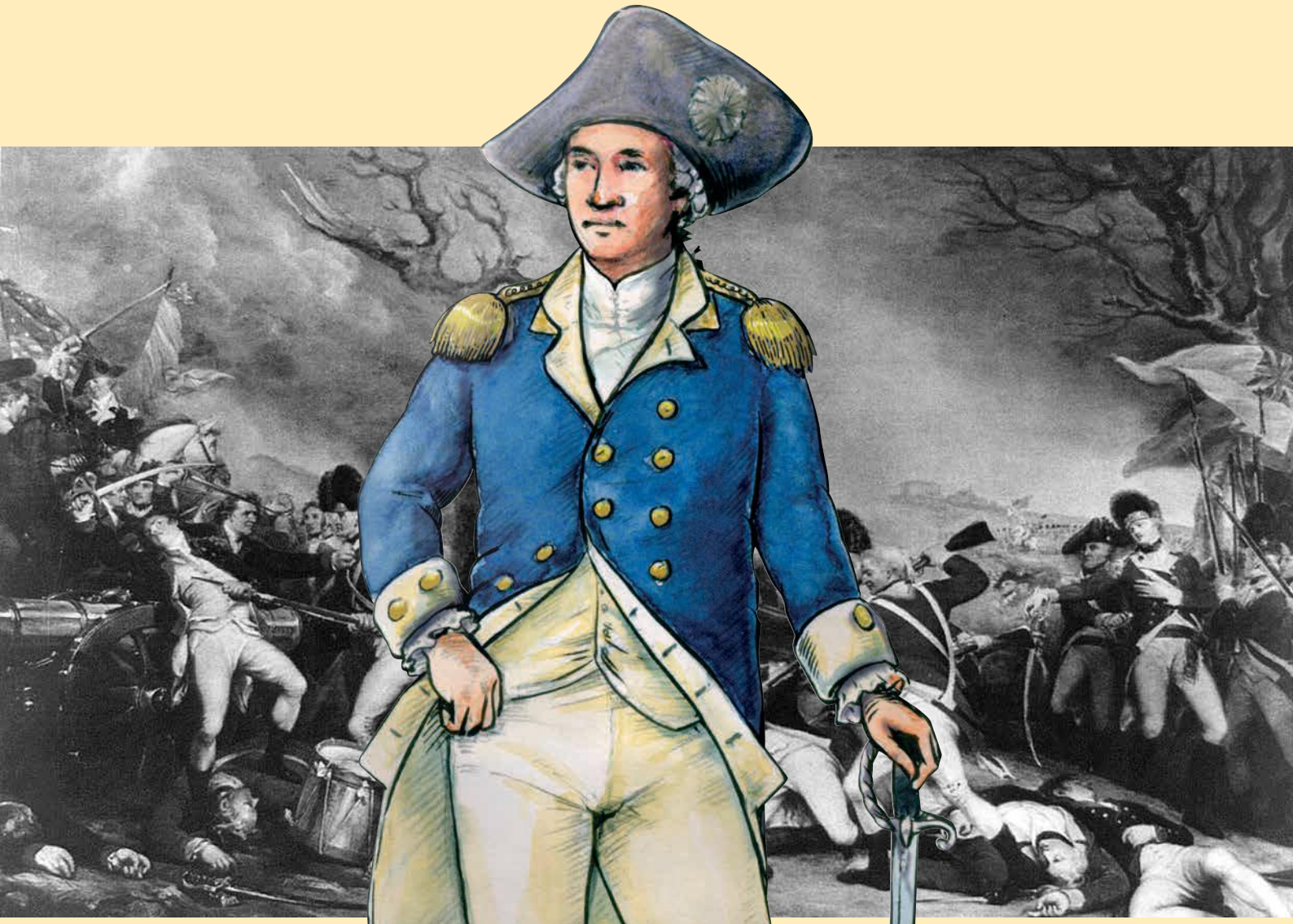
Analysing the American Revolution



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About the authors

Vincent Toohey holds a BA from the University of NSW and an MA (History) from the University of Sydney. He has taught History and Aboriginal Studies at both HSC and VCE level for over 20 years in Sydney and Melbourne, and for the last decade at St Kevin's College in Melbourne. Vincent is a former Head of History at St Kevin's, where he is now a House Head. For almost a decade he has been a Senior Assessor/Marker for VCE Revolutions History with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), and has lectured regularly on both the American and Russian Revolutions for the History Teachers' Association of Victoria (HTAV) and Engage Education to both teachers and students.

Andrew Butcher holds a BA from Monash University, majoring in History, Classics and Literature, and a Grad. Dip. from the University of Melbourne. He is the current Head of History at St Kevin's College in Melbourne, where he teaches VCE History of Revolutions, Australian History and Ancient History. Andrew has lectured regularly on both American and Ancient History for the HTAV. He has assessed for the VCAA and developed sample examinations for Insight Publications. Andrew also organises biannual study tours to both the east coast of the United States, to study the revolutionary period, and to Europe.

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Dedication

Dedicated to my long-suffering and patient family, my 'genius teacher' wife Sophie and gifted children: James, Madeleine and Gemma Toohey. They have supported my teaching knowingly and unknowingly for over 20 years. I have also been blessed to teach many brilliant but also many hard-working students that have done exceptionally well at the HSC and VCE level, and have also been mentored by some wonderful teachers that have helped me on my journey. The camaraderie of these two groups keeps me in the industry.

Vince

Dedicated to my ever-patient and beautiful wife, Sam, whose intellect supports, challenges and extends me; and to my delightful children, Imogen and Liam. To the History Department at St Kevin's, in particular Rhona, Kerry and Catherine, for founding and cultivating American History at the College; Marie Cavanagh, Mary Hardwick and the people of Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts, who have long breathed life and colour into our American Revolution History tours; the dynamic and brilliant staff and students in VCE Revolutions at St. Kevin's – Vinnie, Bob and the boys – who create an environment of learning, excellence and love of history. My heartfelt thanks to you all.

Andrew

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Nick Alexander,
Publisher

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Vincent Toohey

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Foreword

The American Revolution was said to be the revolution where the first shots that were fired echoed around the world, in effect commencing what many historians term the 'age of revolutions'. The events of the American Revolution saw the emergence of many significant individuals whose efforts resulted in a challenge to monarchical authority never before seen in the early modern world. The contributions of such well-known names as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington are examined closely in this text. In addition to this, Vince Toohey and Andrew Butcher highlight how, in a period of scientific and intellectual change, the Enlightenment introduced 'new' ways of viewing the world extended not just with regard to science but also to political and economic life, which provided the American revolutionaries with a model and a new understanding of power relations. The American Revolution was in many ways an 'atypical' revolution, and the unique nature of it, and the challenge to authority that increasingly defined the Revolution, are well captured by Toohey and Butcher in an engaging and accessible way.

Analysing the American Revolution is a welcome addition to the Cambridge Senior History texts. Toohey and Butcher have successfully captured the drama and engaging narrative of the American Revolution in such a way that students and teachers alike will find this an extremely useful resource as they undertake the VCE Revolutions course. The passion for the American Revolution that Toohey and Butcher clearly possess is evident throughout this text. *Analysing the American Revolution* will assist students develop the necessary knowledge and skills for studying the Revolutions course.

The first part of *Analysing the American Revolution* prepares students for completing the first Outcome of the unit; ensuring that students are 'able to analyse the causes of revolution, and evaluate the contribution of significant ideas, events, individuals and popular movements'. Students are supported through this process via a number of rich and effective features of this text. As with any historic revolution, the importance of 'Flashpoints' is emphasised as moments when the revolutionary movement meets an event or point of conflict/tension when the direction and nature of the Revolution is tested. In addition to this, at the end of each chapter Toohey and Butcher have created wonderful revision features in order to clarify and confirm student understanding, namely with the 'Story so far' and the 'Chapter review' sections. Similar key knowledge and skill development activities exist in Part 2 of the text, as does significant detail to help students with the 'historical interpretations' part of the course.

Ensuring that this new text aligns itself with the VCE Revolutions Study Design (2016–2020), this text includes a very effective 'Talking Portrait' feature, which provides a close focus on a range of the 'significant individuals' who are key figures in the Revolution. Combining all of these features with some very effective activities and analysis tasks, this text will prepare students for school-assessed coursework as well as the November examination. While maintaining a close focus on the historical

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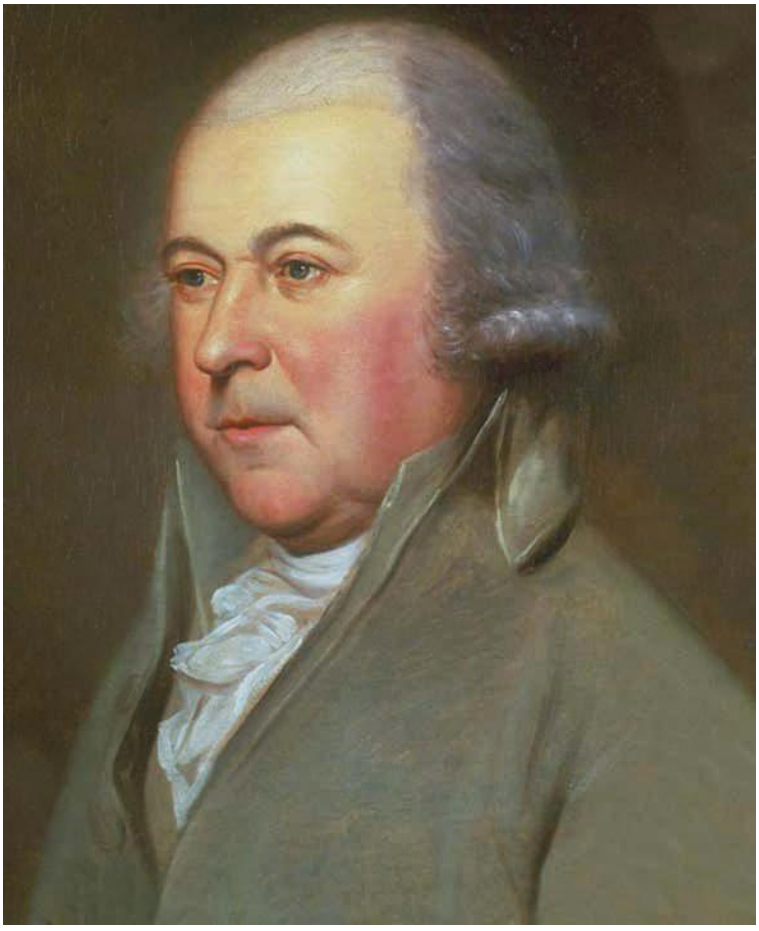
narrative, and the necessary cause and effect that takes place in any revolutionary situation, Toohey and Butcher also seize short moments throughout the text to show the significance of what was forged in post-Revolution America.

In 1776, John Adams wrote of the challenge of uniting Thirteen Colonies: 'remember you can't make thirteen clocks strike precisely alike at the same second'. Within a little over a decade, the founding fathers of America had in fact done this; in the same way that Toohey and Butcher have captured and conveyed the drama, insights and significance of the American Revolution into 10 well-developed chapters.

Nick Frigo
Santa Maria College, Melbourne

'You can't make thirteen clocks strike precisely alike at the same second'



Source 0.1 *John Adams*, by Charles Wilson Peale, circa 1791–99

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How to use this textbook

STRUCTURE

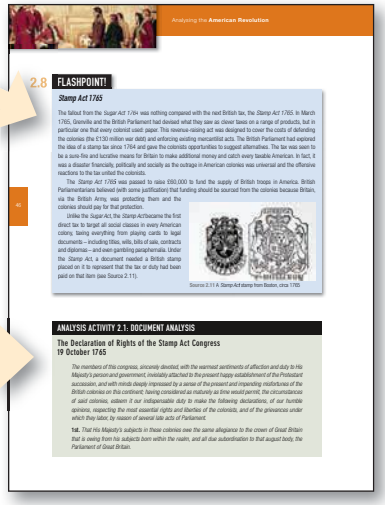
This textbook is broken into three **Parts**. Parts 1 & 2 align with Area of Study 1 & 2 in the VCE History: Revolutions Study Design. Part 3 includes a chapter on the **Historical interpretations** of the Revolution.

Part openers give a broad **Overview** of the chapters to come.

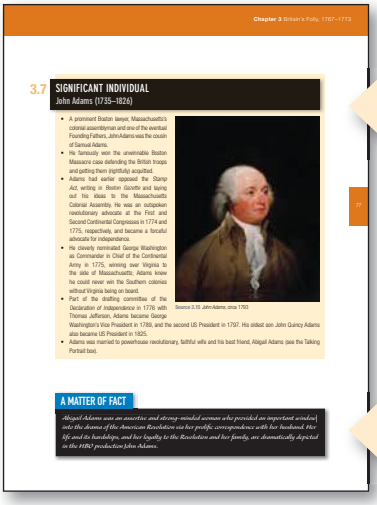
Chapter openers also include an **overview**, as well as **key issues** and **flow of chapter** features.

The **Summary of key events** gives you a detailed timeline for your reference.

Flashpoint! boxes consider key revolutionary events in depth, which can be long-term causes or short-term triggers of revolution.



Analysis activities explore key primary and secondary historical sources. These sources can be visual or text-based, to help develop your understanding of the Revolution as well as your skills as a historian.



Significant individual boxes are biographies that help you examine key personalities in the Revolution.

A matter of fact boxes highlight interesting information to enrich your learning.

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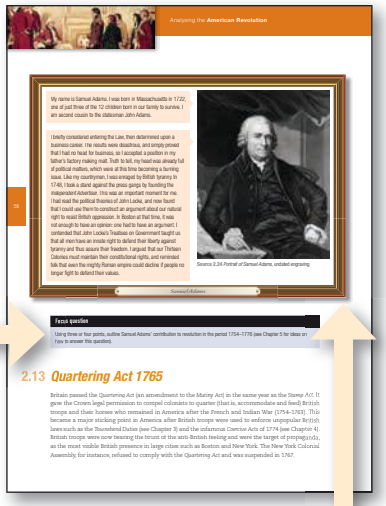
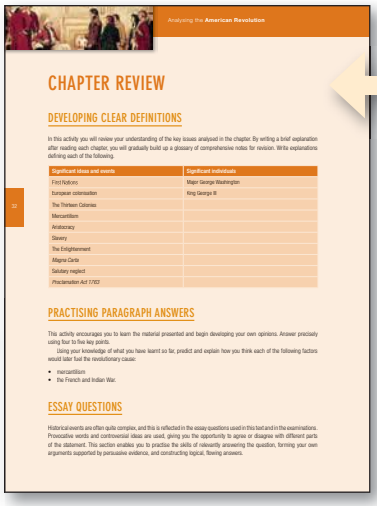


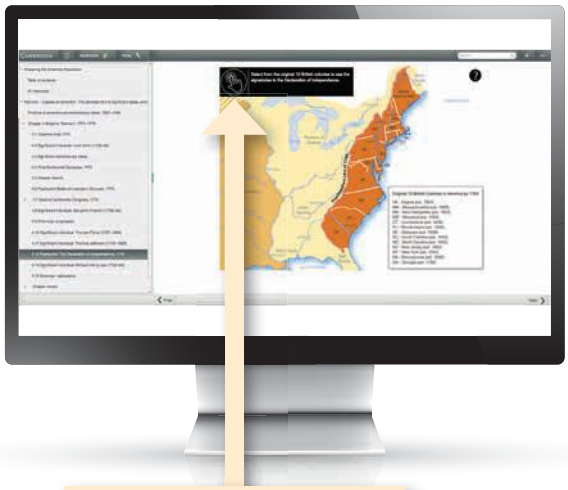
Focus questions are comprehension questions to guide your understanding.



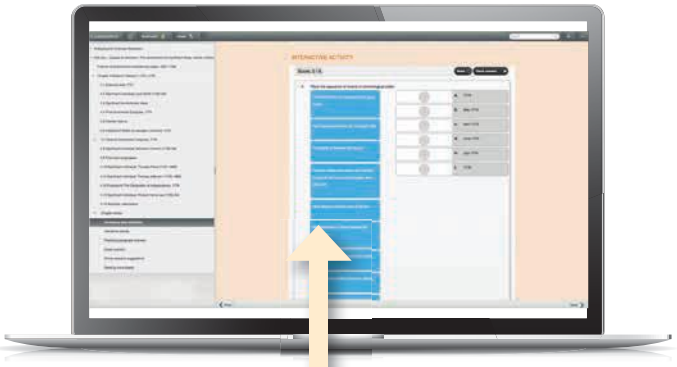
Chapter review activities include a combination of tasks designed to help consolidate your learning:

- **Developing clear definitions** encourages you to define key terms from the chapter in your own words.
- **Practising paragraph answers** are exam-style writing tasks.
- **Activities** can include research work or various creative tasks like role-plays.
- **Practice essay questions** help you prepare for internal and end-of-year assessments.
- **Reading more deeply** offers suggested further reading for your research and is broken into **Easy**, **Moderate** and **Challenging** categories. The latter is annotated to explain why it might be of use in your research.

Talking portraits depict the diverse revolutionary experiences of people who are usually voiceless in the standard pages of history.



Widgets are interactive tools designed to help enhance your digital learning experience.



Interactive activities (e.g. drag and drop questions) assist recall of facts and understanding of concepts.

Further digital resources are available in the **Interactive Textbook** and on ***Cambridge GO***:

- **PDF Textbook** – downloadable, includes note taking and search functions
- **Downloadable worksheets** – in Word format available for all activities
- **Links to history** – provide weblinks to URLs
- **Pronunciation** – audio files appear at the start of a chapter, and cover any new difficult terms to be introduced
- **Reading more deeply** – additional annotations for all **Easy** and **Moderate** sources
- **Annotated map printable activity worksheet** – of key revolutionary sites in America.

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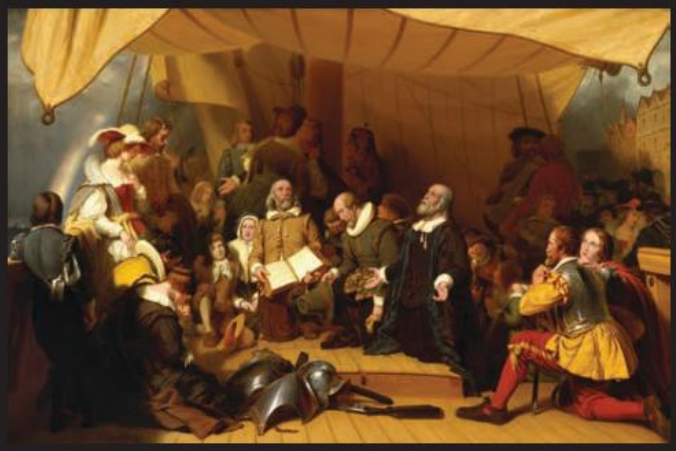

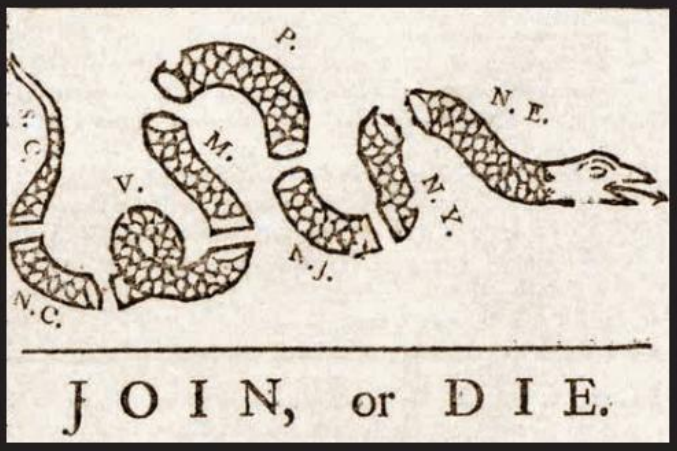

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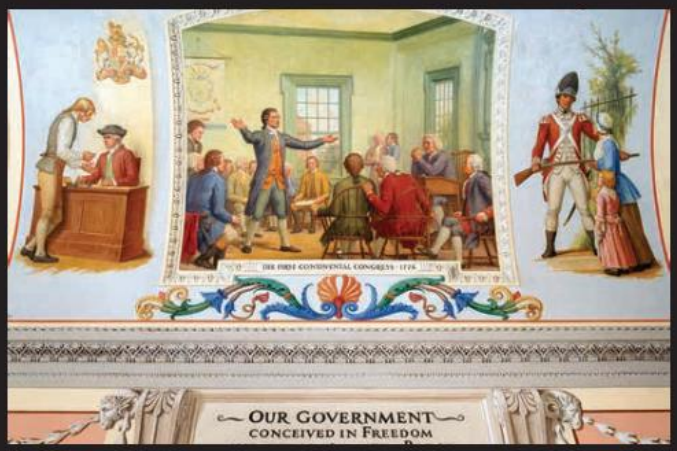

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Causes of Revolution: The development of significant ideas, events, individuals and popular movements in America, 1754 – 4 July 1776

> *Before I came here I was confused about this subject. Having listened to your lecture I am still confused. But on a higher level.*
>
> – ITALIAN PHYSICIST ENRICO FERMI, CIRCA 1950s

OVERVIEW

empire a group of nations ruled by a single leader (usually a monarch – a king or queen) or government

Congratulations on choosing to study history and in particular the American Revolution in the VCE. The best stories are always the real ones. The mighty Egyptian, Greek and Roman **Empires** of the Ancient World, the tragedy of the Romanovs, the First and Second World Wars, the Holocaust, the assassination of John F Kennedy, the Vietnam War, the great calamity of indigenous populations from Western colonisation and a billion other incredible stories of the human experience are the fabric of history. One of history's roles is to offer a window into those collective stories of how the human race got to the present day.

What exactly is a 'revolution'? A definition as good as any other is the one provided by Cambridge Dictionaries Online, that a revolution is:

a change in the way a country is governed, usually to a different political system and often using violence or war.

'So why study America?' many students have asked. In VCE Revolutions, of the four choices for study (the American Revolution of 1776, the French Revolution of 1789, the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Chinese Revolution of 1949), America is in many ways unique. Whereas the other national contexts provide examples of massive social upheaval and change via the process of revolution, their established 'old regimes' were hundreds, if not thousands of years old. However, in the American context (not including the peoples of the First Nations) a new nation was actually formed out of the events of the Revolution itself. Power over the British-ruled Thirteen Colonies of North America was

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basically transferred from faraway Europe to the colonists themselves, and it is how this momentous shift took place that we will examine in detail.

Another reason why the American Revolution is unique is that the revolutionaries who in turn became the '**Founding Fathers**' aimed to draw on the best practices of government (republicanism) and provide a Constitution that remains the envy of many countries. This structure saw the nation through many challenges in the following two hundred years. The significant and ongoing problems over slavery, civil rights and gun laws also hark back to this time.

Importantly, the office of the **President** of the United States was also born out of this narrative, and the inauguration of the first President, **George Washington**, is one of the closing events of our study. Indeed it is worth noting that although he is but one of the significant individuals in the American Revolution, Washington himself is a crucial figure in this book, whose ideas and experiences in many key events cannot be overlooked.

In this book we will consider the wide range of factors that triggered the American Revolution of 1776, as well as looking at its aftermath. Many important questions propel this narrative. For example, what was British America like before the Revolution? How did a revolutionary situation develop in the colonies? Who was involved? How did the Revolution itself play out? After the dust had settled, how did the Americans deal with their newfound freedom? How did the 'new regime' consolidate its hold on power against various challenges? What sort of government would the newly formed United States of America have, after removing the rule of the British monarchy and Parliament? Were the ambitions of the Revolution achieved, and how different was the new society? We hope that this study of the American Revolution affords you the chance to think critically about these questions and many more.

Overall, it is fascinating studying a powerful nation – as we know the United States of America to be today – at the moment of its formation. Indeed, your study will help you unpack some of the reasons how America, the 20th-century superpower, came to be. Enjoy the journey.

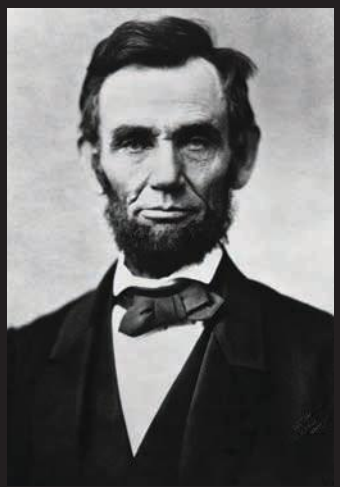
Founding Fathers men such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin and others of the Revolutionary era who created the foundations of the American nation

president the leader or head of state of a republic – a government in which power resides with the people who elect their own representatives

Washington, George (1732–1799) the first President of the United States, who fought in the early stages of the French and Indian War on the side of the British, then led the colonial forces to victory against the British in the War of Independence

Source 0.2 The office of the President of the United States was ultimately born out of the events of the American Revolution. Barack Obama, the 44th President.

Source 0.3 John F Kennedy, the 35th President



Source 0.4 Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President

Source 0.5 George Washington, the 1st President

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historians men and women who attempt to make sense of the past and usually specialise in one country or period of history

George III the reigning King of England for the entire American Revolutionary period (1763–1789)

British Parliament the official political body that ran Britain and all British colonies in partnership with King George III

leaders significant individuals (men and women) who influence ordinary people

revolution a process of massive political upheaval that changes the way in which a country is governed; often a vertical shift in power from an absolute monarch to a popular government ruling on behalf of the people

Part One focuses specifically on Area of Study One 1754–1776 of the VCE American Revolution course. Chapter 1 provides a summary of some pre-revolutionary factors that all converge to make America a country ripe for unrest and lay the groundwork for what would eventually become the Revolution by the 1770s.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 work through the significant ideas, events, individuals and popular movements of this period, as well as the **historians** that write about it. This part concludes with an analysis of the key tensions and conflicts within America. Was the creation of a revolutionary situation just the result of poor leadership from **George III** and the **British Parliament**, or a fusion of many different antecedents that were operating in America already? Part One attempts to unpack this question. Chapter 5 is a selection of real and typical VCE questions for Area of Study (AOS) 1 Sections A and B, plus sample answers to guide you when approaching these tasks.

Part Two covers AOS 2 of the American Revolution course: the period between 1776 and 1789. Chapter 6 covers the significant ideas, events and **leaders** involved in the War of Independence between 1776 and 1783. Chapters 7 and 8 deal with the consequences the American colonists were faced with after winning the war and their freedom from the British. Chapter 9 is a selection of VCE and VCE-type questions for AOS 2 Sections A and B and sample answers for your reference. Chapter 10 in Part Three provides interpretations by historians of the underlying causes and consequences of the **Revolution**. Despite being placed at the end of the book, it is worth also reading now so that you develop the mindset of exploring American history with historians as you journey through this text with them.

Source 0.6 The 13-star Continental flag from the American Revolutionary War period – precursor to the modern flag of the United States of America

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TIMELINE OF PERTINENT PRE-REVOLUTIONARY DATES, 1607–1763

1607	John Smith lands in Jamestown; first British colony of Virginia established in North America.
1620	Puritans or 'Pilgrim Fathers' aboard the *Mayflower* land in Massachusetts just south of present-day Boston.
1732	Britain passes the *Hat Act*, restricting American colonies in the making of their own hats. Raw pelts are supposed to go straight to Britain for processing so Britain can then sell hats around the world and to America at far more inflated prices than what they paid the Americans for the cost of the raw materials. This trade imbalance becomes an open wound some 30 years later.
1733	For similar reasons to the *Hat Act 1732*, Britain passes the *Sugar and Molasses Act 1733* restricting the American rum trade with non-British sources. The 13th European colony of Georgia is established in North America.
1740s	An intense religious revival called the Great Awakening begins in America, leading to the evangelisation of the population. This sets a pattern of a distinct American style of worship and oratory (overt, demonstrative, dramatic and loud) that continues to the present day.
1750	Britain passes the *Iron Act* restricting any American manufacturing of iron products, again applying similar restraints as the *Hat Act 1732*.
1751	Britain passes the *Currency Act*, discouraging the use of American colonial currencies.
1754	The French and Indian War begins. This is the name given to the North American theatre of the Seven Years' War – a global conflict involving the European empires of Britain, France and Spain. George Washington helps to start the conflict when fighting on the British side against the French. Washington is a Colonel in the Virginia militia fighting under the command of the British Army. The Albany Conference in New York during June–July sees nine of the 13 British colonies in North America meet in a formal setting for the first time. Benjamin Franklin's Albany Plan is mooted (to unite against a perceived French threat during the French and Indian War), which was the first and unsuccessful attempt at a loose federal union of American colonies.
1759	French and British fight on the Plains of Abraham, near present-day Quebec City in Canada. Britain wins this crucial battle and effectively wins the French and Indian War and control of the east coast of North America.
1760	George III becomes King of England. Initially very popular in America, by 1783 he would become famously known as the 'King that lost America'.
1763	The Treaty of Paris officially ends the French and Indian War. French possessions in North America are reduced to small pockets in Canada and in Louisiana.

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1

Brief background to America in 1763

> *A revolution is a struggle to the death between the future and the past.*
>
> – FIDEL CASTRO

OVERVIEW

The American Revolution is an important historical event that's well worth investigating closely. Apart from the change it brought upon America itself, significantly – it also inspired other revolutions – including French Revolutionaries only a decade later – to act to dramatically change their society, with the legendary 'American spirit' spreading through France. Indeed, it must be said that the pre-revolutionary period (before 1754) and post-revolutionary period (after 1789) are fascinating areas of study that are not assessed in the VCE Revolutions course. These time periods will have to be taken up at university, or just in your general reading as a lover of American history. For now, in order to better understand the events of 1754–76, in which a revolutionary situation developed in North America, first it is instructive to look at a range of pre-revolutionary factors that influenced America's foundation.

KEY ISSUES

- What was America like before the arrival of European colonists?
- How was America founded by Europeans?
- What was the social structure of the British colonies in America?
- Where did American colonists get their revolutionary ideas?
- What was the French and Indian War?
- Significant individual – George Washington (Part 1)
- Significant individual – King George III

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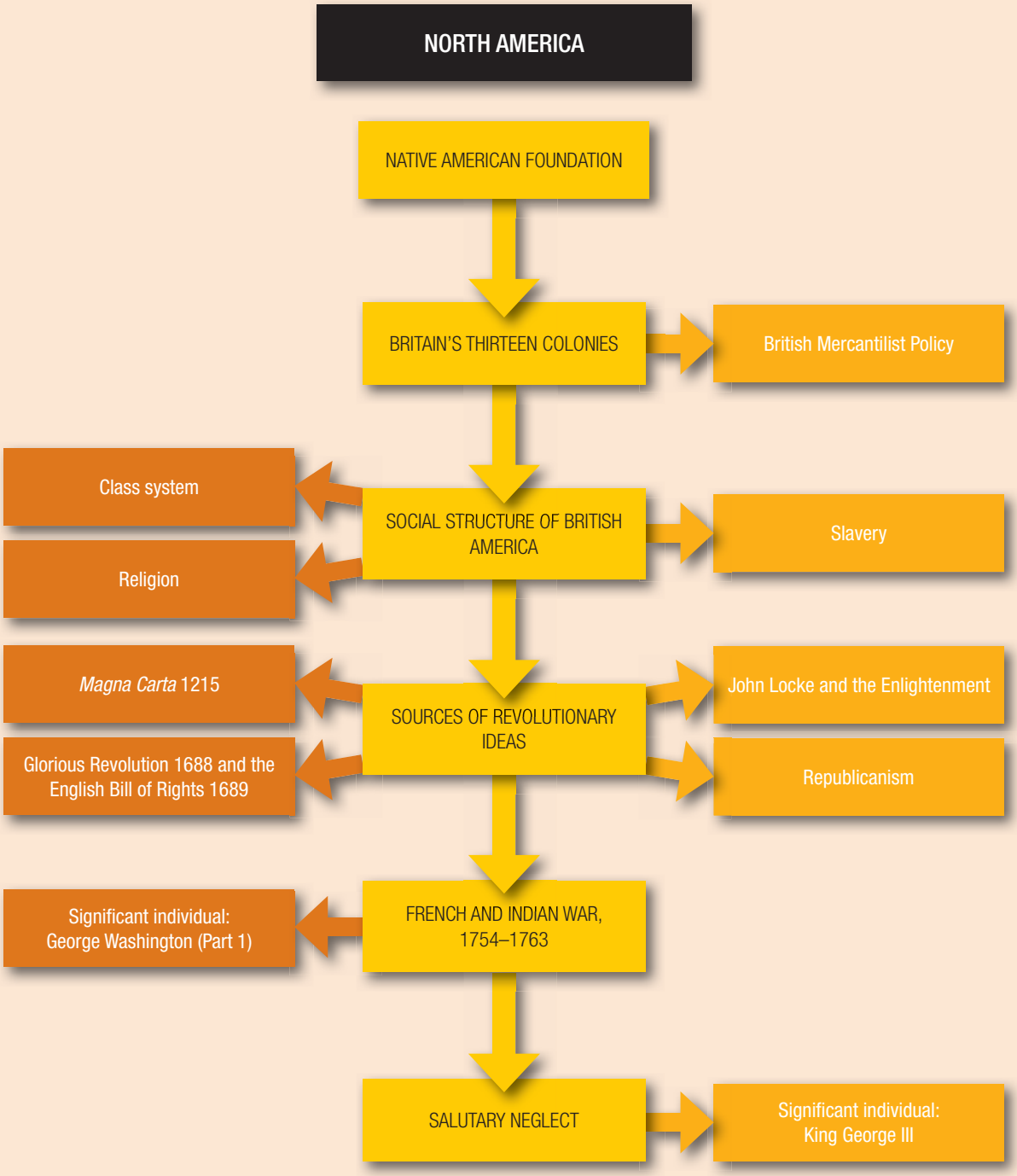
FLOW OF CHAPTER



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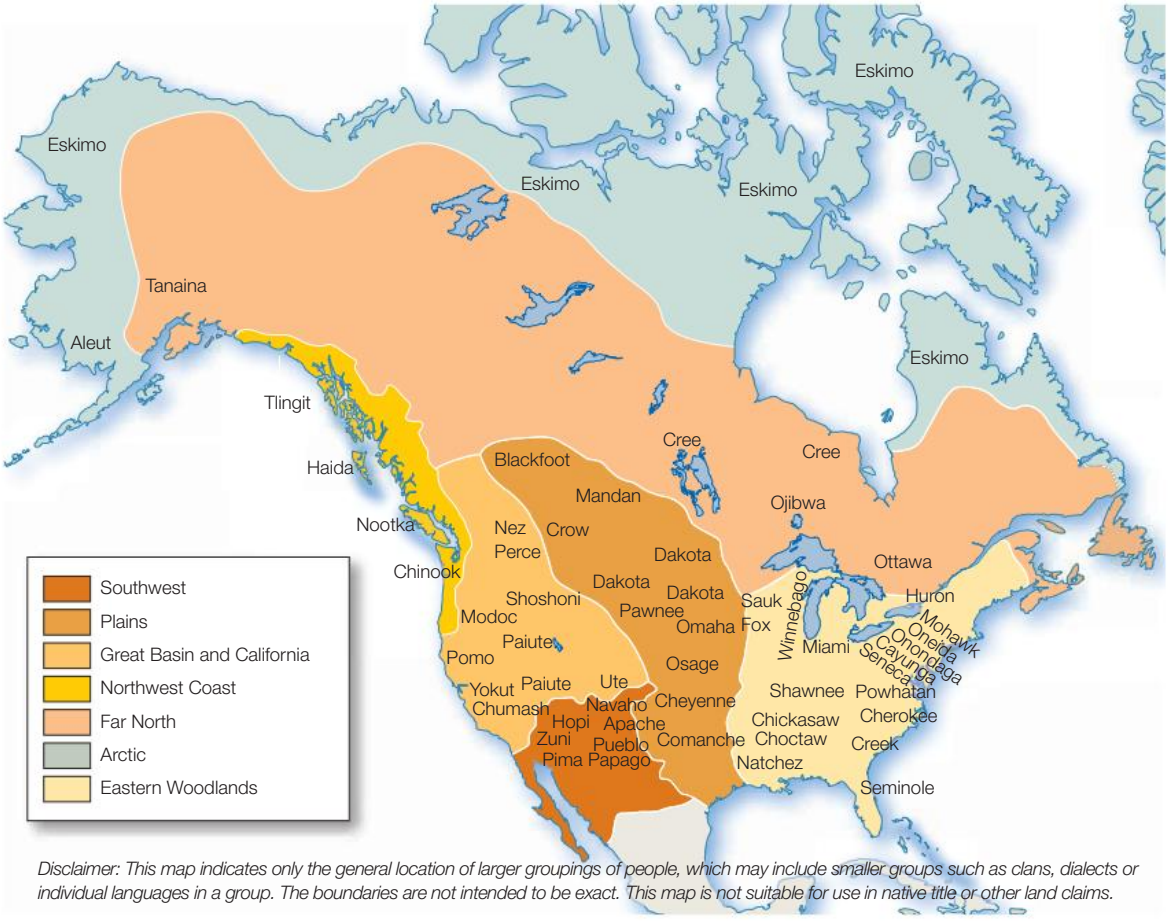
1.1 First Nations foundation

One of the tragic stories of the American journey is the decline of the once proud '500 Nations' of North and South America. One contemporary theory about the settling of America is that Siberian nomads travelled across the Bering Strait via an Ice Age land bridge from the European continent into present-day Alaska more than 14 000 years ago. Eventually these groups populated the whole North American continent from the Arctic Circle to the bottom of South America. Until Europeans made inroads into America (especially the Vikings, Spanish, French, Dutch and English), these 500 Nations – the **First Nations** (or 'Native Americans') – had rich cultures, civilisations and histories. While tribal names like Iroquois, Sioux, Apache, Huron, Algonquin, Creek, Cherokee and Mohawk have become incorporated into the European lexicon (see Source 1.1), First Nations tribes are one of the key groups for whom the American Revolution and the new Constitution in 1789 (covered in Chapter 8) did not bring any benefit, nor do their once proud several thousand-year history in that continent any justice. Europeans exploited inter-tribal rivalries and used First Nations Americans for their own larger political, military and **economic** purposes. Invariably, Native Americans came off second best in these transactions.

First Nations the pre-settlement indigenous communities of North America; a respectful alternative term for 'Native Americans'

economic the theme that involves any issues to do with money, such as taxation, inflation, unemployment, wages and prices of goods



Disclaimer: This map indicates only the general location of larger groupings of people, which may include smaller groups such as clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. The boundaries are not intended to be exact. This map is not suitable for use in native title or other land claims.

Source 1.1 Map of First Nations land holdings prior to European colonisation

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Historians such as Francis Jennings and Howard Zinn deal with these issues in their writings on America, which you will read about in due course.

Tensions between First Nations and contemporary Americans are ongoing, with this painful chapter of American history still being written.

Source 1.2 A 1762 English engraving of Cherokee tribal chiefs, *The Stalking Turkey, The Pouting Pidgeon, The Man Killer*, artist unknown

A MATTER OF FACT

Contemporary American culture continues to grapple with the issues: the television series 500 Nations and the film Dances with Wolves (see Source 1.3) have a sympathetic First Nations perspective. The actor Kevin Costner was heavily involved in both productions.

Source 1.3 A publicity poster for *Dances with Wolves*

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1.2 Britain's Thirteen Colonies

government the official political body that runs a country

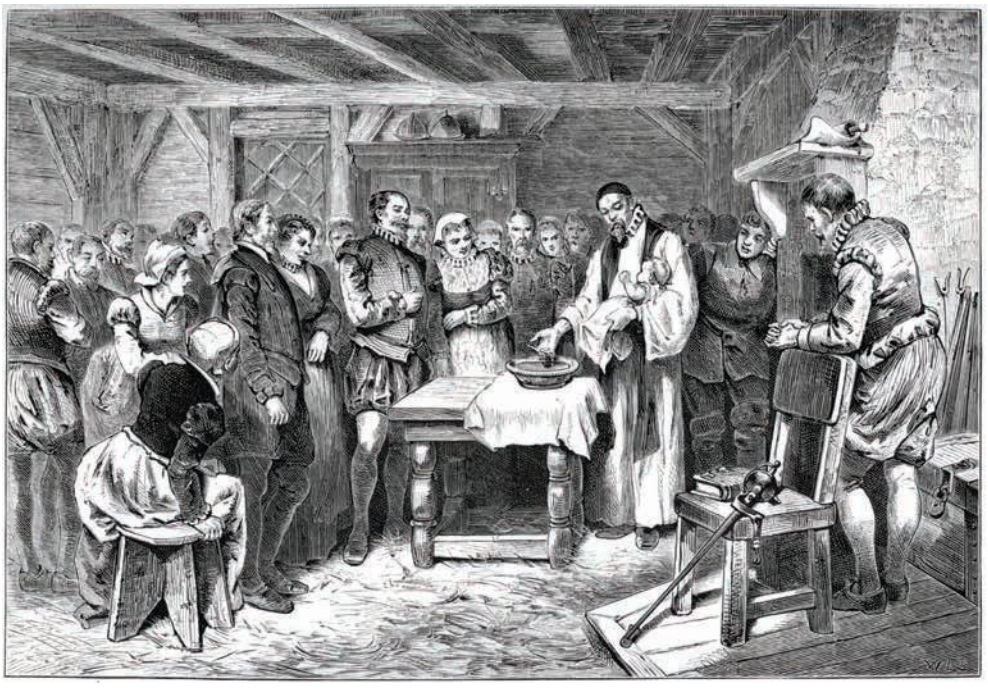
After centuries of imperialistic scrambling, piracy, arranged marriages and 'hot' and 'cold' wars by competing European powers for global supremacy (particularly the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French and British; see Source 1.5), by 1754 Britain had emerged as a key power in America. Britain's **government**, booming economy, armed forces, speed in harnessing Industrial Revolution technology and successful military campaigns outmuscled the other powers, and were all factors in creating an empire that stretched the globe.

Between 1607 (Virginia) and 1732 (Georgia) Britain founded Thirteen Colonies on the east coast of North America. This was to be the setting of the American Revolution, and most of the events featured in this book. Apart from North America, the other key location to consider was London, the capital city of the British 'motherland'. The ways in which the British managed the Thirteen Colonies is a major focus of the chapters in Part One of this book. The ways that British rule was executed over their colonies will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

colony a place governed by another country and settled by their people

By the mid-18th century, each **colony** had its own character: Georgia, for instance, was as different from Massachusetts as night and day. Colonists had different accents, clothing styles, economies, religious practices, politics, manners and mores. Most of their external connections, such as trade, were with Britain rather than with the other colonies themselves. As future Founding Father John Adams later put it:

> *The colonies had grown up under constitutions of government so different, there was so great a variety of religions, they were composed of so many different nations, their customs, manners, and habits had so little resemblance, and their intercourse had been so rare.*
>
> J. Adams, letter to H. Niles, 13 February 1818



Source 1.4 The first colonist of British origin born on American soil, *Baptism of Virginia Dare*, lithograph, by Henry Howe, 1876

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Source 1.5 Map of French, Spanish and British territory in North America around 1754

Similarly, describing how different the American colonies were from one another, an English visitor to the colonies said, 'fire and water are not more heterogeneous than the different colonies of North America'. In other words, fire and water had more in common than the different colonies of North America.

This was the case at least until the 1750s, when the colonies began collaborating with each other at the Albany Congress of June 1754. This meeting, in Albany, New York, between nine of the Thirteen Colonies, was not designed to forge an alliance between the Thirteen Colonies independent of British rule, but instead to discuss ways the colonies could better deal with First Nations peoples and the growing threat of the French in the area. **Benjamin Franklin** presented his **Albany Plan** for unity between the colonies against the French. One of the reasons his call for a colonial union was unsuccessful was economic: most colonies were self-sufficient and dealt with foreign trading partners on their own terms. That being said, the Albany Congress did prove that the colonists could come together in times of great need when they shared concerns.

Franklin, Benjamin (1706–1790) one of the Founding Fathers; he negotiated the 1783 Treaty of Paris (ending the Revolutionary War) and helped to draft both the *Declaration of Independence* and the Constitution of the United States

Albany Plan a plan to unite the Thirteen Colonies proposed by Benjamin Franklin at the Albany Congress in July 1754

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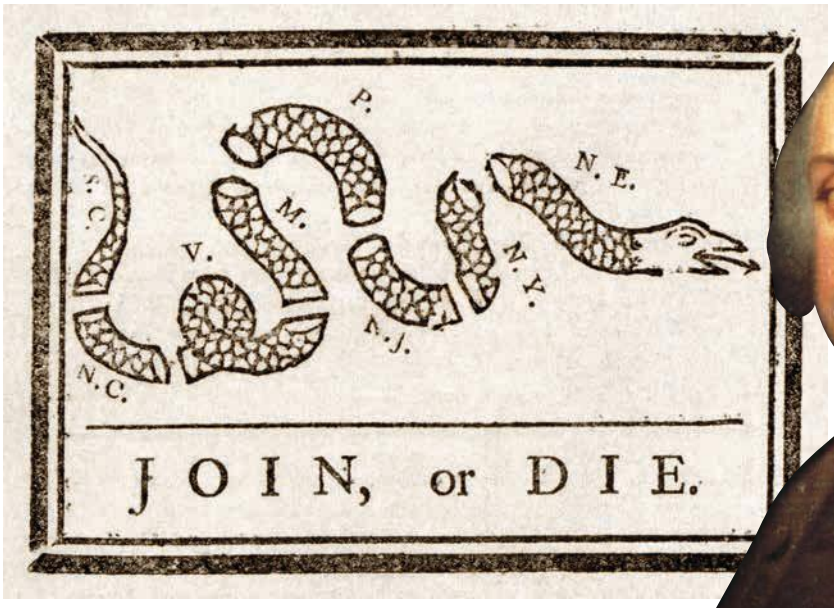

Source 1.6 Above: Benjamin Franklin's 1754 'Join or Die' cartoon. This ink drawing became well known in the American colonies and reappeared later in the Revolution. In fact, Franklin's cartoon became a flag of the later Revolution, which came to fruition in the First **Continental Congress** of 1774. **Right:** *Benjamin Franklin*, by Benjamin Wilson, 1759.

Continental Congress an assembly of delegates representing the Thirteen Colonies in North America that met twice in Philadelphia, in 1774 and 1775

1.3 British mercantilist policy

mercantilism an economic system whereby the first priority of setting up new colonies is that they enrich the Mother Country (Britain in the case of America)

Navigation Acts a series of British laws dating from the early 1600s designed to help the British mercantilist system operate successfully; the British Parliament, Navy and customs officials had sweeping powers to enforce these laws but many American merchants successfully flouted these policies

Mercantilism is the economic policy applied in Britain and its colonies in the 18th century and worked on the basis of maintaining a positive trade balance. Raw materials were taken from America and other colonies, used to produce goods from British factories and then sold back to the colonists (and also exported elsewhere). This policy was backed by legal regulations; for example, the British ***Navigation Acts*** prohibited foreign merchants from trading with America. Britain aggressively sought to establish or take over colonies; once under British control, regulations were imposed that allowed the colony to produce only raw materials and to trade solely with Britain. This led to friction with the inhabitants of these colonies, and mercantilist policies (such as forbidding trade with other empires and controls over smuggling) were a major irritant to American merchants.

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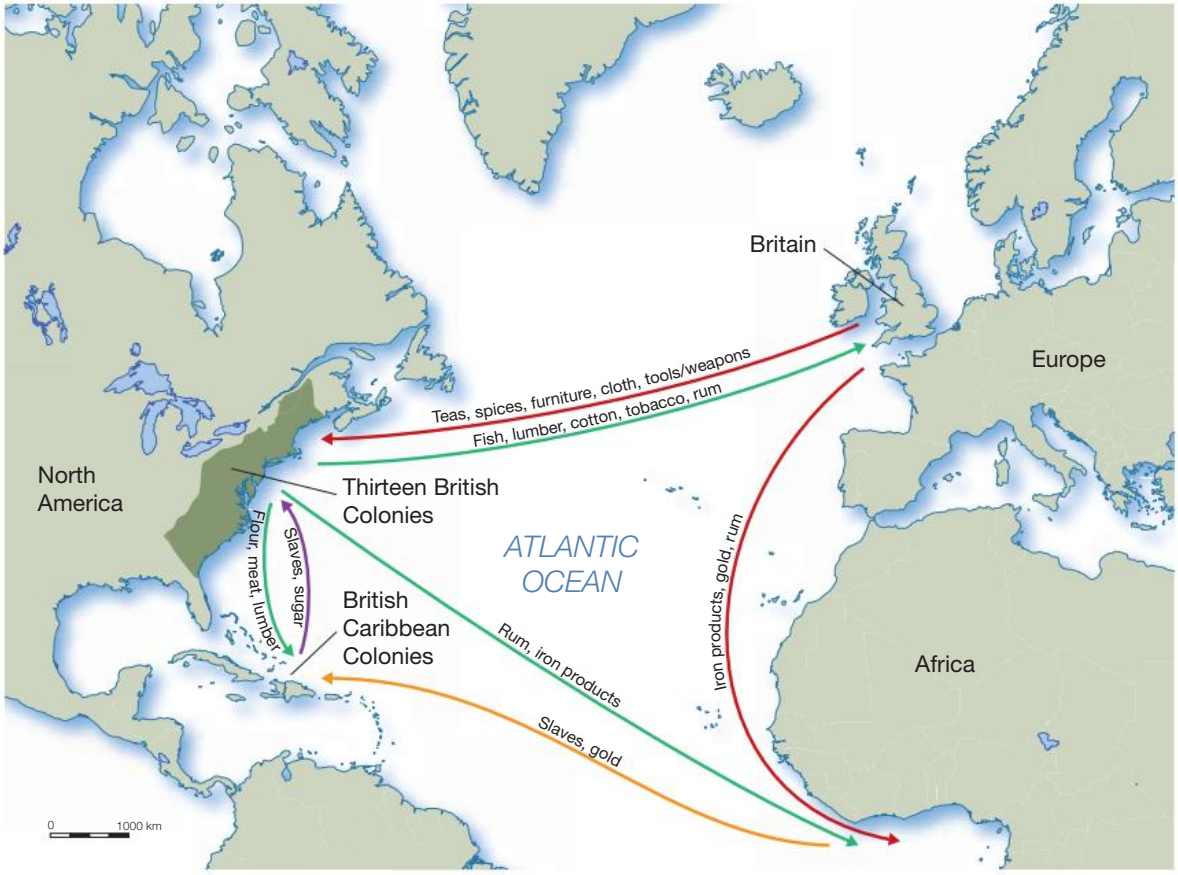

Source 1.7 Map of triangular trade between Europe, Africa and Britain's colonies in North America in the 18th century to support the British policy of mercantilism

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 1.1: INTERNET RESEARCH TASK

Starting with a basic Google search on the Thirteen Colonies, compare Virginia with Pennsylvania or Massachusetts, including each colony's ethnic and cultural makeup, and economic, social, political and religious practices. If using Wikipedia, scroll down to the links under 'References' for more sites. Share your findings with your class. It is quite amazing that these once fiercely independent colonies would eventually form a nation.

A MATTER OF FACT

It's important to note that there was no such thing as an American nation like we know it today at this stage in its history. The 13 separate British colonies didn't much like each other and operated as virtually separate countries. Some of those 13 colonies even fought against each other after the Revolutionary War was over. There was no loyalty to an American nation because one didn't yet exist. There was no Washington DC or federal American government – loyalty was solely to one's own colony.

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1.4 Social structure of the British Colonies

Class system

Old World the rigid and claustrophobic class-based social structure of Europe

deference the act of recognising a 'superior' class of people; in America before the Revolution, people were expected to stop and let a 'gentleman' pass or to tip their hat to them in recognition that they were of a superior class

social mobility an ability to move up the social hierarchy on the basis of talent, as opposed to royal patronage

American dream the ideal that all American citizens are entitled to equal rights and the ability to realise their ambitions

class consciousness a Marxist term to describe a section of society all holding the same ideas or values

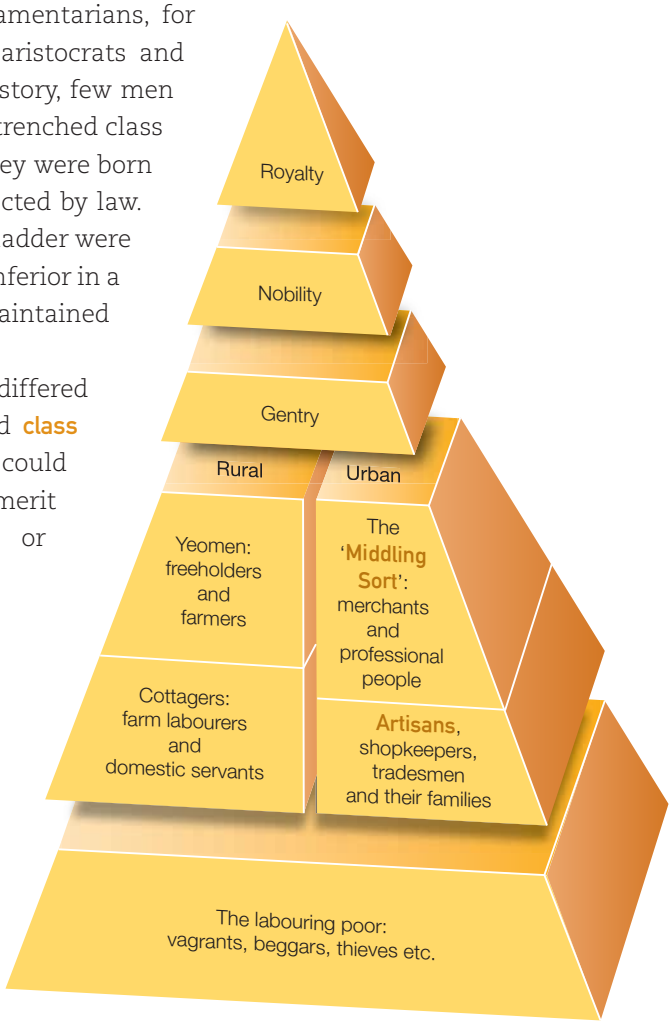
middling sort – or middling class was an 18th-century term for people with wealth, land or property who engaged in commerce. The origin of the modern term 'middle class'.

artisan skilled workers drawn from all levels of society, including poor shoemakers and tailors to elite metal workers or silversmiths

By the 1700s, **Old World** hierarchical class structure, snobbery and **deference** were as pervasive in the American colonies as they were in Europe. The difference was the colonies' absence of monarchs, overcrowded cities and enclosed lands, the geographical isolation of the Thirteen Colonies from Europe, isolation from each other, unlimited employment opportunities and availability of land. All of these factors helped to foster a latent sense of self-determination and independence that would bear fruit in various ways over the course of American history. **Social mobility** is the ability to move out of one's class, and in America, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine and John Adams epitomised this as men from humble beginnings who became spectacularly wealthy and famous (even if fame was fleeting in the case of Paine). The '**American dream**' of going from rags to riches was born. A person with sufficient motivation and drive could rise up the social ladder based on their merit and hard work, not on aristocratic lineage as in Europe.

British Army officers and parliamentarians, for instance, were mostly sons of aristocrats and landed gentry. At this time in history, few men could ever break through the entrenched class inequities of the social ladder they were born into – and which was also protected by law. People lower down on the social ladder were forced to accept that they were inferior in a restrictive system that rigidly maintained the status quo (see Source 1.8).

America – the New World – differed from the Old World of the rigid **class consciousness** of Europe, as one could move up in the world based on merit rather than family influence or



Source 1.8 English social structure during the 18th century (adapted from Heycle, T.W., *The Peoples of the British Isles: A New History*. Vol. 2, Lyceum, 2008, pp. 47–51). Note that the Thirteen Colonies of North America had a similar social structure, but it was less rigidly defined – in part because there was more land and opportunities for people in the New World than in the Old.

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heredity. As an example, Benjamin Franklin was the son of a candlestick maker and, had he been English, would have been a candlestick maker himself. In America, because of the greater opportunities afforded by the less rigid class system, Franklin was able to become a well-educated, wealthy printer who also dabbled in scientific experiments (see Source 1.9), was a wily politician in the Pennsylvanian colonial assembly and helped to draft the *Declaration of Independence*. As an American ambassador, Franklin would negotiate crucial French financial and military aid to America in the Revolutionary War against the British. His fame was built from his own talent and merit instead of from any aristocratic leverage. A **meritocracy** had supplanted the **aristocracy**.

heredity the passing of traits to offspring from parents or ancestors

meritocracy a society based on being recognised for one's talents and ability and not from hereditary connections

aristocracy a rigid social system based entirely on one's hereditary or aristocratic connections (George Washington was refused entry into the officer class of the British Army because he didn't have these connections)

Source 1.9 *Benjamin Franklin Drawing Electricity from the Sky*, by Benjamin West, circa 1816

A MATTER OF FACT

By the time the American Revolution was underway, Benjamin Franklin was indisputably the most famous person from the Thirteen Colonies in Europe.

The increase in America's ethnic diversity from 1609 added another layer of complexity for Britain in trying to wield its authority in the colonies after 1763. Just how British was America? One can see from Source 1.10 that America's ethnic diversity was considerable, particularly when compared with the more monocultural nations of Europe.

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Focus questions

1 Examine Source 1.10. What problems can you see arising for Britain from the cultural diversity of America on the cusp of the 1760s? Look at each group and consider their potential loyalty to Britain. Be prepared to share your individual or group findings with the class.
2 Where did the convicts come from originally and where do they go once the Revolution begins? How does this affect Australia? Discuss your theories in class.

English	1,287,000
Africans	520,000
Scots and Scots/Irish	302,000
German	184,000
Dutch	126,000
Miscellaneous (Finns, Swedes, Belgians and others)	101,000
Southern Irish	82,000
First Nations Americans	38,000
Convicts	30,000
Total population	2,670,000

Source 1.10 American population diversity pre-1763 (Cantwell, J., *America in Revolution*, McGraw-Hill, Sydney, 2005, p. 35)

Religion

zealot an ardent and fanatical follower of a religious creed or idea

dissident a person disagreeing with the established government or system

The founding of America by religious **zealots**, exiles, **dissidents**, New World idealists and capitalists had a profound influence on the overtly evangelical nature of American society. The Pilgrim Fathers (Source 1.11) were Puritans, but in their wake came Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Quakers, and later Amish and Mennonites.

Source 1.11 A representation of the Pilgrim Fathers by Robert Walter Weir, 1857

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These groups sought new starts and a renewal or reawakening of their faith by escaping the confines of European laws and customs. Northern colonies would especially be influenced by this independent, self-sufficient mindset, free from control of the state or established church authorities. The **Great Awakening** in mid-18th-century America was a religious resurgence of the power of a citizen (or a group of like-minded citizens) to determine the destiny of their own independent faith. This would soon bear fruit in terms of a self-sufficient desire for a more representative government – if one can worship their own God in their own independent way without ordained priests, reverends and pastors, or the oversight of the established church (such as Anglicanism in Britain and Catholicism in France), why shouldn't one be able to govern a nation without kings or a distant British Parliament?

Great Awakening a religious revival in American colonies from the late 1730s to the 1760s sparked by George Whitfield (1714–1770), an itinerant English Methodist preacher whose evangelical fervour and eloquence led to many conversions

Anglican relating to the Church of England

Church type	No.
Anglican	406
Baptist	457
Congregational	749
Reformed	328 (Dutch 127 and German 201)
Lutheran	240
Presbyterian	495
Quaker	200
Roman Catholic	56

Source 1.12 The type and number of churches in the American Colonies by 1780 (Gaustad, E., 'Religion Before the Revolution', in J. Greene & J. Pole (eds), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1991, p. 69)

Focus questions

1 The official and governing religious denomination of England at this time was the Anglican faith – or the Church of England as it was known. Add together all the non-Anglican churches in America in 1780. Can you make some conclusions about this fact? Be prepared to share your findings.
2 Briefly research the Quaker, Amish and Mennonite religious factions. How would these groups provide challenges to British and to American authority? Be prepared to share your findings.

Slavery

A system of **slavery** was well established by the time of the Revolution and both the British and the American sides in the Revolutionary War of 1775–83 used African-Americans expediently. The trans-Atlantic slave trade ultimately altered the course of American history and became an ongoing cause of rebellions, exploitation, death, civil wars and civil rights debates, as well as fracturing America into distinct regions of North and South.

The distinctly awful and harrowing experience of the capture and deportation of African slaves is captured forcefully by Steven Spielberg's 1997 film *Amistad*, while the experience of later plantation life is depicted in Steve McQueen's 2013 film *12 Years a Slave* (see Source 1.13) and the 19th-century best seller by Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. That book was said to have made the British sovereign Queen Victoria weep. Slavery would give the South its great distinction from the North, economically, socially and politically.

slavery the forced labour of human beings without payment; in the American context this refers to African people taken from their homeland against their will. In what was termed 'chattel slavery', the slaves were the property of the 'master' and could be bought and sold on a whim. Husbands, wives and children could all be split and sold separately. Each child of a slave was a slave for life and so were their children.

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Cambridge University Press

Source 1.13 A still from *12 Years a Slave*

Historian Simon Schama takes up some of these issues in his book *Rough Crossings*. The following description is from a slave who grew up on a Virginian plantation in the mid-1700s and eventually helped the British Army during the Revolutionary War:

> *My oldest sister was called Patty; I have seen her several times so whipped that her back was all corruption, as though it would rot. My brother Dick ran away, but they caught him and brought him home, and as they were going to tie him up he broke away again and they hunted him with horses and dogs, till they took him; then they hung him up to a cherry tree in the yard, by his two hands, quite naked except for his breeches with his feet about half a yard from the ground. They tied his legs close together and put a pole between them at one end of which one of the owner's sons sat, to keep him down and another son at the other. And after he received 500 lashes or more, they washed down his back with salt water and whipped it in as well as rubbed it in with a rag and then directly sent him to work in pulling off suckers of tobacco.*

Schama, S., *Rough Crossings*, Vintage Books, London, 2009, p. 117

But slaves first had to survive the ocean voyage from Africa. On a voyage from Africa to Jamaica in 1781, the captain of notorious slave ship the *Zong*, Luke Collingwood, found himself in charge of a ship rife with illness. When a navigation error resulted in an extra week at sea, supplies started to run out. Already 60 slaves had died on board along with seven of the 14 white passengers. Alexander Falconbridge, a surgeon who served on four slaving voyages between 1783 and 1787, recounted that 'down in the hold, amid the slop of mucous, blood, faeces, urine and black vomit, slaves continued to sicken'. He wrote that the floors of a slaving ship were 'so covered in blood and mucous that it resembled a slaughterhouse. It is not in the power of human imagination to picture to itself a situation more dreadful or more disgusting'.

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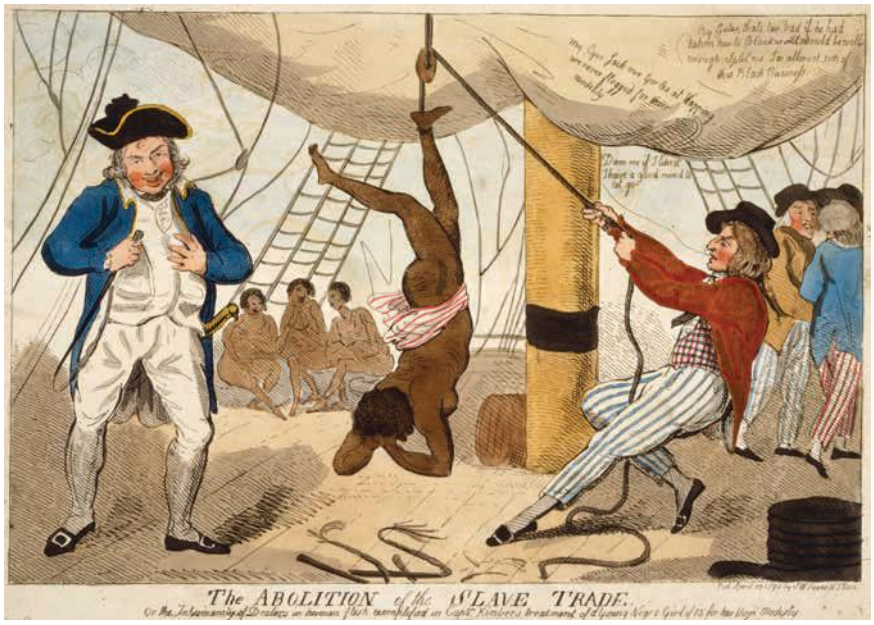

Source 1.14 An abolitionist print of an alleged incident of a slave girl being whipped to death aboard a slave ship in 1792

In his wisdom, Captain Collingwood thought what was needed was a mercy killing of selected slaves to save the rest of the ship. Over the next few days he ordered his crew to throw selected numbers of their 'live cargo' (African men, women and children) overboard. Schama states:

> *With the children it could not have been much labour, made light and soft from their sickness as they were. But with the adult men and women two crewmen were needed, sometimes even a third … As the remainder suddenly comprehended what was to be done to them, the screaming and flailing against the shackles started, and then, from those already in the water, there was some further impotent thrashing until the waves closed over them. Sensing a meal from the wounds opened by the chafing of the irons, sharks slid economically towards their prey.*
>
> Schama, S., *Rough Crossings*, Vintage Books, London, 2009, p. 190

Source 1.15 A sketch of European sailors throwing African slaves overboard during a sea voyage to the Americas, circa 1750

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1.5 Sources of revolutionary ideas

Magna Carta, 1215

From where did revolutionaries get their ideas during the American Revolution? The *Magna Carta* was a famous English document from the 13th century that was constructed to constrain the power of a monarch in favour of landowners and businesspeople. Two core principles from the *Magna Carta* underlay common American beliefs of the revolutionary period:

> *No freeman shall be taken, imprisoned, disseised, outlawed, banished, or in any way destroyed, nor will We proceed against or prosecute him, except by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land.*
>
> *To no one will We sell, to no one will We deny or delay, right or justice.*

Source 1.16 **Left:** A modern representation of British King John signing the *Magna Carta* in 1215; **Right:** a page of the document today

Bill of Rights a declaration of individual rights and freedoms, usually issued by a national government; a list of fundamental rights included in each state constitution

prime minister the elected leader of the ruling party in the British Parliament

The American colonists used these principles as a source for their Constitution and the **Bill of Rights**. According to Professor Peter Mancall, 'the *Magna Carta* mattered because it demonstrated limits to the power of the monarch, which became one of the fundamental principles of British law'. The link between the documents was noted by Sir Winston Churchill, the British **Prime Minister** during the Second World War, who claimed that the *Declaration of Independence* was essentially a restatement of *Magna Carta* values.

A MATTER OF FACT

Recently released British Cabinet documents from the Second World War revealed that Winston Churchill's government was prepared to give the Americans one of the original surviving copies of the Magna Carta in return for America joining the war against Nazi Germany. The British Parliament knew how highly regarded the Magna Carta was in America.

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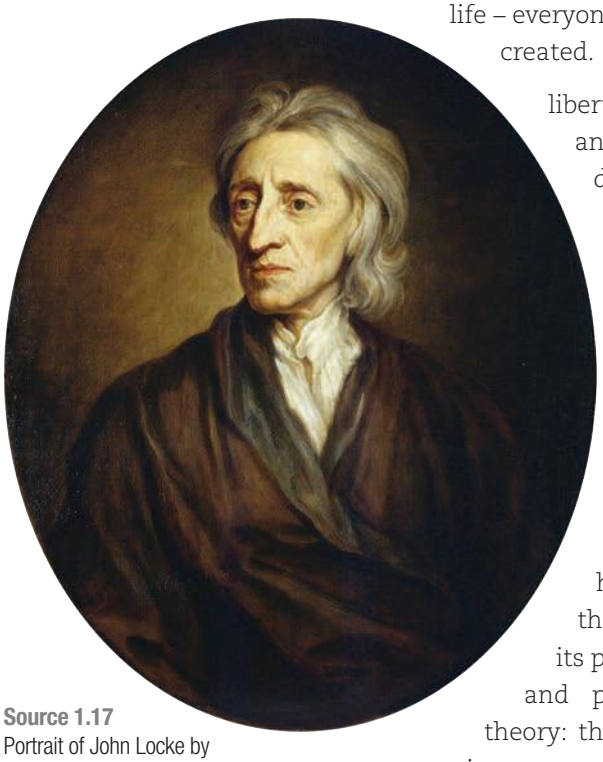
Natural rights

Where else did American revolutionaries source their inspiration? John Locke (see Source 1.17) was an influential 17th- and 18th-century English philosopher who contributed to the main ideas and **ideology** of the American Revolution and the Founding Fathers of the new American state. Locke's writings *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), *Two Treatises on Government* (1690) and the **Enlightenment** movement itself found fertile soil in the minds of Americans. In these documents Locke argued that all human beings have three '**natural rights**' – Life, Liberty and Estate (or property) – that governments and royalty should not infringe upon:

life – everyone is entitled to live once they are created.

liberty – everyone is entitled to do anything they wish as long as it doesn't conflict with the first right.

estate – everyone is entitled to own all they create or gain through gift or trade so long as it doesn't conflict with the first two rights.



Source 1.17
Portrait of John Locke by Sir Godfrey Kneller, circa 1697

In Locke's first **treatise**, he disputed the concept of a monarch's **divine right** to rule. In his second treatise, he attacked the need for a standing army and its ptoential use as a tool by a tyrant, and propounded the **social contract** theory: that people have a right to revolt against a government that infringes on their natural rights. The British Parliament's trespassing on these natural rights of American colonists provided ideological ammunition for the American Revolution, with the ideas of natural rights, the social contract, the force of the British standing army and **justified revolution** used by the Founding Fathers in their speeches, countless newspaper pieces, personal correspondence, state papers, pamphlets, **broadsides**, posters, cartoons, paintings and songs before, during and after the Revolution. Locke also directly influenced Thomas Jefferson's writings almost 100 years later when Jefferson penned the *Declaration of Independence*, including the famous line: 'All men are created equal and endowed with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.'

It is important to note that, like most historical standpoints, this view of Locke's influence is contested. For an alternative viewpoint, see Chapter 4 of Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*, where he puts forward an interesting left-wing critique of Locke and some of the motivations

ideology a governing set of ideas or beliefs held by a group

Enlightenment an English and French philosophical movement in the 18th century whose ideas would inspire many of the American Founding Fathers

natural rights John Locke's idea that people are entitled to certain privileges and basic freedoms simply because they exist

treatise a formal and systematic written work that examines and explains a specific subject

divine right the idea that a king or queen is placed in their position by God and that all others below them are inferior

social contract a contract between those in power and their people or followers; the American colonists felt King George III had violated the social contract, which justified the Revolution

justified revolution the idea that revolution is both justified and right

broadside a large poster-sized article that could be displayed in a public place, usually containing a scathing attack on one's enemies; the Americans used this form of media very successfully against the British

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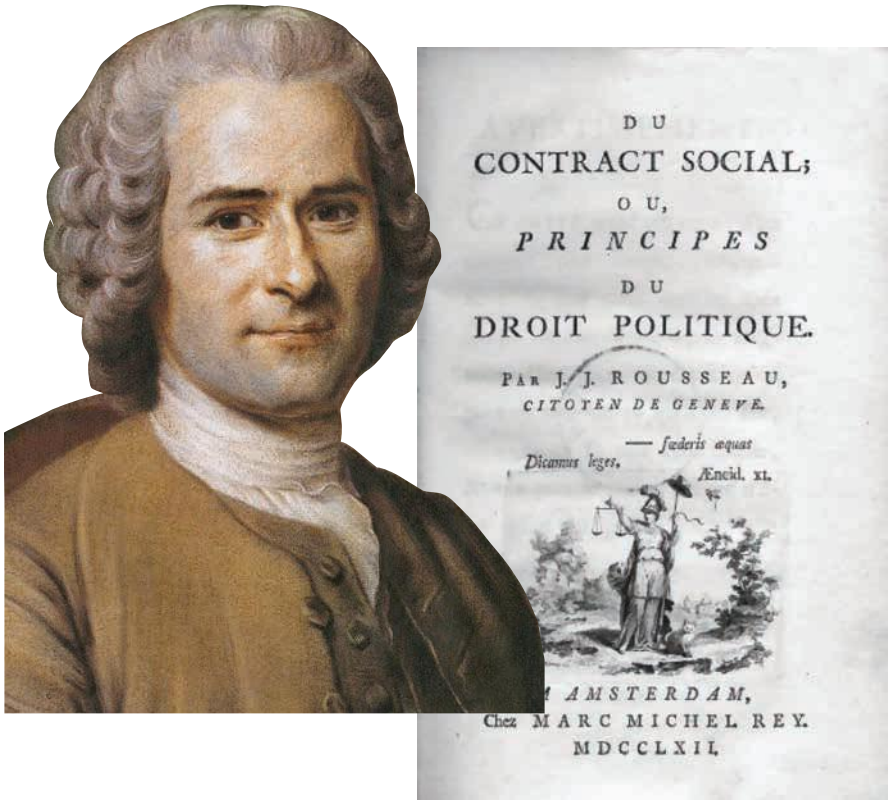
behind the American Revolution. For more on the use of political pamphlets, see the Preface to Bernard Bailyn's *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*.

Several major French philosophers were also central to the Enlightenment, including Baron de Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Denis Diderot and René Descartes. These men argued that freedom, democracy, religious tolerance and reason were primary and central values in society. Rousseau (1712–1778; see Source 1.18), particularly in his book *The Social Contract* (1762), argued that society was divided into the government and the people, with each keeping the other in check. The government runs the country, maintains law and order, and protects the welfare of its citizens. The people pay for this stability and protection through taxes. When the government exceeds the boundaries set in place by the people, it is the mission of the people to abolish such government, and begin anew. The social contract is broken. The American argument of justified revolution was born.



Source 1.18 Portrait of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, by Maurice Quentin de La Tour, circa 1750

Two other major Enlightenment figures were John Trenchard (1662–1723) and Thomas Gordon (circa 1690s–1750). In the early 18th century, they published a series of political critiques of the British Government known as *Cato's Letters*, which also had a profound effect on the American revolutionary intelligentsia, and also propounded the idea that standing armies are a prelude to tyranny.

Focus question

Using three or four points, explain how Enlightenment ideas were utilised by the colonists to justify and legitimate their challenge to British authority. Be prepared to share your findings.

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Glorious Revolution 1688 and the English Bill of Rights 1689

During the 17th century, the reign of the English King, James II, was highly controversial and saw both Britain and its colonies ruled in tyrannical fashion until he was overthrown and replaced by William of Orange-Nassau. In exchange for a new model of monarchical and parliamentary power sharing, the British Parliament limited the authority of the monarch and set up a Bill of Rights in 1689 to specify those limits on a king or queen. After the English Civil War and the **Glorious Revolution**, the monarch could no longer dismiss a judge or create new courts without parliamentary consent, nor maintain a standing army in peacetime or raise taxes.

Both the Glorious Revolution and the **English Bill of Rights** (based on Locke's ideas) in time would serve as ideological weapons for the American colonists as they used these precedents as political, legal, social, military and economic constraints against their very creators.

Glorious Revolution the union of English parliamentarians and William III of Orange-Nassau that overthrew King James II of England, leading to his daughter Mary II and William III jointly taking the throne (also known as the Revolution of 1688)

English Bill of Rights an Act of the British Parliament passed in 1689, which declared the rights and liberties of citizens; it also settled the succession of Mary II and William III

Republicanism

Where did American colonists get the idea that they could run their own government separate from a king or queen, which was the major governing structure of most of the European powers for hundreds of years? The Roman **Republic** and the Greek city-state (*polis*) of antiquity both served as an inspiration for the Americans, in concert with what they had gleaned from the *Magna Carta* and the Glorious Revolution.

Wealthy and well-educated citizens in ancient Greece and Rome voluntarily subordinated their private interests to the common good of the whole society. These participatory republics predicated their stability and authority on the virtue of the citizenry as a whole and their resistance to corruption or tyranny by the ruler (or rulers). Each citizen was required to display what is called **civic virtue** and thus had a role to play in keeping their society stable. If the ruler became a tyrant, then it was the most able and most civically virtuous citizen's duty to oust them and replace them with a better system or candidate. Julius Caesar's assassination and America's eventual rejection of George III in the *Declaration of Independence* fit this pattern.

Citizenship, in these societies, was generally associated with some form of land holding (slaves excluded) as it was thought that landowners had more invested in the society and the public good. Eighteenth-century republicans believed a person with 'virtue' owned property, possessed an intrinsic sense of morality, and was willing to subordinate his own interests for the interests of the community; that is, the public good. These were the only sorts of people whom Founding Father Benjamin Franklin thought capable of freedom. Republican government was, by design, antithetical to monarchies or aristocracies.

The preservation of liberty rested on the ability of the people to maintain effective checks on the wielders of power. As historian Bernard Bailyn put it: 'Virtuous citizens needed to be strong defenders of liberty and challenge the corruption and greed in government. The duty of the virtuous citizen became a foundation for the American Revolution.'

republic a form of government where elected officials are chosen by and represent their citizens to enforce the rule of law. In modern parlance, a republic often means a government without a monarch.

civic virtue the belief that a society of virtuous citizens could run a nation and voluntarily subordinate their private interests to the common good of the whole society; together they could resist the corruption or tyranny of an oppressive force

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1.6 FLASHPOINT!

French and Indian War, 1754–1763

The French and Indian War is the name given to the North American theatre of the Seven Years' War – a global conflict involving the European empires of Britain, France and Spain. The French and Indian War was a conflict that had multiple repercussions for the American Revolution, including the following:

- It brought George Washington into the historical frame, serving as a Major in the British Army (see Source 1.24).
- It caught First Nations Americans in the terrible position of being used by both France and Britain in a deadly game of European conquests.
- It opened up the territory for land sales and speculation, in line with the 18th- and 19th-century notion of **manifest destiny**, which would see the whole American continent taken over by Europeans.
- It provided the French with yet another reason for vengeance against the British.
- It increased European settlers' fear of 'Indians'.
- Finally, it blooded a generation of Americans in war on the **frontier**.

Ultimately the war sounded the death knell of French control of North America from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Circle. The **Treaty of Paris** in 1763 that formally ended the war gave all French lands west of the **Appalachians** to Britain, including Quebec and Ohio River Valley. The subsequent British **Royal Proclamation Line** (created by the *Proclamation Act 1763*) led to an uneasy truce and was a source of contention to all British, French, American and First Nations interests for years to come.

manifest destiny the 18th- and 19th-century American establishment belief that all of America would eventually be conquered and be rightfully theirs

frontier land undiscovered by colonialists beyond an established border

Treaty of Paris a peace treaty signed in Paris in 1763, ending the Seven Years' War between France and Britain fought mainly in North America (not to be confused with the next Treaty of Paris in 1783 signed between Britain and America recognising American independence)

Appalachians a mountain range in eastern North America that bordered most of the Thirteen Colonies

Royal Proclamation Line a border that ran the length of the Appalachian Mountains, skirting the western border of most of the Thirteen Colonies, that Britain forbade Americans to cross; created by the British *Proclamation Act 1763*, arising out of the Treaty of Paris (1763)

Source 1.19 A representation of the French and Indian War, *The Death of General Wolfe*, by Benjamin West, 1770

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1.7 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
George Washington (Part 1)

- Arguably the most famous American in his own lifetime, George Washington is still arguably the most famous figure in US history (though Abraham Lincoln also has strong claims on this title).
- Washington's contribution is significant because he figured in the American Revolution at several crucial points, capturing the hearts and minds of revolutionary America as well as winning the Revolutionary War (more on this in Part 2).

Early life and career (1732–1776)

Born and raised in Virginia to Augustine and Mary Ball Washington, George's father was a slave-owning tobacco plantation owner. He was of largely English descent; his ancestor, John Washington, had immigrated from Sulgrave, England, to Virginia in 1657. At the time, Virginia and most of the southern colonies were 'slave societies' and, in a way, were far more British in outlook than the northern colonies – they possessed a ruling elite, which Washington was born into. Washington was a classic example of British-American colonial elite whose family looked to the Mother Country. In fact, it was only the premature death of his father that prevented George from following his brothers and receiving his education at the Appleby School in England.

Source 1.20 Washington's family estate at Mount Vernon, Virginia

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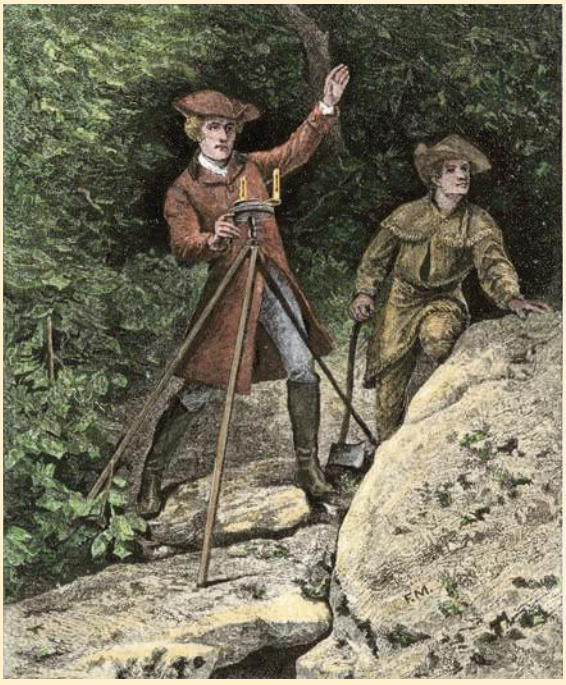
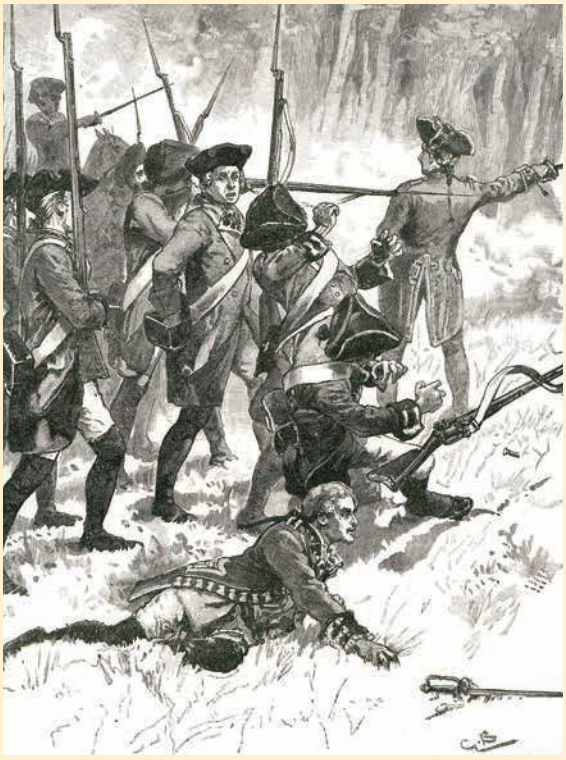
He was tutored at home and then sent to a school near Fredericksburg run by an Anglican clergyman. If education at the hands of a Church of England clergyman didn't establish his English credentials, then early talk of securing a post as a Midshipman in Britain's Royal Navy when he turned 15 certainly did. He inherited enormous wealth from his half-brother Lawrence in 1752 and later from his wife Martha Custis. Lawrence had a powerful connection to the Fairfax family and, at age 17, George was appointed as official surveyor for Culpeper County. This was a lucrative post that facilitated his purchase of land in the Shenandoah Valley, thus launching a career as a land speculator that would later cause him to state that the Royal Proclamation Line of 1763 (restricting land settlements west of the Appalachians) was a 'temporary' barrier; in fact he was surveying land beyond the line at the time for future investment.

Lawrence was a commander in the Virginian Militia and, along with Washington's father, Augustine, a co-founder of the Ohio Company – a land investment company funded by Virginian investors. These connections and George's imposing physique (he stood six feet, which was tall for the time) brought him to the attention of the Lieutenant Governor, Robert Dinwiddie. Effectively, the British system of royal favour and connections facilitated his career. He would lead the revolution that would destroy that very system.

Washington was commissioned into the Virginia Militia as a major in 1753; at the same time he joined the Freemasons. At this point, the Ohio Company, which had been granted land by the Crown in the Ohio Valley, was having its claims tested by French interests. Governor Dinwiddie dispatched the young major with a letter for the local French Commander Jacques Legardeur de Saint-Pierre, who refused to vacate the land. Prior to this meeting Washington had befriended an allied Iroquois chief, Tanacharison, at Logstown. They devised an ambush of what the French claim was a diplomatic party, under the command of the French officer Joseph Coulon de Jumonville. This resulted in the death of de Jumonville and a counter-attack at Fort Necessity, where Washington was humiliatingly taken prisoner and forced to sign a document of surrender before being allowed to return to Virginia. Thus Washington literally



Source 1.21 An artist's interpretation (created circa 1850) of a 21-year-old Washington as a land surveyor in the 1750s



Source 1.22 After the death of General Braddock in the Battle of the Monongahela, Washington rallied the remaining troops to continue fighting. British illustration from 1890.

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began the global Seven Years' War (aka French and Indian War) that would ultimately be the catalyst for the end of British rule in the Thirteen Colonies.

His taste for military ventures was whetted, and he was involved in British General Edward Braddock's disastrous expedition in the Ohio Valley that resulted in the Battle of the Monongahela, where Washington performed well, rallying British troops and colonial militia to fight on after the death of Braddock.

It is clear from this action he learnt a lot about the strengths and weaknesses of the British Army. Due to this he repeatedly sought and was denied a regular commission in the British Army between 1755 and 1757 on his return to Virginia, presumably to aid the Mother Country in its handling of tactics and strategy in the American wilderness. After all, he had been involved in two nearly identical battles where the American terrain had been used to an advantage. It is interesting to speculate what would have eventuated had the British accepted his offers. By 1758, he was a member of the **Virginia House of Burgesses** and was involved with opposing the ***Stamp Act*** of 1765, stating that the British Parliament had no right to 'put their hands in my pockets without my consent' (see Chapter 2 for more on this). From 1768 to 1769 Washington led a continent-wide **boycott** of British goods in opposition to the *Townshend Duties* (see Chapter 3). In 1774 he approved the Fairfax Resolves and brought them to the House of Burgesses (Virginia Convention). Finally, he attended both Continental Congresses and was appointed Commander in Chief of the Continental Army in 1775, after turning up to the Second Congress in the uniform of a full Virginian Colonel, thereby shoring up an alliance of the southern states with New England (see Chapter 4).

Virginia House of Burgesses the representative colonial assembly of Virginia

Stamp Act a British law of 1765 to raise funds from the Thirteen Colonies. This proved to be greatly unpopular and was a key source of revolutionary tension through the 1760s.

boycott the deliberate choice to avoid purchasing goods as a protest against their manufacturer or country of origin

Importantly, his opposition to the Proclamation Line in 1763 should be seen in the light of his position as a tobacco plantation holder. Any restriction on land acquisition for plantation holders meant penury (extreme poverty), as tobacco sucked nutrients out of the ground and further land was always being sought by plantation owners. Land equalled wealth in Virginia.

For Part 2 of this profile on Washington's life between 1776 and 1789, see Chapter 6.

Source 1.23 The earliest authenticated portrait of Washington (in his 40s) wearing his Virginia militia uniform from the French and Indian War, by Charles Willson Peale, 1772

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Reflecting back to the events of my youth, in March 1754 I had the honour of joining the militia of the great colony of Virginia, and was proud to be promoted from Major to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel by Lt. Governor of Virginia, Robert Dinwiddie. I knew that both the good reputation of my family name as well as the strength of my character had helped in my appointment as an officer. I was in command of my own regiment, even though I was but 22 years of age.

My orders were to venture from Williamsburg, Virginia, into the rugged Appalachian region of the Ohio Valley to force the French to abandon their forts and leave the area – as Virginia was British land after all. Indeed, my published account of my first, peaceful, meeting with Captain Jacques Legardeur de Saint-Pierre at Fort LeBoeuf in December 1753 had actually made me something of a famed personage both in my home as well as across the Atlantic in the city of London. As I later commented: 'It was an extraordinary circumstance that so young and inexperienced a person be employed on a negotiation with which the subjects of the greatest importance were involved.'

Source 1.24 A modern illustration representing Major George Washington in service to the British army in the French and Indian War

For my second venture into the Ohio wilderness, Dinwiddie wanted my regiment to 'act on the defensive,' but at the same time 'make Prisoners of or kill & destroy' all those who resisted British control of the region. The outcome of these events is well documented, as my regiment's attack on the French ignited the powder keg of global warfare …

In short, though, during the course of the 'French and Indian War' over the next few years I witnessed both military blunders and the arrogance of my 'superiors'. The British Army disrespected we colonials, treating us as second-class citizens, and my own status as an officer of the Virginian militia was not even recognised. Through these experiences with the British, however, I learnt how not to fight a war in North America.

George Washington: Service for Britain in the French and Indian War, 1754

A MATTER OF FACT

George Washington is one of the most famous Americans of all time. His image is on the $1 bill, meaning he is literally in every American home and possibly in every American pocket at any given time.

Source 1.25 George Washington on the US$1 bill

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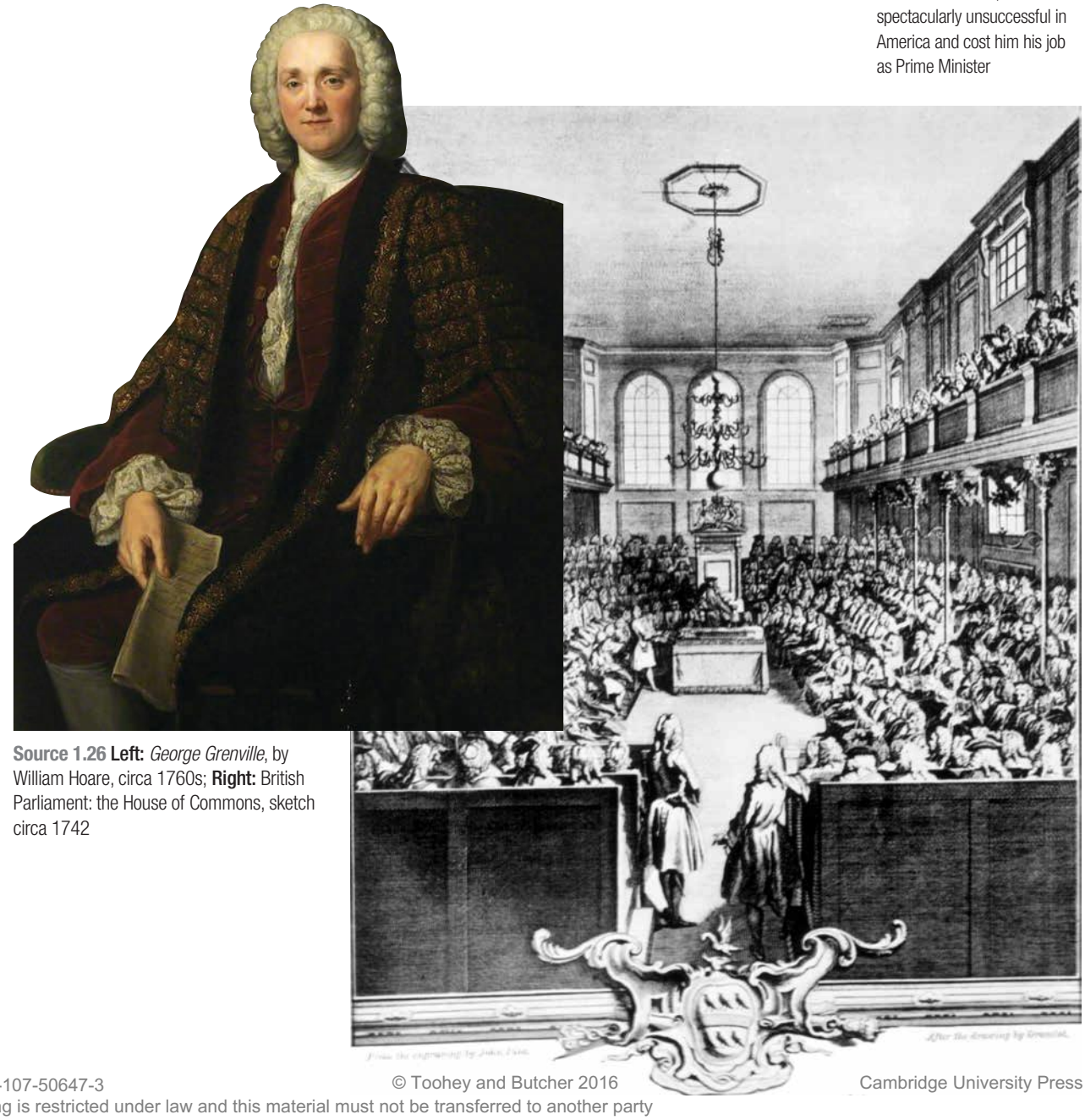
1.8 Salutary neglect

Coined by British Prime Minister Robert Walpole (served 1721–1742), the term '**salutary neglect**' is used to denote the period of 150 years from the early decades of the 1600s until 1763 in which America was virtually self-governed. Britain had too much on its imperial agenda to concentrate much energy on its newest venture in America. Only after the French and Indian War (1754–1763) did King George III, Prime Minister **George Grenville** and the British Parliament find the time to focus on colonial America's domestic and foreign policy. Salutary neglect ended in 1763, with Britain attempting to extract more revenue (income) from its colonies – as opposed to just regulating normal trade – in order to pay for the massive French and Indian War debt of 130 million pounds.

salutary neglect a term in American history that refers to the unofficial and long-term 17th- and 18th-century British policy of lenient or lax enforcement of parliamentary laws meant to keep American colonies obedient to England

Grenville, George the British Prime Minister who devised the *Sugar Act 1764* and the *Stamp Act 1765* to raise colonial revenue for Britain; these were spectacularly unsuccessful in America and cost him his job as Prime Minister



Source 1.26 **Left:** *George Grenville*, by William Hoare, circa 1760s; **Right:** British Parliament: the House of Commons, sketch circa 1742

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1.9 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
King George III (1738–1820)

- George III had his coronation ceremony in 1760 and remained the King of Britain for 59 years.
- An heir of the Hanoverian dynasty, George was the third Hanoverian monarch and yet the first to be born in England, speak English as his native language and be brought up in the Anglican faith. In fact, he never even visited Hanover in Germany.
- George received an education in science and the arts that was heavily influenced by Enlightenment thinking. As king, he became known as 'Farmer George' due to his attention to more modern agricultural and industrial techniques.
- However, despite this progressive thinking, George's politics and his appointments as a constitutional monarch remained highly conservative throughout his reign.
- His time as monarch was marked by his kingdom being involved in various military conflicts, accompanied by his firm resolve to maintain the empire he inherited and was extremely proud of. Despite the fact that George III almost exclusively followed the policies of his appointed ministers, due to his traditional nature and imperialist leaning, he is often depicted as the initiator of the American Revolution.

Source 1.27 *King George III* in coronation robes, by Allan Ramsay, circa 1765

- After the loss of the North American colonies, George considered abdicating the throne due to his personal distress at the situation. However, in his later years, George grew to accept the independence of the United States and started trying to rebuild a relationship between the two nations.
- Upon his death the Prince Regent became King George IV.

A MATTER OF FACT

George III is known to many people today because of the stage play and film The Madness of King George. In his lifetime, it is known that he was taken by several bouts of a severe and mysterious illness (diagnosed in the 1960s as acute porphyria – but today considered to be mental illness such as bipolar disorder). One particularly strange symptom for George III is that when he was ill his body allegedly produced blue urine!

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ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 1.2: HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

In SACs and the examination you are required to write about historians' interpretations of history. This is a difficult concept to grasp at first, but not impossible. Imagine that two people from the time of the American Revolution, a slave and a colonial elite, like George Washington, were both asked to recount their experiences of that time. Due to their varied experiences, as you might expect, both would give us very different accounts about the past – and both would be correct. That was their reality. You have to take into account a person's biographical story to understand where they are coming from. The way a historian sees the world and puts their thoughts on paper works in the same manner. One's life experiences, religious beliefs, political persuasion, education and so on flavour the way one sees the world. Historians are people and are affected in the same way.

The term 'historical interpretations' relates to the study of the writing and interpretation of the past by historians. (You may come across the term '**historiography**' in your research for VCE Revolutions – this is the formal term for historical interpretations). That is, it looks at methods used by historians to determine what occurred in history and how it should be regarded. It tries to decipher a historian's interpretation of a particular nation, group, person, event or fact to find the truth of what is being presented. The dominant perspective on the American Revolution by the bulk of the Western historians, especially Americans, is a very positive interpretation of what happened. In this view, America is a brilliant nation and the Founding Fathers are exceptional, beating the 18th-century world's dominant political and military power. This can be termed a 'right-wing' interpretation. A 'left-wing' interpretation is more critical of America and the Founding Fathers, focusing on controversial issues of slavery, class inequality, gender inequality and the treatment of First Nations Americans. These two opposite poles of right wing and left wing are important concepts to understand as you continue through the course, and are discussed more fully in Chapter 10. After working through a range of sources in class and at home, you should begin to see some of these different interpretations emerge.

historiography the study of the writing and interpretation of the past

The story so far

- America's founding was in part a by-product of a global power struggle between competing European nations in which Britain emerged as the dominant power.
- Slavery was an ongoing undercurrent of tension in America that would frustrate the making of the New Society, influence the drafting of the *Declaration of Independence* and the Constitution, and eventually climax in a massive civil war in 1861.
- Enlightenment ideals from French and British philosophers found fertile soil in the New World – a remote continent far removed from the strict hierarchies, class snobbery and lack of economic opportunity within staid European monarchies.
- Precedents set by the *Magna Carta*, the British Bill of Rights, the Glorious Revolution and Republican ideas dating back to antiquity became powerful agents of change in America's intelligentsia.
- Religious freedom was fundamental to a post–Great Awakening America. This led naturally to the idea that kings were not needed and citizens could organise their own government.
- Long after the Treaty of Paris (1763), the French and Indian War of 1754–1763 produced social, economic, political and military repercussions both in Europe and America.
- America enjoyed unofficial economic and political independence for 150 years in the 'salutary neglect' period prior to 1763. Britain's attempts to rein in that independence after 1763 sowed the seeds for formal independence.

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CHAPTER REVIEW

DEVELOPING CLEAR DEFINITIONS

In this activity you will review your understanding of the key issues analysed in the chapter. By writing a brief explanation after reading each chapter, you will gradually build up a glossary of comprehensive notes for revision. Write explanations defining each of the following.

Significant ideas and events	Significant individuals
First Nations	Major George Washington
European colonisation	King George III
The Thirteen Colonies	
Mercantilism	
Aristocracy	
Slavery	
The Enlightenment	
Magna Carta	
Salutary neglect	
Proclamation Act 1763	

PRACTISING PARAGRAPH ANSWERS

This activity encourages you to learn the material presented and begin developing your own opinions. Answer precisely using four to five key points.

Using your knowledge of what you have learnt so far, predict and explain how you think each of the following factors would later fuel the revolutionary cause:

- mercantilism
- the French and Indian War.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Historical events are often quite complex, and this is reflected in the essay questions used in this text and in the examinations. Provocative words and controversial ideas are used, giving you the opportunity to agree or disagree with different parts of the statement. This section enables you to practise the skills of relevantly answering the question, forming your own arguments supported by persuasive evidence, and constructing logical, flowing answers.

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1 Just how 'British' were the American colonies on the cusp of 1763?

2 What factors allowed America to develop its early Northern and Southern distinction by 1763?

ONLINE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

This activity provides students and teachers with links to valuable resources available online. These suggestions have also been briefly annotated to explain their value.

Alpha History (access via http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/?id=6104)

A brilliant website of VCE and university-level history content including summaries, timelines, graphics, documents and historiography on all four VCE Revolution topics. A must for any student serious about studying the VCE Revolutions History course.

Crash Course – US History (access via http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/?id=6105).

Knowledgeable and geeky US author John Green covers difficult concepts of American history in an accessible way. A must for any Year 11 or 12 student, it has plenty of short lectures on many of the big topics of American history and several pertinent ones on the Revolution.

READING MORE DEEPLY

This section provides an extra reading list for students and teachers who want to explore topics in greater depth. A specific chapter has been briefly summarised so that you can decide how helpful the text might be. Ratings are based on the level of difficulty of the language and ideas used by the author. These readings also cover a variety of historians so that you can directly analyse different historical interpretations of the Revolution. Annotations are available on Cambridge GO for all sources.

Easy

Franklin, F., *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, Ed. Peter Conn, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2005.

Moderate

Brogan, H., 'The Waking of the Revolution 1759–66' (pp. 110–34), 'The Road to Ruin 1766–1775' (pp. 135–66) and 'The Peace and the Constitution 1783–1789' (pp. 186–215), in *The Penguin History of the USA*, Penguin, London, 1985.

Challenging

Zinn, H., 'Tyranny is Tyranny' (pp. 58–75) and 'A Kind of Revolution' (pp. 77–102), in *A People's History of the United States*, Harper Collins, New York, 1980.

This best-selling leftist historian's interpretation of the social history of America is a very alternative and critical left-wing view of the sacred cows of America, the Founding Fathers and their motivations, and the outcomes of the Revolution. Zinn focuses on slaves, women, the poor and First Nations perspectives; that is, all the 'people' the Revolution did not directly or indirectly benefit.

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2

Growing opposition to Britain, 1763–1766

> *Wee shall be, as a Citty upon a Hill, the eies of all the people are upon us.*
>
> – JOHN WINTHROP'S PROPHETIC HOPE IN 1630 THAT THE NEW WORLD (AMERICA) WOULD BE A BEACON FOR THE REST OF HUMANITY

OVERVIEW

America's quasi-independence and self-sufficiency for more than 150 years of salutary neglect ended in 1763 with the Treaty of Paris. Britain gained control of virtually the whole of North America. The end of the French and Indian War (1754–1763) meant Britain could concentrate all its energies on a more direct governance of its rapidly expanding American colonies. The potential, resources, people and future wealth of America could now be harnessed to enrich the Mother Country. The strategy of British involvement in colonial acquisitions was heavy investment and then heavy returns. This approach was the basis of the British Empire, which at its peak dominated almost a quarter of the world's land mass and population.

America's peculiar New World foundation – the political, social, religious and economic experiences of the colonists – would in time be a point of fracture from the Old World order of the British Empire. The more the British attempted to rein in the American colonies from 1763 onwards, the more these points of fracture were revealed. This chapter highlights some of these early points of fracture.

KEY ISSUES

- What were the outcomes of the French and Indian War?
- How did Britain try to force the American colonies to pay for its debts?
- How did the Americans respond?

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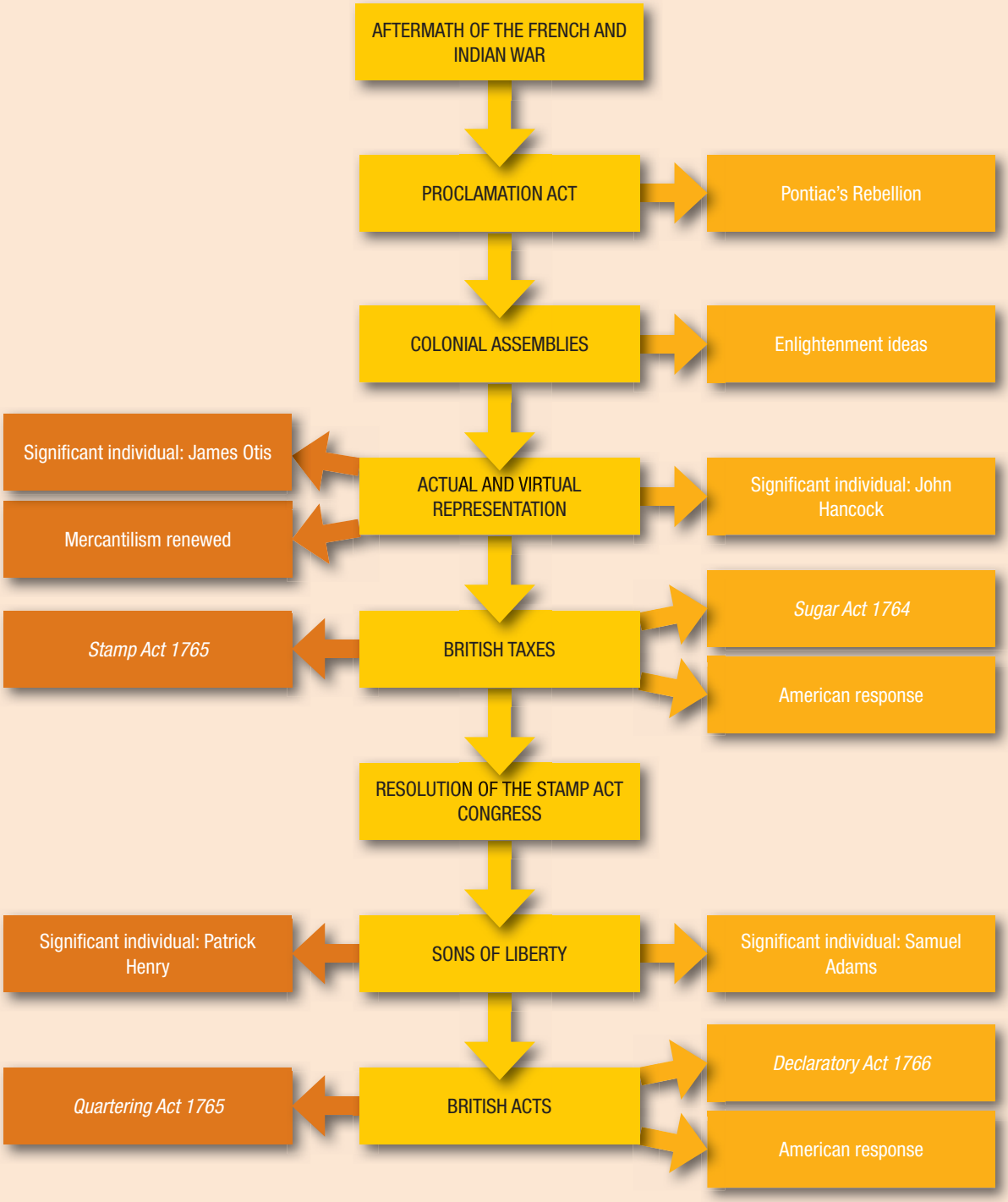
FLOW OF CHAPTER



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TIMELINE OF REVOLUTIONARY DATES, 1763–1776

1763	February	End of the French and Indian War Start of *Proclamation Act*
	May	Pontiac's Rebellion
1764	April	*Sugar Act* established James Otis pens *Rights of British Colonists Asserted and Proved*
1765	March	*Stamp Act* established
	August	*Quartering Act* established
	October	Formation of the Sons of Liberty Stamp Act Congress in New York
1766	February	Repeal of *Stamp Act*
	March	*Declaratory Act* established
1767	June	*Townshend Duties* established
1768	February	John Dickinson pens *Letter from a Farmer* Samuel Adams writes *Journal of Our Times* and *Massachusetts Circular Letter*
1770	March	Boston Massacre Samuel Adams publishes *Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre of Boston* Repeal of the *Townshend Duties* Paul Revere draws his famous depiction of Boston Massacre
1772	June	British customs ship the *Gaspee* is burned by Rhode Island Sons of Liberty
	November	Samuel Adams begins Committees of Correspondence in Massachusetts
1773	December	*Tea Act* established Boston Tea Party
1774	March	*Coercive Acts* established
	September	First Continental Congress is held
1775	May	Second Continental Congress is held
	April	Colonial militia skirmishes with British troops at the towns of Lexington and Concord
	June	Paul Revere performs his Midnight Ride
	July	Congress appoints George Washington as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army The Battle of Bunker Hill Drafting of *Declaration of Independence* begins Olive Branch Petition sent to Britain
1776	January	Thomas Paine pens *Common Sense*
	July	Thomas Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence* is made public
	August	Battle of Long Island begins

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2.1 Aftermath of the French and Indian War, 1754–1763

It is unlikely that you will be asked a VCE exam question about the titanic battles or other specific events of the French and Indian War (1754–1763). However, the repercussions of this war profoundly affected both America and Britain from 1763 onwards. Those repercussions were social, economic, political and eventually militaristic, and caused England to attempt to recoup costs of that war at the expense of the American colonies. The war left a massive black hole of £130 million (a debt in the billions in today's money) in the British Government's purse. The subsequent British revenue-raising taxes of the *Sugar Act 1764*, *Stamp Act 1765*, *Townshend Duties* of 1767 and the *Tea Act 1773* were all an attempt to finance the administration of the American economy and to wind back the war debt. Other repercussions are also teased out in this chapter.

2.2 FLASHPOINT!

Proclamation Line and Pontiac's Rebellion

Source 2.1 A map of the east coast of America in 1763, showing the 13 British colonies and the Proclamation Line

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Cambridge University Press

The Treaty of Paris 1763 (not to be confused with the later Treaty of Paris in 1783) consolidated Britain's victory in the French and Indian War (1754–1763) and took virtually all French possessions in North America, conceding only a few areas to the French province of Quebec in British Canada. These concessions became a thorn in America's ambitions for conquests into that territory and would flare up in 1774 with the *Quebec Act* being added to the *Coercive Acts* of that year (see Chapter 4).

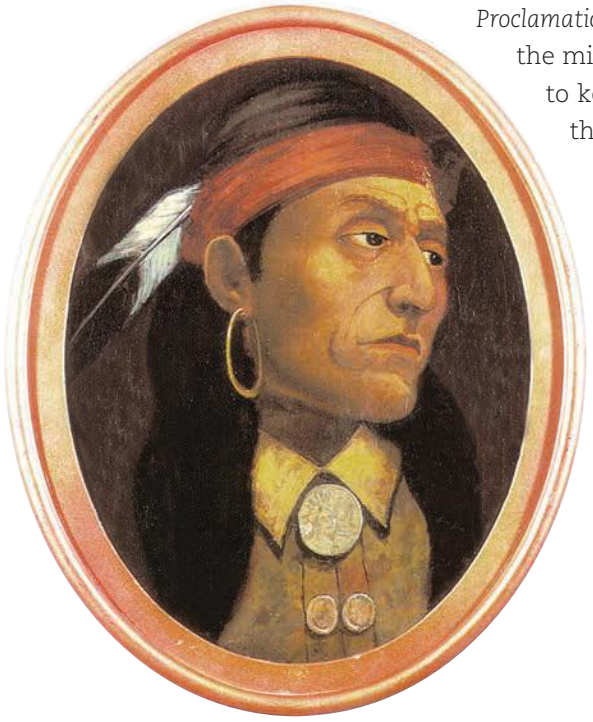
Part of the Treaty of Paris of 1763 was the Proclamation Line, which restricted land settlements west of the Appalachian Mountains between Georgia and Massachusetts. Britain did this in an attempt to contain American opportunistic and (as they saw it) illegal land-grabbing from 'Indian', French and British territory, as well as to avoid the cost of having to police those areas, which would add to the already significant French and Indian War debt.

Pontiac, an Ottawa chief, saw that Britain's treatment of First Nations Americans was arrogant and mean-spirited, but knew that the unfettered ambitions of Americans would be even more disastrous. (Pontiac was to be proved right over the course of the next two centuries.) Pontiac coordinated a series of attacks up and down the Appalachians that became known as **Pontiac's Rebellion**. Many white settlers and soldiers were murdered and their forts, homes and property destroyed in reprisal raids for the similar treatment of First Nations Americans over the previous decades. Fears of 'Indian' attacks became a part of the American frontier psyche, and a very unhappy chapter in American history unfolded over the next two centuries.

Pontiac's Rebellion led by Chief Pontiac, an attempt by an alliance of warriors from various First Nations tribes to drive British soldiers and settlers out of their lands in 1763

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin all had land speculation interests across the Proclamation Line and actively flouted British law in attaining property west of that line. Washington famously said the *Proclamation Act 1763* 'was a temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians'; that is, a temporary measure to keep 'Indians' happy. He and many others ignored this law, even though they were loyal to Britain.

Not only did this British policy upset the wealthy American colonists, but it also hurt many frontiersmen, poor settlers and former colonial soldiers who felt they had fought to win this land from the French and that it should now be rightfully theirs.



Source 2.2 No authenticated images of Pontiac are known to exist. This interpretation was painted by John Mix Stanley, circa 1720.

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2.3 Colonial assemblies

The colonial assembly was the equivalent of a state government in Australia, but was not answerable to a domestic federal government – as Australian states are. Each of the Thirteen Colonies was autonomous, answerable only to Britain. From the 1600s onwards, the American colonial assemblies enjoyed 150 years of virtual self-government of their own territory as Britain was preoccupied by empire building and fighting rival powers for European and international dominance. Britain also had its own domestic political, social and economic problems. This period in America was known as 'salutary neglect' (see Section 1.8). Significantly, the colonial assemblies blooded (or prepared) the generation of politicians that rose to prominence in the period 1763–89. The best politicians of each colony's colonial assembly were chosen for the First and Second Continental Congresses in 1774 and 1775, and then for the Constitutional Convention in 1787. These men, such as James Madison from the Virginia Colonial Assembly (the elite Virginia House of Burgesses), would in time actually design the structure of an independent American government.

Source 2.3 An example of a Colonial Assembly: Virginia's elite House of Burgesses in the Capitol at Williamsburg, by the American photographer and photojournalist Frances Benjamin Johnston, circa 1930–39

Each colonial assembly's governance was based on the British political system (a Charter, signed by the King, gave legitimacy and authority) and in many respects laid the groundwork for the republican-style government that would later emerge. Most assemblies had a **property qualification** to eligibility to vote in an election or to stand for the colonial assembly. The opportunity to vote and to be involved in government spread to a greater number of white males with property in America than any other similar group in any other nation at the same time. White males could get rich far quicker in America because of easy access to cheap land and unlimited employment opportunities. As historian Edwin Perkins put it:

property qualification an assets-based criteria of attaining a certain amount of property or money before one qualifies to vote or to be elected to government

> *Three vital economic factors had a profound effect on population growth and the structure of the economy: the colonies had a surplus of fertile land and other natural resources but shortages of labor and capital required for development. The ownership of land was the main goal of pre-industrial peoples, and in North America that goal was*

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in reach of almost every free citizen … Except in certain areas of New England, population pressure did not hold down the median size of farms … Farmers, who comprised about three-quarters of the colonial workforce, typically lived on properties containing 60 to 100 acres, a huge farm by European standards.

Greene, J. & Pole, J., *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1991, p. 54

The payment of British Royal Governors, who helped run each colonial assembly, was a flawed system as the assembly not only controlled revenue from local taxes but also dictated the Royal Governor's salary. The Governor did not want to bite the hand that fed him and so a conflict of interest arose.

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 reasserted the role of royal governors to the colonists:

… our loving Subjects should be informed of our Paternal care, for the security of the Liberties and Properties of those who are and shall become Inhabitants thereof … We have also given Power to the said Governors, with the consent of our Said Councils, and the Representatives of the People so to be summoned as aforesaid, to make, constitute, and ordain Laws, Statutes, and Ordinances for the Public Peace, Welfare, and good Government of our said Colonies, and of the People and Inhabitants thereof, as near as may be agreeable to the Laws of England …

GOD SAVE THE KING

Focus question

With this royal proclamation in mind, would you think colonial governors put their colony or the 'motherland' first? Discuss with a partner.

legislature the political body or assembly who are empowered to make and change laws (legislation), like a parliament

It is worth noting that an assembly could withhold the salary of a Governor if he tried to exercise his powers in a way that conflicted with the wishes of the local colonial **legislature**. That said, some assemblies were closed for opposing British policy. Assemblies in New York, Boston and Virginia were all closed by their respective Royal Governor for breaches of British law such as the *Quartering Act 1765*.

Nonetheless, the colonial assemblies played an important role in harnessing the power of the growing protest movement and forming collective responses to British actions in the American Revolution. To that end, the colonial assemblies instigated some very important documents during the Revolution, including the 'Virginia Resolves' of 1765 (including the famous line: 'an attack, made on one of our sister colonies, to compel submission to arbitrary taxes, is an attack made on all British America'), the Declaration of Rights of the Stamp Act Congress in 1765, and Samuel Adams' *Massachusetts Circular Letter* in 1768.

Enlightenment ideas

intelligentsia the well-educated thinkers, writers and artists of a society

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Locke and Rousseau were part of a wave of modern thinkers involved in the Enlightenment movement. Popular with the **intelligentsia** of France and England, the ideas of 'natural rights' and 'social contract' found fertile soil in America. Colonists felt the British monarch, King George III (see Source 2.4), had violated their natural rights and the social contract that existed between him and his subjects, and by 1776 became a justification for him being overthrown. The *Declaration of Independence* was inspired by those very ideas: 'certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness'. Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Samuel and John Adams, Jonathan Dickinson and George Washington were all Founding Fathers that took up the cause of 'natural rights'.

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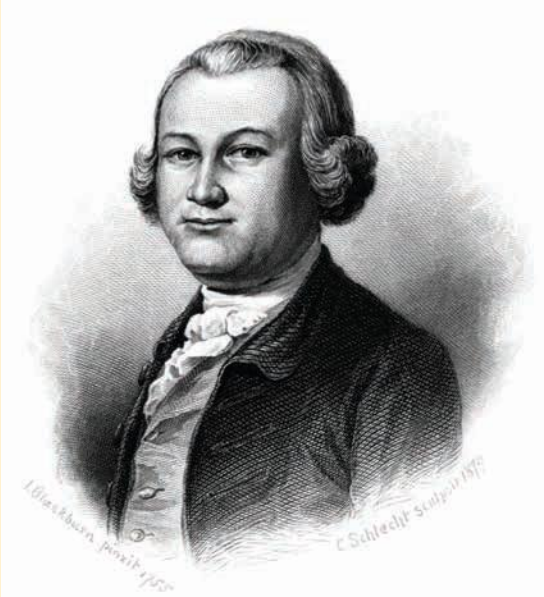
One American who took up these ideas passionately was Bostonian lawyer James Otis, who would be, knowingly and unknowingly, part of the broad dissemination of Enlightenment ideas to the American masses.

Focus question

From your reading of Chapter 1 and other sources, establish three or four reasons why Enlightenment ideas would undermine British authority in many of the Thirteen Colonies, and contribute to the American Revolution by 1776. Give specific examples and be prepared to share your findings.

Source 2.4 *George III* , by Allan Ramsay, 1762

2.4 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
James Otis (1725–1783)



Source 2.5 James Otis

- James Otis was one of the early and truly influential Bostonians, whose legal training and great oratory skills made him a noted adversary to British intrusions into American affairs.
- Otis used many of the Enlightenment ideas to plant the seeds of revolution. In a famous court case in 1761, he argued on behalf of Boston merchants against the hated British **Writs of Assistance**. His speech at that trial was published and entitled *Against the Writs of Assistance*, which galvanised some foundation members of the early revolutionary movement.
- Men like John Hancock and Samuel Adams, whose businesses would directly benefit without the close inspection of British officials, had found a brilliant ally

Writ of Assistance a search warrant from the government permitting a search for contraband items in American homes, warehouses, shops, ships etc.

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in Otis. Otis also inspired John Adams, another noted celebrity in the Revolution. John Adams said of hearing Otis' speech in court: 'Every man appeared to me to go away as I did, ready to take arms against the writs of assistance.'

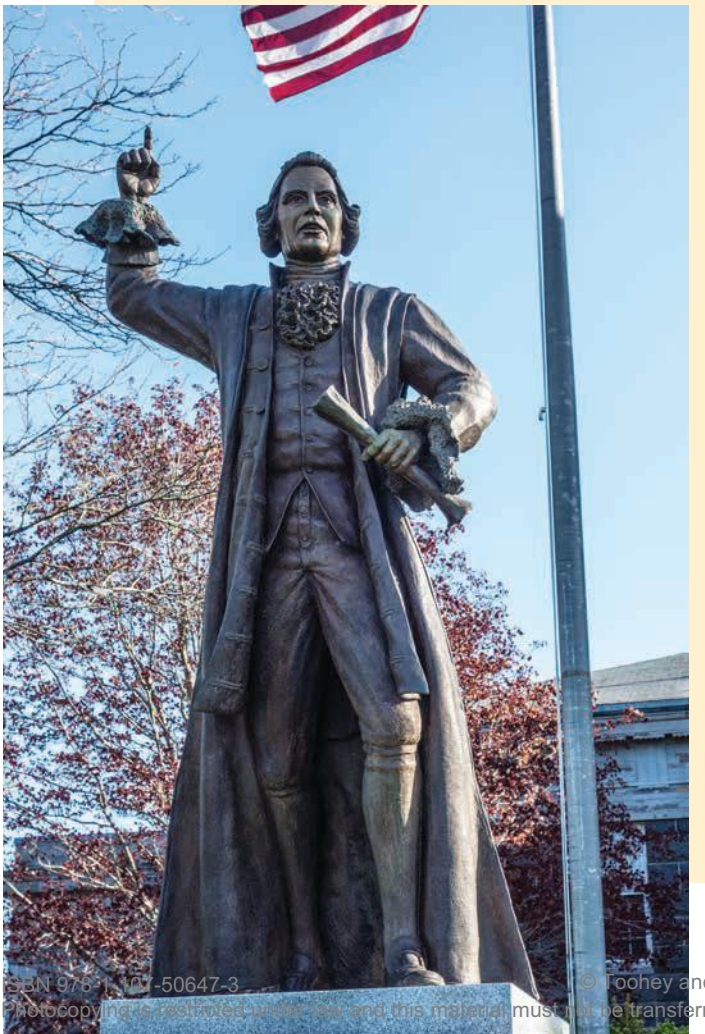
- Like many of the Founding Fathers, Otis had a revenge motive against Britain, because his father was passed over as Chief Justice of Massachusetts in favour of **Thomas Hutchinson**. Ironically, Hutchinson was the magistrate in Otis' court case and had the Writs of Assistance case thrown out of court. This family slight became one of the great motivations for Otis taking on the anti-British cause.
- Otis disputed the British Parliament's right to tax colonies, with his 1764 pamphlet *Rights of British Colonies Asserted and Proved* espousing ideas of natural rights and 'no taxation without representation'.
- Otis also headed up the **Stamp Act Congress** in 1765, an important precursor to the Continental Congress 10 years later. Nine of the Thirteen Colonies attended the Stamp Act Congress in New York.

Hutchinson, Thomas (1711–1780) a businessman and governor from Massachusetts who became hated for not publicly opposing the *Stamp Act*

Stamp Act Congress the first unified mass meeting of nine of the Thirteen Colonies in North America to determine a course of collective action against Britain's *Stamp Act*

Although sentiment was strong in the other colonies to attend the congress, colonial governors loyal to Britain took steps to ensure that their respective colonial legislatures could not meet to select and send delegates to the meeting in New York in October 1765.

Eventually, Otis was severely injured in a bar fight that left him with a brain injury that blunted his extensive mental powers and developed into a debilitating mental illness, leading Samuel Adams to take up Otis' role in leading the revolutionary movement in Boston. Otis died in 1783 after being struck by lightning in his doorway.



Source 2.6 A bronze statue of James Otis that stands outside Barnstable County Courthouse in Massachusetts

A MATTER OF FACT

The beating Otis took in 1769 was for his patriotic writings, and it rendered him 'insane'. Otis was not harmful to himself or others, but he was no longer the brilliant, fiery Patriot he once was. On the day of the Battle of Bunker Hill in July 1775, Otis was under the care of his sister. He snuck away from her house, managed to get a rifle and then walked to Breed's Hill. Otis volunteered to fight, took some unknown part in the battle, and then simply walked home.

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2.5 'No taxation without representation'

One of the contentious issues in America was sovereignty. With each colony being self-sufficient, the colonial assembly had the power to tax in its colony. The people in that colonial assembly were voted in by their constituents, to whom they were directly answerable. If they didn't do a good job, they would be thrown out at the next election.

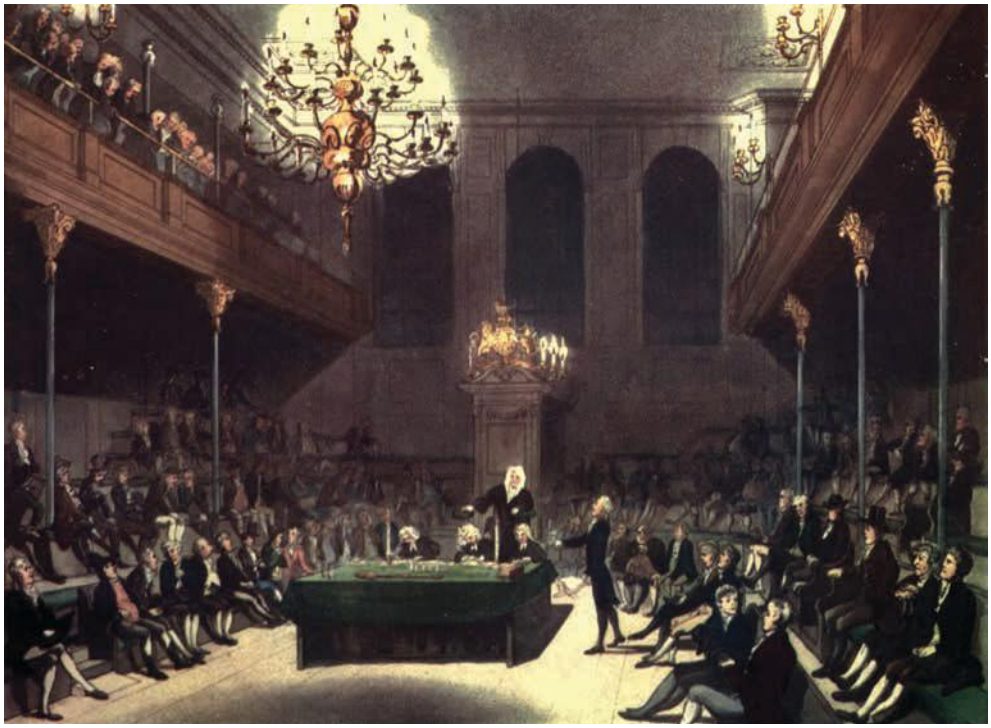
Once the mercantilist policies (such as the *Sugar Act 1764* and *Stamp Act 1765*, discussed shortly) began to make an impact, colonists declared it was unlawful for the British to tax them as they were not represented in the British Parliament. The catch cry became: **'No taxation without representation'**. Colonists wanted to be directly represented in Britain if they were to be taxed by Britain. They wanted **actual representation**, which they had experienced through their own colonial assemblies. However, the class snobbery and hierarchical nature of British society meant Americans were perceived to be part of the lower classes, so they were never going to get representation in the British Parliament.

British Prime Minister George Grenville argued that the American colonists were **virtually represented**, as the Members of Parliament did not just represent their constituents but all British subjects. Furthermore, when Britain closed its colonial assemblies – as in New York in 1767 and Boston in 1768 – colonists felt their right to be directly represented was being taken away and that their 'liberty' (encased in natural rights) was being infringed.

'No taxation without representation' a popular revolutionary slogan that argues that taxes can only be levied on a populace by its elected representatives

actual representation a form of democratic government in which every citizen is represented in the government by someone acting on his or her behalf (in Australia, your local, state and federal members perform this role for you and you can approach them directly)

virtual representation a system where the citizens are loosely represented by the entire legislature; the citizen is not involved in the election process



Source 2.7 Pictured is the House of Commons, where Prime Minister George Grenville argued against the colonists' demand for actual representation in the British Parliament. Illustration from 1808 from a series called 'Microcosm of London'.

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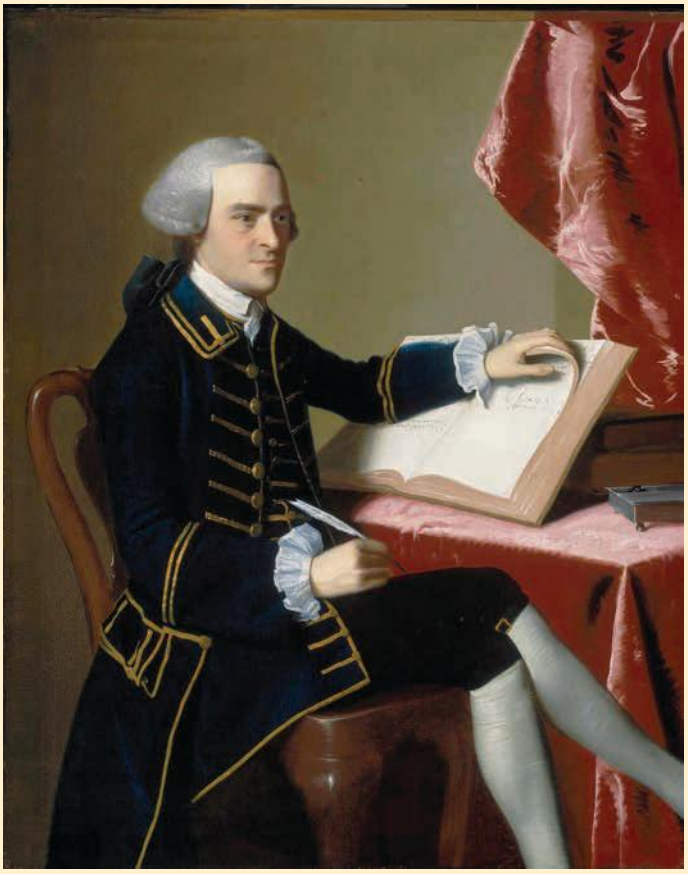
2.6 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
John Hancock (1737–1793)

- John Hancock was a Boston-born, Harvard-educated wealthy merchant who was also a well-known smuggler.
- After working for his rich uncle and learning the import–export business, he inherited his uncle's fortune and with his own hard work and industry also became one of the richest men in America.
- After the mercantilist policies of Britain (including the Writs of Assistance, *Navigation Acts*, *Sugar Act 1764*, *Stamp Act 1765*, *Townshend Duties* of 1767 and *Tea Act 1773*) started to negatively impact Hancock's substantial smuggling operations from non-British sources, he openly began to support James Otis, Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty's operations in and around Boston.
- Hancock lent his support for revolution through political means by serving on the Massachusetts Colonial Assembly and the Continental Congress.
- Hancock's enormous signature on the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776 (the first and the biggest signature on the document; see Source 2.9) gives you some idea of the enormous arrogance and self-importance he held himself in during the American Revolution. His headstone in the graveyard near Boston Common (see Source 2.10) is equally ostentatious.
- His contribution was significant, though not in the same league as Washington, Jefferson or Madison.
- However, his most important contribution was sending money and supplies to the fledgling Continental Army.



Source 2.8 Portrait of John Hancock, by John Singleton Copley, circa 1765

A MATTER OF FACT

A person's 'John Hancock' is slang for their signature – highlighting how famously Hancock's large signature appears on the Declaration of Independence.

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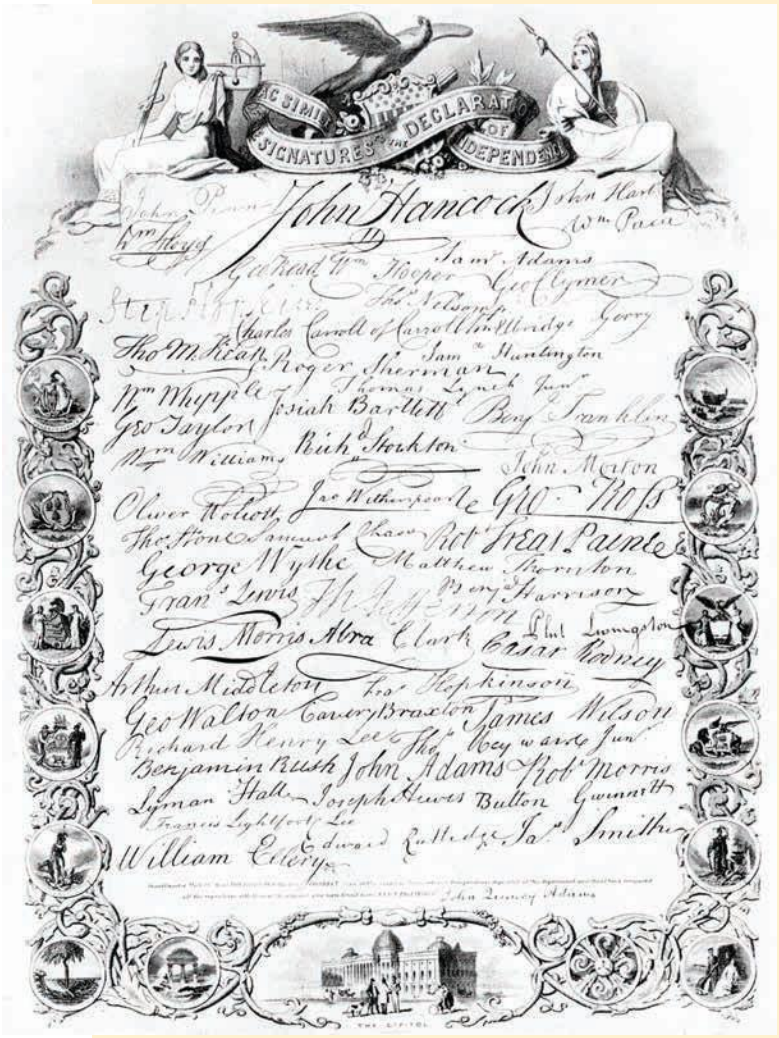
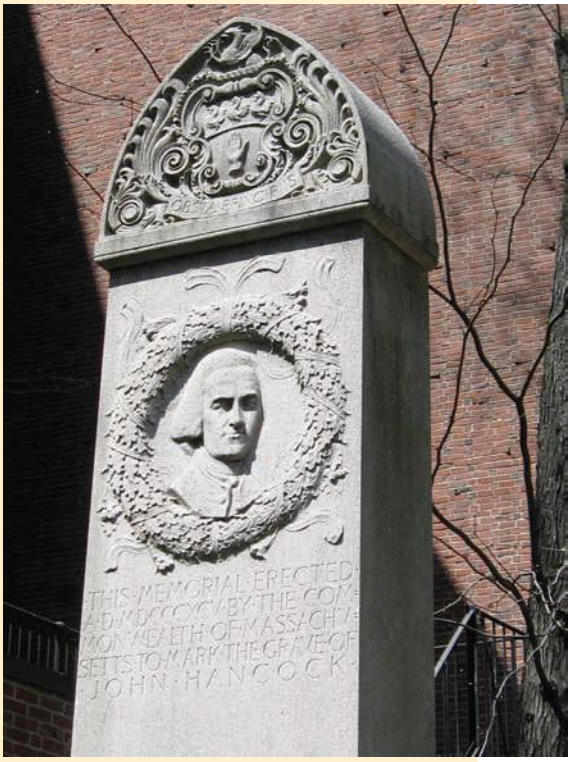
Hancock's wealth was thrown behind the Revolution, as the Continental Army relied on loans from individual benefactors, the states and eventually the Kingdom of France to bankroll its operations.



Source 2.9 John Hancock's large signature on the *Declaration of Independence*



Source 2.10 John Hancock's ornate gravestone today

Mercantilism renewed

Britain conducted an official inquiry into the proper conduct of trade in America and found massive holes in the administration. Britain was making good money out of America but losing revenue due to smuggling and inefficient administration. Customs officers were inept, intimidated or corrupt and smuggling was rife, with the colonies trading illegally with traditional English enemies including the French, Dutch and Spanish. British Prime Minister George Grenville, with his background as a former Chancellor of the Exchequer (the Treasurer of England), realised that England was in a

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financially perilous state. However, he couldn't increase the taxation of English citizens without risking domestic troubles (which was also a major factor in the French Revolution in 1789). Grenville instead designed a new course of action to make America pay through a series of taxes.

A MATTER OF FACT

One of the great ironies of Britain trying to make the American colonies more loyal or subservient to Britain was that it united the American colonies. It helped make America, as they created another layer of government – a federal government – that could address their shared grievances against Britain.

2.7 Sugar Act 1764

Rum was a major currency of sorts in America (as it was in Australia in the late 18th century). Therefore, Grenville introduced a tax measure in the American colonies called the *Sugar Act 1764* that was a reinstitution of Britain's former mercantilist policy, the *Sugar and Molasses Act 1733*, which

Source 2.11 Slaves working in a rum distillery

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gave new powers to customs officers to contain the smuggling of rum from non-British controlled sources – namely the French West Indies. Grenville's plan was to lower the duty (tax) on molasses – the rawest form of sugar distillation and the main ingredient in rum – from 6 pence to 3 pence per gallon to undercut the appeal of smuggled sugar in the colonies. The ***Sugar Act*** also included introduced taxes on many other items in the colonies, including wines, coffee, spices and cloth. The *Navigation Acts* and the Writs of Assistance that went hand in hand with the *Sugar Act* enabled the full power of the British Navy and British customs officers of the colonies to search any American property on land and at sea suspected of containing smuggled goods. Britain's economic monopoly, economic restraints on colonial American trade and the forced searching of people's property began to build pockets of resentment among the people.

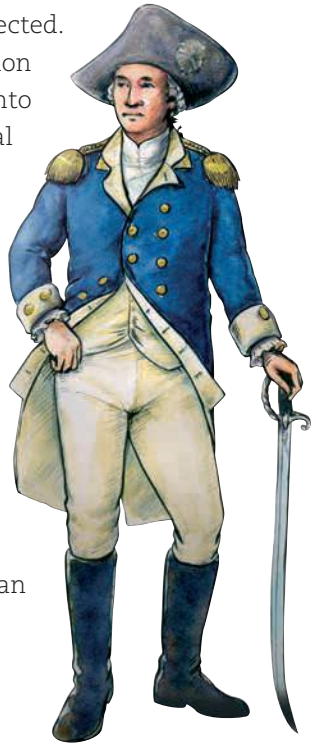
Sugar Act a revenue-raising Act passed by the British Parliament in 1764, which alarmed the colonists about the intent of the British and helped fuel the growing discontent

Currency Act one of several acts created by the British Parliament designed to regulate the use of paper money in America

The ***Currency Act*** of 1764 also undermined the various colonial assemblies' right to control their own colony's economy. The British Government tried to dissuade the use of colonial printed money and have all British items bought and debts paid with only British currency, gold or silver (the latter two were known as 'specie', a term for currency based on intrinsic worth). These actions angered the merchant and financial classes in colonial American society, including men like John Hancock, who called for economic independence long before the call for political independence.

American response

The *Sugar Act* became the first 'direct tax' in America. It also bypassed colonial assemblies' taxation rights and thus was seen to violate colonists' rights (see Section 1.5 for more on revolutionary ideas). The influential merchant class of New England became a pillar of opposition as the *Sugar Act* only affected the various Northern colonies that dealt in molasses. The Southern colonies principally dealt in tobacco, indigo and rice, and thus weren't affected. The *Sugar Act* made Boston a central player in the forthcoming Revolution and brought John Hancock, Samuel Adams, James Otis and John Adams into the spotlight. In response to the *Sugar Act*, Otis produced an influential pamphlet, *Rights of British Colonists Asserted and Proved*. In this text, he highlighted flaws of a British economic policy, in that it violated natural rights and was unconstitutional based on Britain's own laws since the time of the *Magna Carta* and Glorious Revolution. The pamphlet became an important foundation of the ideological arguments that ultimately led to revolution.



During the *Sugar Act*'s implementation, Bostonians resisted the law via the courts and colonial assemblies, at town meetings, through ardent speeches and documents and by harnessing the power of the press to spread their message. They also used illegal means through the intimidation of customs officials and increasing smuggling rates. The unsuccessful prosecution of this tax set a blueprint for how the American colonies could work around British law.

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2.8 FLASHPOINT!

Stamp Act 1765

The fallout from the *Sugar Act 1764* was nothing compared with the next British tax, the *Stamp Act 1765*. In March 1765, Grenville and the British Parliament had devised what they saw as clever taxes on a range of products, but in particular one that every colonist used: paper. This revenue-raising act was designed to cover the costs of defending the colonies (the £130 million war debt) and enforcing existing mercantilist acts. The British Parliament had explored the idea of a stamp tax since 1764 and gave the colonists opportunities to suggest alternatives. The tax was seen to be a sure-fire and lucrative means for Britain to make additional money and catch every taxable American. In fact, it was a disaster financially, politically and socially as the outrage in American colonies was universal and the offensive reactions to the tax united the colonists.

The *Stamp Act 1765* was passed to raise £60,000 to fund the supply of British troops in America. British parliamentarians believed (with some justification) that funding should be sourced from the colonies because Britain, via the British Army, was protecting them and the colonies should pay for that protection.

Unlike the *Sugar Act*, the *Stamp Act* became the first direct tax to target all social classes in every American colony, taxing everything from playing cards to legal documents – including titles, wills, bills of sale, contracts and diplomas – and even gambling paraphernalia. Under the *Stamp Act*, a document needed a British stamp placed on it to represent that the tax or duty had been paid on that item (see Source 2.12).

Source 2.12 A *Stamp Act* stamp from Boston, circa 1765

American response

Henry, Patrick (1736–1799) a lawyer, politician and plantation owner who became known as a great orator and advocate for American independence

Virginia Resolves a set of resolutions decreeing that the only taxation valid in Virginia was that enforced by a parliamentary assembly elected by Virginians, which effectively invalidated the British Government's taxes

With the *Stamp Act*, Britain unwittingly galvanised the colonists in a common outrage at a British tax that affected everyone in America from the colonial elite to ordinary workers. Lawyers were taxed on every legal document used. Merchants and retailers were taxed on all contracts, bills of sale and bonds. Journalists, publishers and essayists were taxed on all newspapers and pamphlets they produced. Common labourers, dockhands and sailors were taxed on items such as playing cards.

The colonial assemblymen feared that if Britain successfully implemented this tax, they would possess infinite power to tax the colonists in all facets of life and the economy. Upper-class angst was channelled in petitions, 'resolves' and letters to various British representatives. For example, Virginian lawyer **Patrick Henry** (see Source 2.14) challenged the *Stamp Act*, introducing his **Virginia Resolves** in the Virginian colonial assembly in May 1765, which rejected British authority to tax the colonies. The Resolves were printed in many colonial newspapers and were important in garnering opposition from the 13 separate colonies.

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Source 2.13 An artist's impression of Bostonians rioting against the *Stamp Act*

Source 2.14 Patrick Henry addressing the first Virginia Colonial Assembly in 1765

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Sons of Liberty a collection of underground groups that formed to fight the Stamp Tax and later became aggressive supporters of American independence

Oliver, Andrew (1706–1774) a merchant and official in Massachusetts who became responsible for enforcing the Stamp Tax there

effigy a model of a person, often used for the purpose of protest

The 'colonial elites' – or politicians – of the British colonies in North America united for the first time at the Stamp Act Congress in October 1765 in New York (discussed in the following section). However, dissent against British rule was also developing among the general population in the colonies, and took many other forms, of which an opposition group called the **Sons of Liberty** is the most notorious example. Samuel Adams organised the Sons of Liberty as a vigilante group of sorts that violently opposed the *Stamp Act* through acts of terror. They made sure colonists systematically boycotted the scheme, intimidating those who purchased stamps and committing acts of violence against stamp officers like **Andrew Oliver**, whose house they ransacked before hanging him in **effigy** at the Liberty Tree in Boston Common on 14 August 1765. Oliver was eventually forced to resign because of these tactics. Soon after, angry colonists ransacked Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson's home and most of his property was either destroyed or stolen (see Source 2.15). The top levels of British power in the colonies were being openly attacked and defied in Boston.

A MATTER OF FACT

Though publicly hated in Boston for his public support for the Stamp Act, privately Andrew Oliver was against the crippling British tax.

Source 2.15 **Left:** *Massachusetts Colonial Governor Thomas Hutchinson*, by Edward Truman, 1741; **Right:** Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson's home, which was torn to splinters in an act of defiance against British rule

The backlash to the *Stamp Act* in the colonies was a protracted campaign of propaganda and violence that became so universal that Britain eventually backed down and repealed the Act in 1766. This colonial success established a model of how to oppose any unfair British policy; that is, by:

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- establishing in each colony a Sons of Liberty-type secret organisation
- using Sons of Liberty tactics (such as **tarring and feathering**, and harassing British representatives)
- using newspapers to spread radical ideas to a large audience
- employing the power of the colonial assembly to direct opposition in each colony
- promoting the boycott of British goods.

tarring and feathering an act of public humiliation and shame involving pouring hot and sticky tar onto a victim then covering them in feathers, and parading them around the town square. Not fatal, but physically and emotionally painful.

Focus questions

1 Briefly describe the *Stamp Act 1765*. Why was it introduced?
2 Summarise the arguments used by the colonists against the tax. How did the *Stamp Act* contribute to the social, political and economic tensions between the colonists and Britain?

2.9 Stamp Act Congress

In October 1765, the Stamp Act Congress was held in the city of New York. It came about after James Otis, on 8 June, put a motion to the Massachusetts legislature to invite all the colonies to send delegates to a congress at New York in October 1765. Representatives from only nine colonies attended (Virginia, New Hampshire, North Carolina and Georgia were not represented). The Congress agreed upon the Declaration of Rights reproduced below, petitioning the King and Parliament for the repeal of the tax. The Declaration pledged loyalty to King George III while simultaneously stating that Britain had usurped colonial rights. This document contended that since the colonists could only vote for members in their colonial assemblies and not in British elections, these were the only legal bodies that could tax them. The cry of 'no taxation without representation' was a regular feature in most colonial writings at the time, especially from James Otis, Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams. Interestingly, because the credentials of certain delegates authorised them merely to consult and not to take action, the petition was signed by the members of only six colonies.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 2.1: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The Declaration of Rights of the Stamp Act Congress 19 October 1765

The members of this congress, sincerely devoted, with the warmest sentiments of affection and duty to His Majesty's person and government, inviolably attached to the present happy establishment of the Protestant succession, and with minds deeply impressed by a sense of the present and impending misfortunes of the British colonies on this continent; having considered as maturely as time would permit, the circumstances of said colonies, esteem it our indispensable duty to make the following declarations, of our humble opinions, respecting the most essential rights and liberties of the colonists, and of the grievances under which they labor, by reason of several late acts of Parliament.

1st. *That His Majesty's subjects in these colonies owe the same allegiance to the crown of Great Britain that is owing from his subjects born within the realm, and all due subordination to that august body, the Parliament of Great Britain.*

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2nd. *That His Majesty's liege subjects in these colonies are entitled to all the inherent rights and privileges of his natural born subjects within the kingdom of Great Britain.*

3rd. *That it is inseparably essential to the freedom of a people, and the undoubted rights of Englishmen, that no taxes should be imposed on them, but with their own consent, given personally, or by their representatives.*

4th. *That the people of these colonies are not, and from their local circumstances cannot be, represented in the* ***House of Commons*** *in Great Britain.*

House of Commons
the lower house of the British Parliament. Holds more power than the House of Lords, as the people elect its members, and it is where the Prime Minister leads the ruling party. This is the House that made the key decisions affecting the Thirteen Colonies during the Revolution.

5th. *That the only representatives of the people of these colonies are persons chosen therein, by themselves; and that no taxes ever have been or can be constitutionally imposed on them but by their respective legislatures.*

6th. *That all supplies to the crown, being free gifts of the people, it is unreasonable and inconsistent with the principles and spirit of the British constitution for the people of Great Britain to grant to His Majesty the property of the colonists.*

7th. *That trial by jury is the inherent and invaluable right of every British subject in these colonies.*

8th. *That the late act of Parliament entitled, 'An act for granting and applying certain stamp duties, and other duties in the British colonies and plantations in America, etc.,' by imposing taxes on the inhabitants of these colonies, and the said act, and several other acts, by extending the jurisdiction of the courts of admiralty beyond its ancient limits, have a manifest tendency to subvert the rights and liberties of the colonists.*

9th. *That the duties imposed by several late acts of Parliament, from the peculiar circumstances of these colonies, will be extremely burthensome and grievous, and, from the scarcity of specie, the payment of them absolutely impracticable.*

10th. *That as the profits of the trade of these colonies ultimately center in Great Britain, to pay for the manufactures which they are obliged to take from thence, they eventually contribute very largely to all supplies granted there to the crown.*

11th. *That the restrictions imposed by several late acts of Parliament on the trade of these colonies will render them unable to purchase the manufactures of Great Britain.*

12th. *That the increase, prosperity, and happiness of these colonies depend on the full and free enjoyment of their rights and liberties, and an intercourse, with Great Britain, mutually affectionate and advantageous.*

13th. *That it is the right of the British subjects in these colonies to petition the king or either house of Parliament.*

Lastly, that it is the indispensable duty of these colonies to the best of sovereigns, to the mother-country, and to themselves, to endeavor, by a loyal and dutiful address to His Majesty, and humble application to both houses of Parliament, to procure the repeal of the act for granting and applying certain stamp duties, of all clauses of any other acts of Parliament whereby the jurisdiction of the admiralty is extended as aforesaid, and of the other late acts for the restriction of the American commerce.

1 Identify the main arguments made by the Stamp Act Congress.
2 How do the colonies perceive their relationship with Great Britain?
3 What new ideas are emerging through this document?

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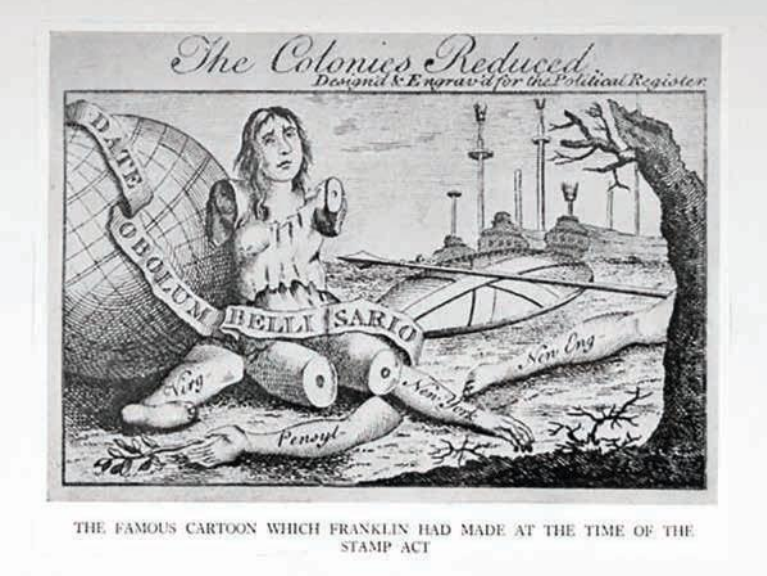
ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 2.2: VISUAL ANALYSIS



Source 2.16 *The Colonies Reduced*, 1765

Sources 2.16 and 2.17 show two key political cartoons produced in 1765 in reaction to the *Stamp Act*. The first was commissioned by Benjamin Franklin, while the second was created by Paul Revere.

1. Describe the main features of each cartoon.
2. What is the key message of each cartoon?
3. In your opinion, why are cartoon or visual images created with a bias, or a one-sided perspective?

Source 2.17 *The Boston Stamp Official Hanged*, Paul Revere, 1765

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2.10 Sons of Liberty

As mentioned previously, the Sons of Liberty had an important role in the early years of the Revolution. Formed as a reaction to the *Stamp Act 1765* in Boston, Sons of Liberty became a generic term for many different groups in the Thirteen Colonies that engaged in violent anti-British activities. However, the original Sons of Liberty in Boston were preceded by the **Loyal Nine**. These were nine men who met in May or June 1765 to organise opposition to the *Stamp Act*. The members were small-scale merchants, artists and shopkeepers who organised in secret, and as a group instigated the intimidation of Andrew Oliver in August 1765, which is considered the starting point of the Sons of Liberty in Boston. They were able to engage in vigilante behaviour, which included harassing tax officials and vandalism.

Loyal Nine a hardline anti-British group in Boston that became the core and the drivers of the Sons of Liberty activities in that city in the period 1765–75

Tory a member of the dominant party in power in the British Parliament at the time of the Revolution; the party survived to become the modern Conservative Party, whose members are commonly still referred to as Tories; 'Tory' also became the term for any pro-British sympathiser during the Revolution

Complementing this revolutionary behaviour were the great propagandists. The more astute like James Otis, Samuel Adams and Paul Revere wrote and drew influential pamphlets and cartoons, and were able to use the sympathetic newspaper the *Boston Gazette* to reach a large audience.

One of the Sons' more infamous tactics was tar and feathering opponents that were seen to be anti-Sons of Liberty, pro-British or **Tory**, or failed to comply with boycotts. This is a particularly brutal tactic and is best summarised by viewing the graphic scene in the HBO series *John Adams*, in Episode 2 titled 'Independence'. Molten tar is poured on naked flesh and then feathers are applied.

St—p! ſt—p! ſt—p! No:

Tueſday-Morning, December 17, 1765.

THE True-born Sons of Li-
berty, are deſired to meet under LIBERTY-
TREE, at XII o'Clock, THIS DAY, to hear the
the public Reſignation, under Oath, of ANDREW
OLIVER, Eſq; Diſtributor of Stamps for the Province
of the *Maſſachuſetts-Bay*.

A Reſignation? YES.

Source 2.18 A forceful *Sons of Liberty* pamphlet, 17 December 1765

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The Sons of Liberty were incredibly successful and helped to cause the repeal of the *Stamp Act*; they were instrumental in the Boston Massacre of 1770 through the harassment of British troops, and carried out the Boston Tea Party in 1773.

The egalitarian nature of the Sons of Liberty, incorporating everyone from lawyers to labourers, meant they had far-reaching powers. Famous US historian Gordon Wood, in his book *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, states it was the egalitarian nature of groups like the Sons of Liberty that helped to create a more open and free society in America, far removed from Britain's class snobbery.

Source 2.19 *The Bostonian Paying the Excise-Man, or, Tar and Feathering.* This is a print from an engraving that originated in London in late October 1774.

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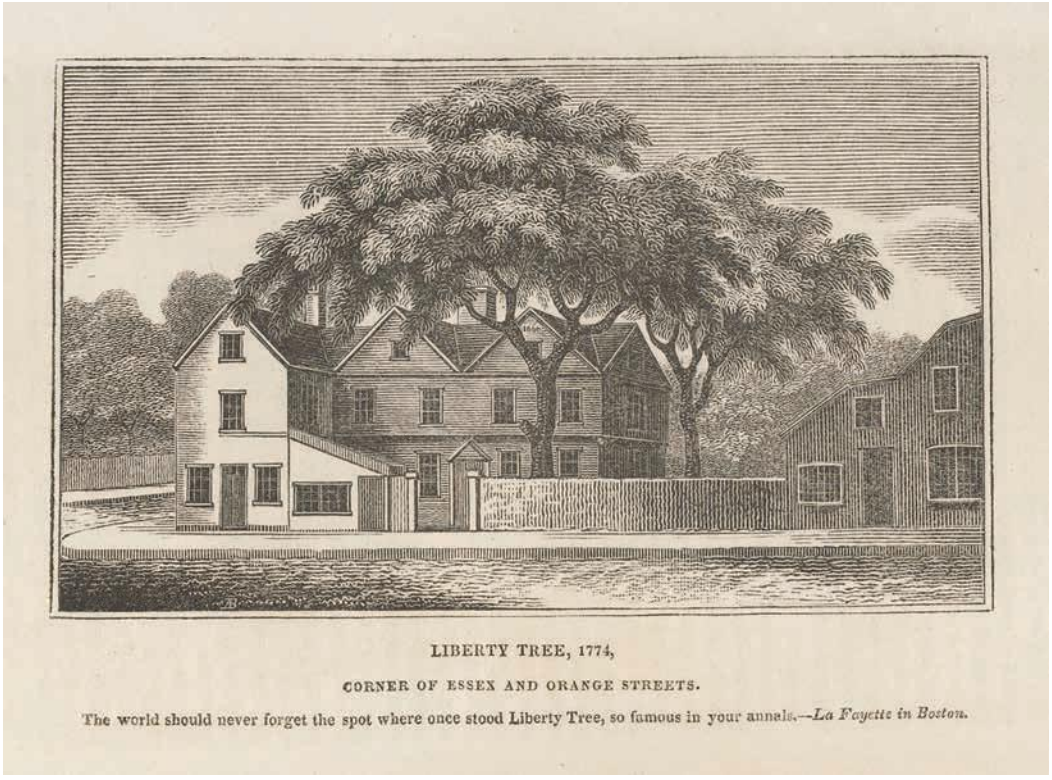
Source 2.20 **Left:** *A new method of macarony making, as practised at Boston*, circa 1774, artist unknown; **Above:** a representation of The Green Dragon Tavern, an important meeting house for the Boston Sons of Liberty



Source 2.21 The Liberty Tree was a famous elm that stood near Boston Common for a hundred years before the Revolution. In the 1760s the tree became a rallying point for the growing resistance to the rule of Britain over the American colonies and for that reason it was felled by British soldiers in 1775. Illustration by Caleb H Snow, 1825.

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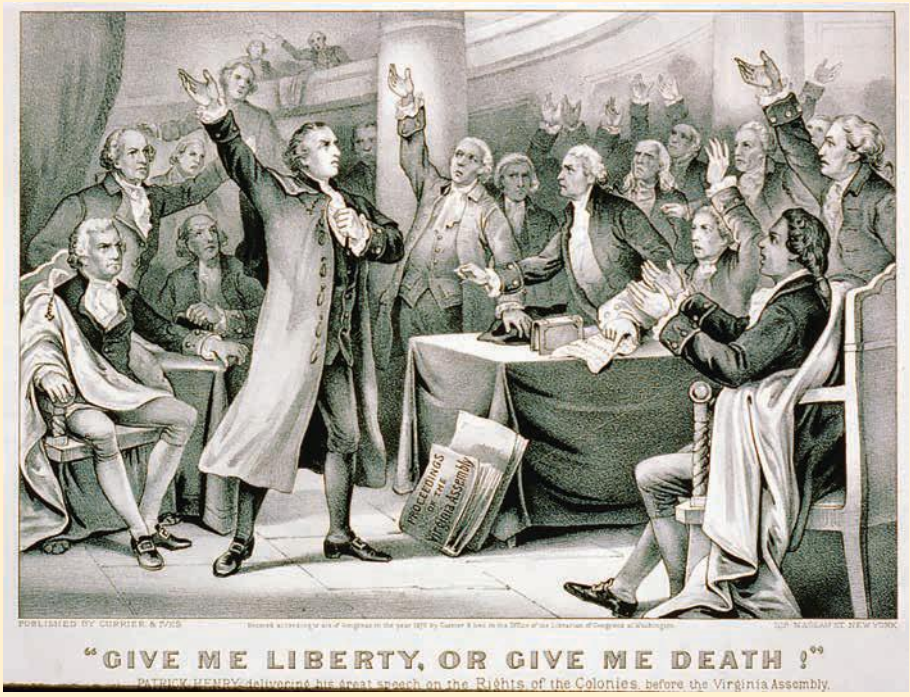
Cambridge University Press

2.11 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
Patrick Henry (1736–1799)



Source 2.22 Patrick Henry delivering his famous 'Give me liberty, or give me death' speech at a 1775 Virginia House of Burgesses assembly

- Born in Virginia, Patrick Henry was a noted orator in the Virginian colonial assembly, the House of Burgesses; he often articulated radical ideas and didn't seem concerned with the consequences.
- A lawyer, politician, governor and friend of the common man, he supported popular aspects of the Revolution.
- His famous quotes include 'If this be treason, make the most of it' in 1765, speaking out against the *Stamp Act* in the House of Burgesses; 'I am not a Virginian, but an American', stating a new American national vision after the *Coercive Acts* in 1774; and 'Give me liberty or give me death' in 1775, during a speech that apparently swung the Virginian vote in favour of sending Virginian troops to join the Continental Army in the Revolutionary War.
- Interestingly, our records of Henry's most famous speeches were most likely reconstructions by a biographer in the 1800s.
- Henry claimed that under British law, Virginia was subject to taxation only by an assembly to which Virginians themselves elected representatives. They had no colonial representation in the British Parliament, therefore the only assembly that could legally tax them would be the Virginian House of Burgesses (this is the difference between the ideas of *actual* and *virtual* representation discussed earlier in this chapter).
- Henry's 'Virginia Resolves' stated that the colonists are 'entitled to all liberties, privileges and immunities' of freeborn Englishmen. They state, in part:

> *3. Resolved, that the taxation of the people by themselves, or by persons chosen by themselves to represent them, who can only know what taxes the people are able to bear, or the easiest method of raising them, and must themselves be affected by every tax laid on the people, is the only security against a burdensome taxation, and the distinguishing characteristic of British freedom, without which the ancient constitution cannot exist.*

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5. Resolved, therefore that the General Assembly of this Colony have the only and exclusive Right and Power to lay Taxes and Impositions upon the inhabitants of this Colony and that every Attempt to vest such Power in any person or persons whatsoever other than the General Assembly aforesaid has a manifest Tendency to destroy British as well as American Freedom.

A MATTER OF FACT

The most famous speech attributed to Henry ends with the dramatic lines: "Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

Source 2.23 *Patrick Henry*, unknown artist and date

SAMPLE ANSWER

This feature is designed to help you prepare for your assessments by modelling possible responses to VCE-style exam questions (explored further in Chapters 5 and 9). The following is a sample response to a question that might appear in AOS 1, Section A of the VCE exam.

1 Using three or four points, explain the contribution of Patrick Henry to the American Revolution in the period up to 1776.

Patrick Henry was an outspoken and passionate speaker, a radical opponent to British policy in the early 1760s who fervently endorsed colonial rights and pro-individual liberties. Due to his radical nature, Henry promulgated the ideas of independence and royal tyranny as early as 1765, when such ideas were extremely unpopular. Henry was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses and became a solicitor in 1769. He was creator of the 'Virginia Resolves' with his 'If this be treason, make the most of it' speech. The Resolves were a series of resolutions against the *Stamp Act 1765*, which denied the British Parliament's right to tax the colonies, resulting in the Stamp Act Congress. Thomas Gage (British General) credited the Resolves 'as the signal for a general outcry over the continent'. Intent on galvanising the American colonies against their British oppressors, Henry proposed a Continental Congress be called following the closure of Boston Port as part of the *Coercive Acts* in 1774. He made a second speech in the more radical year of 1775, which ended with 'give me liberty or give me death', helping to form support for the newly formed Continental Army and justify a revolutionary conflict. Henry's idea for a Continental Congress was essentially a revolutionary government and the body that would produce the *Declaration of Independence* and commission the Continental Army: the final call for war against Britain.

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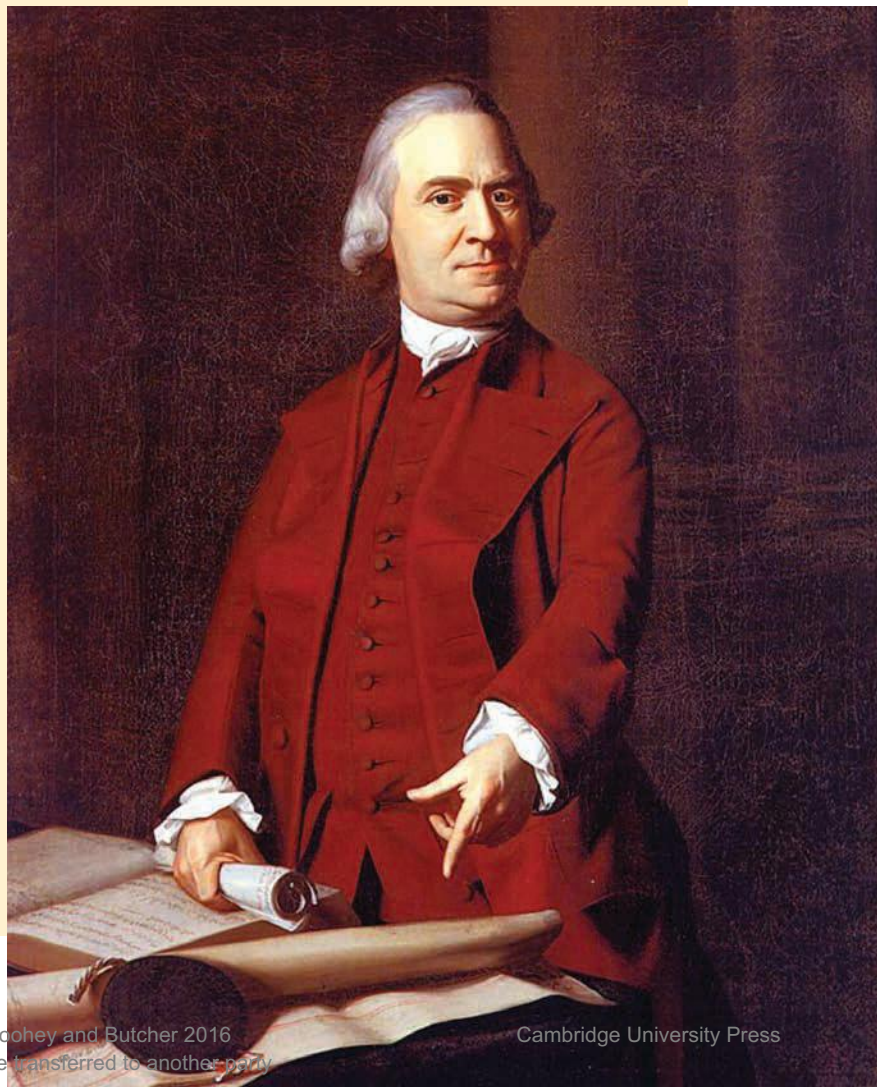
2.12 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
Samuel Adams (1722–1803)

- Samuel Adams was one of the real drivers of the Revolution by the mid-1760s and was involved in virtually every anti-British action in Boston up to the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776.
- He was America's first career politician and, like Otis, he had a revenge motive against Britain for slights against his father.
- He popularised the Revolution through his work in the Sons of Liberty and by harnessing the power of the mob and the press (especially in his anti-British propaganda writing, regularly published in the *Boston Gazette*).
- He also connected lower-class support for revolution with the colonial elite, such as lawyer James Otis and wealthy merchant John Hancock.
- Adams organised Sons of Liberty activities against the *Stamp Act* in 1765, and a non-importation group against the *Townshend Duties* in 1767.
- In 1768 he wrote the *Journal of Events*, documenting atrocities by British soldiers who had been sent to Boston to maintain order and enforce the *Townshend Duties*. This tension became directed at the idea of Britain having a standing army, leading to confrontation in the Boston Massacre in 1770.
- He also wrote the *Massachusetts Circular Letter* (1768) that angered the British, who shut down the Massachusetts Colonial Assembly.
- In 1770, after manipulating the events that led to the Boston Massacre, he wrote *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre of Boston*, a biased account of the event that increased anti-British feeling.
- In 1771 he organised Committees of Correspondence, an influential group that spread anti-British propaganda; each colony soon had a similar organisation.
- In 1773 he led and organised the Boston Tea Party.
- He attended the First and Second Continental Congresses as a delegate from Massachusetts in 1774 and 1775, respectively, and in 1776 he signed the *Declaration of Independence.*



Source 2.24 *Samuel Adams*, by John Singleton Copley, 1772

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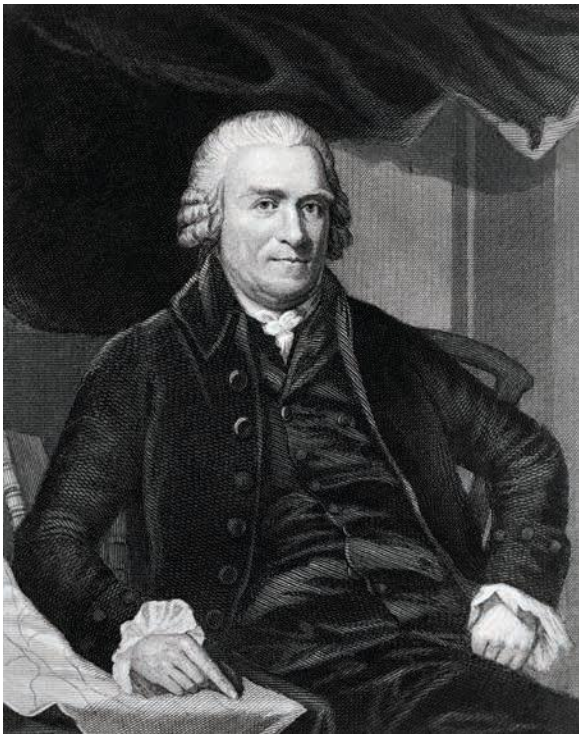
My name is Samuel Adams. I was born in Massachusetts in 1722, one of just three of the 12 children born in our family to survive. I am second cousin to the statesman John Adams.

I briefly considered entering the Law, then determined upon a business career. The results were disastrous, and simply proved that I had no head for business, so I accepted a position in my father's factory making malt. Truth to tell, my head was already full of political matters, which were at this time becoming a burning issue. Like my countrymen, I was enraged by British tyranny. In 1748, I took a stand against the press gangs by founding the *Independent Advertiser*. This was an important moment for me. I had read the political theories of John Locke, and now found that I could use them to construct an argument about our natural right to resist British oppression. In Boston at that time, it was not enough to have an opinion: one had to have an argument. I contended that John Locke's Treatises on Government taught us that all men have an innate right to defend their liberty against tyranny and thus assure their freedom. I argued that our Thirteen Colonies must maintain their constitutional rights, and reminded folk that even the mighty Roman empire could decline if people no longer fight to defend their values.



Source 2.25 *Portrait of Samuel Adams*, undated engraving

Samuel Adams

Focus question

Using three or four points, outline Samuel Adams' contribution to revolution in the period 1754–1776 (see Chapter 5 for ideas on how to answer this question).

2.13 *Quartering Act 1765*

Britain passed the *Quartering Act* (an amendment to the *Mutiny Act*) in the same year as the *Stamp Act*. It gave the Crown legal permission to compel colonists to quarter (that is, accommodate and feed) British troops and their horses who remained in America after the French and Indian War (1754–1763). This became a major sticking point in America after British troops were used to enforce unpopular British laws such as the *Townshend Duties* (see Chapter 3) and the infamous *Coercive Acts* of 1774 (see Chapter 4). British troops were now bearing the brunt of the anti-British feeling and were the target of propaganda, as the most visible British presence in large cities such as Boston and New York. The New York Colonial Assembly, for instance, refused to comply with the *Quartering Act* and was suspended in 1767.

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The view that the British Army was a latent 'standing army' and inevitably would be used against the American colonists was mere propaganda in 1765, but within the next 10 years, following the Boston Massacre in 1770 and the Battle of Lexington-Concord in 1775, this would become fact.

2.14 *Declaratory Act 1766*

The *Stamp Act 1765* was repealed in 1766 after Prime Minister George Grenville (the Act's creator and greatest supporter) was dismissed and two prominent British parliamentarians, Edmund Burke and William Beckford, spoke out against the Acts in the House of Commons. However, the new Prime Minister, Lord Rockingham, agreed to the *Stamp Act*'s repeal only on the condition that it was accompanied by an assertion of full British sovereignty over the Thirteen Colonies. This would give Britain 'full power and authority to make laws and statutes … to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever'. In many respects, the ***Declaratory Act*** was Britain's attempt to save face following the repeal of the *Stamp Act*.

Declaratory Act British legislation passed in 1766 granting Parliament the authority to pass all laws for its American colonies. Initially it did not cause much of a reaction but came to be viewed as a dangerous sign of British intentions.

Source 2.26 A British cartoon from 1766 depicting the repeal of the *Stamp Act* as a funeral procession. George Grenville is carrying the coffin.

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American response

The *Declaratory Act 1766* did not provoke great upheaval and outrage in the colonies as they were still celebrating the repeal of the *Stamp Act* and pledging their loyalty to King George III. In fact, in New York City a statue was erected celebrating the 'Best of Kings' George III (see Source 2.27). Most colonists did not grasp the full significance of the *Declaratory Act*, which ultimately entitled Britain to full authority over the colonies. In reality, the Act was an implicit statement of British intention to take further steps to tax the colonies to recover costs for colonial expenditure. Although the Act had no practical impact on the colonies, some radicals did realise the grave danger in handing full sovereignty to the British.

At this time Americans were largely loyal to the British Empire and the main question was: did Britain have the right to tax America? Over the course of the next 10 years, all this changed and by 1776 Americans would be defying the right of Britain not just to tax the colonies but also to rule at all.

Focus question

James Otis, John Adams, John Dickinson and Patrick Henry were all lawyers and members of their colonial assembly. Why would lawyers and politicians be a dangerous pressure group against Britain in the Revolution?

Source 2.27 'Britons behold the best of kings …', a 1762 print by Nathaniel Hurd

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Summary chart: British Acts affecting the Thirteen Colonies and the Prime Ministers in charge at the time

British Act affecting the colonies	Year policy enacted	Prime Minister at time of enactment
Proclamation Act	1763	King George III (this was a royal declaration bypassing Parliament)
Sugar Act	1764	George Grenville
Stamp Act	1765	George Grenville
Quartering Act	1765	George Grenville
Declaratory Act	1766	Lord Rockingham
Townshend Duties	1767	William Pitt
Tea Act	1773	Lord North
Coercive Acts ('Intolerable Acts')	1774	Lord North

A MATTER OF FACT

King George III could enact Royal Decrees in the Thirteen Colonies, but not in Britain. This was because the English Bill of Rights 1689 limited the monarch's power in Britain, but not its colonies.

The story so far

- Repercussions of the French and Indian War caused Britain to attempt to recoup massive war debt costs not from higher taxing of its own citizens but rather by shifting this debt to the American colonists. The *Sugar Act 1764* and *Stamp Act 1765* were all part of this plan. These economic policies of Britain backfired spectacularly and cost George Grenville his prime ministership.
- After 150 years of self-government and self-management in almost every facet of colonial America, life was rudely interrupted by Britain after 1763. Traditional attachment to the Mother Country was still very strong, but this sentiment was tested as each new piece of British legislation was enacted.
- Prominent American colonial figures emerged, such as James Otis, Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams, and these men were to become prominent Founding Fathers in the years to come.
- A test of wills was developing between the British Parliament and the Thirteen Colonies of North America – who were once a loyal and obedient part of the British Empire.

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CHAPTER REVIEW

DEVELOPING CLEAR DEFINITIONS

Write explanations defining each of the following:

Significant ideas and events	Popular movements	Significant individuals
Proclamation Line	Loyal Nine	James Otis
Pontiac's Rebellion	Sons of Liberty	John Hancock
Sugar Act 1764		Patrick Henry
Stamp Act 1765		Samuel Adams
Declaratory Act 1766		
Virginia Resolves		
British Parliament		

PRACTISING PARAGRAPH ANSWERS

1 Using three or four points, explain the importance of the *Stamp Act 1765* in the development of the American Revolution from 1765 to 1770.

2 Using three or four points, explain how the *Sugar Act 1764* contributed to a revolutionary situation by 1776.

3 On the VCAA website (access via http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/?id=6106), find and respond to the 2011 VCE exam question for Section B on America.

ONLINE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

Alpha History (access via http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/?id=6104)

Under the drop-down menu 'History Sites', select 'American Revolution' to access numerous documents, images and historiography that are tailored to each particular Area of Study. You will find this a valuable resource. Both class time and study time should be devoted to interpreting the images and documents on this site.

Liberty, television series, PBS, Twin Cities Public Television, 1997.

This is a highly recommended six-part series of one-hour episodes on the American Revolution. Episode 1, 'Reluctant Revolutionaries', and Episode 2, 'Blows Must Decide', deal with the entire Area of Study One course. All six episodes provide an excellent window into the American Revolution, but offer an extremely patriotic and one-sidedly positive viewpoint. Leftist historians like Howard Zinn and James Loewen would argue strongly against many of its claims.

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READING MORE DEEPLY

Easy

Frigo, N., *VCE Revolutions: America,* Cambridge Checkpoints, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2015.

Moderate

Thompson, S., *Forging America*, HTAV, Melbourne, 2010.

Challenging

Loewen, J., *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, The New Press, New York, 1995.

Look at Chapter 1, 'Handicapped by History', Chapter 4, 'Red Eyes', and Chapter 5, '"Gone With The Wind": The Invisibility of Racism in American History Textbooks'. This is a very entertaining left-wing summation of American history and the flaws in the way it has been traditionally written and taught.

Source 2.28 Collage of images from the 18th and 19th centuries showing several notable members of the Sons of Liberty: **1st Row:** Samuel Adams (founder & political writer, Boston), Benedict Arnold (businessman, Norwich, Connecticut), John Hancock (merchant/smuggler, Boston), Patrick Henry (lawyer, Virginia), James Otis, Jr. (lawyer, Massachusetts) **2nd Row:** Paul Revere (silversmith, Boston), James Swan (financier, Boston), Alexander McDougall (merchant, New York), Benjamin Rush (physician, Philadelphia, Charles Thomson (tutor, Philadelphia) **3rd Row:** Joseph Warren (doctor, Boston), Marinus Willett (cabinetmaker, New York), Oliver Wolcott (lawyer, Connecticut), Christopher Gadsden (merchant, Charleston, South Carolina, Haym Salomon (financial broker, New York and Philadelphia)

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Cambridge University Press

3

Britain's folly, 1767–1773

> *I will hold up America to the lightning scorn of moral indignation. In doing this, I shall feel myself discharging the duty of a true* ***patriot****; for he is a lover of his country who rebukes and does not excuse its sins.*
>
> – AFRICAN-AMERICAN SOCIAL REFORMER AND STATESMAN FREDERICK DOUGLASS, 1847

Patriot 18th-century colloquial term for anyone who supported the Revolution

OVERVIEW

American taxation problems with Britain led to the emergence of more sophisticated colonial organisations of resistance than the Sons of Liberty and their overt violence. According to historian David Conroy, the power of the word arose, in both speech and in pen, through several avenues: sermons in weekly church services, impassioned speeches from colonial assemblymen, letters printed in the local press, Committees of Correspondence forming and spreading those ideas, the formation of the Daughters of Liberty, and widespread boycotts of British products. All of these provided ideological and economic muscle to the colonial response, and in the long term were a far more successful form of revolutionary opposition than simple armed struggle.

KEY ISSUES

- How did the British react to American indignation over new taxes?
- What was the physical threat posed by the British in the colonies?
- How did the American colonies react?
- How did revolutionary political ideas spread?

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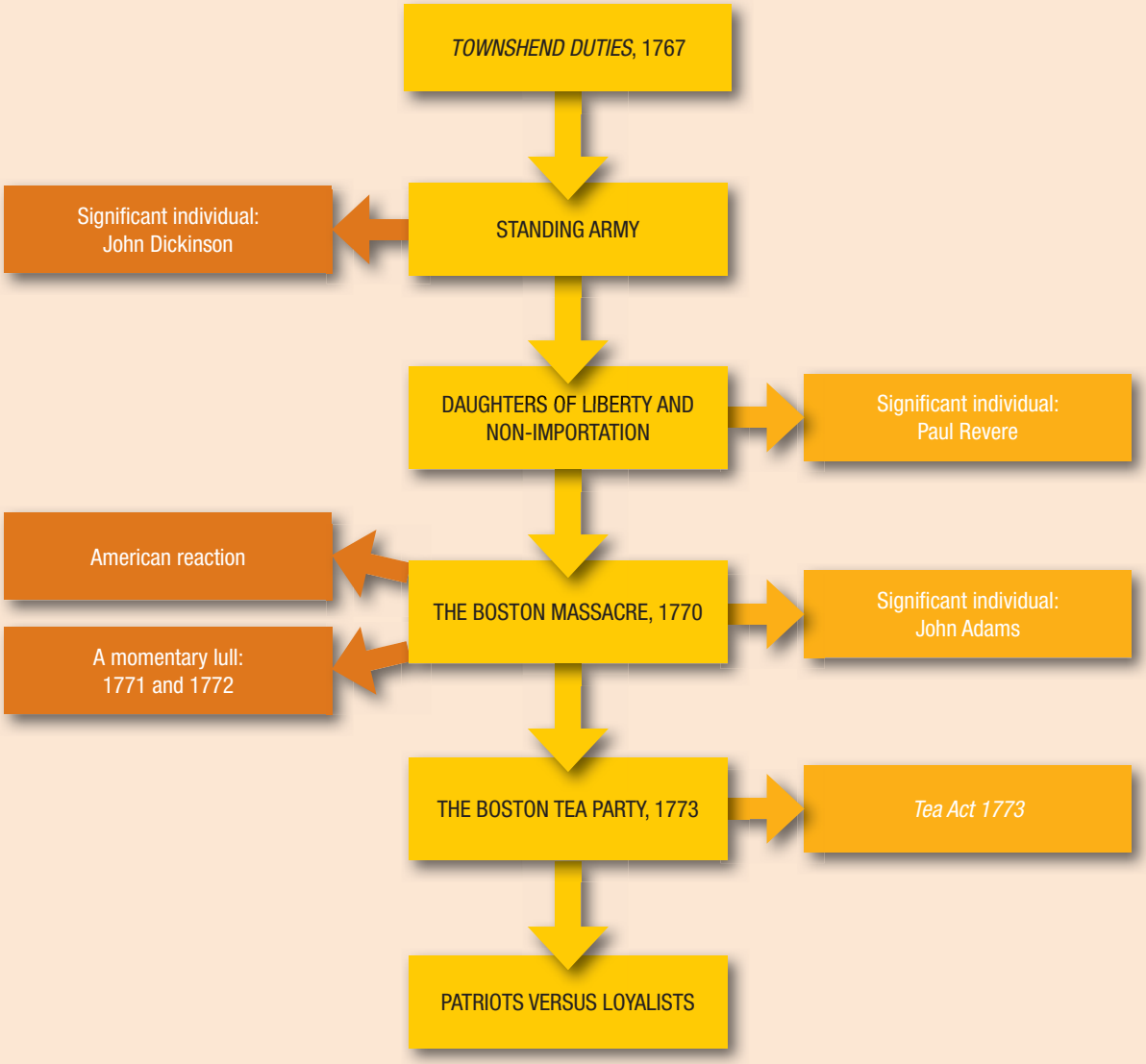
FLOW OF CHAPTER



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3.1 *Townshend Duties*, 1767

The collection of taxes on both sugar and paper had been disastrous for Britain, so a new raft of taxes was implemented in another attempt to collect much-needed revenue for the British treasury, known as the *Townshend Duties*. The principal piece of legislation was simply the *Townshend Act 1767* (also known as the *Revenue Act*), but the *Townshend Duties* also included the *Indemnity Act 1767*, the *Commissioners of Customs Act 1767*, the *Vice Admiralty Court Act 1767* and the *New York Restraining Act 1767*, which collectively represented the counter-punch by Britain to offset the previous taxation failures of Grenville. His failure to implement the *Sugar Act 1764* and the *Stamp Act 1765* in the colonies had cost him his job, which was the first of many political changes in Britain during the Revolutionary period (see Source 3.1). This political instability would eventually play into American hands.

Whig a member of a political faction and then a political party in the parliaments of England, Scotland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom; between the 1680s and 1850s, they contested power with their rivals, the Tories. Whig can also mean anyone liberal minded or progressive who was sympathetic to the cause of independence.

Term	Name	Party
1762–63	Earl of Bute	Tory
1763–65	George Grenville	Whig
1765–66	Marquess of Rockingham	Whig
1767–70	Duke of Grafton	Whig
1770–82	Lord North	Tory
1782	Marquess of Rockingham	Whig
1782–83	Earl of Shelburne	Whig
1783	Duke of Portland	Coalition
1783–1801	William Pitt the Younger	Tory

Source 3.1 Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, 1763–1801 (*The Hutchinson Dictionary of World History*, Helicon, 1998)

Like all the mercantilist legislation, the purpose of the *Townshend Duties* was twofold: to raise revenue and to assert the power of the British Parliament. The *Townshend Act* itself was a duty on products such as paper, lead, glass, oil, paint and tea: popular items used by virtually every colonist – and importantly, all of these products were imported from Britain. However, it was the principle of the external taxes – not the tax itself – that was the main colonial concern; a fact Britain didn't fully comprehend at this stage. Resistance in the colonies re-emerged because of the imposition of these 'external taxes', which were met by widespread boycotts by the general public and the non-importation of most British products by traders and merchants.

Once more, the resistance was most acute in Boston, in part due to the sheer volume of British imports that landed in that port city:

- The Sons of Liberty began their clandestine activities as a guerrilla-like response to the overwhelming power of 1000 or more British troops in Boston – literally, a 'standing army'.
- In 1768 Samuel Adams penned the *Massachusetts Circular Letter* and John Dickinson wrote the first of 12 essays published between 1767 and 1768: a *Letter from a Farmer*. Both works publicly declared the *Townshend Duties* to be unconstitutional, as the colonists were not represented in the British Parliament. The catch cry of the *Stamp Act* – 'No taxation without representation' – re-emerged.

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- Samuel Adams' *Circular Letter* was passed by the Massachusetts Assembly. Because this was rightly seen by Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson as defying British law, he had the assembly dissolved. As riots broke out in response, more British troops were sent to Boston to maintain public order and to enforce compliance with the *Townshend Duties*. These front-line British troops bore the brunt of poor British management and public policy. For colonists this was a rationalisation of their fears regarding standing armies and tyranny.

Source 3.2 The American Revolution is popularly seen as the rebellious youth of the nation. Here young boys in Boston confront the governor, General Thomas Gage, because his soldiers had pulled down the forts they had made in the snow. *The Boston Boys Protest to General Thomas Gage*, by Frederick Coffay Yohn, circa 1900.

A MATTER OF FACT

Source 3.3 *Charles Townshend*, by Joshua Reynolds, circa 1765

Charles Townshend (1725–1767) was a British politician from the Whig party, who, in August 1766, became Chancellor of the Exchequer *in Prime Minister William Pitt's government. He held this position until his sudden death in September 1767, aged 42. Townshend was known for delivering witty speeches in the House of Commons; however, it is his final official act in Parliament for which he is best remembered. This was to pass through Parliament resolutions for taxing several articles, such as glass, paint, paper and tea, on their importation into America, which he estimated would produce the (then considerable) sum of £40,000 for the English treasury: also known as the Townshend Duties.*

Chancellor of the Exchequer the title held by the British Cabinet minister who is responsible for all economic and financial matters, equivalent to the role of Treasurer or Minister of Finance in other nations

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3.2 Standing army

standing army an army of professional soldiers that is always combat ready and can be used at any moment; seen as an affront and risk to liberty under Enlightenment ideals

impressment the forced membership into the British Army or Navy

Redcoats, or 'lobsterbacks' – slang for British soldiers, especially during the revolutionary period.

The theoretical threat of a **standing army** (as mentioned in Chapter 2) was beginning to become a practical threat, as large numbers of British Army and Navy troops moved into Boston and New York to police British laws. Stories of **impressment** and the establishment of the unpopular *Quartering Act 1765* (the forced colonial housing of British troops; discussed in Chapter 2) meant that the colonists now felt a growing and oppressive presence of British troops in their cities.

In response, Samuel Adams' *Journal of Events* (a work of pure propaganda) railed against the immorality and harshness of British troops in the Boston press, while the Sons of Liberty strove to discomfort the British troops wherever they could. Fights between isolated **Redcoats** and locals became commonplace in the streets and bars of Boston. And as the pay of a British soldier was so meagre, they often had to get secondary employment in cities to supplement their wages – further increasing tensions during a period when jobs were in short supply.

Source 3.4 An example of impressment in the colony of New York: *British Recruiting Party*, by William Henry, 1780

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A MATTER OF FACT

Though often referred to as 'Redcoats', British troops were also known by other pejorative terms in the Thirteen Colonies. 'Regulars' or 'King's men' were commonplace, 'Bloody backs' was one name, and a popular one in Boston around 1770 was 'lobster' – as the colour of the British uniform matched the colour of the local staple (New England lobsters) when boiled.

Source 3.5 British Army and Navy troops moving into Boston to police British policies: *A View of the Town of Boston in New England and British Ships of War Landing their Troops*, by Paul Revere, 1768

Two of Locke's three 'natural rights' – liberty and estate (property; see Chapter 1) – had already been usurped by Britain through taxes, the *Quartering Act* 1765 and Writs of Assistance (see Chapter 2). Britain only had to take 'life' and all three 'rights' would be abrogated – and this is exactly what happened. The presence of Britain's standing army was a crucial factor in the cause and aftermath of the Boston Massacre in 1770, the *Coercive Acts* in 1774, the Battle of Lexington-Concord in 1775 and subsequent Revolutionary War and the formation of America's own Continental Army.

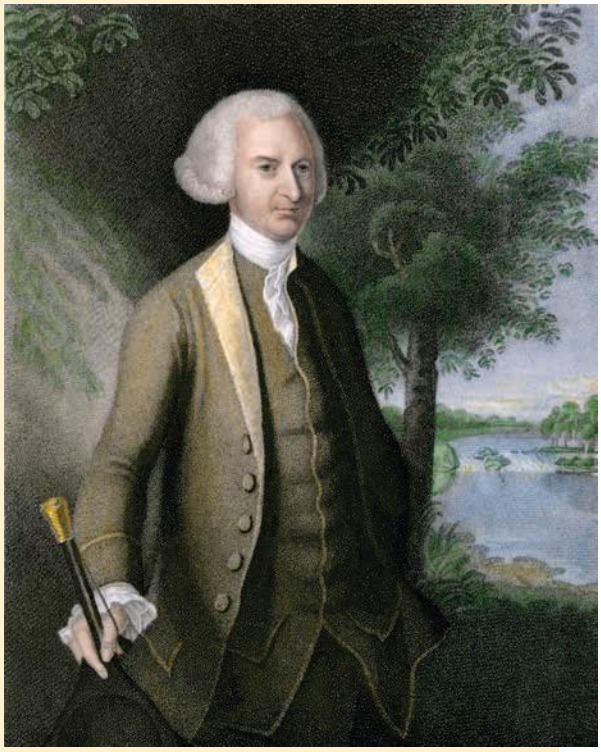
ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 3.1: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Using three or four points, discuss how the presence of British troops contributed to a revolutionary situation by 1776.

ISBN 978-1-107-50647-3

3.3 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
John Dickinson (1732–1808)

- John Dickinson, a lawyer from Pennsylvania, was one of the Founding Fathers. He rose to fame as a legislator in the Pennsylvanian colonial assembly opposing the *Townshend Duties* in 1767.
- He was well known for his oratory and his collection of essays, *Letters from a Farmer*, written between 1767 and 1768. These 12 letters, which were widely read and reprinted throughout the colonies, acknowledged the power of the British Parliament in Empire affairs, but argued that the colonies should be sovereign in their own internal affairs.
- He also argued that taxes laid upon the colonies by Parliament for raising revenue, rather than regulating trade, were unconstitutional.
- He foresaw the possibility of conflict but urged against the use of violence; Pennsylvania was traditionally a Quaker state and had strong undercurrents of that religion, especially pacificism.
- He attended the First and Second Continental Congresses in 1774 and 1775, respectively. He also famously penned the *Olive Branch Petition* in 1775 and the Articles of Confederation in 1777.



Source 3.6 *John Dickinson*, by Charles Willson Peale, circa 1770

Source 3.7 This idealised image by Franz Xaver Haberman from the 1770s of British soldiers working with the colonists shows both the presence of the Redcoats and the importance of Boston as a location for the Revolution.

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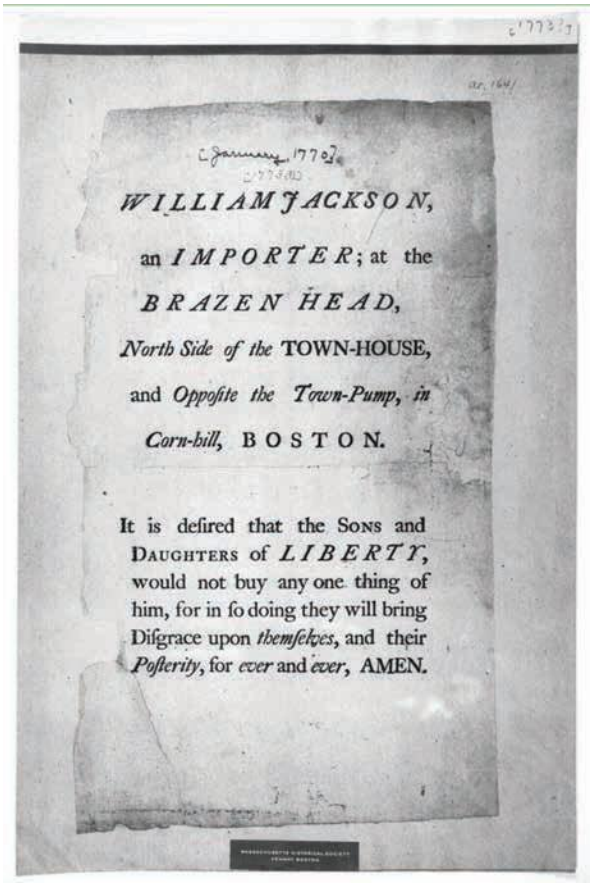
3.4 Daughters of Liberty and non-importation

Formed as a complement to the Sons of Liberty, the Daughters of Liberty harnessed the important role of women in colonial America as the principal purchaser of foodstuffs for the family. By refusing to purchase British products, women put severe economic pressure on Britain, which highlights their power in the 'domestic sphere' (home), as recent historians such as Laurel Thatcher Ulrich have argued. As examples of ways that the Daughters of Liberty contributed to the politically charged atmosphere, they practised mending clothes to avoid buying British goods, and even went to the extent of blending their own tea to avoid British duties – 'Labrador tea' was one such herbal substitute to British tea advertised in many papers of the time. According to Ulrich, in Edenton, North Carolina, in October 1774, 51 women gathered at the private residence of Elizabeth King to drink wild raspberry tea and sign non-importation agreements. An Englishman who heard about the gathering considered the whole thing a 'marvellous joke', and sarcastically wrote:

> *Is there a Female Congress at Edenton too? I hope not, for Ladies have ever, since the Amazonian era, been esteemed the most formidable Enemies: if they, I say, should attack us, the most fatal consequence is to be dreaded.*

Ulrich, L., 'Political Protest and the World of Goods', *The Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution*, Oxford, New York, 2013, p. 78


WILLIAM JACKSON,
an IMPORTER; at the
BRAZEN HEAD,
North Side of the TOWN-HOUSE,
and Oppofite the Town-Pump, in
Corn-hill, BOSTON.

It is defired that the Sons and
DAUGHTERS of LIBERTY,
would not buy any one thing of
him, for in fo doing they will bring
Difgrace upon themfelves, and their
Poſterity, for ever and ever, AMEN.

Source 3.8 A sign declaring that Sons and Daughters of Liberty should boycott an importer of British products, William Jackson

While more passive in their resistance than the Sons of Liberty, the organised boycotts of British goods by the Daughters of Liberty were still successful, and their influence was certainly felt across the Atlantic.

Another tactic was to encourage merchants to not trade with British ships. The idea was to strangle trade with Britain to force them to repeal the *Townshend Act* and its associated taxes. The tactic was agreed upon in Suffolk Resolves in 1774 at the First Continental Congress, in reaction to the *Coercive Acts*. Samuel Adams was responsible for instituting a non-importation authority that would hold the colonies to the agreement.

The subsequent downturn in trade hurt British merchants and manufacturing industrialists, who then pressured their members in the British Parliament to repeal laws that were supposed to be raising revenue, but had the effect of dramatically reducing it – for both the Crown and the merchants.

Focus question

Do you think non-importation placed greater pressure on Britain than street riots or tar and feathering random British officials, customs officers or sympathisers?

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Source 3.9 Two examples of leading Daughters of Liberty: Esther de Berdt Reed (1746–1780) and Sarah Franklin Bache (1744–1808). Reed was married to leading Philadelphia Patriot Joseph Reed, who would serve as Washington's secretary and aide-de-camp in the Revolutionary War. Bache was the only daughter of Benjamin Franklin, and in particular strongly opposed the *Stamp Act*. Both women were politically active and exceptionally dedicated to the revolutionary cause. Through the Ladies' Association of Philadelphia, which Reed established, they raised funds and purchased much-needed clothing for the fledgling Continental Army. **Left:** *Portrait of Esther De Berdt Reed*, artist unknown; **Right:** *Portrait of Sarah Franklin Bache*, by John Hoppner, circa 1793.

3.5 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
Paul Revere (1735–1818)

- Revere was an active member of the Sons of Liberty and a good example of the role of 'grassroots' involvement in the Revolution and how traditional class enemies – the working, middle and upper classes – successfully worked together in America.
- As an artisan (a silversmith), he became widely known for his engraving of the Boston Massacre in 1770 that accompanied Samuel Adams' *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre of Boston* (see Source 3.12). Although the account bore little resemblance to the actual incident, it became the accepted version of the event in America.
- Revere's role as an propagandist is important as he copied and disseminated other anti-British images, including 'The Able Doctor' (which depicts America as a semi-naked First Nations woman being sexually assaulted and forced to drink British tea; see Chapter 4) in 1774 in response to the *Coercive Acts*.
- Revere delivered the Suffolk Resolves of 1774 to the First Continental Congress.
- Revere became immortalised in American folklore for his famous 'midnight ride' on the eve of the Battle of Lexington-Concord in 1775 (discussed in Chapter 4).
- He also sat on the Committee of Safety, and joined the Massachusetts militia to fight in the Revolutionary War.

Source 3.10 *Portrait of Paul Revere* , by John Singleton Copley, 1768–70

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3.6 FLASHPOINT!

The Boston Massacre, 1770

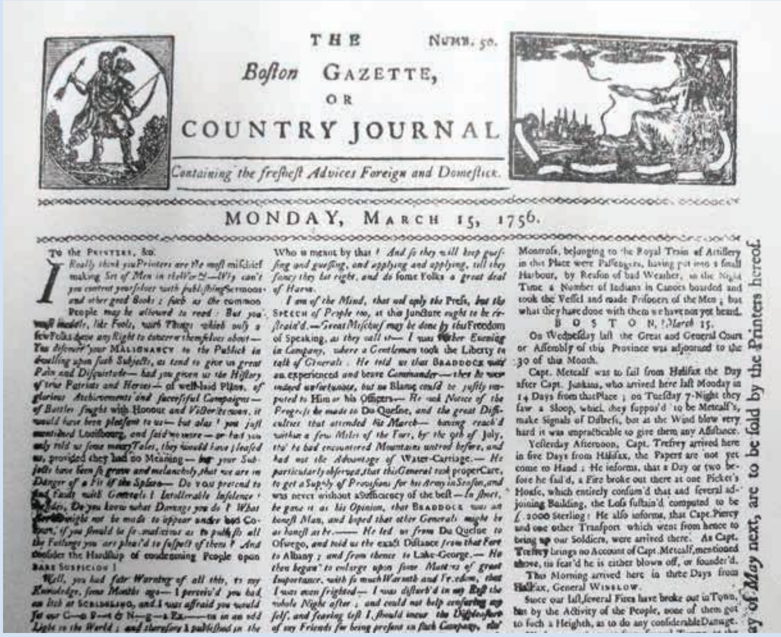
Britain's unsuccessful prosecution of the *Townshend Duties*, the widespread boycott of British products, the activities of the Sons of Liberty, the defiance of colonial assemblies of British policies and the growing propaganda war against Britain had further deteriorated relations between the American colonies and Britain, especially in Boston. Harassment of British soldiers was overt in bars, streets and in the workplace.

These tensions culminated in the Boston Massacre, which firmly established the city as the 'epicentre of revolution'. Ironically, this fatal confrontation erupted on the same day that the *Townshend Duties* were partially repealed in London: 5 March 1770. The Sons of Liberty and other Bostonians had been aggravating and taunting British troops ever since the death of 11-year-old **Christopher Seider** at the hands of a **Loyalist** in February 1770. According to John Adams, who later defended the British soldiers in court, a 'rabble' of 300 or so 'saucy boys, negroes, mulattos, Irish teagues and outlandish Jack Tars' gathered outside the customs house opposite the Boston State House to harass the British troops on guard duty there. Snowballs, rocks, razor-sharp oyster shells and heavy wooden clubs were thrown at the guards, as well as a torrent of abuse. When one trooper was hit to the ground, his musket discharged. In the ensuing chaos, the British troops killed five Bostonians, escalating the anti-British atmosphere in Boston to toxic levels.

Seider, Christopher a member of a large mob that attacked a custom official's house, and who was shot and killed by the owner, the Loyalist Ebenezer Richardson

Loyalist a colonist loyal to Britain

In many respects the Boston Massacre reignited the Sons of Liberty's role in the community. Indeed, the event may well have been orchestrated: much has been written about Samuel Adams manipulating the events on the day so a confrontation was inevitable. In any case, Adams now had a real incident that he could use to punish Britain, launching a new wave of propaganda through the *Boston Gazette*. His clever manipulation of the massacre validated his fulminations about British troops in his *Journal of Events* and resulted in his emotional piece, *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre of Boston* (1770). He published this so quickly that he outmanoeuvred any British version of events; in fact, his version was the one first read by audiences in both the colonies and Britain. In colonists' minds this confirmed the Lockean fears of standing armies.


THE Boston GAZETTE, OR COUNTRY JOURNAL — NUMB. 50.

Containing the freshest Advices Foreign and Domestick.

MONDAY, MARCH 15, 1756.

To the PRINTERS, &c.

I Really think you Printers are the most mischief making Set of Men in the World — Why can't you content yourselves with publishing Sermons and other good Books; such as the common People may be allowed to read: But you must meddle, like Fools, with Things which only a few Folks have any Right to concern themselves about — You discover your MALIGNANCY to the Publick in dwelling upon such Subjects, as tend to give us great Pain and Disquietude — had you given us the History of true Patriots and Heroes — of well-laid Plans, of glorious Atchievements and successful Campaigns — of Battles fought with Honour and Victories won, it would have been pleasant to us — but alas! you just mentioned Louisbourg, and said no more — or had you only told us some merry Tales, they would have pleased us, provided they had no Meaning — but your Subjects have been so grave and melancholy, that we are in Danger of a Fit of the Spleen — Do you pretend to find Fault with Generals! Intollerable Insolence! ... Do you know what Damage you do! What ... might not be made to appear under bad Colours, if you should be so malicious as to publish all the Failings you are pleas'd to suspect of them? And consider the Hardship of condemning People upon BARE SUSPICION!

Well, you had fair Warning of all this, to my Knowledge, some Months ago — I perceiv'd you had an Itch at SCRIBLERING, and I was affraid you would set our G—s S—t & N—g—a F—— in an odd Light to the World; and therefore I published in the

Who is meant by that! And so they will keep guessing and guessing, and applying and applying, till they fancy they hit right, and do some Folks a great deal of Harm.

I am of the Mind, that not only the Press, but the SPEECH of People too, at this Juncture ought to be restrain'd. — Great Mischief may be done by this Freedom of Speaking, as they call it — I was t'other Evening in Company, where a Gentleman took the Liberty to talk of Generals. He told us that BRADDOCK was an experienced and brave Commander — that he was indeed unfortunate, but no Blame could be justly imputed to Him or his Officers — He took Notice of the Progress he made to Du Quesne, and the great Difficulties that attended his March — having reach'd within a few Miles of the Fort, by the 9th of July, tho' he had encountered Mountains untrod before, and had not the Advantage of Water-Carriage. — He particularly observed, that this General took proper Care, to get a Supply of Provisions for his Army in Season, and was never without a Sufficiency of the best — In short, he gave it as his Opinion, that BRADDOCK was an honest Man, and hoped that other Generals might be as honest as he. —— He led us from Du Quesne to Oswego, and told us the exact Distance from that Fort to Albany; and from thence to Lake-George. — He then began to enlarge upon some Matters of great Importance, with so much Warmth and Freedom, that I was even frighted — I was disturb'd in my Rest the whole Night after; and could not help censuring myself, and fearing lest I should incur the Displeasure of my Friends for being present in such Company, tho'

Montrose, belonging to the Royal Train of Artillery in that Place were Passengers, having put into a small Harbour, by Reason of bad Weather, in the Night Time a Number of Indians in Canoes boarded and took the Vessel and made Prisoners of the Men; but what they have done with them we have not yet heard.

BOSTON, March 15.

On Wednesday last the Great and General Court or Assembly of this Province was adjourned to the 30 of this Month.

Capt. Metcalf was to sail from Halifax the Day after Capt. Junkins, who arrived here last Monday in 14 Days from that Place; on Tuesday 7-Night they saw a Sloop, which they suppos'd to be Metcalf's, make Signals of Distress, but as the Wind blew very hard it was impracticable to give them any Assistance.

Yesterday Afternoon, Capt. Trefrey arrived here in five Days from Halifax, the Papers are not yet come to Hand; He informs, that a Day or two before he sail'd, a Fire broke out there at one Picket's House, which entirely consum'd that and several adjoining Building, the Loss sustain'd computed to be £. 2000 Sterling: He also informs, that Capt. Piercy and one other Transport which went from hence to bring up our Soldiers, were arrived there. As Capt. Trefrey brings no Account of Capt. Metcalf, mentioned above, tis fear'd he is either blown off, or founder'd.

This Morning arrived here in three Days from Halifax, General WINSLOW.

Since our last, several Fires have broke out in Town, but by the Activity of the People, none of them got to such a Heighth, as to do any considerable Damage.

...ay of May next, are to be sold by the Printers hereof.

Source 3.11 *The Boston Gazette*

ISBN 978-1-107-50647-3 Cambridge University Press

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 3.2: VISUAL ANALYSIS

Source 3.12 Paul Revere's depiction of the Boston Massacre (based on an English engraving) that accompanied Samuel Adams' *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre of Boston*. Note that behind the British troops is a row of buildings including the Royal Custom House, which bears the sign 'Butcher's Hall'. Beneath the print are 18 lines of verse, which begin: 'Unhappy Boston! see thy Sons deplore, Thy hallowed Walks besmeared with guiltless Gore.' Also listed are the 'unhappy Sufferers' Sam Gray, Sam Maverick, James Caldwell, Crispus Attucks and Patrick Carr (killed) and it is noted that there were 'Six wounded; two of them (Christophe Monk & John Clark) Mortally.'

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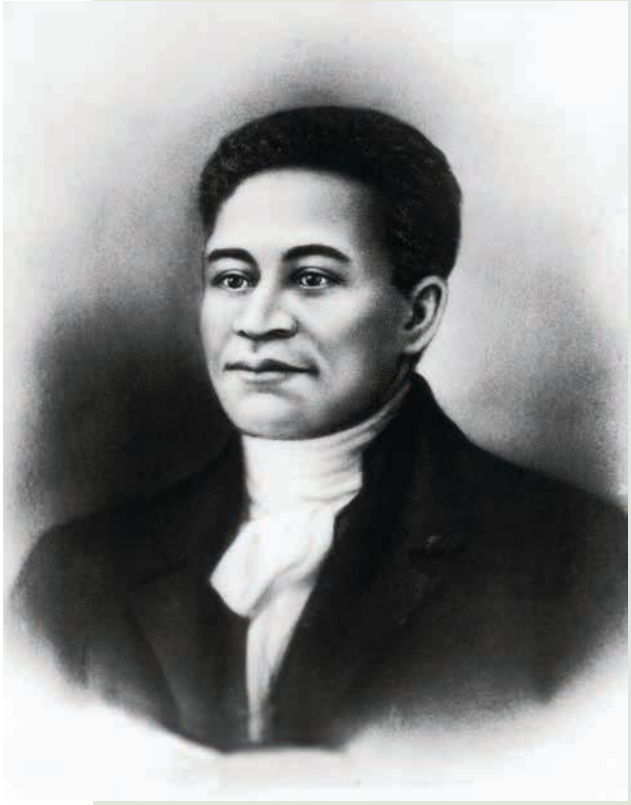
Examine Source 3.12. Even though this image is factually incorrect and the British soldiers involved were acquitted in court, this was the version sent to all American colonists and caused widespread condemnation of Britain both in the colonies and at home.

1 Find out what actually occurred and how the court case was handled and compare this information to the scenario depicted in this image. Also consider the accompanying text.
2 What inconsistencies did you find?



Source 3.13 *Crispus Attucks* (1723-1770), date and artist unknown

Source 3.14 The Boston Massacre Memorial in Boston Common, Boston, Massachusetts

A MATTER OF FACT

Attucks is today remembered as the first casualty of the American Revolution when he was shot and killed in the Boston Massacre. Years later he became a heroic symbol for the abolitionist movement against slavery.

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American reaction

Samuel Adams described the Boston Massacre, and other lesser incidents that took place in the days prior, as unprovoked attacks on peaceful, law-abiding citizens. His account of the massacre was drawn from more than 90 testimonies taken after the event – all from anti-British sources. Adams asserted that the British soldiers, under the command of Captain Preston, were deployed with the express intention of causing harm.

Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson collected his own testimonies, publishing *A Fair Account of the Late Unhappy Disturbance in Boston* and had the text sent to London. However, Hutchinson's work was published too long after the event, by which time Adams had already won the propaganda war.

Interestingly, it was John Adams, who later became the second President of the United States, who defended the soldiers in the trial of the Boston Massacre. However, even though he was successful, eventually getting them acquitted, the damage had already been done and the Boston Massacre set a precedent for further violent confrontations between colonists and British armed forces over the next six years.

A MATTER OF FACT

Though it might seem strange that a Patriot and future President of the United States would defend British troops against murder charges during a time of great political and social turmoil, John Adams wasn't pro-British but liked a famous case and the spotlight, and also believed in justice being served.

Hours to the Gates of this City many Thouſands of our brave Brethren in the Country, deeply affected with our Diſtreſſes, and to whom we are greatly obliged on this Occaſion—No one knows where this would have ended, and what important Conſequences even to the whole Britiſh Empire might have followed, which our Moderation & Loyalty upon ſo trying an Occaſion, and our Faith in the Commander's Aſſurances have happily prevented.

Laſt Thurſday, agreeable to a general Requeſt of the Inhabitants, and by the Conſent of Parents and Friends, were carried to their *Grave* in Succeſſion, the Bodies of *Samuel Gray*, *Samuel Maverick*, *James Caldwell*, and *Criſpus Attucks*, the unhappy Victims who fell in the bloody Maſſacre of the Monday Evening preceeding!

On this Occaſion moſt of the Shops in Town were ſhut, all the Bells were ordered to toll a ſolemn Peal, as were alſo thoſe in the neighboring Towns of Charleſtown Roxbury, &c. The Proceſſion began to move between the Hours of 4 and 5 in the Afternoon; two of the unfortunate Sufferers, viz. Meſſ. *James Caldwell* and *Criſpus Attucks*, who were Strangers, borne from Faneuil-Hall,

A MATTER OF FACT

The day of the Boston Massacre, 5 March, was a date that was commemorated in America until 4 July was adopted as the national day 13 years later.

Source 3.15 Paul Revere's obituary for the Patriots killed in the Boston Massacre published in the *Boston Gazette*, 17 March 1770. There were five deaths but only four coffins represented in Revere's engraving because one of the deaths happened from wounds and medical complications days later.

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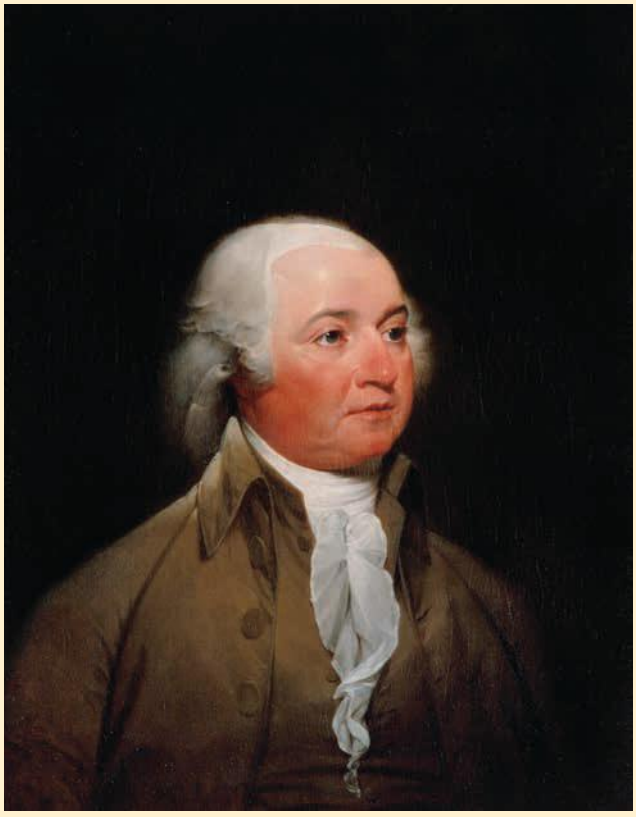
3.7 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
John Adams (1735–1826)

- A prominent Boston lawyer, Massachusetts's colonial assemblyman and one of the eventual Founding Fathers, John Adams was the cousin of Samuel Adams.
- He famously won the unwinnable Boston Massacre case defending the British troops and getting them (rightfully) acquitted.
- Adams had earlier opposed the *Stamp Act*, writing in the *Boston Gazette* and laying out his ideas to the Massachusetts Colonial Assembly. He was an outspoken revolutionary advocate at the First and Second Continental Congresses in 1774 and 1775, respectively, and became a forceful advocate for independence.
- He cleverly nominated George Washington as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army in 1775, winning over Virginia to the side of Massachusetts; Adams knew he could never win the Southern colonies without Virginia being on board.
- Part of the drafting committee of the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776 with Thomas Jefferson, Adams became George Washington's Vice President in 1789, and the second US President in 1797. His oldest son John Quincy Adams also became US President in 1825.
- Adams was married to powerhouse revolutionary, faithful wife and his best friend, Abigail Adams (see the Talking Portrait box).



Source 3.16 *John Adams*, circa 1793

A MATTER OF FACT

Abigail Adams was an assertive and strong-minded woman who provided an important window into the drama of the American Revolution via her prolific correspondence with her husband. Her life and its hardships, and her loyalty to the Revolution and her family, are dramatically depicted in the HBO production John Adams.

ISBN 978-1-107-50647-3

My name is Abigail Adams. I was born Abigail Smith at Weymouth, Massachusetts, in 1744. As a child, I was never well enough to attend school, and so I was educated at home by my mother, Elizabeth Quincy Smith, and my sisters. I explored the great libraries of my father and grandfather, studying literature in English and in French. At 17 years of age, my cousin, John Adams, a country lawyer, showed an interest in me. My mother thought him too coarse, and a bad match, but in 1764 we married. This began a rich friendship, although my husband's frequent absences from home often obliged us to discuss matters by letter.

In 1774, John attended the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia, while I stayed home. It was then that I realised that it would be men who would define our new nation, and that women's opinions might not be heard. But I had the ear of my beloved husband, and we continued to correspond. I urged him to support the idea of education for women: 'If we mean to have Heroes, Statesmen, Philosophers, we should have learned women.'

As the Thirteen Colonies fought their way towards independence from Britain, it occurred to me that the Liberty we were fighting for would not necessarily be applied to women; women would have to fight for their rights in order to gain them. I therefore wrote a stern warning to John at the Continental Congress:

> I long to hear that you have declared an independency. And, by the way, in the new code of laws I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power in the hands of husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are prepared to [cause] a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.

Source 3.17 *Abigail Adams*, by Benjamin Blythe, circa 1766

Later, when the United States of America was formed, the capital of our new nation was moved to Washington, and John became President. I continued my domestic responsibilities of keeping house for him and family, but now in the grand surroundings of the president's house. I remained active in political matters, and was delighted to hear my enemies call me 'Mrs President', a title of which any thinking woman could be proud.

Abigail Adams

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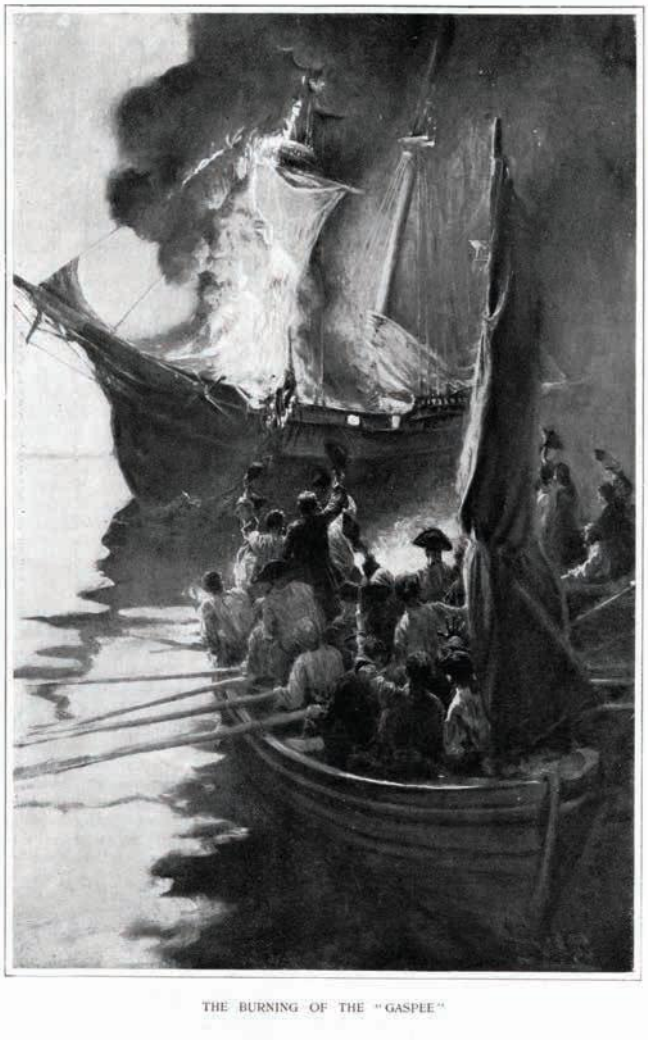
A momentary lull, 1771 and 1772

The quiet period of 1771–72 belied the fact that the Revolution was soon to take a major turn for the worse for the American colonists. For the moment, however, the taxation regimes tried by Britain had failed and the American colonists settled back into looking after their own colonial affairs again. There were two incidents of note. The capture of John Hancock's ship the *Liberty* in 1771 by the British Navy, and the confiscation of all its contents, outraged Boston Sons of Liberty, while in 1772 the tables were turned as the Rhode Island Sons of Liberty burned the *Gaspee* (see Source 3.18), but overall relative calm had returned to the American colonies.

One notable group did emerge at this time: the Massachusetts Committee of Correspondence. In time every colony had a similar committee, which distributed Revolutionary pamphlets, ideas, cartoons, letters and copies of speeches to every corner of the Thirteen Colonies. These played an important role in uniting the Thirteen Colonies, linking their ideas, modes of opposition and solutions to their problems. In fact, historian Bernard Bailyn later argued that these committees helped to bring the latent American nation to life. Nevertheless, it is worth stressing that these committees did represent yet another step towards unifying the colonies.



Source 3.18 A representation of the burning of the *Gaspee* in 1772. Rhode Island Sons of Liberty burnt the British customs ship to stop British interference in local trading operations. From Harper's *New Monthly Magazine*, No. 399, August 1883.

A MATTER OF FACT

Hancock's sloop (a small sailboat) Liberty became the Royal Navy ship HMS Liberty after its seizure by the British in 1768. It was used to patrol the waters around Rhode Island to stop customs violations. In July 1769 it was boarded and burnt down by Patriots, similar to the Gaspee incident in 1772.

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ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 3.3: HISTORICAL INTEPRETATION

Samuel Adams, writing on the revolutionary ideas of liberty and freedom in 1772, said:

Among the natural Rights of the Colonists are these: First, a Right to Life; Secondly to Liberty; thirdly to Property; together with the Right to support and defend them in the best manner they can …

The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man; but only to have the law of nature for his rule …

Just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty in matters spiritual and temporal, is a thing that all Men are clearly entitled to, by the … laws of nature, as well as by the law of Nations …

The great end of civil government from the very nature of its institution is for the support, protection and defence of those very rights …

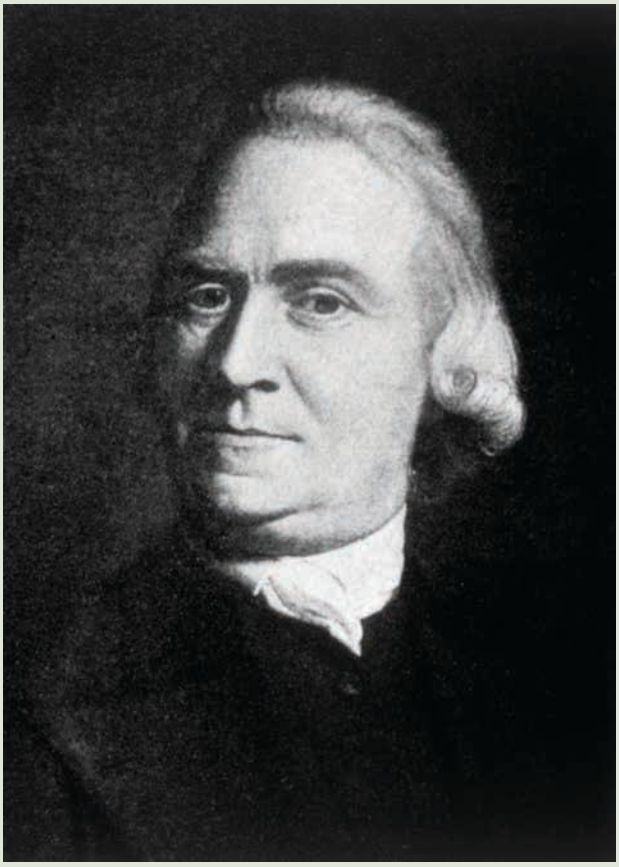
All Men have a Right to remain in a State of Nature … And in case of intolerable Oppression … to leave the Society they belong to, and enter into another.

… civil laws, should conform as far as possible, to the Law of natural reason …

The Legislative has no right to absolute arbitrary power over the lives and fortunes of the people …

All Persons born in the British American Colonies are by the laws of God and nature … entitled to all natural essential, inherent and inseparable Rights, Liberties and Privileges …

Quoted in M. Jensen (ed.), *Tracts of the American Revolution*, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1967, pp. 235, 236, 237, 239



Source 3.19 Samuel Adams, undated etching

1. Identify from the extract two of the natural rights of the Colonists.
2. Identify from the extract two ways in which man's liberty is to be kept free.
3. By quoting from the extract and using your own knowledge, explain the extent to which ideas of rights and liberty influenced the direction of the American Revolution.
4. Evaluate the usefulness of the extract in understanding the rise of significant individuals and their ideas from 1763 to 1776. In your response quote parts of the extract and refer to different views of the period 1763 to 1776.

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3.8 FLASHPOINT!

The Boston Tea Party and *Tea Act 1773*

The tax on tea was the only part of the *Townshend Act* still in operation by 1773. England passed the *Tea Act 1773* to continue the tax on tea, to collect more revenue and to stop smuggling by undercutting smugglers and colonial merchants. The *Tea Act* also helped the struggling British East India Trading Company to stay solvent and thus save the company.

Up until the *Tea Act*, the colonies were spending a whopping £3.4 million on tea annually, making tea a very lucrative product for Britain. However, Britain realised it was only capturing 10% of the American market, as 90% of tea consumed in America was being smuggled in from Dutch sources. If Britain could tighten up this imbalance, it could be an even more profitable market.

Even though British tea would be cheaper than the smuggled product under the new tax regime, its existence rekindled the colonists' longstanding gripe from the days of the *Sugar Act* and *Stamp Act*: 'No taxation without representation'. The stage was set for another showdown.

Famously, in December 1773 three British ships laden with tea arrived in Boston: the *Eleanor, Beaver* and *Dartmouth.* The Sons of Liberty had a sympathetic following among the merchant class in Boston and also had many members on the Boston wharves. Dockworkers refused to unload the British tea and this led to a standoff between the two main protagonists, with Samuel Adams representing Boston interests and Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson representing British interests. No tax would have to be paid if the ships never unloaded their cargo. Hutchinson was keen to uphold British law and to get the tax due for the cargo, but he didn't have the military muscle to break the strike. Adams broke the impasse by organising the Sons of Liberty, dressed as members of the First Nations Mohawk tribe, to throw 342 chests of British tea into Boston Harbor – an act that became known as the Boston Tea Party.

It is important to understand the British attitude to its citizens and colonies. Within a decade, convicts would be transported for seven years (or more) to the new colony of New South Wales for stealing single loaves of bread or other trivial items. In this light, the Boston Tea Party was seen as an outrageous violation of British law and the sanctity of private property, and could not go unpunished as far as Britain was concerned.

The repercussions of the Boston Tea Party were enormous and set America and Britain on a course that would culminate in the Revolutionary War. The British Government had had enough of American civil and non-civil disobedience. Governor Hutchinson lost his job, Boston was locked down under martial law and the *Coercive Acts* were introduced in the following year, 1774. The Acts forced colonists to take sides: Patriot or Loyalist.

Source 3.20 *'Boston tea-party.' Three cargoes of tea destroyed. Dec. 16, 1773.* Reproduction based on engraving by D Berger from 1784, by D Chodowiecki, 1903.

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ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 3.4: VISUAL ANALYSIS

Source 3.21 *The Destruction of Tea at Boston Harbor*, by Nathaniel Currier, 1846

Examine Source 3.21. This graphic depiction of the Boston Tea Party is similar to the Boston Massacre image by Paul Revere (see Source 3.12). Likewise, it contains many falsehoods.

1 Find out what actually occurred and compare this information to the scenario depicted in this image.
2 What inconsistencies did you find?

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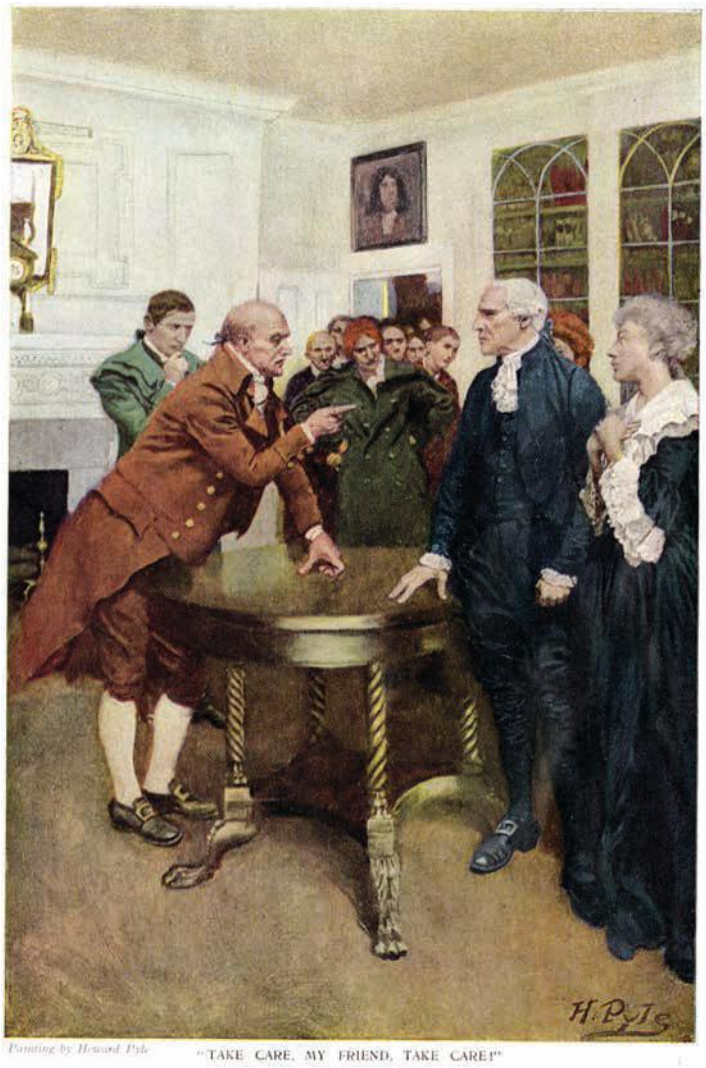
3.9 Patriots versus Loyalists

One significant result of simmering tensions between the colonies and the British was the fracturing of the American colonies between those that supported the revolutionaries and those that stayed loyal to the Crown: the Patriots and Loyalists. In broad terms, a Patriot was pro-revolutionary, anti-British, anti-Tory and part of an emerging American nationalist faction that supported the economic, political, social boycott of all things British. A Patriot would support the military action against Britain, the eventual severance from the British Empire and the establishment of an independent America. A Loyalist, by contrast, was anti-revolutionary, pro-British, pro-Tory conservative who supported the status quo and would stay loyal to 'King and Country' throughout the American Revolution. Eventually, some 80,000 Loyalist Americans migrated to Canada or Britain after their position and treatment in their own colonies became intolerable.

In Paul Revere or Samuel Adams (see Chapter 2 for more on him), we have notable examples of Patriots. On the other hand, in Thomas Hutchinson, we have a famous example of a Loyalist. However, things were not often so clear-cut, and communities and even families were torn apart by their divided loyalties to Britain or the patriotic cause. The example of Founding Father Benjamin Franklin and his own personal battle with his allegiance to the 'motherland' or the New World is evidence of this (more on his story appears in Chapter 4).



Painting by Howard Pyle "TAKE CARE, MY FRIEND, TAKE CARE!"

Source 3.22 *'Take care my friend, take care'*: Samuel Adams lecturing Massachusetts' colonial governor, Thomas Hutchinson, after the Boston Massacre, by Howard Pyle, circa 1898

A MATTER OF FACT

A general consensus amongst historians today estimate that in the early 1770s of a white population of about 2.5 million American colonists, around 45% were dedicated Patriots, 20% were Loyalists, and the rest were undecided fence sitters.

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Source 3.23 Political cartoon from 1774 by Paul Revere, depicting Death attacking Governor Thomas Hutchinson

A MATTER OF FACT

In New England to this very day chimneys dated prior to and during the revolutionary period painted white with a black trim indicate the residents of the house remained loyal to Britain during the Revolution.

Source 3.24 A 'Tory chimney' in Boston today

Source 3.25 *Reception of the American Loyalists by Great Britain in the Year 1783.* Engraving by H Moses after Benjamin West.

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Cambridge University Press

My name is Thomas Hutchinson, and I am one of the most misunderstood and unfortunate of men in my home city of Boston.

I am commonly referred to as a 'Loyalist', or supporter of British authority over the colonies. I am hated and criticised by Patriots such as John Adams and Sam Adams for defending Britain's right to impose taxes, but blamed by the British Prime Minister Lord North for worsening tensions between the colonists and the Mother Country. Without intending to, I suppose I became a useful unifying focus for the Patriot movement in Boston.

In 1765, during the *Stamp Act* protests, I felt the brute power of the crowd when they attacked my home and tore it to pieces. My possessions were looted and many precious documents for the history of Boston were destroyed …

Source 3.26 Lieutenant Governor of Boston in 1765, *Thomas Hutchinson*, Anonymous, circa 1750. He was deported from Boston in 1774, and eventually died in exile in England six years later.

Thomas Hutchinson

A MATTER OF FACT

According to historian Bernard Bailyn, who wrote a book on the man (The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson), criticising Hutchinson became an obsession for Patriot and future Founding Father John Adams. However, not only the colonial elite of Massachusetts despised Hutchinson. Bailyn discovered a Boston shopkeeper with the peculiar name of Harbottle Dorr, who was a one-time member of the Sons of Liberty. During the decade after the Stamp Act was introduced, Dorr collected the leading Boston newspapers of the day and added his own comments about news items in the margins of the page. Many of Dorr's comments are especially critical of the Boston governor. For example, his notes in an issue of the Boston Gazette included the terms 'vile hypocrite! … and slanderer,' 'arch fiend,' 'traitor!' and at one point simply 'Oh the villain!' to describe Hutchinson.

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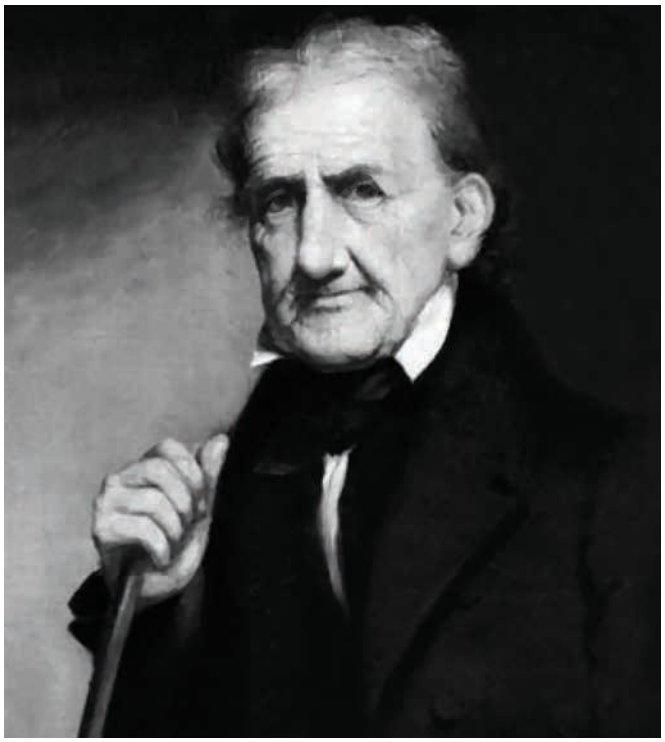
My name is George Robert Twelves Hughes. I am a citizen of Boston, and was born in 1742. I was apprenticed to a cobbler, because my family could not afford the payment to get me into one of the higher trades. Thus I became a poor shoemaker by trade, but took pride in the quality of my craftsmanship. I have also worked as a farmer, fisherman and sailor. I entered my majority in 1763, and worked in Boston until 1775, when I left to go to war. I had a little shop at the head of Griffith's Wharf, close to the place of the Boston Tea Party. I did bespoke work, making shoes to order, but also doing humbler repairs. I married in 1768, but did not prosper; I found myself in debtor's prison in 1770, and never owned my own house. Some referred to me as a rascal and a vagabond. I consider myself an ordinary, hardworking man.

My life seemed to set on a sure path, until our city and the Thirteen Colonies were swept up in a revolutionary experience that would change everything. I did not intend to be involved in these events, but I too was swept up in the struggle for our Liberty from Britain. At first, I only heard the gentlemen and the people of the better sort talking about grand ideas such as 'liberty' and 'taxation without representation', but I confess that I did not really understand them or even care for them. To tell the truth, my main reading was the Holy Bible. Of course there were plenty of political pamphlets around then, but they were written by educated people, and were too difficult for me to read. Just one pamphlet was different. When I first heard people reading Tom Paine's *Common Sense* aloud, I understood exactly what he was saying, and my mind was much impassioned by his fine words. I only ever bought one pamphlet, and never parted with it throughout my life, and keep it to this very day.

The years 1765 to 1775 were exciting ones for me. In 1765, I watched with curiosity as my fellow Bostonians hanged effigies of our British masters from the Liberty Tree, but I did not join in.



Source 3.27 George Robert Twelves Hughes, by Joseph Cole, 1835

Things changed dramatically in 1768, when the British invested our Boston with 4000 soldiers to our 16,000 citizens. Our city was changed completely, and not for the good. There were Redcoats everywhere, talking noisily in our taverns, congesting the sidewalks, and picking drunken fights with us locals. Worse still, these louts in uniform were poorly paid, and soon took to earning extra money by practising the trades they had followed at home. Many of them were shoemakers, and they were soon offering to do work – badly – at lower prices than our standard rates. My own takings, never good, began to fall rapidly. Now I understood what Liberty meant: being free of the heavy presence of these invading Redcoats.

In 1768, I was right in the crowd at the Boston Massacre. I knew four of the five men killed, all good working folk like myself. James Caldwell, a ship's mate, was shot in the back right beside me, and fell into my arms where he lay dying. I was well and truly fired to resist this tyranny, and gave evidence so that Captain Preston could be charged. For the first time, I hurried home and began to arm myself.

George Robert Twelves Hughes

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Source 3.28 Boston colonists under the Liberty Tree, hanging effigies of the British

In December 1773, I took part in the Boston Tea Party. Many working men were invited to take action, but I was made a leader. For the first time, I felt I was taking action to defend our city, to defend ordinary working people and to defend a principle. I had become a political man, and that day no less than the great John Hancock looked upon me with real respect as an equal.

In January 1774, I witnessed the hated customs officer John Malcolm threatening a small boy with a club. The arrogant official hit me with his club instead, knocking me senseless and leaving a cleft in my skull. When news of this spread, a crowd called out Malcolm, and gave him a good tarring and feathering. I would have preferred him to be tried and punished by a court.

Now I am an old man, and they have made something of a hero of me, and given me a pension. My memory of exact dates is sometimes clouded, but I remember those events in Boston as if they were yesterday …

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The story so far

- The *Townshend Duties* of 1767 were enacted by the British Parliament to raise much-needed revenue. However, after three years of non-compliance by most colonies, they were repealed in 1770, much like the *Stamp Act* was in 1766.
- Due to the sheer volume of British imports into Boston Harbor, and after a series of anti-British incidents, Boston became the 'epicentre of revolution'. The Boston Massacre in 1770 was a key event in which British soldiers fired on American colonists.
- John Dickinson and John Adams emerged as the most articulate and capable politicians from the Pennsylvania and Massachusetts colonial assemblies, respectively. In future years, they would play significant roles in the Revolution and help to form a rival federal government to the British.
- The Boston Tea Party in 1773 was the final act of defiance for the British Parliament, which acted to bring the colonies back into line.

CHAPTER REVIEW

DEVELOPING CLEAR DEFINITIONS

Write explanations defining each of the following:

Significant ideas and events	Popular movements	Significant individuals
Townshend Duties (1767)	Sons of Liberty	John Dickinson
Standing armies	Daughters of Liberty	Paul Revere
Massachusetts Circular Letter (1768)		John Adams
Boston Massacre (1770)		Thomas Hutchinson
Non-importation		
Boston Tea Party (1773)		
Tea Act 1773		

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PRACTISING PARAGRAPH ANSWERS

The following questions are typical of those that have appeared in previous VCE exams for the American Revolution, Area of Study 1, Section A. You have 15 minutes to answer each question. See Chapter 5 for more sample questions and answers.

1 Using three or four points, explain the importance of the Boston Massacre in the development of the American Revolution from 1770 to 1776.

2 Using three or four points, explain the importance of the Boston Tea Party in the development of the American Revolution from 1773 to 1776.

PRACTISING EXAM QUESTIONS

The following appeared in the 2008 VCE Exam for the American Revolution for Area of Study One, Section B. It is a series of source-based analysis questions using the original English version of *The Able Doctor* image.

Source 3.29 *The Able Doctor, or America Swallowing the Bitter Draught*, Anonymous, London, 1774

1 Identify two groups that are represented in the cartoon. (2 marks)

2 Identify two specific British Government policies criticised in the cartoon. (2 marks)

3 Using your own knowledge and the representation, explain the role of the 'Intolerable Acts' in the events that led to the outbreak of military conflict in Massachusetts in 1775. (6 marks)

4 Explain to what extent this representation presents a reliable view of the reasons for the growth of the Independence movement in 1775 and 1776. In your response, refer to different views of the period. (10 marks)

Source: *VCE History-Revolutions Examination*, 2008 (Section B, Part 1, Q. 4; pp. 14–15); © VCAA 2008; reproduced with permission

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ONLINE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

John Adams, HBO series, 2008, Episode 1, 'Join or Die'.

This episode in the award-winning seven-part US series covers the Boston Massacre and subsequent trial very well. It is extremely parochial, but does breathe life into the historical figures of John Adams and Samuel Adams, and gives you a good idea of life in 18th-century Boston at the time of the imperial crisis.

READING MORE DEEPLY

Easy

Cantwell, J., 'Rising Tensions, 1760–1773', *America in Revolution*, McGraw-Hill, Sydney, 2005, pp. 51-94.

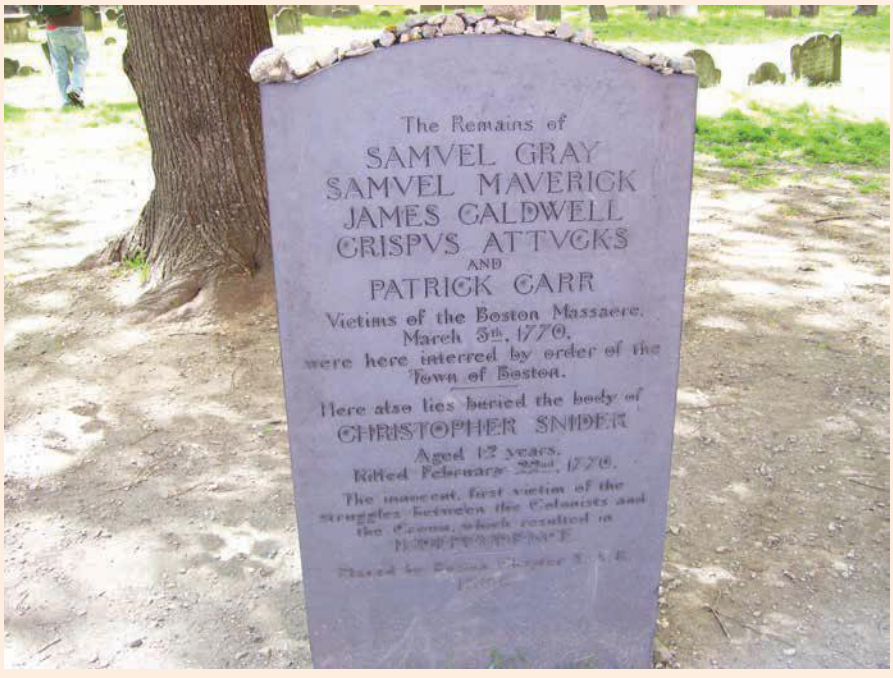
Moderate

Ammerman, D., 'The Tea Crisis and its Consequences, through 1775', in J. Greene & J. Pole (eds), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1991, pp. 198–209.

Challenging

Starr, R., 'Political Mobilisation, 1765–1776, in J. Greene & J. Pole (eds), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1991, pp. 231–9.

These are two challenging and academic versions of events from the 1765–1776 period. This whole book is challenging but the keen student can find a topic on virtually any aspect of the Revolution covered by one of the many historians who contribute to this book.



Source 3.30 Gravestone of victims of the Boston Massacre (Granary Burying Ground, Boston, Massachusetts)

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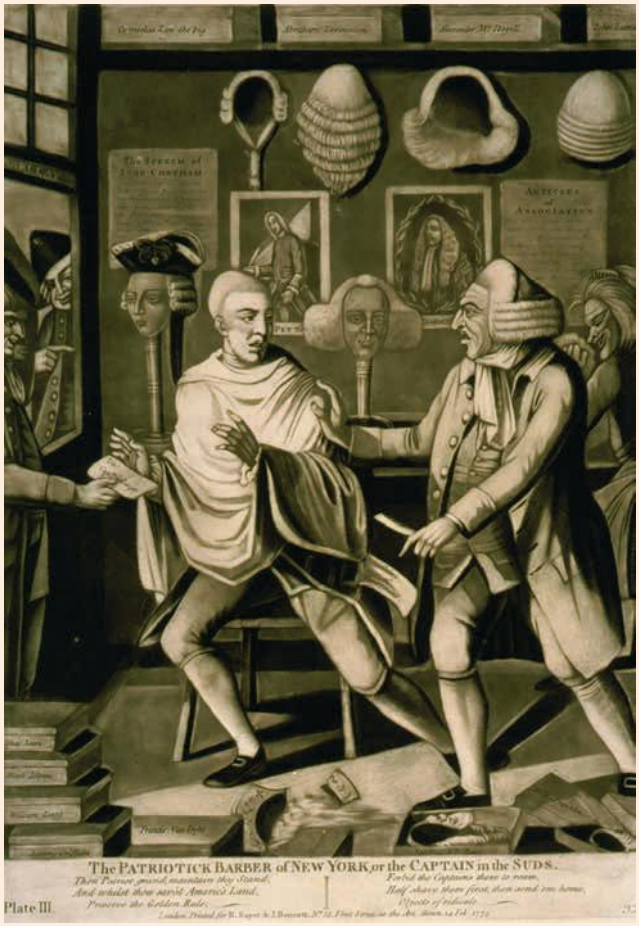

Source 3.31 *The Patriotic Barber of New York, or the Captain in the suds* by Phillip Dawe, 1775. This cartoon shows a New York barber refusing to finish shaving a customer after learning of his British identity. Wig boxes of leading Patriots can be seen in the background. This image ultimately demonstrates how political ideas spread in public places and how the revolutionary situation was heating up.

Source 3.32 *A society of patriotic ladies, at Edenton in North Carolina* by Phillip Dawe, London, March 1775. In this second political cartoon by the same artist we can see a critical take on the Daughters of Liberty and one of their famous tea parties to rally support against the British. Overall, the women are protrayed in quite a negative light and this shows one way that the actions of the colonists was interpreted across the Atlantic. For example, the of their resolution reads "We the Ladys of Edenton do hereby solemnly Engage not to Conform to that Pernicious Custom of Drinking Tea, or that we the aforesaid Ladys Promote the use of any Manufacture from England, until such time that all Acts which tend to Enslave this our Native Country shall be Repealed."

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4

Britain's 'Vietnam', 1774–1776

> *A great Empire, like a great Cake, is most easily diminished at the Edges.*
>
> – BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, 'RULES BY WHICH A GREAT EMPIRE MAY BE REDUCED TO A SMALL ONE', IN *THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER*, 11 SEPTEMBER 1773

OVERVIEW

Vietnam War the conflict that took place between 1962 and 1975 where the powerful armed forces of the United States fought against the resourceful (North) Vietnamese in their homeland in South-East Asia. Used in the context of the American Revolution, this is a historical analogy that refers to the way that Britain had great military superiority over the Thirteen Colonies, but still lost the war.

While the Boston Tea Party of 1773 was a show of defiance by just one of the Thirteen Colonies, it unknowingly set the stage for a major confrontation between all the colonies and Britain. The introduction of *Coercive Acts 1774* increased tensions between the colonies and Britain, and by 1775 the situation had descended into outright war. In September 1774, King George III famously said 'blows must decide' the outcome in America. The time for repealing taxes and acquiescence was over.

This conflict would become Britain's version of the **Vietnam War** – a situation that pitted the world's greatest economy – boasting an army and navy that had defeated virtually all rival nations – against an underestimated opponent. It was a war with no front line, fought in a hostile environment, and even though the British won many battles, it ended exhausted and defeated – both on American soil and at home – and vulnerable to the other European powers.

KEY ISSUES

- How did the British react to the Boston Tea Party?
- What were the First and Second Continental Congresses?
- How did the colonists form a fighting force against the British?
- What was the importance of the *Declaration of Independence*?
- What role did significant individuals play by 1776?

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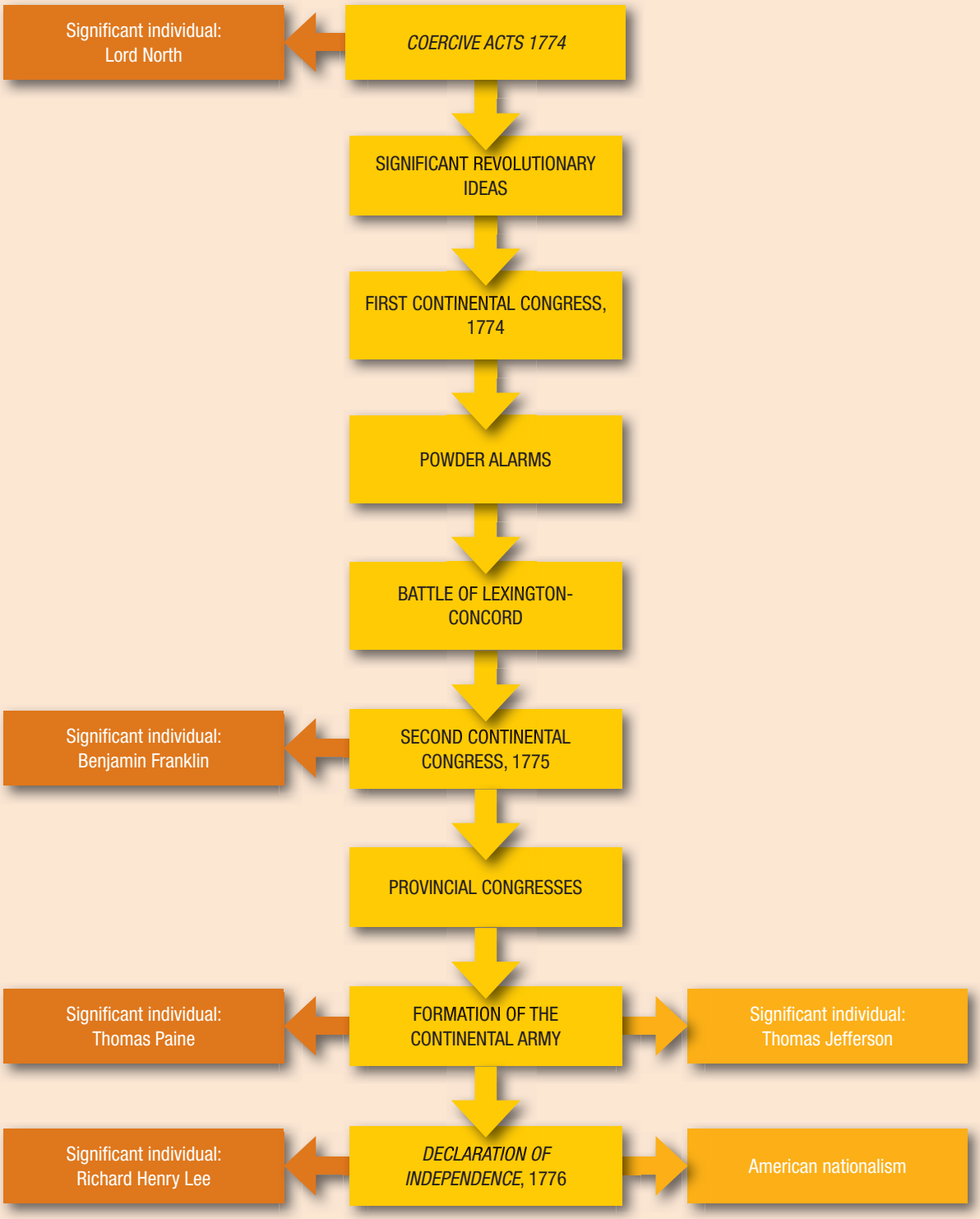
FLOW OF CHAPTER



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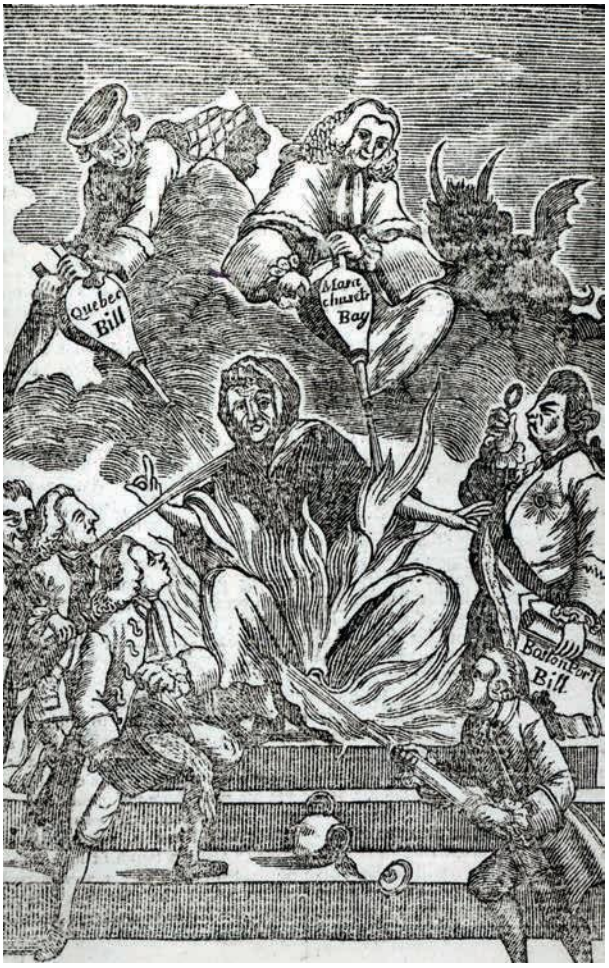
4.1 *Coercive Acts 1774*

Britain's reaction to the Boston Tea Party of 1773 changed the course of American history. The open defiance of the colonists and the loss of British property was not going to go unpunished. The British Parliament came up with a raft of measures to bring Boston back to order: economically, politically, socially and militarily. They termed this legislation the '*Coercive Acts*' – an appropriate punishment to fit the crime. In America they began to be known as the 'Intolerable Acts', and would be a game changer as they had the opposite outcome to that intended by Britain. Not only would the *Coercive Acts* fail to bring Boston into line but they would also inadvertently galvanise all the colonies to rise against the Mother Country.

There were five main parts to the *Coercive Acts*:

- The *Boston Port Act 1774* closed Boston Harbor to all trade, and only allowed entry to British military vessels, until the full cost for damaged tea had been repaid.
- The *Massachusetts Government Act 1774* stripped the power of the colonial assembly, and effectively gave it to the King. The new military governor Thomas Gage (replacing the much maligned Thomas Hutchinson) would appoint his own representatives to govern Massachusetts.
- The *Administration of Justice Act 1774* ensured that officials and soldiers charged with a crime while performing their duties in America would be tried in another British colony or in Great Britain. This was designed to produce legal decisions more favourable to the accused (and to the Crown) by removing any potential anti-British bias by American juries. It was known colloquially in America as the 'Murder Act', as people could literally get away with murder.
- The *Quartering Act* was reinstated, again requiring Americans to house and supply British troops.
- The *Quebec Act 1774* added large sections of the Indian Reserve to the Province of Quebec in British Canada. These were lands claimed by the colonies, and Americans felt that Britain was giving away territory they had fought for (and won) in the French and Indian War. Further, the Act established Catholicism as the state religion of Quebec, enraging sections of Protestant America.



Source 4.1 A British cartoon called *America Aflame* from 1775. It was produced in response to the *Coercive Acts*, and it signifies that through their policies the British leaders seemed to be fanning the flames of rebellion.

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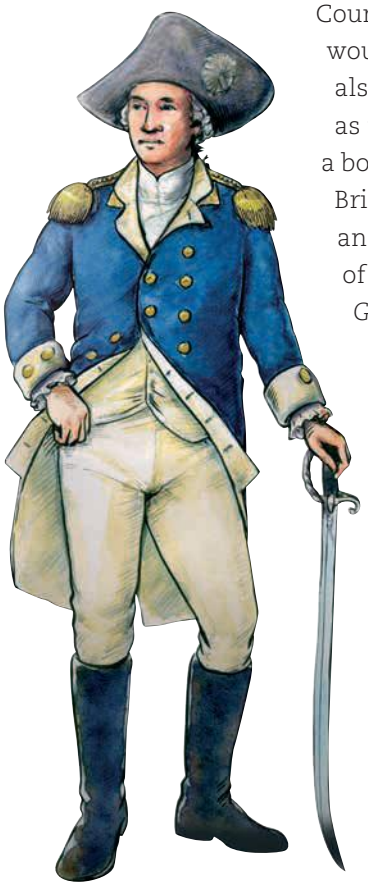
The *Coercive Acts* completely shut down Boston and placed the city under military rule. All the rights that Bostonians had previously enjoyed were now stripped from them, especially the rights based on the Enlightenment ideals so dear to them. Further, their fear of having a standing army in their colony had been realised, prompting a new campaign of action by longstanding critics of the British, including the Sons of Liberty, Samuel Adams, John Adams and the Committees of Correspondence.

One important political reaction was the organisation of separate meetings by the Northern and Southern colonies to discuss appropriate reactions to the latest British trespass on their colonial rights. These meetings would eventually lead to the calling of the First Continental Congress (discussed in Section 4.4).

In the South, a core of influential Virginians (including George Washington, George Mason and Patrick Henry) met in Fairfax County, Virginia, and produced a raft of resolutions that become known as the **Fairfax Resolves 1774**. The resolutions rejected the British Parliament's claim of supreme authority over the colonies; summarised their concerns on taxation, representation, judicial power, military matters and the colonial economy; adopted a proposal to place an embargo on British goods; and called for a congress for the purpose of preserving their rights as Englishmen. This last resolution was an important step forward in inter-colonial cooperation as more Americans came to realise that a threat against one colony was a threat against all.



In the North a similar meeting took place in Suffolk County, Massachusetts, led by Dr Joseph Warren (who would later be killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill). They also produced a list of resolutions, which became known as the **Suffolk Resolves 1774**. These resolutions called for a boycott of British goods and the curtailing of exports to Britain; rejected the *Massachusetts Government Act 1774* and the *Boston Port Act 1774*; demanded the resignations of those appointed to positions under the *Massachusetts Government Act*; proposed a ban on tax payments until the *Massachusetts Government Act* was repealed; and called for a colonial government in Massachusetts free of royal authority. The Suffolk Resolves also urged each colony to raise a **militia** for their own protection.

The resolutions of both these meetings increased colonial animosity towards Britain and paved the way for the First Continental Congress.

Fairfax Resolves 1774 a set of resolutions adopted by a committee in Fairfax County in the colony of Virginia on 18 July 1774, in the early stages of the American Revolution; written primarily by George Mason, the resolutions rejected the British Parliament's claim of supreme authority over the American colonies

Suffolk Resolves 1774 a declaration made on 9 September 1774 by the leaders of Suffolk County, in the colony of Massachusetts; the declaration rejected the *Massachusetts Government Act*, resolved on a boycott of imported goods from Britain unless the 'Intolerable Acts' were repealed, and promoted the formation of a militia for each colony

militia the part-time army of each colony, often having had limited training and very poorly equipped in comparison to the British Army

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4.2 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
Lord North (1732–1792)

- Frederick North, best known as Lord North, was a Tory British prime minister who led from 1770 until 1782 – or most of the American Revolutionary period.
- Following the Boston Tea Party in 1773, North proposed a number of legislative measures designed to punish the colony of Boston, known as the *Coercive Acts* in Britain, and dubbed the 'Intolerable Acts' in the colonies.
- North wanted to shut down the economy of Boston by cutting off trade in order to shake up the rebellious colonists. Instead, the Acts further fanned the flames of revolution in Massachusetts, and eventually the other colonies.
- According to left-wing historian Francis Jennings, North dutifully executed his king's wishes in Parliament.
- North remains the first and only British prime minister to be forced out of office by a motion of no confidence in Parliament, resigning in March 1782. This was due to the result of the American Revolutionary War (more on this in Part 2, Chapter 6).

Source 4.2 A French caricature of Lord North from 1779

4.3 SIGNIFICANT REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS

Apart from the influence of Enlightenment thinkers on significant individuals discussed in earlier chapters, where else did revolutionary ideas develop, and how were they spread at the time? The following section demonstrates some of the ways in which revolutionary political ideas developed in the American colonies as well as in Britain itself, via the spread of political pamphlets and visual representations.

Political pamphlets

It should be remembered that unlike the Chinese, French or Russian revolutions, the population in North America was largely middle class, prosperous and literate at the time of the Revolution. As discussed throughout this text, this allowed the revolutionary leaders to widely disseminate (spread) their ideas and gain support for their cause from people from all walks of life.

The most potent political instrument of the 18th century was certainly the pamphlet. These early pamphlets were the discourse of an educated elite, between patriotic colonists such as Thomas Jefferson. Neo-Whig (more on this in Chapter 10) historian Bernard Bailyn studies these pamphlets closely in his 1967 book, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*. He writes:

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Source 4.3 John Dickinson's 1767 pamphlet, 'The Patriotic American Farmer' (this lithograph version published between 1870 and 1880)

Study of the pamphlets confirmed my rather old-fashioned view that the American Revolution was above all else an ideological, constitutional, political struggle and not primarily a controversy between social groups undertaken to force changes in the organisation of the society or the economy.

Bailyn found political pamphlets to be profoundly imbued with beliefs about the concepts of 'Liberty', 'Tyranny' and standing armies.

Bailyn believed that 'there were real fears, real anxieties, a sense of real danger behind these phrases, and not merely the desire to influence by rhetoric and propaganda the inert minds of an otherwise passive populace'. The greatest concern was 'the fear of a comprehensive conspiracy against Liberty throughout the English-speaking world'.

Visual representations

The visual equivalent to Bailyn's study of pamphlets is the exploration of the various graphic works – cartoons, drawings and engravings – produced to illustrate the same ideas.

Source 4.4 *The Colossus of the North*, Anonymous, 1774

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These images are important because they track what the colonists thought was going wrong in Britain, which they had once believed to be one of the greatest democratic systems the world had known. It is worth noting that many of these images (as well as political pamphlets) came from England itself, originating from the Whig movement in politics (against the ruling Tory party policies of Lord North's government directed against the colonists in North America). In essence, the Whigs, as well as the colonists, felt that the British Parliament was subverted by 'Corruption' and 'Tyranny', which are the great enemies of 'Liberty'.

For example, the image depicted in Source 4.4 was published in the *London Magazine* on 1 December 1774, and would have reached the colonies a few weeks later. It depicts the Prime Minister, Lord North, standing astride an allegorical or symbolic river of corruption flowing between the pillars marked 'Tyranny' and 'Venality'.

His name and portly figure are wittily satirised by reference to Boreas, the North Wind. His flaming torch represents the punishment of America. His corruption is represented by the bundle of 'favours' he holds in his hand.

The allegorical figure of Britannia/Liberty is smaller and more vulnerable. She holds a scroll proclaiming: 'Those who should have been my preservers have been my destroyers.' The second figure is John Wilkes, a politician whose rejection by the British Parliament after his election in 1769 seemed to provide strong evidence of a complete subversion of parliamentary democracy. Grimly determined, he holds a broom and proclaims: 'I'll stem the stream [of corruption]'.

The spread of revolutionary ideas

In our studies, apart from analysing the powerful language of the pamphlets and the detailed imagery of the cartoons, we can also track the electrifying speed with which these ideas flashed across the Atlantic world – at least by the standards of the day. However, at this distance, most colonists could not know that the Whig movement in England was actually the work of a relatively small group in English politics. To the colonists, Whig literature confirmed their own suspicions that liberty was under threat in the home country itself.

Source 4.5 Version 1: *The Able Doctor*, Anonymous, London, 1774

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As an example of this movement of revolutionary ideas from England to the American colonies, we can track the trajectory of three versions of the same political cartoon. Firstly, we have the original, English version of *The Able Doctor or America Swallowing the Bitter Draught*, depicted in Source 4.5.

The Able Doctor: London version

In this image, the personification of America was as a First Nations woman, which was later to be replaced by an Anglo-Saxon figure. The forced drinking of tea is matched to an act of sexual domination. Power is represented by the lunging figure of Lord North, the leader of the parliamentary group proposing the three pence per pound tea tax. The Boston Port Bill emerges from his pocket, a technique also used in revolutionary street theatre with effigies. Historian McSherry Fowble has identified the two Tory ministers holding her as Lord Bute and Murray, First Earl of Mansfield.

We know from the pamphlets that the colonists' greatest nightmare was 'Tyranny', which perpetually threatened to destroy 'Liberty'. The figure on the far right is considered chilling because he holds a sword labelled 'Military Law'. This may be Lord Wedderburn, Solicitor General, identifiable by his Scottish kilt. He had helped draft the Boston Port Bill.

Another condemnation is that the allegorical figure of Britannia covers her eyes in shame when she sees how British liberty has degenerated into despotism.

The Able Doctor: Boston version

It was the colonial artist, Paul Revere, who adopted this English image and reproduced it, very similarly, for the local market in America. This second version was published in a Boston journal, the *Royal American Magazine*, in June 1774 (see Source 4.6). This process of translation illustrates the degree to which he and other artisans like him were middlemen or conductors of ideas in a double sense: like most artisans, he would have been able to explain the ideas of the pamphlets to co-workers who could not read, but he could also produce a picture that would translate political issues into imagery that could be understood by nearly everybody.

Source 4.6 Version 2: *The Able Doctor*, by Paul Revere, Boston, 1774

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The Able Doctor: Backcountry version

At some stage, Revere's second version of the image must have been seen by the editor of a publication called *Freebetter's New England Almanack*, who published the third version as the front cover of his paper in the year 1776 (see Source 4.7). This was another great leap, for the Almanac was a form of popular literature, sold cheaply to working people, particularly poor farmers in the backcountry of the colonies. This third incarnation of the image is in a sense more surprising than the first two images that crossed the Atlantic. We know that the urban elites and the artisans (like Revere) of colonial America discussed political ideas, though these ideas might not have enjoyed much dissemination among the far-flung and largely illiterate populations of rural areas. This may be so, yet the editor of the Almanack would not have risked publishing an image like this if it would have been incomprehensible to people who lacked a basic political vocabulary.

Source 4.7 Version 3: *The Able Doctor*, Anonymous, Backcountry, 1776

Such imagery represents Bernard Bailyn's argument about the flourishing revolutionary ideological concepts of liberty and tyranny, but in a visual form. As the cartoon *The Colossus of the North* and the original *Able Doctor* came from London (as did Source 3.12: Revere's imitation of the English cartoon of the Boston Massacre), we can see how these ideas, which we would normally associate with the American colonists, show that:

> *'rebelliousness was alive on both sides of the Atlantic' – in the words of historian Francis Jennings (p139). British policies regarding the American colonies were under fire from multiple fronts.*
>
> Source: Adcock, M., 'Patriot Pictures: Ideological Images of the American Revolution', *Agora*, 40(3), 2005

ISBN 978-1-107-50647-3

Source 4.8 This simple diagram traces the evolution of one powerful political image, and illustrates how radical ideas from England interacted with those in the colonies.

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4.4 First Continental Congress, 1774

The First Continental Congress, held in Philadelphia in September and October 1774, was attended by representatives of 12 of the Thirteen Colonies (Georgia was not represented, as the colony had 'Indian' troubles and needed the assistance of British troops to subdue them). This meeting was significant because, after 150 years of relative autonomy, the fiercely independent colonies came together in an attempt to solve mutual problems. This quasi-federal government structure would unify and control the offensive position of all the colonies in the upcoming war. However, it was not a smooth process and much infighting occurred between the members of the different colonies before the *Declaration of Independence* from Britain in 1776. Prior to the 1760s, most colonies jealously guarded their unique character and economic power, and distrusted many of the other colonies. Given that the *Coercive Acts* were directed only at Massachusetts, reactions were mixed across the colonies, but they recognised that a similar strategy could be used against any colony that defied the British.

Source 4.9 A painting of the First Continental Congress hung in a hallway in The Capitol, Washington, DC

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The best colonial assemblymen were selected from each colony, and included John Adams (representing Massachusetts), John Dickinson (Pennsylvania) and George Washington (Virginia). In the debate on the *Coercive Acts*, many delegates (particularly Southerners) argued that Boston was at fault thanks to its radicals and mob actions, but acknowledged that the British reaction was totally unacceptable. Ultimately consensus was gained and 'Articles of Association' were drafted and passed. These outlined various grievances and included 14 measures to be adopted by all colonies in attendance; many of these resolutions were adapted from the Fairfax Resolves 1774 and Suffolk Resolves 1774. Furthermore, the delegates agreed to meet in a year's time at what would become the Second Continental Congress.

In the meantime, each colony set up a **Committee of Correspondence**, Inspection and Safety, which were monitored by the Continental Association to ensure all colonies were complying with the agreed sanctions against Britain. The Committees of Correspondence controlled the propaganda war against Britain; the Committees of Inspection made sure no British products were bought in each colony; and the **Committees of Safety** stockpiled weapons and formed militias in each colony. The Massachusetts Committee of Safety was particularly active, storing large amounts of weapons and gunpowder across the colony, and drilling and training their militia. Their militia became known as the '**Minutemen**' (see Source 4.10), reflecting the speed at which they could turn out to defend their colony.

Committees of Correspondence organised letter-writing civilian groups that circulated news, intelligence and revolutionary ideas around the Thirteen Colonies after their formation in 1772

Committees of Safety Patriot civilian groups who operated in the Thirteen Colonies from 1770 to the end of the Revolutionary War. They closely monitored the activities of British soldiers, and were especially active in the colony of Massachusetts in 1774–75

Minutemen colonial militia prepared to arm themselves against the British in less than a minute's notice

Source 4.10 An artist's interpretation of Minutemen in action at Lexington, 1775

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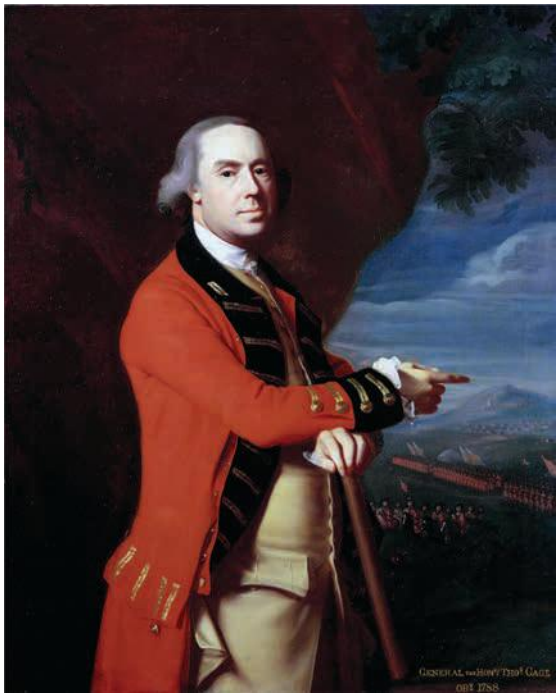
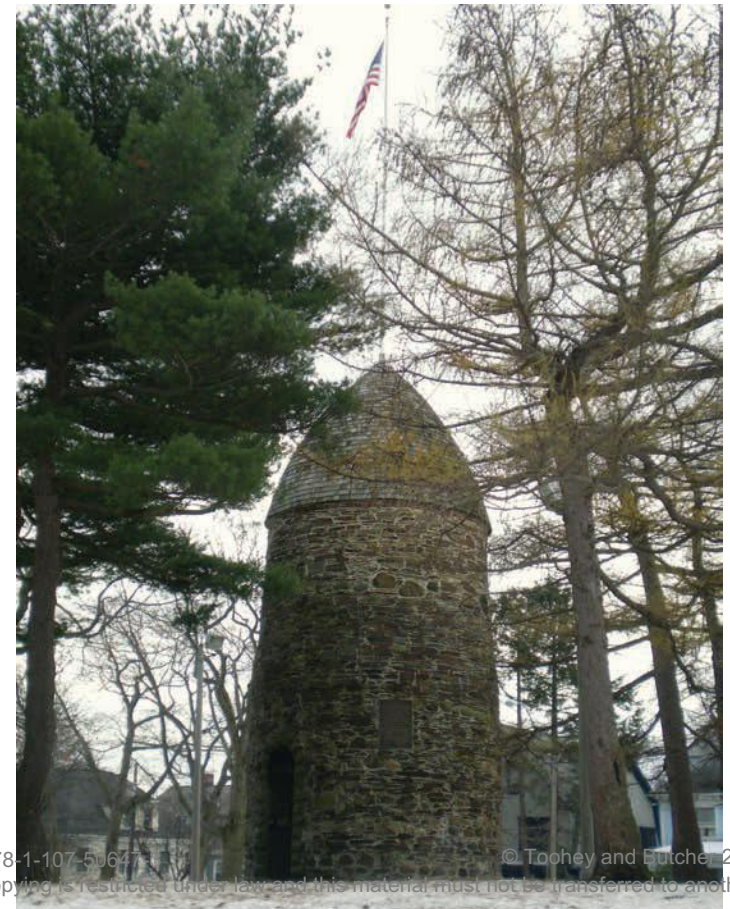
4.5 Powder Alarms

From August 1774, new Massachusetts Governor General Thomas Gage (see Source 4.11) ordered his Redcoats to perform weapons and gunpowder seizures throughout the colony. These seizures are today referred to as the 'Powder Alarms'. Gage's tactics were to confiscate gunpowder and weapons he knew were being stockpiled by the well-armed and aggrieved urban and rural population of Massachusetts in order to defuse any potential large-scale military uprising against Britain by local Patriots. One particularly cunning British raid in Middlesex County netted a considerable cache of weapons and powder without anyone realising until after the event.

The Powder Alarms were seen by Bostonian radicals and the underground press as the epitome of the ravages of a standing army, and represented the theft of people's property and liberty. They further raised the tensions in Massachusetts, but had not started a war – at least, until Gage's fateful decision to send his men to Concord.



Source 4.11 *Thomas Gage*, by John Singleton Copley, 1768



Source 4.12 The Old Powder House as it stands today in Nathan Tufts Park

A MATTER OF FACT

The sight of up to 260 Redcoats in formation stirred many rumours, including that the British had opened fire and killed citizens of Massachusetts Bay Colony. The rumours were untrue, but Gage's actions had ignited a colonial alarm system (the Powder Alarms) and the militia readied themselves for battle.

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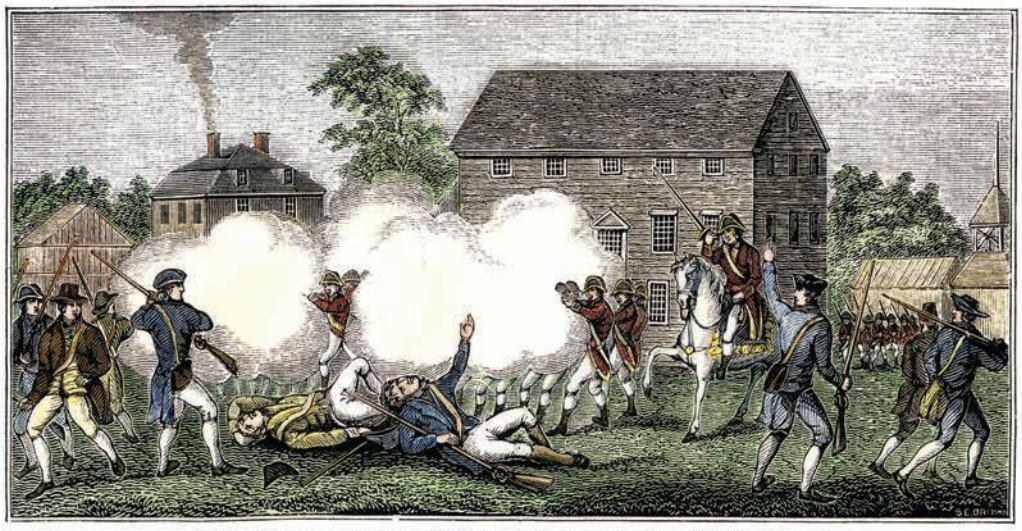
4.6 FLASHPOINT!

Battle of Lexington-Concord, 1775

A year after the passing of the *Coercive Acts* and the formation of the First Continental Congress, Gage seriously underestimated the level of preparedness and support for the local militia. He ordered his troops, 'with utmost expedition and secrecy to Concord, where you will seize and destroy … all Military stores …. But you will take care that the soldiers do not plunder the inhabitants or hurt private property.' However, Gage was sending his men into a hornet's nest. Rumours were rife about a possible British expedition to Concord, and after Paul Revere discovered the British were on the march, he embarked on his famous 'midnight ride' on 13 December 1774, warning Patriots across Middlesex County. By the time the British forces arrived at Concord, they faced a considerable force of colonial militiamen. While the British were able to fight their way into Concord, and search the town for the caches of weapons and gunpowder (most of which had already been moved to safety), they were harassed all the way back to Boston, as increasing numbers of militiamen joined the fray. By the end of the day, Gage had started the Revolutionary War, witnessed 272 British troops killed or wounded (as opposed to 94 for the Massachusetts militia) and prompted thousands of well-armed militiamen to gather on the outskirts of Boston. The Boston press had a field day; soon each colony received an impassioned anti-British account of the event. Political and economic angst now had a military edge.



THE BRITISH TROOPS FIRING ON THE AMERICANS AT LEXINGTON.

Copied from a drawing made by Mr. Earle, on the spot, a few days after the Americans were killed.—Lexington Meeting House and some othe buildings are seen in the background.

Source 4.13 An illustration of the Battle of Lexington-Concord

A MATTER OF FACT

Historians have questioned many aspects of Revere's account of his 'midnight ride'. A popular version of the story claims that as he furiously rode on horseback, he shouted to Massachusetts colonists that 'the British are coming!' However, most people from that colony had English origins, and would have still identified themselves as being British. Revere himself claimed to have said (not shouted), 'the Regulars are coming out' – which was backed up by eyewitness accounts.

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4.7 Second Continental Congress, 1775

Three weeks after the Battle of Lexington-Concord, in May 1775, the Second Continental Congress met. However, the battle did not unite the Congress as the *Coercive Acts* had done; this new military threat was a far more dangerous gamble. To take on the world's greatest army and navy when America had neither was obviously a major decision that was going to take much debate.

What is clear, though, is that the Second Continental Congress was beginning to act as a revolutionary federal American government. It sought and drew loans from foreign powers to finance the war, and eventually adopted the fledgling New England militia as its own quasi-national army. Furthermore, it dealt with practical issues, creating a postal service and issuing currency. According to historian Benjamin H Irvin, in official pronouncements Congress for the first time began to refer to its constituents (members) as the 'United Colonies'.

Battle of Bunker Hill a famous hour-long battle fought on 17 June 1775 in Boston between the British and Massachusetts militia; even though the British won the battle, they suffered three times the casualties of the militia

The Battle of Bunker Hill, 1775

While the Second Continental Congress continued in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, British and militia forces met again in the **Battle of Bunker Hill** on 17 June 1775, in Boston Harbor. The first two British assaults were repulsed, but the British eventually took the peninsula. While it was viewed as a British victory at the time, they suffered heavy casualties, including many officers, and the battle gave the colonial forces confidence that they could match it with a professional army.

Source 4.14 Dramatic painting of the Battle of Bunker Hill and the death of well-known Patriot and Boston Son of Liberty, Dr Joseph Warren

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In the wake of the battle, Congress decided to form a national army, the **Continental Army**, but the question remained of who was to lead it. On the day of this decision, 14 June 1775, John Adams nominated George Washington, who had conveniently been arriving at Congress for weeks in the full military attire of the Virginia militia – clearly prepared for war. Washington became the Commander in Chief of the Continental Army on 15 June 1775. His greatest test and greatest role in the Revolutionary War would be to mould a fledgling, rag-tag army and lead it against the might of the

Continental Army the professional or regular army raised by the Second Continental Congress and trained by Washington to fight the War of Independence

Source 4.15 *Washington appointed Commander in Chief*, by Nathaniel Currier, 1876

My journey into revolutionary war started on 4 May 1775, when I left my plantation at Mount Vernon, Virginia, to attend the Second Continental Conference. I presented my military credentials of war by wearing my Virginian militia uniform. Although still aged only 43 years, I knew well that I was one of the most experienced military leaders, and that people also respected my good leadership. On the suggestion of my friend John Adams, I was nominated Commander in Chief of the Colonial Army.

On 16 June, I rose before the Congress to state my acceptance, and offered these heartfelt sentiments:

> 'Though I am truly sensible of the high honour done me in this appointment, yet I feel great distress that my abilities and military experience may not be equal to the extensive and important trust: however, as the congress desires I will enter upon the momentous duty, and exert every power I possess in their service for the support of the glorious cause: I beg they will accept my most cordial thanks for this distinguished testimony of their approbation.'

George Washington: Commander in Chief, 1775

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British Army. His success in completing this seemingly impossible task would make his name pre-eminent in the American national mythology.

Other achievements of the Second Continental Congress

Olive Branch Petition
a last-ditch peace offering sent by the Second Continental Congress to King George III in July 1775 to avoid going to war with Britain

Though it came shortly after the formation of the Continental Army, Congress also produced the 5 July 1775 **Olive Branch Petition**. This was a last-ditch peace offering to Britain approved by Congress, drafted by John Dickinson. This document sent a mixed message to King George III, pledging loyalty to him while simultaneously demanding autonomy, thereby subverting the authority of the British Parliament.

Finally, and significantly, the Second Continental Congress also embarked on one of its most significant acts: it voted to draft a *Declaration of Independence* in 1776 and set Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams to the task.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 4.1: DOCUMENT COMPARISON

The Olive Branch Petition was produced by the Second Continental Congress on 5 July 1775. This is how the document begins:

> *To the King's Most Excellent Majesty.*
>
> *Most Gracious Sovereign: We, your Majesty's faithful subjects of the Colonies of New-Hampshire, Massachusetts-Bay, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Counties of Newcastle, Kent, and Sussex, on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, in behalf of ourselves and the inhabitants of these Colonies, who have deputed us to represent them in General Congress, entreat your Majesty's gracious attention to this our humble petition.*
>
> *The union between our Mother Country and these Colonies, and the energy of mild and just Government, produced benefits so remarkably important, and afforded such an assurance of their permanency and increase, that the wonder and envy of other nations were excited, while they beheld Great Britain rising to a power the most extraordinary the world had ever known …*

The Olive Branch Petition reached London on 14 August 1775. George III's reply to the colonists, the Declaration of Rebellion, was issued on the 23rd of August.

> *Whereas many of our subjects in divers parts of our Colonies and Plantations in North America, misled by dangerous and ill designing men, and forgetting the allegiance which they owe to the power that has protected and supported them; after various disorderly acts committed in disturbance of the publick peace, to the obstruction of lawful commerce, and to the oppression of our loyal subjects carrying on the same; have at length proceeded to open and avowed rebellion, by arraying themselves in a hostile manner, to withstand the execution of the law, and traitorously preparing, ordering and levying war against us …*
>
> *… we do accordingly strictly charge and command all our Officers, as well civil as military, and all others our obedient and loyal subjects, to use their utmost endeavors to withstand and suppress such rebellion, and to disclose and make known all treasons and traitorous conspiracies which they shall know to be against us, our crown and dignity.*

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If Congress' Olive Branch Petition of 5 July 1775 sent a mixed message to the King, the document issued a day later on 6 July explaining the formation of the Continental Army, *Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms*, had a much clearer message. This document was also written by John Dickinson, with drafts by Thomas Jefferson:

> *… Our forefathers, inhabitants of the Island of Great Britain, left their native land, to seek on these shores a residence for civil and religious freedom.*
>
> *… they effected settlements in the distant and inhospitable wilds of America, then filled with numerous and warlike nations of barbarians. Societies or Governments, vested with perfect Legislatures, were formed under Charters from the Crown, and a harmonious intercourse was established between the Colonies and the Kingdom from which they derived their origin.*
>
> *… We fight not for glory or for conquest. We exhibit to mankind the remarkable spectacle of a people attacked by unprovoked enemies, without any imputation or even suspicion of offence. They boast of their privileges and civilization, and yet proffer no milder conditions than servitude or death.*
>
> *In our own native land, in defence of the freedom that is our birth-right, and which we ever enjoyed till the late violation of it; for the protection of our property, acquired solely by the honest industry of our forefathers and ourselves, against violence actually offered, we have taken up arms. We shall lay them down when hostilities shall cease on the part of the aggressors, and all danger of their being renewed shall be removed, and not before.*

1 Understanding the language of 18th-century documents requires practice. Describe the language of the Olive Branch Petition. Provide examples.
2 Why do you think Congress directed the Olive Branch Petition directly to the King and not to the British Prime Minister or Parliament?
3 How would you describe the response of George III? Where does he lay blame for the revolutionary situation that had developed in America by July 1775? Which significant events and individuals does he refer to? Provide example quotes from the text.
4 Who do you think the *Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms* is addressed to?
5 What reasons does Congress give to explain the need to take up arms against the British? Will the Continental Army be a colonial version of a 'standing army'? Why/why not?
6 To whom does the term 'barbarians' refer? How do you explain this perspective?

Source 4.16 *George III,* illustration from *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, April 1883, artist unknown

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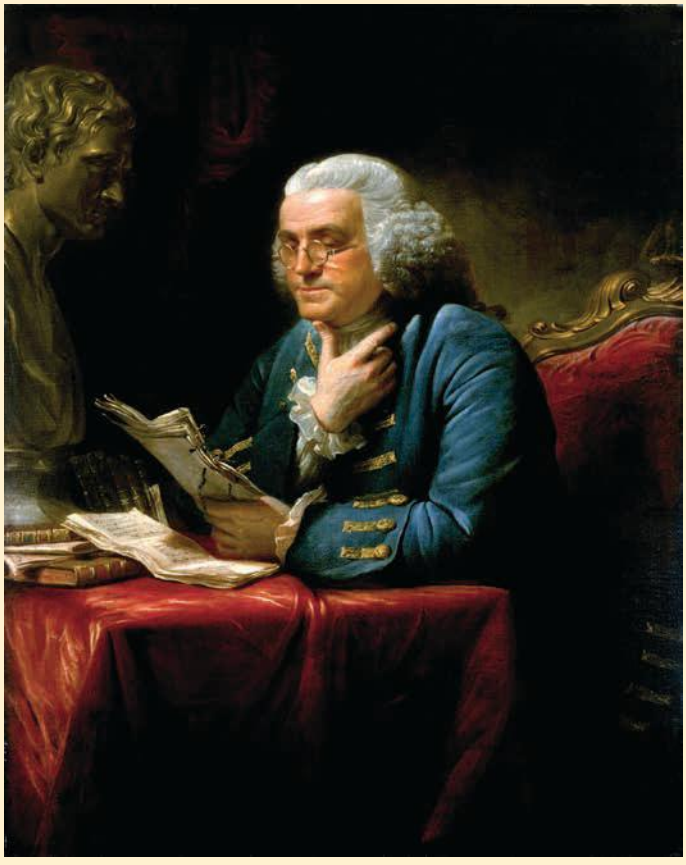
4.8 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790)

- Benjamin Franklin is one of the most famous Americans of this period. The son of a candle maker, he became a scientist, scholar and wily politician, epitomising the social mobility of the New World.
- Like many in the colonies, Franklin was initially very loyal to Britain, but his loyalty was tested and transformed during the imperial crisis.
- He was an early advocate of colonial unity through his Albany Plan in 1754, and through his famous 'Join or Die' cartoon (see Source 1.6).
- From 1764 to 1774, he was the Colonial Ambassador to the British Parliament, which ended when he was persecuted by Parliament for sending Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson's private letters (calling for Britain to suppress Boston) to Samuel Adams to print in the *Boston Gazette* (see Chapter 3).
- He attended the Second Continental Congress, and worked with John Adams and Thomas Jefferson on drafting the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776.
- He famously sponsored Thomas Paine, who eventually published the best seller, *Common Sense*, in 1776.
- In 1776 he was appointed to represent the colonies in France. After two years of hard work, he convinced Louis XVI to commit to the Revolutionary War against Britain in 1776, which helped to swing the outcome of the war (see Chapter 6).



Source 4.17 *Portrait of Benjamin Franklin*, by David Martin, circa 1767

A MATTER OF FACT

Sadly, families were sometimes divided over the Revolution. Patriot Benjamin Franklin's son, William, a Loyalist governor of New Jersey, supported the British effort during the war, and they rarely spoke afterwards.

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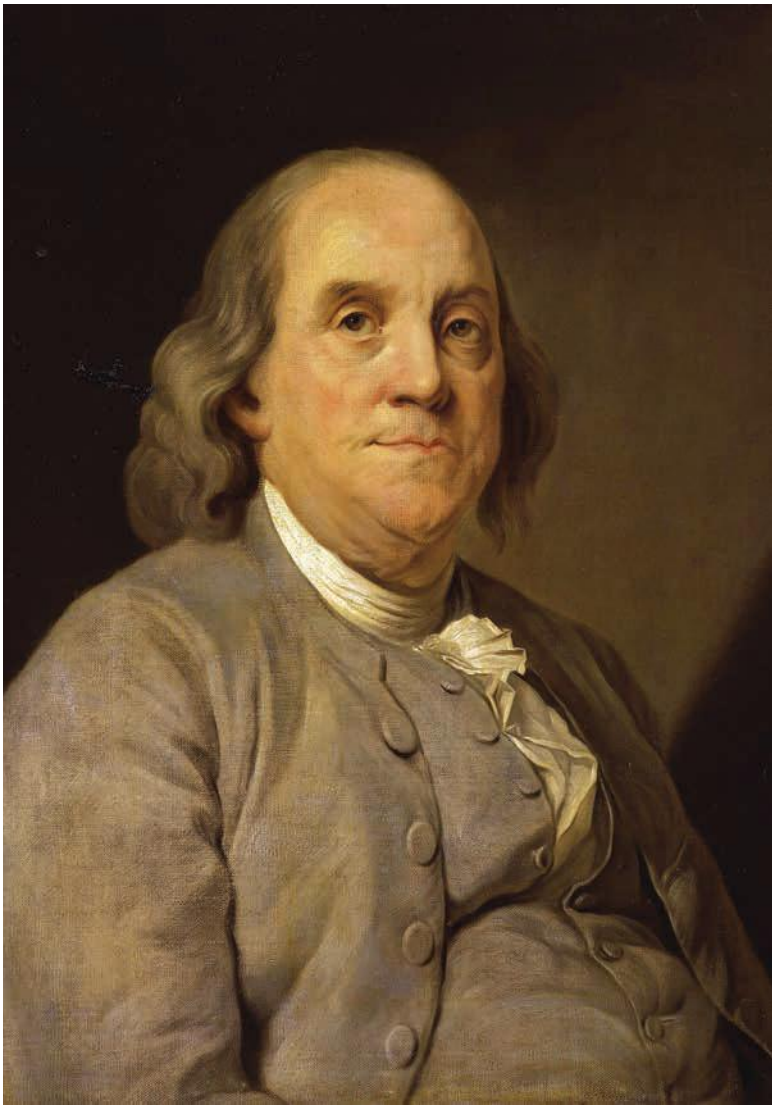
My name is Benjamin Franklin. I was born in the year of our Lord, 1706. In my life, I have been a thinker, researcher, inventor and statesman. I have read the works of the great French free thinkers: Voltaire, Diderot and the immortal Jean-Jacques Rousseau. My mind became afire with their ideas, and I aspired to write articles too.

I refused all the trades my father suggested to me – candle-making indeed! – until he gave me an apprenticeship with my brother, who owned a printing works. I took the false name of Silence Dogood, and slipped my political writings under the door, as if they were from an anonymous writer. I laughed as my brother printed them and wondered who the brilliant writer actually was.

I am proud that I have been able to use the Reason that the Lord has given me, and the Science that men have devised, to improve life for people here on Earth. I invented the 'saving' of daylight, so men do not have to waste so much money on candles. I devised a high-efficiency fireplace, so that humans do not have to burn whole forests of wood just to keep warm. I traced the Gulf Stream, so that ships plying between America and England may shorten their long voyages. Like the great Voltaire, I proved that an educated man of Reason can actually improve a whole town, and took on the beautification of our city of Philadelphia. Most of all, I started to probe the mysteries of the natural force of electricity, which we all see at work in nature's fury, but do not fully understand. In 1751, I published my scientific findings, and had the privilege of being elected to the Royal Academy of London.



Source 4.18 *Benjamin Franklin*, by Joseph Siffrein Duplessis, circa 1778

By 1757, I was leading the fledgling movement against British rule in the Thirteen Colonies, as well as being a leader of the anti-slavery movement, which I judged to be against all natural law.

Later, I served as the American ambassador to France from 1776 to 1785. How the fine ladies at Versailles fussed over me! I wore my oldest, plainest suits to court, and the elegant courtiers judged me to be a real home-spun philosopher, a man after Rousseau's heart. I have served my country well, and I have assisted with the birth of our new nation.

Benjamin Franklin

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4.9 Provincial congresses

republican referring to republic – a form of government where elected officials are chosen by and represent their citizens to enforce the rule of law; in modern parlance, a republic often means a government without a monarch

Another manifestation of the **republican** ideal (a concept introduced in Section 1.5) – that is, spreading the political decision-making process across a greater section of the population – was the provincial congress. These congresses effectively represented a third level of government, beneath the national Congress and the colonial assembly of each of the colonies.

The long resistance to British rule over preceding decades, along with the events of the Revolutionary War, had blooded many men in the political process. Membership of resistance organisations (e.g. the Sons of Liberty; the Committees of Safety, Inspection and Correspondence; and the colonial militias), along with involvement in the Continental Army, colonial assemblies and Continental Congresses, had multiplied

I set out to take up my post with my army in Massachusetts, reaching their base in Cambridge on 2 July 1775. With me rode my Majors-General Charles Lee from Virginia, Philip Schuyler from New York, Artemas Ward of Massachusetts and Israel Putnam of Connecticut, who in turn commanded eight brigadier generals.

This was a massive responsibility, but some things were very clear to me early on. In military terms, the mighty British Empire suffered from an extended line of supply – the vast width of the Atlantic, in fact – and so every loss of men or equipment was a greater problem for them than it was for we colonists. Every soldier, every bullet, had to come by sea, and so the British would find it very difficult to sustain a long war of damaging battles. The victory of the British at the Battle of Bunker Hill back in June cost them a thousand men. Clearly, the British could not afford to suffer too many more losses like this.

Source 4.19 An imagining of Washington taking command of the Continental Army at Cambridge, Massachusetts, on 3 July 1775, by Nathaniel Currier, 1876

Yet when I surveyed our colonial army, I understood why the British generals referred to it contemptuously as an 'infamous' force. These were not professional soldiers but inexperienced Patriot citizens; enthusiastic and brave, yet undisciplined and sometimes unreliable. Their camps were filthy. Many were lazy, disobedient and unused to authority; some were simply extremely dirty and squalid people. These 15,000 raw recruits were not ready to stand up to a fully professional army. It was my task to make them so.

Later, I was heartened to receive reinforcements of 13 companies of men from the southern colonies of Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland, the so-called 'shirtmen' who had marched hundreds of miles north to join us, bringing with them accurate long-barrel rifles and much greater discipline and commitment.

George Washington: Into battle, 1775

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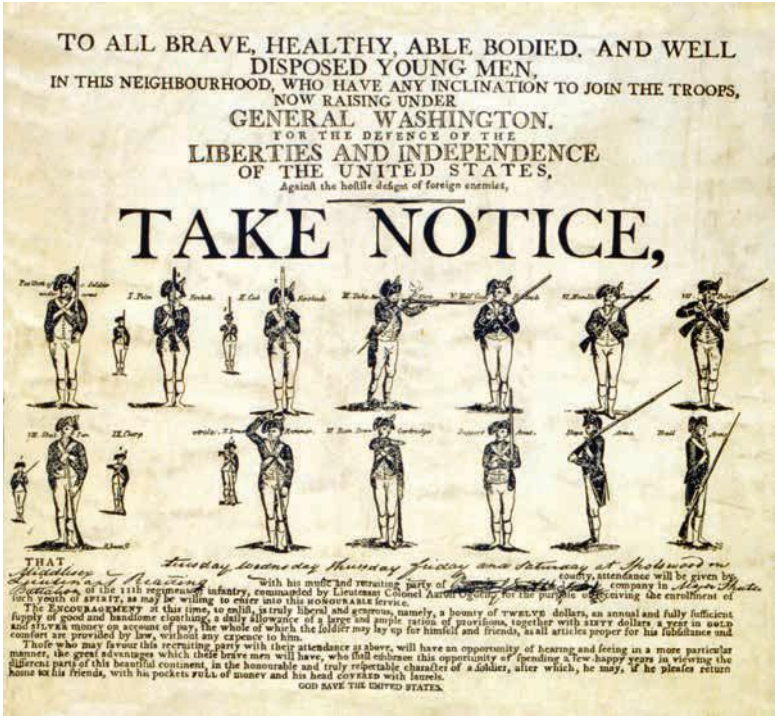
the number of people holding positions of leadership and responsibility. Within these organisations, people were embodying a vital ideal of the Revolution: that of **sovereignty** of the people over all branches of government and the accountability of all those elected officials to the people's will (the electorate).

sovereignty the right of a government or a people to make decisions and form laws within its own borders

Provincial congresses were elected by voters to discuss the big questions of the day, although their findings were not binding. It's noteworthy that the electoral system for provincial congresses was far more democratic and representative than their colonial assemblies. They were also much larger in size. In New Jersey and Maryland, for instance, the number of men in the provincial congress was twice that of the colonial assembly. In South Carolina it was triple. As David Conroy explores in the *Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, these organisations not only became seedbeds of revolt against the British but also breeding grounds for the embryonic federal government created after independence in 1789.

When I surveyed the situation in November 1775, however, I admit I felt defeated. General Gage had been replaced by Sir William Howe. The British were heavily fortified and well dug in, and seemed immoveable. My generals told me that we would not be able to relieve Boston. In fact, they told me we could barely hold together our troops, who wanted to return to their homes and farms. By September of 1775, I had to warn Congress that we might end up with no army at all. We could not even pay our men, and I informed them, 'The Military Chest is totally exhausted. The paymaster has not a single Dollar in Hand.' For one dark moment, I even regretted taking command, and wrote home: 'Could I have foreseen what I have, and am likely to experience, no consideration on earth should have induced me to accept this command.'


TO ALL BRAVE, HEALTHY, ABLE BODIED, AND WELL DISPOSED YOUNG MEN,
IN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD, WHO HAVE ANY INCLINATION TO JOIN THE TROOPS, NOW RAISING UNDER
GENERAL WASHINGTON,
FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE
LIBERTIES AND INDEPENDENCE
OF THE UNITED STATES,
Against the hostile designs of foreign enemies,
TAKE NOTICE,
THAT
GOD SAVE THE UNITED STATES.

Source 4.20 A recruitment poster from 1776 for the Continental Army

We sat out a bitter, pointless inactive winter into 1776, and I wrote to Congress suggesting that a professional army requires formal enlistment for a term of service, as well as decent pay or grants of land, and the prompt payment of wages. The congressmen, fearful of standing armies as a threat to Liberty, did not agree and rejected my claim. I reflected, somewhat bitterly, that our political leaders had not grasped the basic fact that when one is at war with a powerful enemy, a professional standing army is actually the best guarantee of our Liberty by far.

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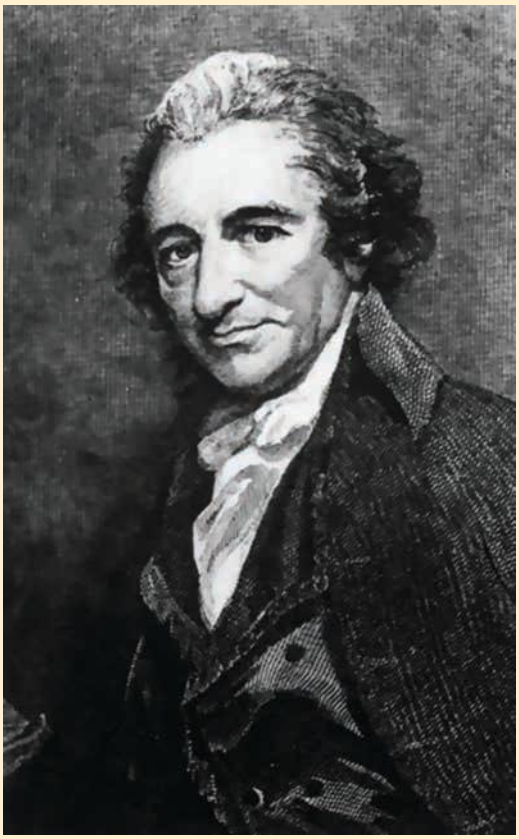
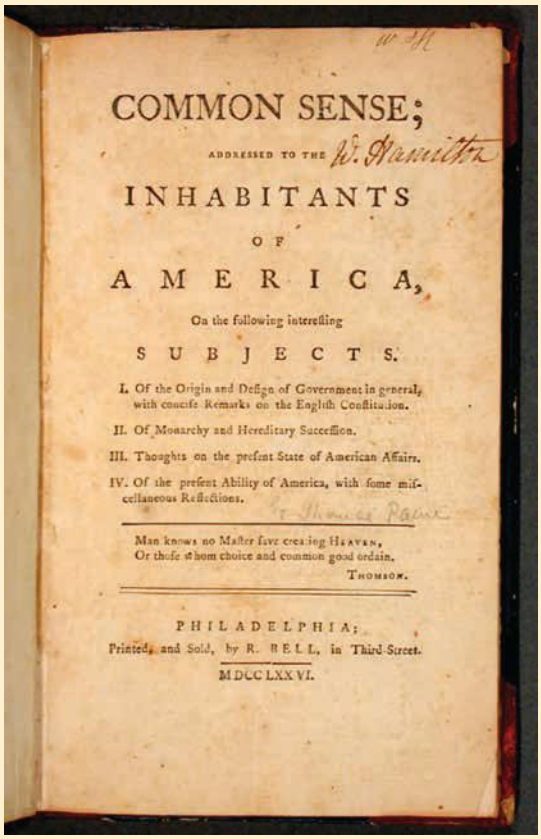
4.10 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
Thomas Paine (1737–1809)





COMMON SENSE;

ADDRESSED TO THE INHABITANTS OF AMERICA,

On the following interesting

SUBJECTS.

I. Of the Origin and Design of Government in general, with concise Remarks on the English Constitution.

II. Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession.

III. Thoughts on the present State of American Affairs.

IV. Of the present Ability of America, with some miscellaneous Reflections.

Man knows no Master save creating HEAVEN,
Or those whom choice and common good ordain.
THOMSON.

PHILADELPHIA:
Printed, and Sold, by R. BELL, in Third-Street.
MDCCLXXVI.

Source 4.21 **Left:** *Thomas Paine*, by George Romney, circa 1790; **Right:** Paine's famous pamphlet from 1776, *Common Sense*

- Thomas Paine was a disaffected Englishman who came to America in 1774 and became one of the most influential writers of the revolutionary period.
- His pamphlet *Common Sense*, published in 1776, came at a crucial stage in the Revolution where people were coming to believe that war with Britain could destroy them all. *Common Sense* would sway the argument for independence.
- *Common Sense* brought the ideology of the Revolution to the common man. Paine wrote his justification for revolution in simple and accessible language, which exposed revolutionary ideas and ideals to a much wider group of people than the intelligentsia that was prosecuting the struggle.
- Keeping the price down made it even more accessible, and it was an instant best seller, with 100,000 copies sold in the first month and half a million by the end of the Revolutionary War. Historian Gordon Wood claimed it was 'the most incendiary and popular pamphlet of the entire revolutionary era'.
- Washington had Paine travel with the Continental Army at one stage. Paine's brilliant *American Crisis*, written in December 1776, was read to soldiers on the eve of the Battle of Trenton, and had an astonishing effect.
- Paine participated in the Congress, sitting on the Congressional Committee on Foreign Affairs and travelling to France with Benjamin Franklin to raise funds for the war effort.

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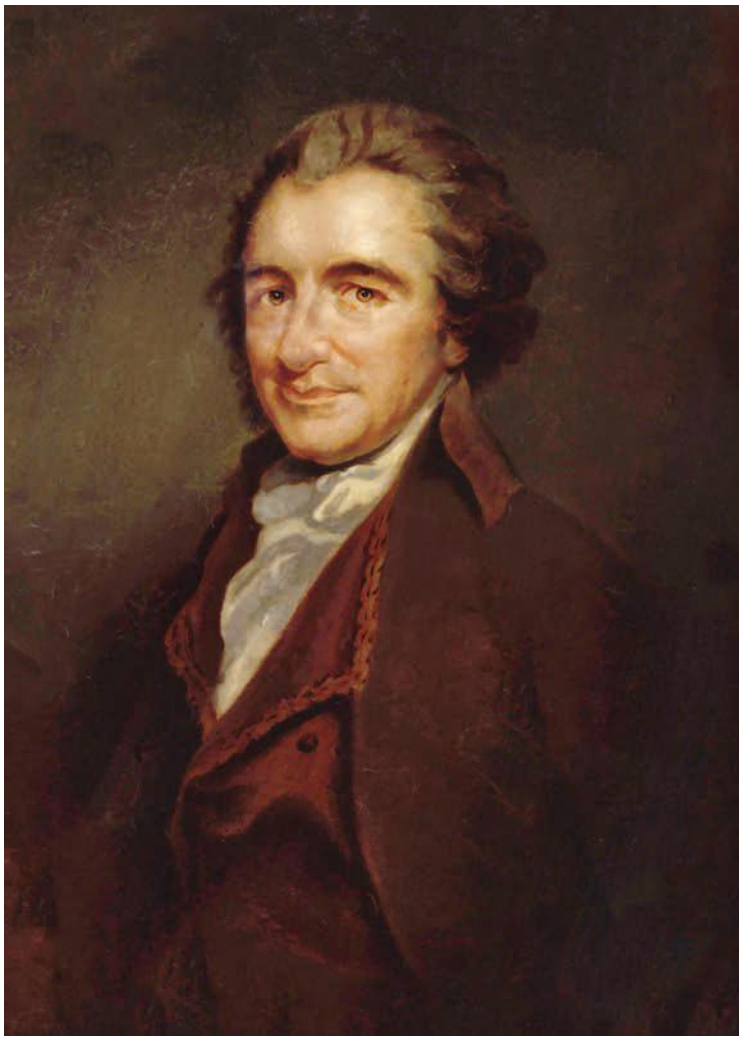
My name is Thomas Paine. I was born in Thelford, England, in 1737, but never really settled to a respectable trade or profession in my home country. In 1760, however, I did begin teaching in the slums of London, and there learnt to understand the thoughts and feelings of ordinary folk such as beggars and working people. I learnt to explain myself carefully and clearly in phrases that uneducated people could understand.

My life suddenly changed much for the better when I met the American Patriot Benjamin Franklin, who encouraged me to come to the colonies in 1774. I was lucky to quickly secure a job writing for the *Pennsylvania Magazine*. I arrived to find the colonists fired with a determination to conquer their Liberty, by which they meant declaring independence from Britain. I saw around me a storm of political debate and pamphlets, all of them very sophisticated, but I wondered whether I could sum up the case for independence in the simplest, clearest language possible.

I confess that I rapidly became known as a strong champion of the Patriot cause. I published my *Common Sense* in 1776, using language that ordinary working people could understand. I was amazed to see that it sold 120,000 copies in its first three months, and that it effectively persuaded many more people that they must fight for independence from Britain. I was proud when the great Patriot, John Adams, said of me: 'Without the pen of the author of *Common Sense*, the sword of Washington would have been raised in vain.' It seems that my clear convictions expressed in simple words really did persuade people to support the rebellion. I was also proud to hear that the great Thomas Jefferson ordered his officers to read my words in *Common Sense* to their troops on the eve of battle during the War of Independence, to fire them up for the coming fight.



Source 4.22 *Thomas Paine*, by Auguste Millière, 1880

At the same time, I joined in the campaign to abolish the abominable trade of slavery, which is contrary to all natural law. When this battle was won, I was free to travel to France to encourage another revolution, which had broken out in July 1789. There, too, I published a simple, clear, convincing pamphlet, *The Rights of Man*, to argue that human beings were indeed capable of creating a new society based on the great principles of the Enlightenment. I was honoured to sit in their 'National Assembly', and to observe how they created their new society. Thus, I have used my humble skills – my words – to encourage two great revolutionary projects, and I can only hope I will be remembered and honoured for this achievement.

Thomas Paine

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A MATTER OF FACT

While Paine wrote further books, including The Age of Reason (1794) and Agrarian Justice (1797), his later years were obscure. By the time he died in New York in 1809, he was almost forgotten. Only six people turned up to his funeral.

4.11 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826)

- One of the outstanding Founding Fathers, Thomas Jefferson significantly contributed to the Revolution through his prolific writings in the period.
- An Enlightenment-influenced scholar, he heavily used the writings of Locke, Rousseau and his own countrymen to form his argument against the British Empire.
- He was a member of the Virginian House of Burgesses and a delegate to the Second Continental Congress.
- In 1774 he penned *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*, arguing the illegality of the *Coercive Acts* and justifying the Boston Tea Party, thus creating support for Boston and the Revolution in the South.
- At the Second Continental Congress in 1775 he wrote *Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms*, justifying an armed resistance against Britain that helped to sway the contentious vote to form the Continental Army.
- By 1776 he had written some of the best parts (particularly the Preamble) of the *Declaration of Independence*, making a grand statement about universal human rights and calling for final dissolution of all political bonds with Britain.
- His *Declaration of Independence* paved the way for the creation of the United States of America as a separate nation, and for Congress to assert itself as its rightful government.

Source 4.23 *Thomas Jefferson*, by John Trumbull, 1788

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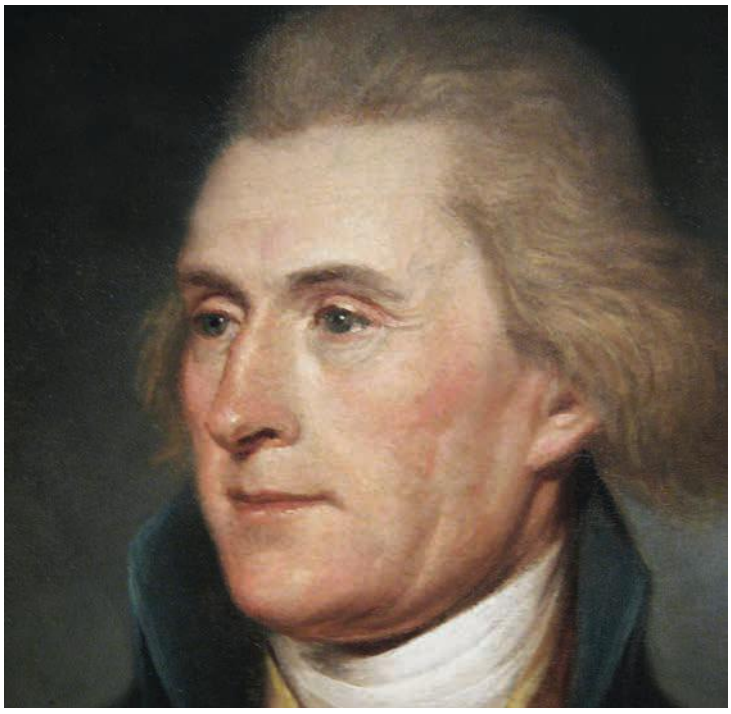
My name is Thomas Jefferson. I was born on the 13th of April in the year of Our Lord 1743, in the remote farmlands of Virginia. My father, Peter, was a planter and surveyor, but I knew little of him: he died in 1757, when I was just 14 years of age. My mother was Jane Randolph, the daughter of a ship's captain.

My life's work has been devoted to the affirmation of the natural rights of all human beings and the creation of a free and democratic republic in our new nation.

I have lived my life by following some simple and clear general principles. As regards the body politic, I live by these firm beliefs. First, we must all think actively about what makes for good government: 'History, in general, only informs us of what bad government is.' If we aspire to good government, we, the citizens of a free country, must create it ourselves. It is up to us to get history right this time.



Source 4.24 *Thomas Jefferson*, by Charles Peale, 1791

The question of freedom remains as important to us now as it was during our struggle with Britain. I advised my nation: 'I would rather be exposed to the inconvenience attending too much liberty than to those attending too small a degree of it.'

I firmly believe that final sovereignty belongs with the people: 'I know no safe repository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves … This is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power.' If we think the people are too ignorant to hold this power, then we must educate them properly so they are capable.

If freedom is indeed crucial to everything, then even rebellion must in some cases be justified to secure it. I reflected: 'I hold it that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the [natural world].'

As regards the formation of a citizen's good character, I have also tried to live my life by my own principles. First among these is integrity: 'Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom.' A man must first be guided by firm principles that he knows to be right. I wrote: 'In matters of style, swim with the current; on matters of principle, stand like a rock.'

Like the philosophers whose works I still revere, I believe that laws should only forbid that which is harmful to others: 'The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. It does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty gods or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.'

As regards my career, I have always worked hard and prospered. My philosophy is that I'm a great believer in luck. And I find the harder I work the more I have of it. The secret of my success has been to act, and to act boldly. To the young citizens of our new republic, I wrote: 'Do you want to know who you are? Don't ask. Act! Action will delineate and define you.'

For more on Jefferson, see the interactive textbook.

Thomas Jefferson's life

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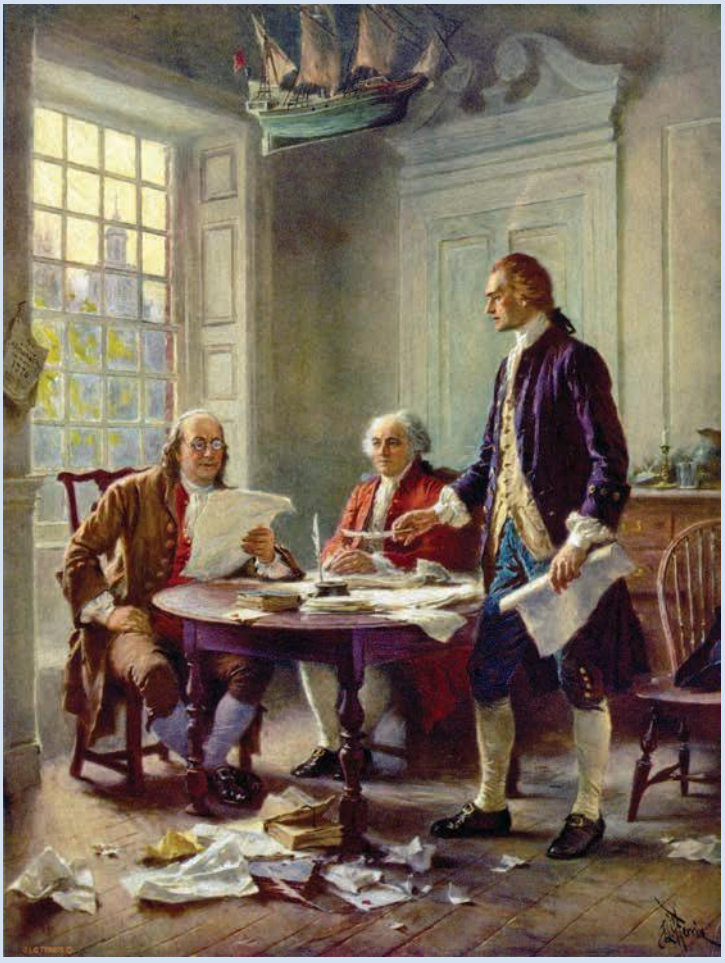
4.12 FLASHPOINT!

The *Declaration of Independence*, 1776



Source 4.25 Celebratory image of Founding Fathers Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, part of the drafting committee that produced the *Declaration of Independence*

A MATTER OF FACT

Some of the most famous lines in the Declaration of Independence were inspired by Virginia's Declaration of Rights by George Mason (profiled in Chapter 7).

The *Declaration of Independence* is one of the cornerstone documents in American history. The Preamble is mainly Jefferson's doing and brilliantly captures a statement of universal human rights that revolutionaries have been using to overthrow unjust regimes for more than two centuries:

> *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.*

Recalling your reading on the Enlightenment in Chapter 1, it is clear how Jefferson has incorporated the work of Locke and Rousseau in the Preamble, and these ideals form the basis of many of the arguments used against Britain (and especially George III) in the rest of the document. In fact, most of the *Declaration of Independence* is a list of grievances against the King, accusing him of breaking the social contract and stating that, as a consequence, the people have the right to form a new government.

Essentially, the Declaration was an attempt to dissolve all political, economic and social ties with Britain, and provide a formal separation that implicitly is also a formal declaration of war.

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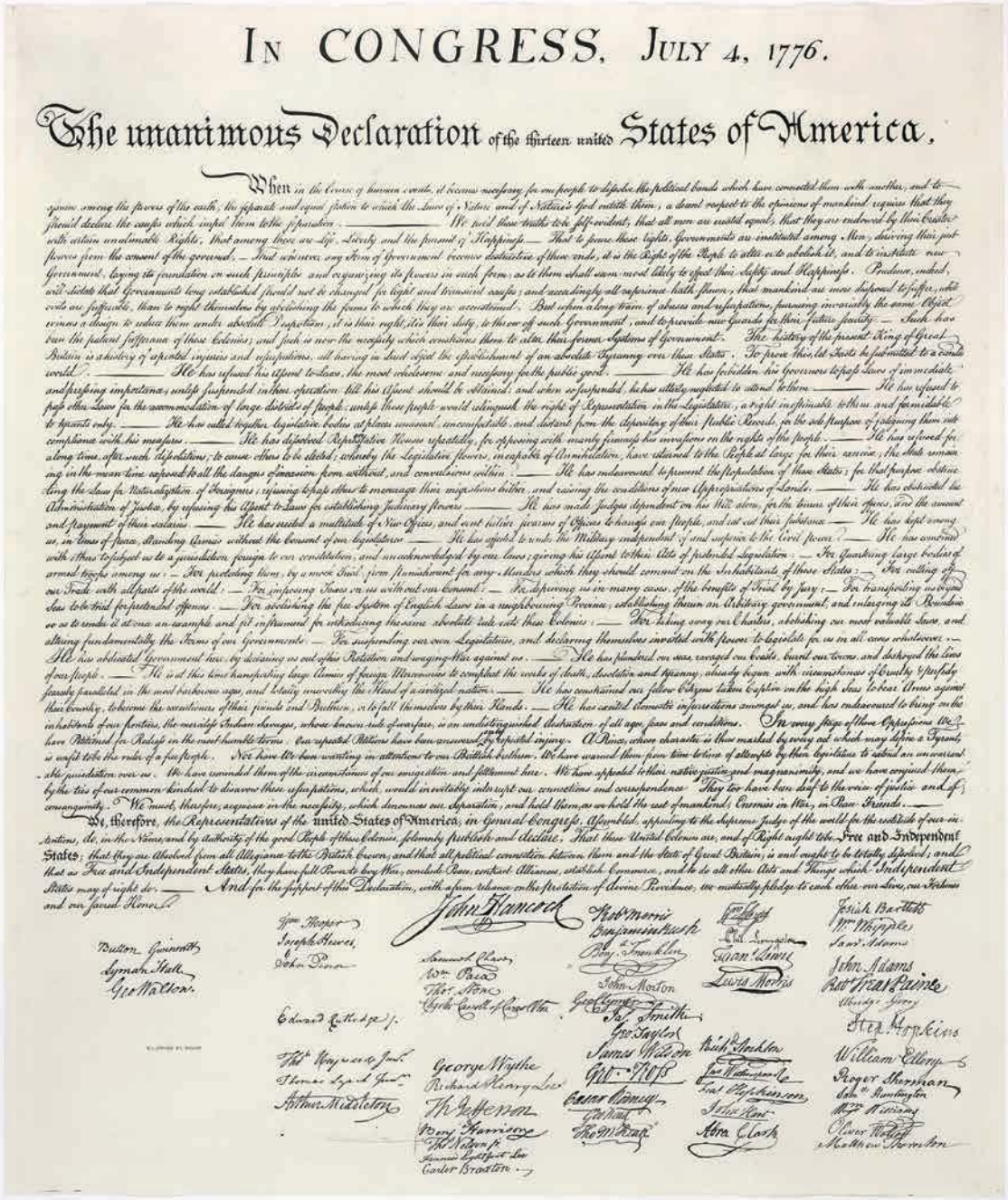

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. — 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 to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world. — He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. — He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them. — He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only. — He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures. — He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people. — He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within. — He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands. — He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers. — He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries. — He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance. — He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our Legislatures. — He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power. — He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation: — For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us: — For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States: — For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world: — For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent: — For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury: — For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences. — For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies: — For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments: — For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever. — He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. — He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people. — He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation. — He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands. — He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions. In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. — Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends. —

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

John Hancock

Josiah Bartlett, Wm Whipple, Saml Adams, John Adams, Robt Treat Paine, Step Hopkins, William Ellery, Roger Sherman, Sam Huntington, Wm Williams, Oliver Wolcott, Matthew Thornton

Source 4.26 The *Declaration of Independence*

Focus question

Find and read a copy of the *Declaration of Independence*. You will be able to trace most of the events of 1763 to 1776 in the various statements made in the document. Identify four instances that highlight the expression of revolutionary ideas (see Section 1.5). In addition to this, comment on the language used. Discuss your findings in class.

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Source 4.27 George III's statue, erected in New York City in 1766 to celebrate his greatness in repealing the *Stamp Act*, is pulled down, melted and turned into bullets for the Continental Army in 1776

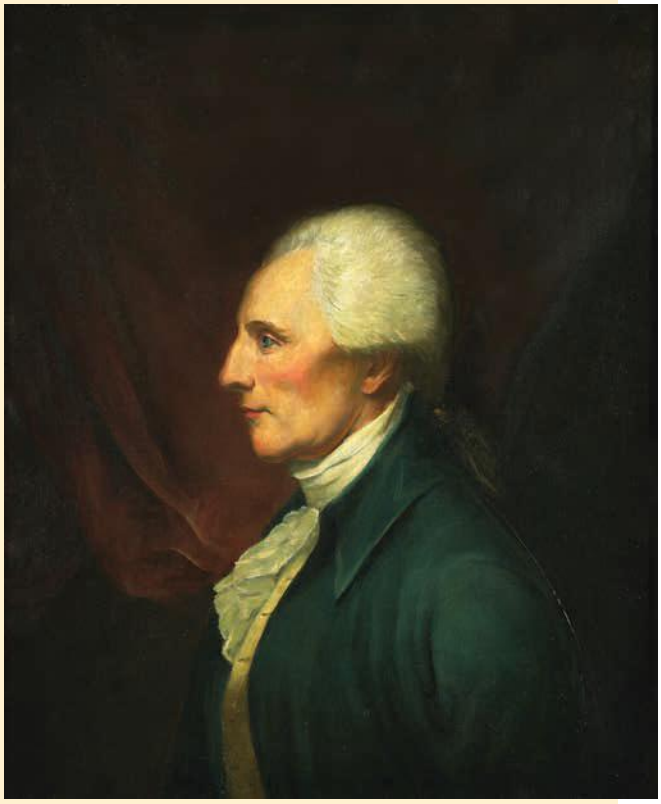
A MATTER OF FACT

After watching the statue of George III come down, Lieutenant Isaac Bangs of the Massachusetts militia wrote grimly to a friend: 'The lead we hear is to be run up into musket balls for the Yankees, when it is hoped that the emanations from the leaden George will make deep impressions in the bodies of some of his redcoated and Tory subjects'.

ISBN 978-1-107-50647-3

4.13 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
Richard Henry Lee (1732–1794)

- Born in Westmoreland County, Virginia, in 1732, Richard Henry Lee was a Virginian statesman and radical voice in the early days of the Revolution.
- He organised anti-*Stamp Act* petitions and boycotts in Virginia in 1765, helped to form the Virginian Committee of Correspondence in 1773, and helped to organise a Day of 'Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer' in 1774 in response to the introduction of the *Coercive Acts* against Boston.
- In June 1776, he famously moved a motion at the Second Continental Congress that the colonies declare themselves independent of the British Empire.
- A critic of the proposed Constitution, he declined to attend the Constitutional Convention in 1787 and is considered a possible author of the anti-Ratification pamphlet *Letters from the Federal Farmer* in the same year.
- He served in the Virginian House of Burgesses (1758–75), was a delegate to Congress (1774–79 and 1784–87, serving as the sixth President of Congress in 1785) and eventually became a US Senator (1789–92).



Source 4.28 Richard Henry Lee

4.14 American nationalism

One of the most surprising elements of the Revolution was the growing emergence of a separate American identity by people who had traditionally considered themselves to be British. Most of the colonists were English, or of English origin, but in the face of salutary neglect (discussed in Section 1.8) and then a punitive British taxation regime, they felt they had become disconnected. For those in colonies not of British heritage – including numbers from Scotland, Ireland, Holland, France and Germany – the emerging American patriotism transcended these cultural and ethnic boundaries.

The ability to make something of oneself in the New World was also transformative. Fewer European constraints, a better diet, a longer life expectancy, better literacy levels, a better standard of living, available land to work and endless employment opportunities helped white males to achieve social mobility levels unthinkable in Europe. Benjamin Franklin's transformation was a case in point.

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Source 4.29 The famous *Spirit of '76* image by Archibald MacNeal Willard, circa 1875, which captures the revolutionary spirit of American nationalism

Originally a staunch Loyalist, after many years of travel through poverty-stricken parts of the Empire (such as Ireland), he re-evaluated his position and became a critical figure in the Revolution.

With the benefit of hindsight, one can see many of the critical moments on the path of American nationalism, particularly the failed Albany Plan in 1754, the successful Stamp Act Congress in 1765, the Continental Congresses of 1774 and 1775, the formation of the Continental Army in 1775 and the eventual *Declaration of Independence* in 1776. These indicated that on several major fronts, colonial boundaries were being transcended by a new national mindset and entity: the American nation. Britain had unwittingly created the foundations for a new nation that would come to dominate the world in the 20th century and the early 21st century.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 4.2: HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

Regarding the *Declaration of Independence*, historian Francis Jennings has called it 'a magnificent statement of principle and fact that shows how strongly minds can be swayed by mere words when crafted by a master'. He argues that though colonists often blamed British politicians for their ill treatment in the 1700s, by the time the Declaration was being drafted by Thomas Jefferson in 1776, 'it had become clear that Parliament did what George III wanted done'. Jefferson therefore 'understood that no arguments could sway American opinions as well as the actions of George III'. Jennings first directly quotes Jefferson's words in the Declaration:

> *The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States.*

Jennings continues, summarising the complaints of the Americans:

> *[King George] had assented to Parliament's 'acts of pretended Legislation,' besides refusing to assent to proper laws, 'the most wholesome and necessary for the public good'. He had dissolved colonial legislatures 'for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.' He had 'made Judges dependent on his Will alone.' He had harassed the people with 'a multitude of New Officers' and 'swarms of Offices.' He had sent standing armies 'to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.'*

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> . . .
>
> *This royal criminal had 'abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the Lives of our people' and 'He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny … with circumstances of Cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages.'*
>
> Jennings then presents a critique:
>
> *Even as propaganda, that last was a bit shrill. Jefferson knew history, and circumstances of cruelty and perfidy were among history's most common phenomena. But propaganda aims at effect rather than accuracy.*
>
> . . .
>
> *Maybe one should not raise questions about great propaganda documents. Despite its power, the Declaration was not perfect even in its bill of complaints. It is hardly necessary to note again the abysmal fault in its 'self-evident' truth 'that all men are created equal' coming from the pen of a slaveholder.*
>
> Source: Jennings, F., *The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2000, pp. 168–9

Write a short paragraph response for each of the following questions:

1. Why do you think Jennings calls the *Declaration of Independence* a 'great propaganda document'?
2. According to Jennings, the Declaration is both a 'magnificent statement' and a 'great propaganda document'. Can you explain how this is possible?
3. Though he calls Jefferson a 'master' writer, how does Jennings question the ethics of Jefferson being the author of the Declaration?

The story so far

- The Boston Tea Party of 1773 provoked a heavy-handed response by Britain to punish Boston. However, the subsequent *Coercive Acts* of 1774 actually served to galvanise the Thirteen Colonies against the British, a stance that culminated in the Revolutionary War.
- Revolutionary ideology spread from London via the Whig political movement to the Thirteen Colonies, and back again. Ideas, especially about the concept of liberty, were transmitted across the Atlantic via political pamphlets and powerful visual representations.
- The Continental Congress operated as a quasi-federal American government in direct opposition to Britain's control of the colonies. By July 1776 they would be the official American government.
- The Revolutionary War promised to be a test of wills and endurance. Congress did not know it at the time, but the appointment of George Washington would be a masterstroke that ultimately delivered victory to the colonies.
- The publication of *Common Sense* and the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776 helped to win over an ambivalent population within the Thirteen Colonies and set the stage for a new nation to be born. The new American nationalism would develop slowly and be soundly tested in the crucible of war.

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CHAPTER REVIEW

DEVELOPING CLEAR DEFINITIONS

Write explanations defining each of the following:

Significant ideas and events	Significant individuals
Coercive Acts (1774)	Lord North
Suffolk Resolves 1774	Benjamin Franklin
Fairfax Resolves (1774)	Thomas Paine
Olive Branch Petition (1775)	Thomas Jefferson
First Continental Congress	Richard Henry Lee
Second Continental Congress	
Powder Alarms	
Battle of Lexington-Concord (1775)	
Battle of Bunker Hill (1775)	
Common Sense (1776)	
Declaration of Independence (1776)	
American nationalism	
Continental Army	

PRACTISING PARAGRAPH ANSWERS

Using three or four points, explain how the actions of the Second Continental Congress in 1775 and 1776 contributed to the development of the American Revolution.

ESSAY QUESTION

'British measures to gain more revenue from the American colonies were intended to solve its financial problems, but ultimately caused a revolutionary situation.' To what extent do you agree with this evaluation? Provide reasons for your answer.

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ONLINE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. History: Revolutions – Exams and Examination Reports (access via http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/?id=5891).

Reviewing past exam papers is a must. You must have practice at completing sections of the exam timing. Have your teacher mark these attempts for you. For examples of past exam questions and sample answers, see Chapters 5 and 9.

Alpha History: practice exams (access via http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/?id=6104).

These exams are extremely challenging and not for the faint-hearted. You may need your teacher's help in deciphering some of these questions as they are pitched at a university student level. Note that practice exams are available via subscription only (the rest of the site is free).

John Adams, HBO series, 2008, Episode 1 'Independence'.

This excellent episode includes the establishment of both Continental Congresses, the operation of the unstable quasi-federal American government, examples of colonies/states protecting their own interests, disputes between Adams and Dickinson, the formation of the Continental Army and the drafting of the *Declaration of Independence*.

Liberty, Public Broadcasting Service series, 1997, Episode 3 'The Times that Try Men's Souls'.

READING MORE DEEPLY

Easy

A Summary View of the Rights of British America, Thomas Jefferson, 1774.

This valuable source is available in many forms, including online.

Moderate

Common Sense, Thomas Paine, 1776.

Paine's political pamphlet is also available in many forms, including online.

Challenging

Marshall, P.J., 'Britain's American Problem: The International Perspective', in *The Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution*, Eds Edward G. Gray and Jane Kamensky, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, pp. 15–29.

Jennings, F., *The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2000, Ch. 21, 'Changing Sides', pp. 127–39.

Jennings briefly charts the shift in loyalties of Benjamin Franklin, from being a royalist in London, to an observer of both sides, to a fully committed Patriot. The chapter includes engaging passages from Franklin's speeches in the House of Commons around the time of the Boston Tea Party of 1773, to his private thoughts in letters to friends and his son.

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5

Area of Study 1, 1754–1776: Exam questions and answers

> *… feeble communities, independent of each other, have resorted to Union … for the common safety ag[ain]st powerful neighbours, and for the preservation of peace and justice among themselves.*
>
> – JAMES MADISON, PREFACE TO *NOTES OF DEBATES IN THE FEDERAL CONVENTION OF 1787*

OVERVIEW

This chapter will give you some guidance on how to complete the VCE Exam for the American Revolution in Section A or B of Area of Study 1 (AOS 1). These answers have been gleaned from former students who have mastered the material and performed well in both SACs and the VCE. You can see examples of how to model an appropriate answer and can use this when you are preparing for SACs and the final exam.

One way to get a handle on the scope of the Revolutions course is to break down what you need to know into a manageable spreadsheet. Copy the following crib sheet for the AOS 1 Course (1754–1776) onto one A4 sheet and do the same for AOS 2 (1776–1789; see Chapter 9). Paste it on your wall at home, on cards, on the front of your workbook, or on your phone, tablet computer or laptop – wherever helps you study – and you will always have a quick refresher at your fingertips. The Revolutions course means you can be assessed on any significant idea, event, individual, popular movement or group, and the historical interpretations surrounding these issues, so you have to cover all of these scenarios, plus a few challenging left-field possibilities, in your preparation. We want you to enjoy the great story of America, but we also want you to pass the very challenging VCE final examination that you face in November. This spreadsheet will help you contextualise the questions and sources you will be asked in that paper. Note the questions in bold type have been covered in the VCE final examination over the period 2005–2014.

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Source 5.1 VCE American Revolutions History Course, Area of Study 1, 1754–1776

Events	Leaders	Ideas	Groups/movements	Documents	Historians
1763: *Proclamation Act* **End of French and Indian War** Pontiac's Rebellion	**George III** James Otis	**Enlightenment and natural rights: life, liberty and estate** Salutary neglect Social mobility	**Colonial Assembly**	1761: James Otis' *Against the Writs of Assistance*	Gordon Wood
1764: *Sugar Act* and *Currency Act*	John Hancock	Mercantilism		1764: James Otis' *Rights of British Colonies Asserted and Proved*	Bernard Bailyn
1765: *Quartering Act*	Samuel Adams **Patrick Henry**				Hugh Brogan
1765: *Stamp Act* Stamp Act Congress	George Washington Benjamin Franklin	Actual and virtual representation	**Sons of Liberty**	1765: Patrick Henry's 'Virginia Resolves'	John Cantwell
1766: *Declaratory Act*					Edward Countryman
1767: *Townshend Duties* 1767: *New York Restraining Act*	John Dickinson		Non-importation organisations begin; the best known is the Daughters of Liberty	1768: Samuel Adams' *Massachusetts Circular Letter* 1768: *Journal of Events* 1767: John Dickinson's *Letters of a Farmer*	Steve Thompson
1770: Boston Massacre	John Adams Paul Revere			1770: Samuel Adams' *Short Narrative of Horrid Massacre of Boston*	Howard Zinn, Francis Jennings, Charles Beard
1773: Boston Tea Party			Committees of Correspondence and Safety		
1774: *Coercive Acts*					
1774: First Continental Congress	**Thomas Jefferson**	**Republicanism** Popular sovereignty	Continental Congress is formed		
1775: Second Continental Congress **Battle of Lexington-Concord** The Revolutionary War begins Battle of Bunker Hill			**Second Continental Congress is formed** Continental Army is formed	**1775: Patrick Henry's 'Give me liberty or give me death'** **1775: Thomas Jefferson's *Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms*** **1775: Olive Branch Petition**	

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Events	Leaders	Ideas	Groups/movements	Documents	Historians
1776: Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*	**Thomas Paine**	**Enlightenment and natural rights: life, liberty and estate**		**1776: Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*** **1776: *American Crisis***	
1776: Thomas Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence*		American nationalism Justified revolution		**1776: Thomas Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence***	
1776: Battle of Long Island		American nationalism			

Source 5.2 According to legend, in June 1776 a widow named Betsy Ross was entrusted with making a flag for the newly independent Thirteen Colonies. This is, however, a story told by her grandson 100 years after the Revolution, and no proof exists that it ever happened or that the traditional design is of Betsy Ross' making. **Top:** Betsy Ross showing Major Ross and Robert Morris how she cut the stars for the American flag; George Washington sits in a chair on the left. Painting by Jean Leon Ferris, c 1900. **Right:** A 'Betsy Ross' flag with 13 stars for the Thirteen Colonies.

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5.1 AOS 1, Section A VCE UNIT 3

In this first part of the examination paper, students are required to complete two extended-answer questions on a significant event, idea, individual, group or popular movement from the period 1754 to 1776. The key focus will be on how these factors combined to cause a revolutionary situation.

A good way to approach this task is to begin with a brainstorming exercise, placing ideas under the headings of Introduction, Body and Conclusion. This should take only a couple of minutes; spend the rest of your time developing these ideas into a solid mini-essay. Be sure to answer the question (rather than demonstrating your knowledge on an unrelated area) and combine factual information with your own analysis and interpretation.

A typical question in AOS 1 looks like this:

> *Using three or four points, explain how the* Coercive Acts of 1774 *(also known as the 'Intolerable Acts') contributed to a revolutionary situation in the American colonies. Provide evidence to support your answer.*

(Firstly, read the question carefully. For example, what exactly does the term 'revolutionary situation' mean to you? Think about how you could demonstrate this understanding in your response.)

A brainstorm to structure an answer might look like this:

- *INTRO.* Coercive Acts *came directly in the wake of Boston Tea Party and followed over 10 years of revolutionary activity in America:* Sugar Act, Stamp Act, Townshend Duties, *Boston Massacre*
- *BODY. The hardline American defiance through Boston Tea Party gets a hardline British reaction with the* Coercive Acts *having 4 to 5 parts that attack Boston politically, legally, economically, militarily, socially … this hard-line British reaction directly caused a revolutionary situation in the colonies to develop by …*
- *CONCLUSION. Hardline British reaction of* Coercive Acts *= a counter hardline American reaction.* Coercive Acts *leads to Continental Congresses 1 and 2 (1774/1775), Lexington/Concord and War in 1775 and* Declaration of Independence *in 1776.*

You can then quickly and confidently complete your answer as you know how to start, how to order your argument and how to conclude. Note that a more formal approach to tackling a mini-essay is outlined in Chapter 9.

Past questions

Full VCE exam papers are available online (access via http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/?id=5891), but here's a summary of VCE questions for AOS 1, Section A, from 2005 to 2014.

Year	Question 1	Question 2
2005	Thomas Paine	*Stamp Act 1765*
2006	*Coercive Acts* of 1774	Sons of Liberty
2007	*Revenue Act 1767* (*Townshend Duties*)	George III
2008	British revenue raising	Second Continental Congress (1775)
2009	Boston Tea Party	Thomas Jefferson and the *Declaration of Independence* (1776)
2010	King George III	Ideas of liberty

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Year	Question 1	Question 2
2011	American self-government	*Coercive Acts* of 1774
2012	Sons of Liberty	Ideas in the *Declaration of Independence* (1776)
2013	Ideas of republicanism	Actions of the British Government
2014	Effects of the French and Indian War (1754–1763)	Patrick Henry

5.2 Sample answers

This section is designed to help you prepare for your assessments by modelling possible responses to VCE-style exam questions. Here is a series of sample responses to typical questions from AOS 1, Section A of the VCE exam.

SAMPLE ANSWER I

Using three or four points, explain George Washington's contribution to the American Revolution in the period 1754 to 1776.

As commander in chief of the Continental Army, George Washington was at the forefront of revolutionary affairs. Born in Virginia, 1732, Washington played several key roles in pre-revolutionary America as a gentleman farmer, one of the colonial elite and a member of the Virginian House of Burgesses. He fought as a soldier in the French and Indian War (1754–1763) and applied for commission into the British army; however, he was denied. The rejection encouraged him to lead the war against the people who had refused him entry years earlier. With the end of the French and Indian War, and the French removed, Washington saw westward expansion as a great opportunity, but the *Proclamation Act 1763* prevented this, leaving him angered. Washington presided over a meeting in rural Virginia where they formed the Fairfax Resolves (1774), which called for a strict boycott on British imported goods. His involvement in the rebellion highlighted the clear opposition he had towards British authority. Washington vehemently protested against the introduction of the *Stamp Act* in 1765, arguing that 'Britain has no right to stick their hands into our pockets'. He was made general of the Continental Army and had the ability to transform a rag-tag mob of untrained and undisciplined men into a skilled military combat unit. Even more commendable was that he achieved this despite obstacles such as interstate rivalry, high desertion numbers and limited funding from Congress. During the Revolutionary War at Valley Forge, when morale was low in the Continental Army, Washington ordered that all soldiers be read a copy of Paine's 'American Crisis', a pamphlet that inspired the soldiers and gave them that needed optimism. In 1789 Washington became the first President of the United States and was forever seen as a revered man who's 'genius was in keeping the cause alive'.

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SAMPLE ANSWER II

How did Samuel Adams contribute to a revolutionary situation by 1776?

A Harvard graduate, Sam Adams worked more than any other revolutionary to enlarge the fight that lay between Britain and the colonies, employing the power of the mob while promoting enflaming ideology, to create a revolutionary situation by 1776.

Samuel Adams was a staunch Protestant who believed that Britain's sovereignty in the American colonies, where it should belong to the constituents and therefore God, was an abridgment of 'natural rights'. When the *Stamp Act 1765* was introduced, Adams, along with James Otis, established the Sons of Liberty, harnessing the 'power of the mob' to repel what they saw as illegitimate infringements upon the colonies. The success of their rebellion, which saw the *Stamp Act* repealed in 1766, set precedence for further rebellion to occur.

When the *Townshend Duties* were introduced, taxing imported goods such as paint and lead, and threatening the power of the Colonial Assemblies, Adams' promise to 'take up arms and spend our last drop of blood' proved the catalyst that saw 1000 British troops deployed to Boston. Though unsuccessful on this occasion, the presence of the troops led to the Boston Massacre (1770) that saw Adams publish *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre of Boston* as revolutionary propaganda that further induced colonial fear for British tyranny.

Adams, though a street 'rabble-rouser', also contributed significantly to the organisational sophistication of the Revolution. In 1772 Adams created the Committees of the Correspondence, allowing for the increasingly interconnected nature of the Colonial Assemblies, while his circular letter 'A State of the Rights of Colonists' argued for the defence of the 'natural rights' that were under siege by the British.

It was his response to the *Tea Act 1773*, however, that proved 'so bold, so daring' and inflammatory. When Britain attempted to reduce excise taxes on tea, to allow the failing British East India Company to clear stocked warehouses, Samuel Adams organised the Sons of Liberty to board the ships, seize the cargo and dispose of £9569 worth of tea into the harbour. This complete rebellion saw British respond with the *Coercive Acts* (1774) that unified the colonies through the First Continental Congress (1774) and justified the *Declaration of Independence* (1776).

Ultimately Adams, who represented Massachusetts at both the First (1774) and Second (1775) Continental Congresses, had incited such tension between Britain and the colonies, by acting upon the ideologies that others only spoke and wrote of, that he is arguably responsible more than any other single figure for the revolutionary situation of 1776, and aptly named 'the most dangerous man in the colonies' by King George III.

SAMPLE ANSWER III

Using three or four points, how did conflict between the American colonists and Britain over political representation help create a revolutionary situation in the period up to 1775?

The British Empire was so engaged in war with France and other conquests throughout the 150 years that it left America in 'salutary neglect' to govern political and economic affairs alone. Following victory in the French and Indian War and the passing of the Treaty of Paris (1763) and *Proclamation Act 1763*, colonists saw no reason for British troops to remain in America. However, the British Parliament was faced with a 130 million pound war debt and decided to tax colonists for their defence against enemies. Also, Britain saw the need for a development of law and policy in America and thus British troops would be needed for a foreseeable future. By 1765 the *Quartering Act* was established by Parliament requiring colonies to meet the costs of feeding and housing British troops. Widespread opposition was generated, particularly in New York, where the local assembly refused to comply with the obligations of the Act. The

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Declaratory Act 1766 outlined Britain's political sovereignty over the colonies and the colonists' subordinate role to the British Crown and Parliament. Although the *Declaratory Act* did not stir much discontent, many saw it as sinister evidence that Britain intended to pass further taxation policies and subordinate the Colonial Assembly. The coercion of a British 'standing army' during the Boston Massacre (1770) and the unfair 'taxation without representation' were considered by the Thirteen Colonies to be a denial of liberty for 'freeborn English men'. The ability of British Government to tax was unwelcomed by the colonists who rejected the genuineness of Britain's right to tax through 'virtual representation'. The untimely conflict, as a result of the *Coercive Acts* (1774) along with Thomas Paine's justification of American sovereignty in 'Common Sense', convinced colonists that independence was necessary to release them from the shackles of British tyranny.

SAMPLE ANSWER IV

How did the *Sugar Act* contribute to a Revolutionary situation by 1776?

The *Sugar Act 1764* was the first example of taxation following the Treaty of Paris (1763), with the responses to it creating tension between Britain and the colonies and developing the beginnings of the revolutionary ideology that provided the basis for further rebellion.

Following the 150 years of 'salutary neglect' prior to 1763, the colonies had developed 'internal sovereignty' that gave the colonists constituent representation. The Colonial Assemblies, that provided this governance, controlled the right to representative and consensual taxation, which was undermined by the *Sugar Act*. New England merchants were the most affected group and campaigned for rebellion. Though no major rebellion was ignited by a tax, because it was too specific to offend enough of the population, it saw the beginnings of the revolutionary ideology that formed the basis for further rebellion. James Otis' 'Rights of the Colonists Asserted and Proved' argued that 'taxation without representation' was against the 'natural right' to property and therefore illegal.

This small-scale resistance established the anti-British sentiment and foundation ideology that was necessary for the true rebellions to the *Stamp Act 1765*, the *Townshend Duties* of 1767 and the *Tea Act 1773*, that ultimately fractured trans-Atlantic relations and led to the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776.

SAMPLE ANSWER V

Explain the importance of revolutionary ideas in the development of the American Revolution between 1770 and 1776

The American Revolution was largely a result of the revolutionary ideas that arose during the period leading up to 1776. Such ideas were so vital in motivating Americans to pursue revolution that they formed the foundations for the *Declaration of Independence*. They were developed by philosophers and became the works of several leaders in the Revolution. Ideas included the Enlightenment movement, 'natural rights', 'justified revolution', 'representation' and 'nationalism'. James Otis, a radical revolutionary and co-founder of the Sons of Liberty, wrote 'Rights of British Colonists Asserted and Proved' (1763), which was a direct assault on Britain's restrictions and imprisonment of colonists' natural rights. This belief in the 'natural rights of men' was formed and circulated by people such as John Locke. In similar fashion, Thomas Jefferson wrote on 'natural rights' in his 'A Summary View of the Rights of British America' (1774). Enlightenment ideas of liberalism and political sovereignty had been prominent since the 1600s, and revolutionary leaders like Samuel Adams and Benjamin Franklin applied these to promote the notion of 'liberty'. Through riots,

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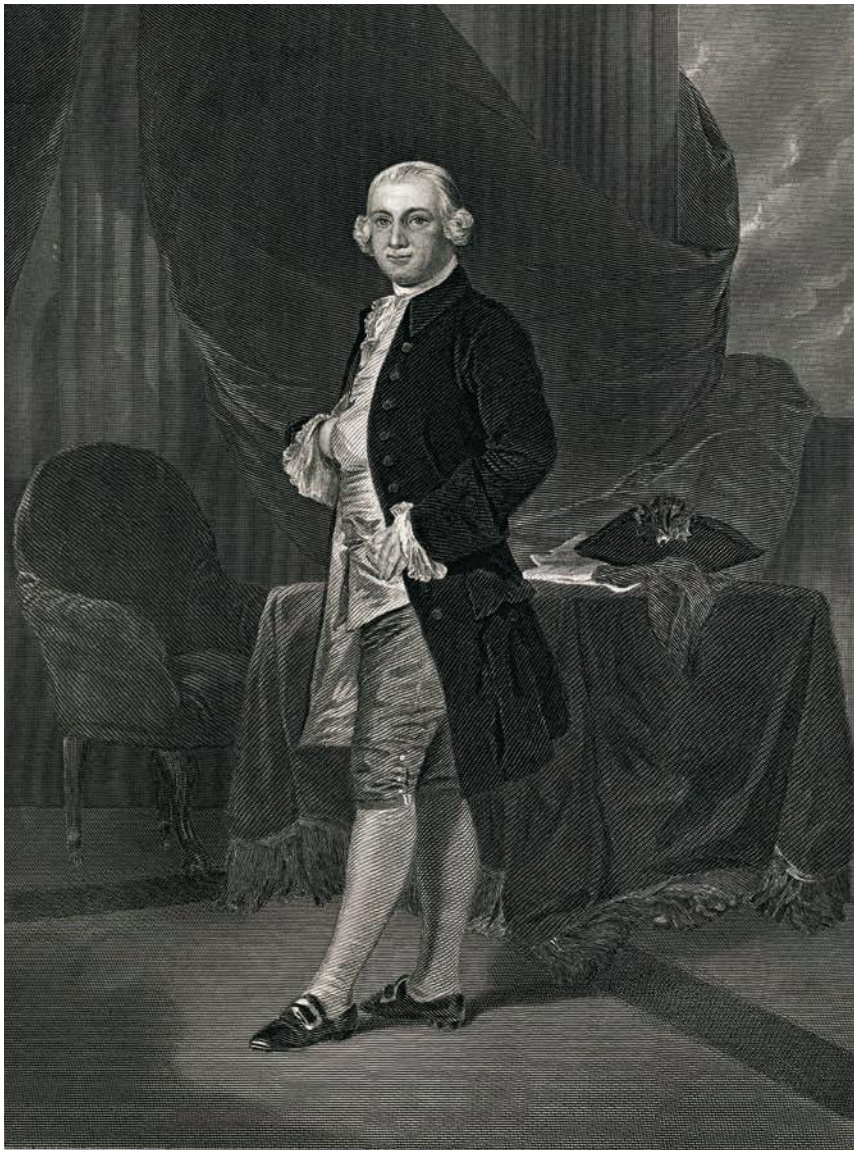
protests and even the Boston Tea Party (1773), Samuel Adams exercised the need for American independence, as he believed that British economic policy was a violation of the colonists' rights to 'freedom' and 'liberty'. At the same time, Benjamin Franklin advocated for the unification of the Thirteen Colonies at the Albany Congress during the French and Indian War. The *Stamp Act 1765* and *Declaratory Act 1766* brought about the ideas for 'actual representation' and the common catchphrase of 'No taxation without representation'. This thrust for representation was the main reason behind American protests against their Mother Country because it showed a lack of 'liberty'. This discontent was taken advantage of by Samuel Adams and Paul Revere through their propaganda published in the *Boston Gazette*, which often featured the liberty tree or the Lady Liberty. Thomas Paine wrote two of the most important documents of the Revolution, which reflected the ideas of Locke's 'natural rights'. The first, 'Common Sense', was a clearly expressed and argued explanation of 'justified revolution' where people have the right to change their government. His works were of a republicanism nature and rejection of monarchy as a form of government.



Source 5.3 *Portrait of James Otis (1725–83)*, by Alonzo Chappel, circa 1850

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5.3 AOS 1, Section B VCE UNIT 4

discriminating also known as a discriminator; relating to a skill that justifies a high mark in the VCE

In this second part of the examination paper, students are required to analyse an image or document from the period 1754 to 1776. This is considered to be a **discriminating** question and is designed to challenge all students. It is divided into four parts. Thirty minutes in total is allotted for this part of the exam. Spend a minute or two on parts a and b, and split the rest of the time between parts c and d.

- Parts a and b test comprehension, and are worth two marks each. They require you to identify key points, ideas, arguments or assumptions made in the source.
- Part c tests analysis skills and is worth six marks. It requires you to quote from the extract and demonstrate your knowledge of the period by going beyond the source, placing it in context and introducing evidence relevant to the source that is not directly in the source.
- Part d is a critical evaluation exercise and is worth 10 marks. It requires you to critique the image or document, assessing its reliability, strengths and limitations, positive or negative viewpoint, and its political provenance (e.g. right-wing or left-wing), along with its accuracy, completeness and assumptions. You need to provide evidence for your answer, as well as acknowledging the existence of different points of view, different historical interpretations and any significant omissions. (See Chapter 10 for more information about historical interpretations.)

Past questions

Full VCE exam papers are available online (access via http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/?id=5891), but here's a summary of VCE questions for AOS 1, Section B, from 2005 to 2014.

Year	Question
2005	Boston Tea Party/Liberty Tree cartoon – anti-British image
2006	Boston Massacre – anti-British image
2007	Boston in Distress cartoon – anti-British image
2008	Boston cannonaded cartoon – anti-British image
2009	Anti-British Parliament cartoon – anti-British image
2010	Sons of Liberty tar and feathering poster – anti-Loyalist image
2011	Samuel Adams document – anti-British document
2012	Patrick Henry image – anti-*Stamp Act* image
2013	John Adams' diary – anti-British document
2014	John Hancock – anti-British document

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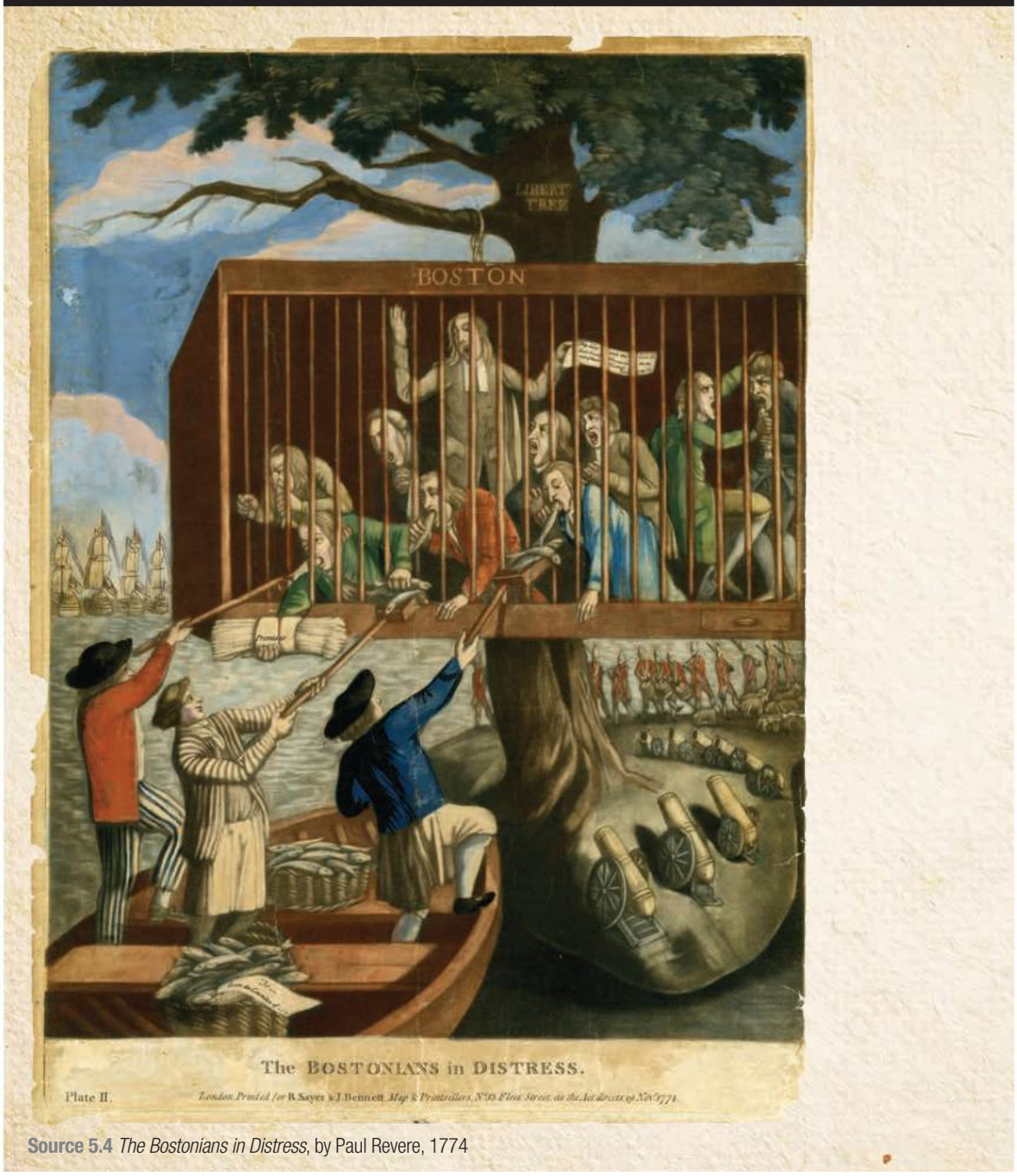
5.4 Sample answers

This section is designed to help you prepare for your assessments by modelling possible responses to VCE-style exam questions. Here is a series of sample responses to typical questions from AOS 1, Section B of the VCE exam.

ANNOTATED SAMPLE EXAM RESPONSES



Source 5.4 *The Bostonians in Distress*, by Paul Revere, 1774

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a What is suggested about colonial Americans in this representation?

That the colonial Americans, Bostonians in this case, are being denied any form of justice and are being treated harshly by Britain and its military forces. They are starving and forced into an almost barbaric state by the *Coercive Acts* of 1774.

b Identify two details in the representation that show anti-British feeling in the colonies.

The colonists are denied their liberty (shown by the cage) and their contorted faces show they have been reduced to a state of starvation and disorder, due to the presence of British shown by British cannons, soldiers and naval blockade that were part of the military rule that occurred during the *Coercive Acts*. This Act closed Boston economically, politically and socially.

c Using your knowledge and the representation, explain why this cartoon appeared in 1774.

This cartoon appeared because of the *Coercive Acts* (1774), which the Americans referred to as the 'Intolerable Acts' because they were unacceptable.

After 10 years of revolutionary activity in Boston (including the *Sugar Act 1764*, the *Stamp Act 1765*, the *Townshend Duties of 1767*, the Boston Massacre in 1770 and the Boston Tea Party in 1773), this new legislation was a game changer and every colony saw the dangerous precedent this set for their own state security. The *Coercive Acts* included the suspension of the Massachusetts Assembly, the closure of Boston Harbor and economy, a new *Quartering Act* (which required the Bostonians to house and feed British troops) and a new legal system that tried Bostonians in English courts in jurisdictions outside the Thirteen Colonies.

In response, Boston citizens held illegal town meetings, stepped up communication with other colonies and increased the production of propaganda, like 'Bostonians in Distress' and 'The Able Doctor', suggesting denial of liberty was being committed. Outcomes included the harnessing of media by Americans against the British, boycotts of all British products, the formation of a quasi-federal American government, with 12 of the Thirteen Colonies joining the First and Second Continental Congresses, the formation of the Continental Army and the *Declaration of Independence*.

d To what extent are the revolutionary ideas in this cartoon valid and justified? What other interpretations might exist?

The revolutionary ideas expressed in Paul Revere's cartoon, a noted revolutionary in Boston since the Boston Massacre 1770, show injustice of the hardline British reaction to the Boston Tea Party in 1773 by persecuting Boston with the *Coercive Acts* in 1774.

Those ideas in summary: national rights (especially liberty), standing army, the injustice of British policy, the call to revolutionary action from Americans, and the injustice to all parts of

Concise responses demonstrating a strong understanding of the image and its particular features (cage, cannon, British soldiers) as well as directly answering each question.

Parts **a** and **b** test comprehension, and require you to identify key points, ideas, arguments or assumptions made in the source.

Question **b**'s high-scoring response actually identifies more than two 'details' that 'show anti-British feeling'.

Part **c** tests analysis skills and requires you to quote from the extract and demonstrate your knowledge of the period by going beyond the source, placing it in historical context.

Direct opening sentence.

Good use of language.

This is an example of how this response goes 'beyond the source', by demonstrating 'knowledge of the period' by providing evidence of what the *Coercive Acts* actually were.

This is an excellent example of how this response goes 'beyond the source', placing the visual representation itself in historical context.

Part **d** is a critical evaluation exercise. It requires you to critique the image or document, assessing its reliability, strengths and limitations, positive or negative viewpoint, along with its accuracy, completeness and assumptions. You need to provide evidence for your answer, as well as acknowledging the existence of different points of view or historical interpretations.

Direct opening sentence, which is a clear and strong start to an analysis of the source and its usefulness. Note how the writer weaves in knowledge of the creator of the representation and its purpose.

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Good use of language, and evidence of the writer's own point of view on the effectiveness of the image.

Good historical evidence to put the image into context in order to present a point of view about its 'accuracy' or 'limitations', and use of language: 'direct outcomes …'.

Introduces a historical interpretation.

Excellent term to use, but most importantly, here the writer is 'acknowledging the existence of different points of view or historical interpretations'.

Excellent conclusion, recapping the writer's point of view or 'critical evaluation' of the representation, and echoing their opening sentence (or introduction) – a sign of quality writing and argumentation.

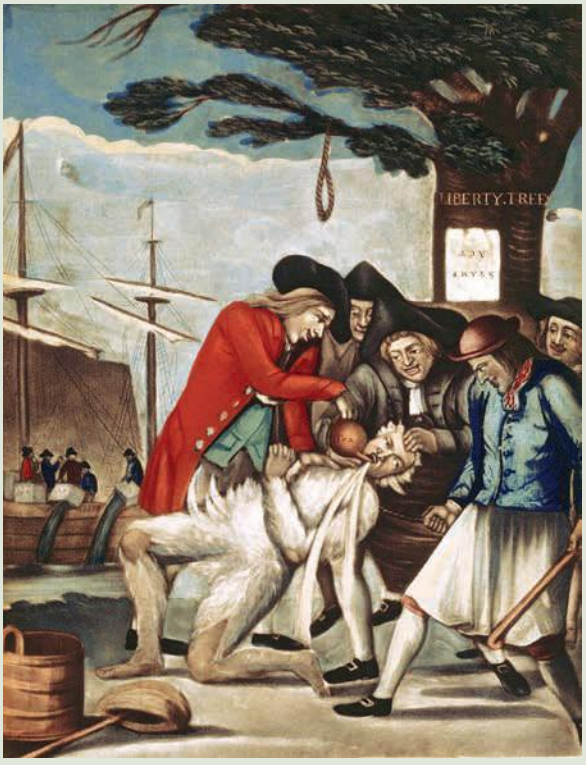
the *Coercive Acts*. This was met by hardline American reaction, as was the intention of Revere and other revolutionaries like Samuel Adams. The successful transfer of revolutionary ideas through propaganda such as this helped to bring the colonies together and they began to form an 'American' mindset and nation, as distinct from earlier colony-based attachments.

The direct outcomes of the *Coercive Acts* were the formation of the First and Second Continental Congresses, the formation of the Continental Army, the Revolutionary War and the *Declaration of Independence*, which severed all ties with Britain.

Right-wing historians like Bailyn would argue the colonists' harnessing of anti-British themed media such as pamphlets, broadsides, posters and cartoons like this in all colonial newspapers helped spread the Revolution much faster than Britain could contain it.

Contrary to this, left-wing interpretations, like those of Zinn and Jennings, suggest that these incidents were sparked by elements of the colonial merchant class, who manipulated the lower classes to help achieve separation from England in order to increase both their economic and political influence in the region. Revere's intention is clear: to paint Britain and its policies as 'intolerable'.

PRACTICE QUESTION



Source 5.5 *The Bostonian Paying the Excise-Man, or, Tar and Feathering*. This is a print from an engraving that originated in London in late October 1774.

a Name two groups that are represented in the drawing.

b Name two ways in which the representation portrays opposition to the British Government.

c Using your own knowledge and the source, explain some of the causes of these actions depicted in the representation.

d To what extent is this representation useful in understanding the erosion of the colonists' confidence in the British Government between 1754 and 1774? What other interpretations might exist?

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part two AOS 2

Consequences of Revolution: Challenges and responses, changes and continuity, significant individuals and experiences of groups in America, July 1776 – 1789

> *America's Revolution was Britain's American War: a series of fateful moves in the high-stakes game of the European great powers.*
>
> – HISTORIANS EDWARD G. GRAY AND JANE KAMENSKY, 2013

OVERVIEW

Part Two focuses initially on the significant events of the American Revolutionary War. The period until 1789 has been divided into three chapters in order to assist an analysis of the peace settlement, the response to the crises of the 1780s that faced the new nation, and ultimately the Founding Fathers' solution: the creation of the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The embryonic government – known as the 'Articles of Confederation Government' – experienced varying fortunes from 1776 to 1789. It had been effective during the war, creating the Continental Army, conducting diplomacy with European powers and, despite significant problems, defeating or outlasting the British forces. However, the new government was deeply flawed, plagued by economic problems (such as debt, inflation and inconsistent tariffs) and conflicts between (and in) the states, and lacking the legislative power to alleviate the problems that arose, particularly in the 1780s. How did the new nation and the leaders of this new nation deal with these problems?

Confederation a group of nations or states that work together in an alliance while maintaining some independent power

Knowing that the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights provided the settlement that founded a new nation allows us to examine the period of the 1780s to highlight the revolutionary undercurrents that led to their creation. How popular was their solution? How were they organised and who were the key leaders?

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While Chapters 6, 7 and 8 are devoted to answering these questions, each chapter also deals with the responses of the opposition movement to the events and decisions of the conventions. This Part concludes with a thematic analysis of the key tensions and conflicts within the newly formed United States. Was the creation of the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights the 'crowning act of the revolution', as asserted by historian Hugh Brogan, or merely 'the work of certain groups trying to maintain their privileges, while giving just enough rights and liberties to enough people to ensure popular support', as Howard Zinn would have it?

Chapter 9 offers a selection of VCE and VCE-type questions for AOS 2 Section A and B, and sample answers for your reference. Underlying all the events of the Revolution that are described in this book is the interpretation provided by historians who also study the American Revolution. Chapter 10 in Part 3 summarises the key interpretations of the Revolution as a whole. Despite being placed at the end of the book, it is worth reading now so that you can develop the mindset of exploring American history with historians as you journey through this text with them.

SUMMARY OF KEY EVENTS, 1776–1789

1776	July	*Declaration of Independence*
	August	Battle of Long Island: the British take New York.
	December	The Continental Army flees to Pennsylvania, driven from New York by British Generals Howe and Cornwallis.
1777	September	Battle of Brandywine Creek: the Continental Army is defeated by the British Army.
	October	Battle of Saratoga: a 7000-strong British Army under General Burgoyne is defeated by the Continental Army under General Horatio Gates.
	November	The Articles of Confederation are passed by Congress, providing a framework for government – providing the states will ratify it.
	December	The Continental Army creates a winter encampment at Valley Forge.
1778	February	Prussian General Baron von Steuben trains the Continental Army at Valley Forge.
	July	France recognises the United States. France declares war on Britain.
	December	The British capture Savannah and Georgia.
1780	March	The British hold New York and Savannah; complete the capture of Georgia and take Charleston.
	May	Mutiny occurs in the Continental Army as soldiers demand payment and rations.
1781	January	Pennsylvanian soldiers refuse to take orders from any but the Pennsylvania State Assembly.
	October	Battle of Yorktown: Cornwallis forced to surrender in Yorktown, Virginia by an allied American–French force.
1782	January	Loyalists begin to flee the colonies.
	November	Final battles of the War of Independence: the Continental Army and militias fight First Nations and Loyalist militia groups.

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1783	February	The Treaty of Paris formally ends the Revolutionary War.
	March	The United States is recognised by Sweden, Denmark, Russia and Spain. A note sent anonymously to American offices encourages them to take action against Congress for unpaid salaries. The scandal becomes known as the Newburgh Conspiracy. Washington alleviates tensions by delivering an impassioned speech to discontented officers.
	June	The Continental Army is disbanded.
	December	Washington visits Congress and volunteers to resign his commission as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army.
1786	September	A mob in New Hampshire marches on the state assembly and demands that it order a new issue of paper money. The Annapolis Convention is held to 'remedy defects of the federal government'.
	October	A 1400-person strong militia is mobilised by Congress to defend the federal arsenal stockpiled in Springfield, Massachusetts.
1787	January	Prices, state taxes, foreclosures and debtors' courts all became causes of civil unrest in Massachusetts, eventually culminating in Shays' Rebellion, where 1200 rebels marching on Springfield led by Daniel Shays are repelled in their advance by state militia from Boston.
	May	Fifty-five delegates attend the Philadelphia Convention to consider amendments of the Articles of Confederation.
	September	The Philadelphia convention closes, resulting in a final draft of the new constitution approved by all the delegates in attendance.
	July	The Northwest Ordinance is passed by Congress, providing for the creation of new states in the West instead of expanding the existing states' 'Madison Constitution'.
	December	The Ratification Debates begin.
1788	January	The Ratification Debates continue.
	July	Congress formally announces the Constitution of the United States of America.
1789	April	George Washington is inaugurated as the first President of the United States.
	September	Madison's 'Bill of Rights' is adopted.

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6

The War of Independence, 1776–1783

> *The use of force alone is but temporary. It may subdue for the moment; but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again: and a nation is not governed, which is perpetually to be conquered.*
>
> – BRITISH WHIG POLITICIAN EDMUND BURKE, SPEECH ON CONCILIATION WITH AMERICA, 1775

OVERVIEW

rebels colonists who fought against the British

With the signing of the *Declaration of Independence* in the summer of 1776, the **rebels** displayed their intentions; however, it would become meaningless if they lost the war. The newly named and established states lacked an experienced army to face the British. Further, they had disparate ill-disciplined militias and a weak central government created by the Articles of Confederation that was unable to adequately supply or fund the new Continental Army and the war effort. Given these circumstances, how did the colonists win?

As previously discussed, historians often refer to the American War of Independence as Britain's 'Vietnam'. There is much truth in the assertion, for Britain was militarily very successful, particularly in the South, and Washington's greatest achievement as a general was simply to keep the Continental Army cohesive and active as a belligerent force. It was not until the involvement of a colourful array of European and subcontinental allies – including France (1778–83), Spain (1789–83), the Netherlands (1780–83) and the Sultanate of Mysore (1780–84) – that the tide really turned against the British. Their involvement effectively turned the war into a global conflict; the British Empire now had to deploy forces in theatres as diverse as India and Gibraltar as well as in the American colonies. Additionally, a direct French invasion of the British Isles was a real fear for the British Parliament. Despite distant supply lines, an increasing inability to win over the American populace and uninspiring military leadership, was British defeat inevitable?

The Battle of Lexington-Concord, the Battle of Bunker Hill and the Siege of Boston had been carried out by numerous motivated militias against a poorly led and heavily outnumbered British force in Boston. The British at this stage – and arguably during the majority of the war – completely underestimated the

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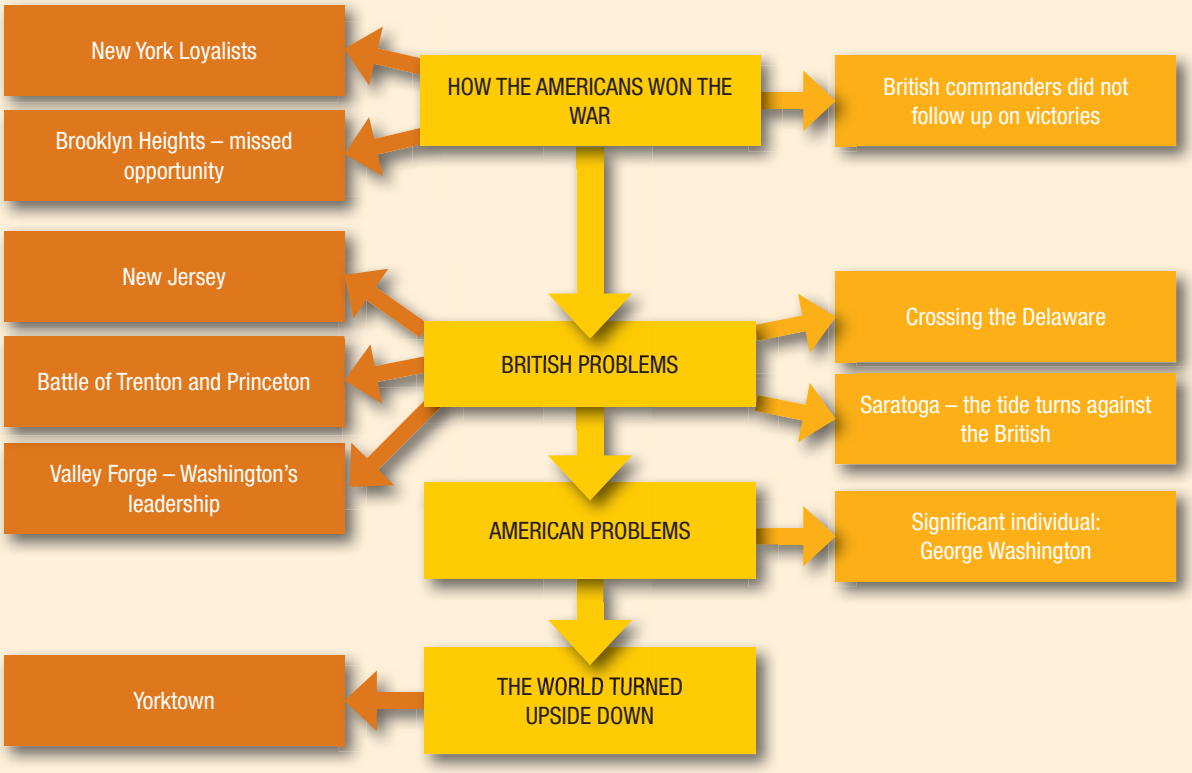
capability and resolve of the rebels to resist British forces. British commanders such as Thomas Gage, William Howe and Henry Clinton repeatedly misunderstood the nature of the conflict. Many of the initial engagements saw British commanders fail to follow up successes as they would have in Europe or India. At Breed's Hill (Bunker Hill), after capturing the Patriots' positions at heavy cost and driving them from it, Howe failed to pursue the defeated Americans. Prior to and during this period, decisive military victories were actually gained in the pursuit of fleeing enemy forces, which were either easily captured or cut down. In an 18th-century frontal assault on a fortified position, the attacker could expect a 3:1 (attackers:defenders) exchange of casualties – which they could 'make good' in the pursuit of the defeated enemy. (At Bunker Hill, the British suffered double the American casualties – a relatively 'good' result.) Without this reality, great military commanders such as Julius Caesar would have had a vastly different military career. Why didn't British commanders follow up their victories?

KEY ISSUES

- What were the problems that faced the British?
- What were the problems that faced American colonists?
- Why was any form of colonial military success so important?
- Why was British military success nearly irrelevant?
- Why was the actual presence of British troops during the war so damaging to the British cause?
- Significant individual: George Washington (Part 2)

FLOW OF CHAPTER



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TIMELINE OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, 1776–1783

1776	December	On the eve of the Battle of Trenton, Thomas Paine pens *American Crisis*, which is later read to the American troops as inspiration. A 2400-strong American force crosses the Delaware River and captures 1000 Hessians at Trenton in New Jersey.
1777	July	The Marquis de La Fayette, a French nobleman, alights in Philadelphia and volunteers for the Continental Army.
	October	The Americans win the Battle of Saratoga, their most significant victory in the war to date.
	November	The Articles of Confederation are passed by Congress, providing a framework for government if the states will ratify it.
	December	The Continental Army creates an encampment for the winter at Valley Forge in Pennsylvania.
1778	February	France formally recognises the United States and the two nations sign military and trade treaties. Commander Baron von Steuben of Prussia begins training the American soldiers at Valley Forge.
	July	British naval forces attack a French ship, causing France to formally declare war on Britain.
1779	May	Hundreds of men of the Continental Army mutiny over salaries that are five months' overdue and poor rations.
1781	January	Further mutinies strike the Continental Army in Pennsylvania when local soldiers will not take orders from anyone but their state assembly.
	October	The British are forced to surrender at Yorktown after being surrounded by a combined French and American land army.
1783	February	The Treaty of Paris formally ends the Revolutionary War.
	March	A note sent anonymously to American officers encourages them to take action against Congress for unpaid salaries. The scandal becomes known as the Newburgh Conspiracy. Washington alleviates tensions by delivering an impassioned speech to discontented officers.

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1776

Map of the
ORIGINAL THIRTEEN
COLONIES

FAC-SIMILE OF THE FIRST

SETTLEMENT of the THIRTEEN COLONIES			POPULATION IN 1776.		TROOPS FURNISHED DURING THE REVOLUTION
1607	Virginia	by the English.	New Hampshire	102,720	12,497
1614	New Jersey	by the Dutch.	Massachusetts	268,746	67,907
1620	New York	by the Dutch.	Rhode Island	60,208	5,908
1620	Massachusetts	by the Puritans.	Connecticut	240,608	31,939
1624	New Hampshire	by the English.	New York	273,338	17,781
1627	Delaware	by the Swedes.	New Jersey	125,460	19,726
1633	Connecticut	by the English.	Pennsylvania	389,201	25,678
1634	Maryland	by the English Catholics.	Delaware	48,344	2,386
1636	Rhode Island	by Roger Williams.	Maryland	257,000	13,912
1663	North Carolina	by the English.	Virginia	567,196	26,678
1670	South Carolina	by the English.	North Carolina	320,165	7,263
1682	Pennsylvania	by Wm. Penn.	South Carolina	221,117	6,417
1732	Georgia	by James Oglethorpe.	Georgia	70,111	2,679
			Total	2,779,934	240,783

POPULATION OF CITIES IN 1776.

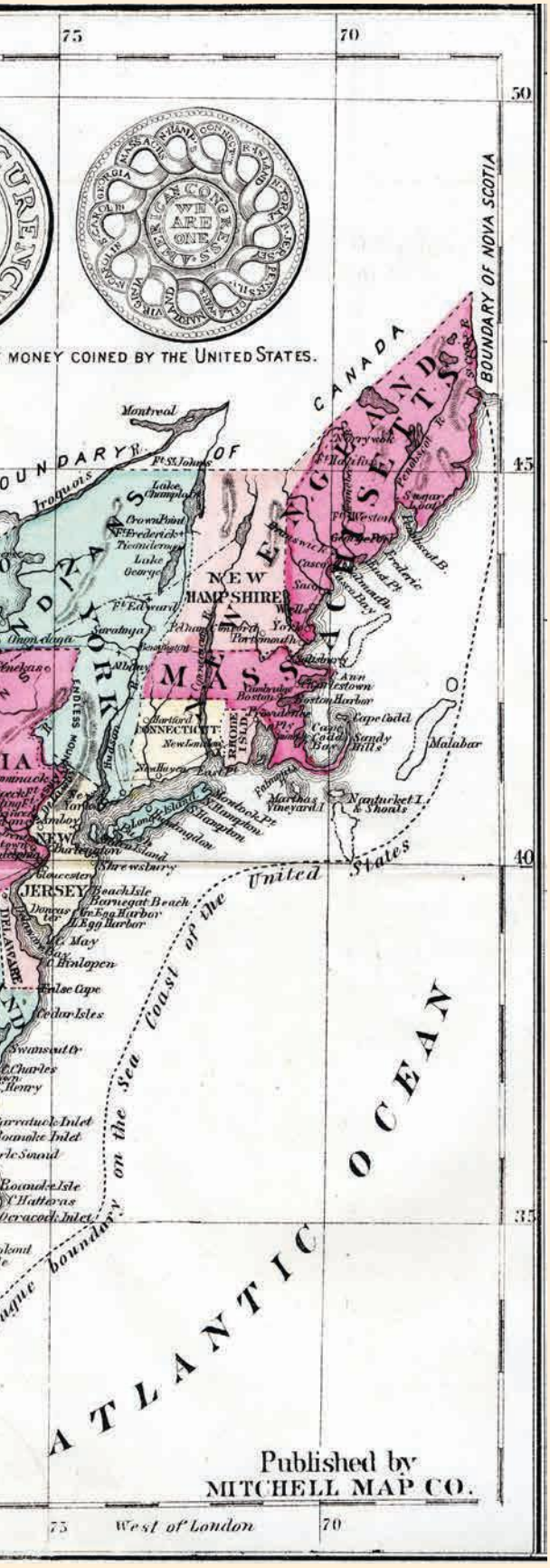
Philadelphia	21,767
New York	23,194
Richmond	1,800
Baltimore	6,140
Boston	17,200
Savannah	2,760
Charleston	2,000
Trenton	1,200
Concord	700
Hartford	2,000
Albany	2,907
Providence	4,140

IMPORTANT BATTLES OF THE REVOLUTION

Lexington	April 19th 1775.	Red Hook	Oct. 22nd	1777
Bunker Hill	June 17th 1775.	Monmouth	June 28th	1778
Flatlands	Aug. 27th 1776.	Rhode Island	Aug. 29th	1778.
White Plains	Aug. 28th 1776.	Briar Creek	Mar. 30th	1779
Trenton	Dec. 25th 1776	Stony Point	July 15th	1779
Princeton	Jan. 5th 1777.	Camden	Aug. 16th	1779
Hubbardstown	Aug. 17th 1777.	Kings Mountain	Oct. 1st	1780
Hennington	Aug. 16th 1777.	Cowpens	Jan. 17th	1781
Brandywine	Sep. 11th 1777.	Guilford C.H.	Mar. 15th	1781.
Stillwater	Sep. 17th 1777.	Bahkanks Hills	Apr. 25th	1781.
Germantown	Oct. 5th 1777.	Eutaw Springs	Sep. 8th	1781
Saratoga	Oct. 17th 1777.	Yorktown	Oct. 19th	1781

Estimated Population of the United States in 1876
43.000.000

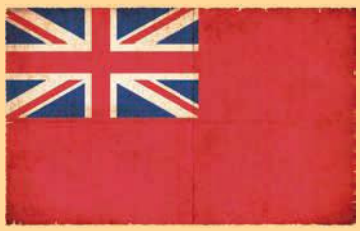
Source 6.1 *1776 Map of the Thirteen Original Colonies*, produced in 1876 to celebrate the centenary of the revolutionary events of 1776



American Revolutionary War by the numbers

American Colonies on the eve of war

2 165 076 British North American colonies' population in 1770



British Forces

133 000 troops comprised the British Forces at the height of the war

56 000	Regular British Troops
30 000	German Auxiliaries
13 000	Native-Americans
19 000	Loyalists

Continental Army

96 500 troops served in the Continental Army at the height of the war

35 000	Regular Army Soldiers
5000	Sailors
45 000	Militia
12 000	French

As many as **25 000** slaves and freed blacks fought on both sides of the war

Total Battles

1546 separate military engagements throughout the war

Washington

Led the Continental Army in **5** major battles,
but only **1** was a decisive victory – The Battle of Yorktown, 1781

The aftermath

At least **50 000** soldiers died during the war.

British Forces

24 000 died – **3500** in battle

1700 Loyalists died and

80 000 fled the colonies after the war

1200 German mercenaries died

Continental Army

25 000 died – **4435** in battle

10 000 were killed off from disease

18 000 Colonial soldiers were captured

10 000 of these prisoners died in captivity

Source 6.2 Based on figures from *The Journal of the American Revolution*, and *The Toll of Independence: Engagements and Battle Casualties of the American Revolution* by Howard H. Peckham, University of Chicago Press, 1974

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Cambridge University Press

6.1 How did the Americans win the war?

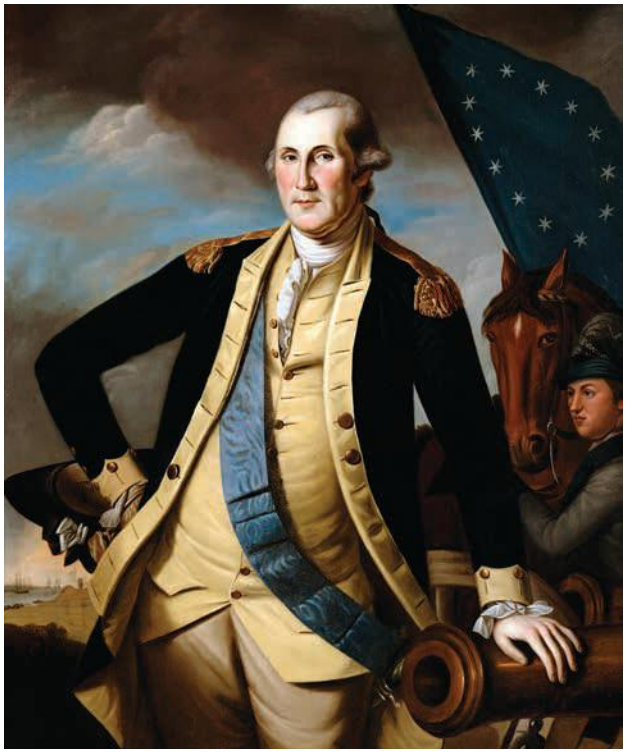
Why didn't British commanders follow up their victories?

This is an interesting question for you to ponder as you work through the events of this chapter. In the early battles of the War of Independence, British commanders still held a belief that a sharp military defeat to the colonists would somehow bring them to their senses and to the negotiating table. Essentially, the British authorities were reacting much as they had in the recent past. For example, in 1769 during the Spitalfield Riots in London, British soldiers fired on a group of protesting weavers, killing two and wounding four, but allowing the others to flee. We must remember, after all, that the Americans were British subjects both in name and (largely) in ethnicity; a savage pursuit to annihilate a beaten opponent (as would have happened in India or Continental Europe) was unthinkable. To say the least, this was a bad calculation.

A MATTER OF FACT

British reaction to Australia's own Eureka Stockade in 1854 followed a similar pattern: after an initial assault, with 22 attendant deaths – the remaining rebels were allowed to flee, with the British refraining from following up with aggressive pursuit and wholesale slaughter.

Just when I was despairing, we enjoyed a breakthrough. The brave soldier, Henry Knox of Boston, a former bookseller, arrived in our camp at Cambridge dragging along a battery of cannon he had captured from the British at Fort Ticonderoga. I acted quickly, and ordered them to be set up on the Dorchester Heights, to the south of Boston. I ordered that the guns be well protected with proper walls of earth. In one move, I had outmanoeuvred General Howe, for he suddenly realised, too late, that we could now easily fire upon the city from on high. By 17 March 1776, he had ordered his troops to abandon Boston, and we watched as his troops – and a force of Loyalists – boarded ships and sailed out of the harbour. The church bells rang out our victory across the Thirteen Colonies.



Source 6.3 *George Washington*, by Charles Willson Peale, circa 1780–82

George Washington: A bloodless victory, 1776

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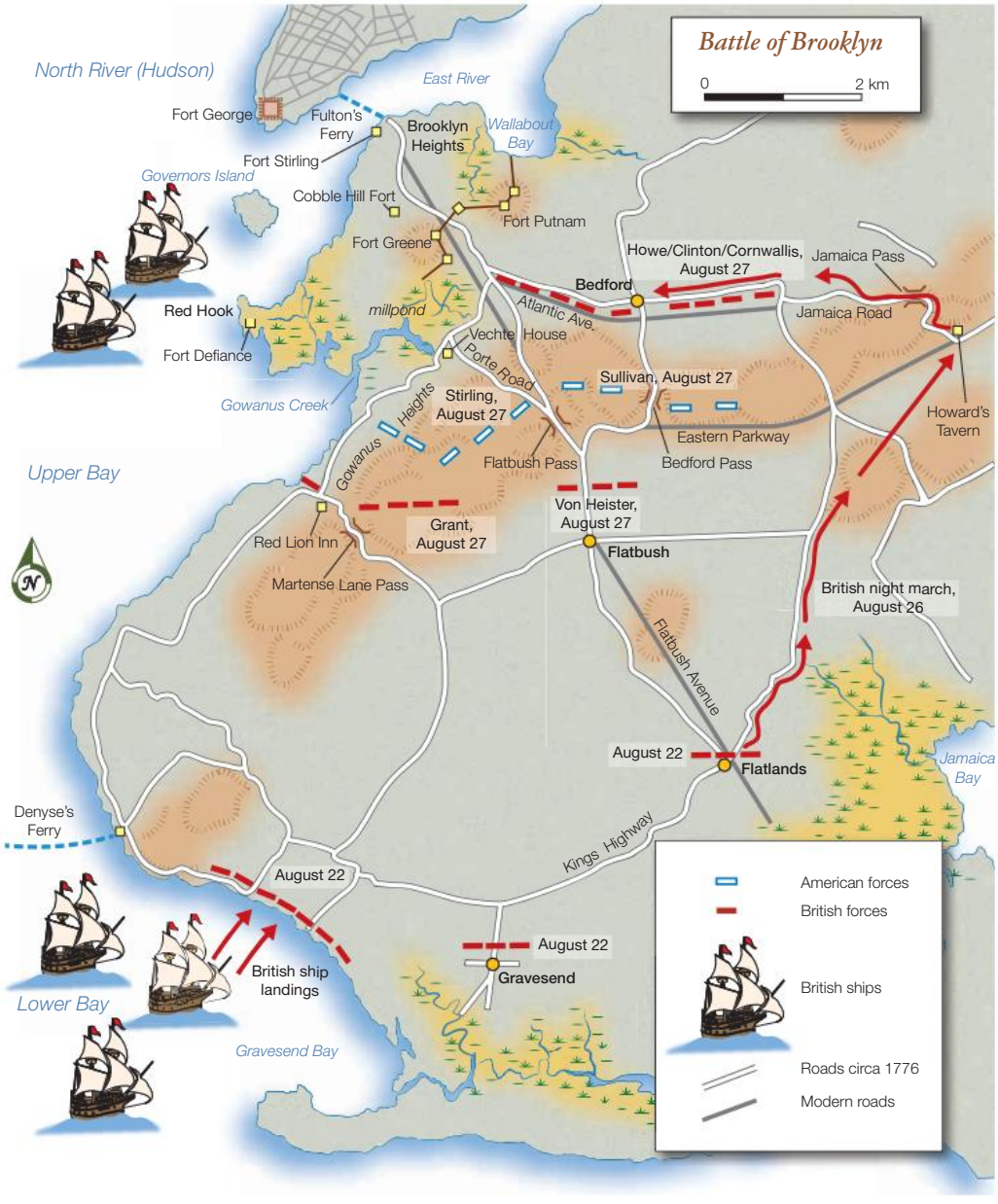
New York, 1776 – enter the Loyalists

The British left Boston by sea after being besieged there and moved to a city known for its Loyalist sympathies: New York. With the knowledge that the recently signed *Declaration of Independence* would become irrelevant without victory in the war, throughout the summer and into autumn British commanders attempted to destroy the Continental Army in a series of battles around New York. The British possessed superior military power, with 32,000 troops of whom one-quarter were the infamous German mercenaries known as **Hessians**. Arguably, Howe had the chance to end the Revolution at this point, and he resolved on a series of military actions in the greater New York area.

Hessians German soldiers who were in the paid employ of the British

Brooklyn Heights, 1776 – a missed opportunity



Source 6.4 A map of the site of the Battle of Brooklyn

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In August, 15 000 British troops marched from their base on Staten Island into battle at Brooklyn Heights, defeating Washington. Arguably, British General Howe could have pursued and destroyed the Continental Army and captured Washington; however, he refused to conduct an aggressive pursuit, wishing to limit the damage and bring the rebels to the negotiating table. In light of the opposition movement in Parliament at the time of the war, this was understandable, but ultimately fatal to the British cause.

Our enemy had retreated, but had by no means withdrawn. I foresaw that General Howe would use his vast naval power to deploy his troops, and would strike our least defensible point: New York. Worse, there was now no hope that we could, by military action, force Britain to compromise. By January, the worthy Englishman Thomas Paine had argued in *Common Sense* that there was no option but to separate from Britain. By June, Congress was drafting our assertion of our independence. I was now Commander in Chief in a formal war, and that with a mighty power.

I had moved my forces into New York in April, and waited. At the very moment our Congressmen were drafting our resolution towards independence, Howe's enormous fleet hove into sight off the shores of New York. On 2 July, he landed 32,000 men at Staten Island. This was not so much an attack as an invasion, and I knew we could not risk open battle, and had at all costs to avoid entrapment. The best solution would have been to put the town of New York to the torch, and leave the British with nothing but scorched earth, forcing them to withdraw. This being impractical, we were obliged to stay, knowing that this city could become a trap for my whole army.

Source 6.5 *Washington's Entry into New York*, by Currier and Ives, 1857

War now became a series of rapid moves, with our forces – a mere 20,000 men – ducking and weaving to avoid our foe. My army had become the fox, and Howes' men the hunting hounds. In August, Howes' men attacked New York, and bloodied us sorely at Brooklyn Heights, where we lost 200 dead and 1000 captured. I sent more regiments across the river from Manhattan to reinforce Brooklyn Heights, then realised that the British could trap us there. On the evening of 29 August, I took the very great risk of re-embarking my men in boats back to Manhattan. Had the British discovered us, this would have been the end of our army but, aided by darkness and a heavy fog, we escaped unnoticed. Now began a nervous game of cat-and-mouse. Howe pursued us to Manhattan; I withdrew to Harlem Heights. After a month of stalemate, Howe advanced again, and I fell back again. My rule was on all occasions to avoid a general action with this massive force. Later, I crossed the Hudson River onto the New Jersey shore; by the end of 1776 I was retreating across Pennsylvania. Morale was plummeting, enlistment was dropping and the Congress, fearful now for its own safety, must have doubted my appointment.

George Washington: Defending New York, 1776

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As a result, Washington was able to escape and keep the Continental Army together until December; abandoning one position after another to British forces, employing **Fabian tactics**, while Howe incorrectly continued to believe that Washington was on the verge of negotiating.

Fabian tactics named for Fabian the 'Delayer', a Roman politician and general who avoided battles with the famous Carthaginian general, Hannibal, due to the superiority of the Carthaginian enemy; British Americans were well read in ancient history, and Washington knowingly employed these tactics

6.2 British problems

The British Army in the 18th century was the most professional and experienced in the world. Having recently emerged victorious from the Seven Years' War it was confident, disciplined and well trained. However, there were problems:

- **Supplies** – the British military was fighting a war thousands of miles away from England (the 'tyranny of distance'). As a consequence, if supplies failed to reach them from Britain they needed to be taken from the American populace. In most cases they would be paid for, but undoubtedly looting occurred and the process was costly both financially and in terms of support from Americans.
- **Insurgent warfare** – while this is a term from the modern era, this campaign faced all the difficulties of a modern insurgency, the most obvious being: who is a Loyalist and who is a rebel?
- While the British Army was essentially trained to fight set-piece battles against European armies, the rebels generally avoided this, preferring to use the terrain and locality to their advantage as they had at Lexington-Concord, Bunker Hill and the Siege of Boston.
- In addition, many senior militia officers – and particularly Washington – had in-depth knowledge of British Army strengths and weaknesses, and generally employed tactics to exploit them. Washington had been involved in Braddock's disastrous expedition during the French and Indian War, where a superior force of Redcoats were defeated by a mixed French force of militia, regulars and First Nations allies. He knew the vaunted British Army was beatable.
- Given the nature of insurgent warfare, as long as there were organised forces opposing them, the occupying force (the British) was essentially losing. Therefore, all Washington had to do was keep the Continental Army in the field; he knew this and behaved accordingly.
- Consequently, any victories the British attained were basically just restoring control over a localised region. This tended to alienate American civilians (Loyalist, the unaligned and Patriots alike), due to the brutal behaviour of British soldiers: pillaging, looting and assaulting women. This in particular has strong parallels with the Vietnam War.
- In 1818, John Adams said, 'The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people'. By its very definition, a revolution or insurgency needs to win over the 'hearts and minds' of the populace. The very presence of British soldiers worked against this. The Americans were particularly obsessed with the presence of the Hessians. For some colonists, the use of German Hessian mercenaries against them was the final sign that George III was a tyrant. What monarch other than a tyrant would use foreigners against his own people?
- Lurid accounts of sexual assault by British soldiers (Hessians included) were rife in the colonies; reports had been received by Congress of assaults on girls as young as 13.

supplies resources such as food, water, clothing, bedding, ammunition and weapons

insurgent warfare a rebellion against an established authority, often armed and sometimes involving subterfuge or subversive tactics; similar to the term 'guerrilla warfare'

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You may … traffic and barter with every little pitiful German Prince, that sells and sends his subjects [Hessians] to the shambles of a foreign country; your efforts are for ever vain and impotent – doubly so from this mercenary aid on which you rely; for it irritates, to an incurable resentment, the minds of your enemies – to overrun them with the sordid sons of rapine and plunder.

William Pitt, Speech in the **House of Lords** in response to the 12th Earl of Suffolk Henry Howard's speech in favour of war against America's colonies, 18 November 1777

House of Lords the upper house of the British Parliament, made up of upper nobility and clergy whose membership is a hereditary privilege. Holds less power than the House of Commons, as members only have the power to comment on or delay Bills already passed by the House of Commons.

- Quite clearly, it wasn't just the colonists who were troubled by the use of German mercenaries. Although, undoubtedly, there was some exaggeration; however, armies of this period did have appalling reputations for rape and looting – and despite the British Army being the most disciplined in the world, incidents certainly occurred. Letters, broadsides and hearsay abounded among the American populace, Loyalist or otherwise, further eroding support for the British cause. This erosion was exacerbated by other factors:
  - Any British military failure, or particularly the inability to protect Loyalists from the attacks of Patriots, disheartened their supporters.
  - European support for the Americans against the British emerged as the campaign dragged on.
  - British soldiers were prone to desertion, fleeing a life of savage discipline and sudden death, and merging into the American populace.

A MATTER OF FACT

The most famous Hessian today is probably the Headless Horseman in Washington Irving's gothic tale The Legend of Sleepy Hollow. Hessians were named after the region of Hesse – which is now southwest Germany. German troops fought in every major battle of the Revolutionary War on the side of the British, and almost half of them settled in America after the war.

Source 6.6 An illustration of British Redcoats (left) and Hessian soldiers (right)

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ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 6.1: THE BRITISH OPPOSITION

As the War of Independence dragged on, the British Parliament became increasingly divided. Many saw it as an unjust war against their fellow countrymen. Prominent figures within this Whig movement were Edmund Burke and William Pitt (who later became prime minister). Both had repeatedly denounced British policy in the colonies during the days of the *Stamp Act* crisis of 1765. Below is an excerpt from a Pitt speech in the House of Lords:

Source 6.7 William Pitt, 1st Earl of Chatham, by Richard Brompton, 1772

You have ransacked every corner of Lower Saxony; but forty thousand German boors never can conquer ten times the number of British freemen. You may ravage – you cannot conquer; it is impossible: you cannot conquer the Americans. You talk, my Lords, of your friends among them to annihilate the Congress, and of your powerful forces to disperse their army: I might as well talk of driving them before me with this crutch! … If you conquer them, what then? You cannot make them respect you; you cannot make them wear your cloth: you will plant an invincible hatred in their breasts against you. Coming from the stock they do, they can never respect you.

William Pitt, Speech in the House of Lords, 30 May 1777

Quote sections of the extract to support your arguments when answering the following questions:

1 Who is Pitt referring to when he states 'You have ransacked every corner of Lower Saxony'?
2 What does Pitt imply will be the result of using 'German boors' in the American colonies?
3 What reasons does Pitt give as why 'you cannot conquer America'?
4 What system (covered in Part One of this text) is referred to when Pitt states 'you cannot make them wear your cloth?'
5 What is meant when Pitt states 'you will plant invincible hatred in their breasts against you. Coming from the stock they do …'?

Focus questions

1 To what extent did the presence of British soldiers, Hessian or otherwise, erode support for the British cause?
2 Why did British generals repeatedly fail to follow up early victories with an aggressive pursuit to destroy the Continental Army?

New Jersey, 1776

In late December 1776, Washington staged a series of daring and remarkable attacks on British forces that, although they were minor, had a profound effect on rebel morale and began the mythical transformation of Washington from failed Virginian Militia Commander and British Army reject to patriotic military hero and father of the United States.

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Crossing the Delaware and the battles of Trenton and Princeton, 1776–77

Focus questions

Read the full text of *American Crisis* online.

1 Why would Paine mention a 'summer soldier' or a 'sunshine patriot' at this particular time in a document written to inspire his readers? Describe his use of language.
2 Do you think Paine's words would have been inspirational to battle-weary soldiers?

Knowing that the Hessians would be celebrating Christmas – and basically drunk, homesick and full of food – on the night of 25 December 1776, Washington crossed the Delaware River with 2500 troops in preparation for a surprise attack on the Hessian forces at the town of Trenton. This famous event entered American mythology after it was commemorated in a mid-19th-century painting (see Source 6.10). As mentioned briefly in Chapter 4, Washington had Paine's *American Crisis* read aloud to the troops prior to the crossing, reminding them of the cause they were struggling for. Paine's pamphlet, written to inspire colonial troops, started with the words:

These are the times that try men's souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.

Thomas Paine, *American Crisis*, 1776

Washington sent John Honeyman on a reconnaissance mission into Trenton posing as a Tory. Honeyman's service at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in Quebec under Major General James Wolfe in September 1759 made it easy for him to pass as a convincing Tory, and he was able to relay to Washington the disposition and vulnerability of the Hessian troops.

The Hessian forces were utterly surprised by Washington's men and were unable to organise an effective defence, ultimately surrendering 1000 soldiers. Washington followed this up by repulsing a British counter-attack at Trenton on 2 January 1777, and on the following day defeated a small garrison of 1200 men at the nearby town of Princeton with a force of 4500 men, although at the cost of Brigadier General Hugh Mercer (see Source 6.8). With several defeats in the space of three days, the British withdrew from New Jersey.

Although these engagements were not strategically significant, they increased enlistments and consolidated Washington's position as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army. They also demonstrated to the Americans that under the right circumstances they could stand up to the British Army.

Ultimately, the British occupation of the greater New York area was more damaging than the military setbacks they suffered because of the brutality of British and Hessian troops. In an attempt to ameliorate the effect their troops were having on civilians, British officers decided to arm Loyalists, on the assumption that they would surely treat their countrymen better than the British forces. While good in theory, it backfired spectacularly; armed and with the support of the British Army, Loyalists took over much of the war effort in the lower Hudson Valley. They acted with as much or even more brutality than the British and the Hessians, settling old scores with neighbours.

Focus question

Did the British plan of arming Loyalists work?

Essentially, the brutal behaviour of British, Hessian and Loyalist troops in this region established a pattern that would continue throughout the war. By furthering the political education of the populace, converting both Loyalist and neutral civilians into Patriots, they effectively played into the hands of the Patriot cause.

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Source 6.8 *The Death of General Mercer at the Battle of Princeton*, by John Trumbull, circa 1789–1831

We were saved in New York only because General Howe did not pursue us as he might have done, and in December 1776 he withdrew his army altogether to winter quarters. The situation could not have been worse, so I determined on a desperate surprise attack on 25 December.

With a force of just 2400 determined men, we crossed the Delaware River and launched a surprise attack on Howe's mercenary Hessian troops who were camped at Trenton. Not expecting an attack on Christmas Day, they lost 30 dead and 900 captured, while we suffered only four wounded casualties. Then our game of fox-and-hounds resumed: the British General Cornwallis sent out a party of 8000 troops to capture my force, but we foiled him by the ruse of leaving our campfires burning at night while we slipped out of camp.

By January 1777, I had withdrawn my own army to quarters in New Jersey to sit out the long winter.

Source 6.9 *General George Washington at Trenton*, by John Trumbull, 1792

George Washington: Trenton, 1776

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ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 6.2: VISUAL ANALYSIS

Source 6.10 *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, by Emanuel Leutze, 1851

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Examine Source 6.10 and answer the following questions:

1. Can you identify any elements that suggest revolutionary ideals?
2. How does the artist represent the importance of Washington's leadership?
3. Using the representation and your own knowledge, explain the events leading up to the crossing of the Delaware and the significance of this event.
4. How has the artist depicted and implied that the crossing was not easy?

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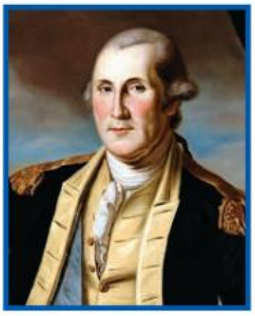
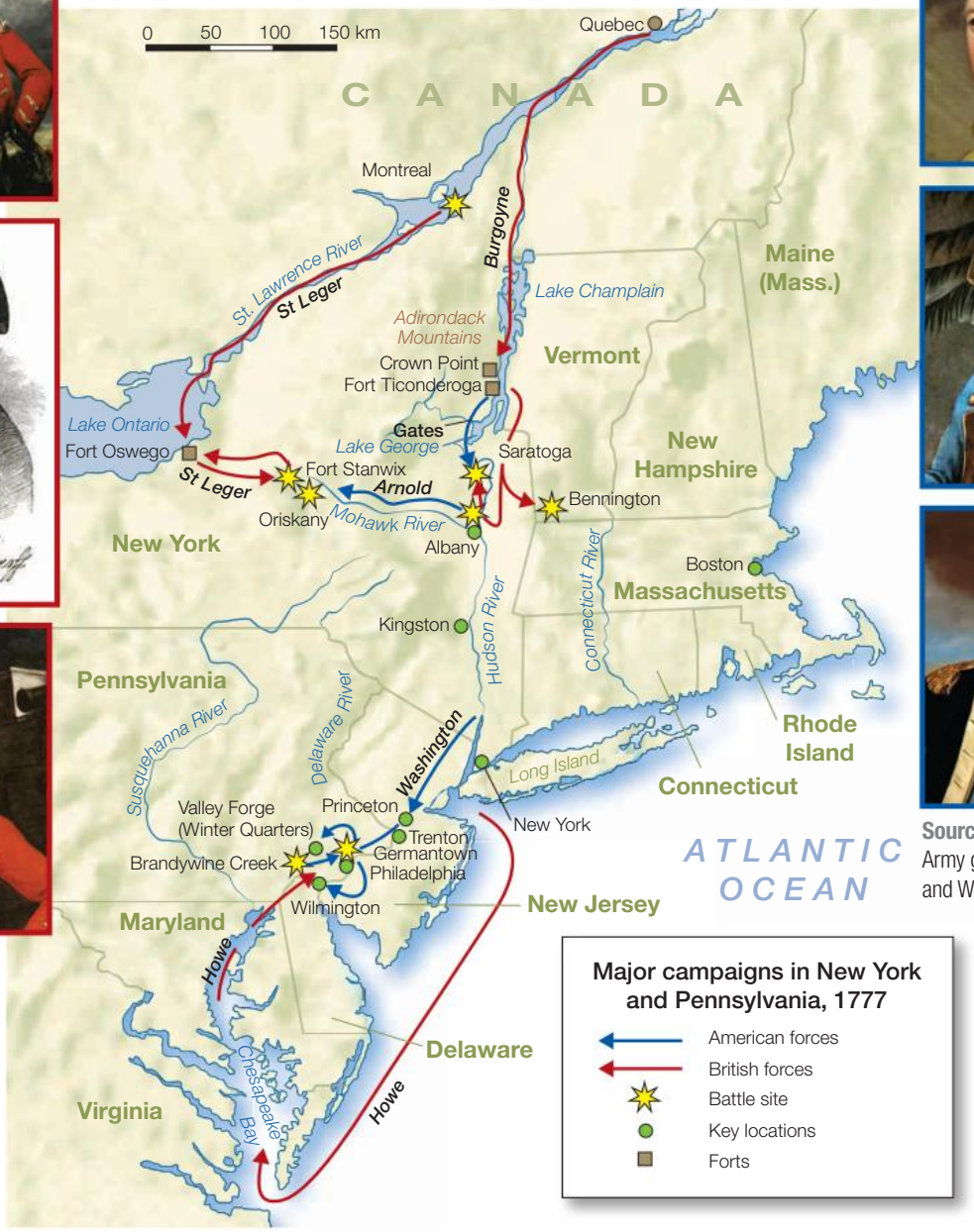
Saratoga, 1777 – the tide turns against the British

Source 6.11 British generals Burgoyne, St Leger and Howe



Source 6.12 Continental Army generals Gates, Arnold and Washington



Source 6.13 A map of the major campaigns in New York and Pennsylvania, 1777

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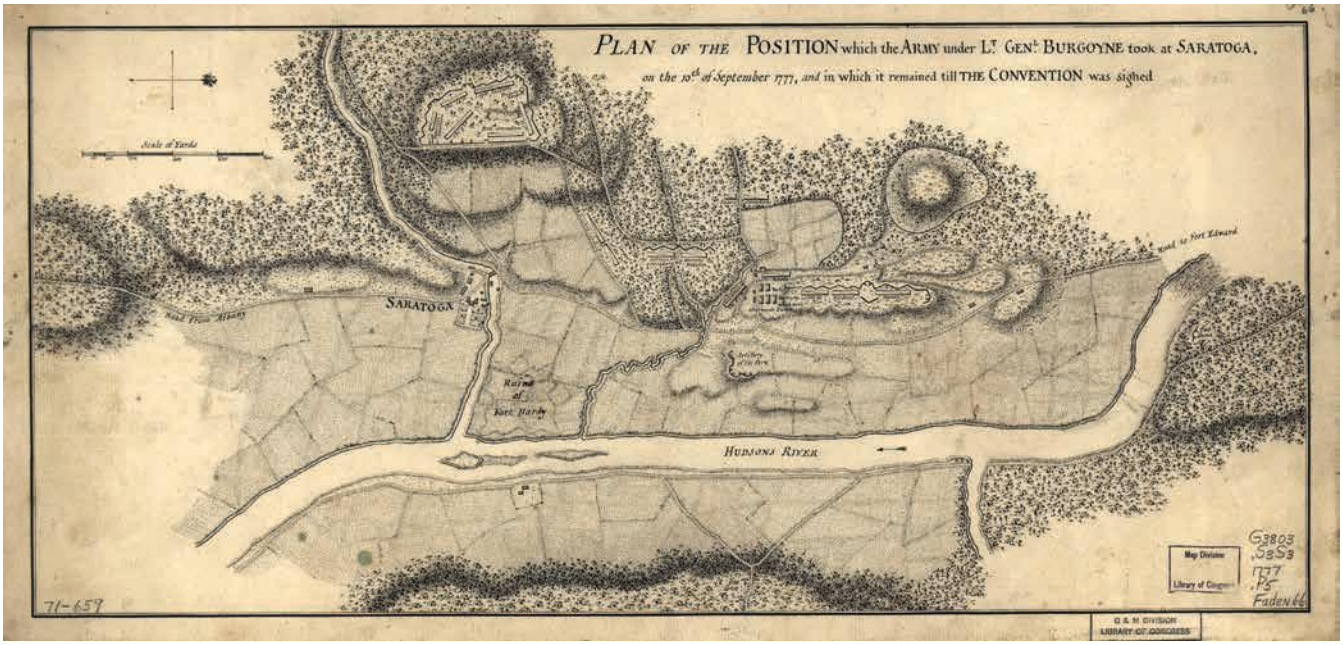
Following Washington's victories in New Jersey in 1776–77, the British changed tack and General Howe planned a two-pronged campaign. A British force of 7700 would attack south from Canada – from the region of Lake Champlain to the Hudson River – under the command of General John Burgoyne, with the aim of taking the city of New York. Simultaneously, a British force would move up from the south, taking Philadelphia before marching into New York (see Source 6.13).

Howe's ultimate plan was for Burgoyne to cut New England off from New Jersey, thus dividing the resistance; however, British commanders, used to fighting in European theatres, failed to realise the difficulties they faced travelling through the wilderness of the area. Burgoyne's force was famously weighed down by camp followers and a somewhat ridiculous baggage train full of luxuries to keep the senior officers entertained (a senior Hessian officer even brought his wife on the campaign). Although this approach was fairly common in European campaigns, it proved disastrous in the swamp and woodland terrain of New England. In particular, their red uniforms made them ideal targets for shadowing American militia men, and by the time Burgoyne reached Saratoga (see Source 6.14) his men were exhausted, with their numbers severely depleted. Further, like Bunker Hill, the British executed a plan that assumed the American Patriots would flee or break in the face of the Redcoats. It is doubtful whether British commanders would have behaved in the same way against a European foe, such as France.



Source 6.14 A map of the battle of Saratoga

A MATTER OF FACT

The Battles of Saratoga were two closely related engagements in September and October 1777. The first was the Battle of Freeman's Farm and the second was the Battle of Bemis Heights. These victories for the Continental Army are often called the turning point of the war in favour of the Americans.

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ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 6.3: VISUAL ANALYSIS

satire the use of humour, irony or ridicule to criticise people or their behaviour

The squirrel: The squirrel up the top of the Liberty Tree throwing paper money down to the Congress is a clever satire, but needs some historical context. The Continental Congress issued paper money after 1775 (called the Continental currency), but the policy on issuing currency was a disaster. Having almost no experience in monetary policy, as well as a desperate need for cash, the Congress ended up printing way too much. Furthermore, individual colonies were not financially regulated and they issued their own money as well. And even the British created counterfeits with their superior press technology and circulated it. So you had hyperinflation, which brought the value down very quickly. And given the perception that America might lose the war, lots of people didn't want to

The eagle: The eagle doesn't refer to America as we know it today – it actually refers to the Imperial Eagle of the Holy Roman Empire, which represents the Germans/ Hessians employed by the British.

The snake: The American 'independence' is a snake and evidently uncouth and unreliable – an association you could probably make in 1777 but not in today's world.

The 'Baboon King': Some historical context: according to historian John Arbuthnot, in English political satire of the 18th century, Frenchmen were referred to as monkeys, 'because of his chattering nature and scrawny physique'. By the end of the century, the derogatory label 'frog' had developed in its place. Who is the Baboon King?

Original in the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University

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take Congress-backed money anyway (since it might be worthless in a few years) and preferred gold, silver or pounds sterling. All this caused a lot of instability and hardship in the economy. Often soldiers were being paid in Continentals, only to return from duty and find that their cash was worth only a fraction of its face value in towns and cities. 'Not worth a continental' became a popular saying. This squirrel dropping money was put in the cartoon deliberately to appeal to colonists – it was easily one of the most unpopular issues for the Continental Congress. It was also fairly damaging for the Congress' reputation in foreign financial circles too (from whom they were trying to borrow to finance the war). So liberty is being associated with irresponsibility and uncertainty.

Study Source 6.15 and answer the following questions:

1. Explain the viewpoint suggested by the representation (including its accompanying text). Is the creator for or against the Revolution? Why?
2. Referring to elements from the representation, what sort of symbols can you identify in the image, and what/who do they represent?
3. How does the naming and selection of animals reflect the creator's political point of view?
4. Using elements from the representation and your own knowledge, how does the representation reflect events from the time in which it was created?

The armadillo: Washington as an armadillo is quite interesting, and possibly a comment on his Fabian tactics in the early years of the war, hiding and attacking at opportune moments, avoiding open battle with the British.

Source 6.15 This example provides excellent insight into some of the symbolism of the era whose meaning will soon change. *The Flight of the Congress*, Anonymous, London, 1777.

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After two battles, and a failure to be relieved by British General Clinton, Burgoyne surrendered his remaining forces.

Essentially, the campaign was beyond the capability of 18th-century armies. The British moved too slowly; although Howe made it to Philadelphia, he took so long that he could not aid Burgoyne in the north. His mistake in approaching Philadelphia via Chesapeake rather than the Delaware demonstrated the immense advantage that Washington possessed in being familiar with the land. This action allowed Washington time to organise his troops, resulting in delaying actions of the British forces at Brandywine and Germantown. Ultimately, although Howe defeated Washington, and in spite of some innovative tactics at Germantown, he was disastrously late in taking Philadelphia, which resulted in the failure of the larger campaign.

Consequences in Europe and Asia

At this time Benjamin Franklin was on a diplomatic mission to France on behalf of Congress, and the American military success at Saratoga convinced the French King Louis XVI to enter into an alliance

A MATTER OF FACT

Benjamin Franklin was notoriously fond of women. His friendship with influential women in France, such as Countess d'Houdetot (who supported the American cause) and Duchess de La Rochefoucauld (who enjoyed talking politics with Franklin), gave him an introduction and credibility into the French Court during his diplomatic mission. In France he embodied the 'American Spirit' and was tremendously popular. This 'spirit' would later emerge in France during their own revolution.

Source 6.16 *Franklin's reception at the court of France, 1776*, by John Smith, circa 1869

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and trade agreement with the Americans in 1778. Spain, an ally of France, soon pledged its support for the United States (1789), followed by the Dutch and the Sultanate of Mysore in India (both 1780). In addition, other European nations distanced themselves from the British. Congress had hoped that the French would be eager to avenge themselves on the British after the Seven Years' War, and this proved to be the case. Further, Saratoga settled French fears about the potential of the colonists to defeat the British following the loss of the American capital of Philadelphia. The success at Saratoga, and the enlistment of the European powers in what was to become a global conflict against the British, turned the tide of the conflict, both in America and internationally. In the coming years, the American theatre of war would almost become of secondary importance to the larger battle between the European powers.

Valley Forge 1777–78 – Washington's leadership

Despite the modern realisation that Saratoga was the turning point in the war, this was not clear to the Americans at the time. With their capital, Philadelphia, under the control of the British, Congress fled so that it could continue to operate. The most important city in British America was now occupied by British soldiers, whose presence nearly doubled the population. Meanwhile, in spite of his able handling of the Continental Army, Washington was soon in trouble after he established his winter camp in late December 1778 at Valley Forge.

Conditions in the camp were appalling for the soldiers; basic necessities such as food, clothing and shelter were lacking. Further, many men's enlistments were ending. These conditions and lack of pay for the Continental Army exposed the frailties of the Articles of Confederation (see Chapter 7). In fact, the only item sent by a member of Congress, John Hancock, was a barrel of salted fish for Washington's personal consumption. However, with the arrival of Prussian commander Baron Von Steuben, and his training of the American soldiers as professionals, Washington and the American cause received a substantial boost. Ultimately, the struggles of Washington and his men became another chapter in the American creation myth.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 6.4: VISUAL ANALYSIS

Source 6.17 Washington at Valley Forge

Study Source 6.17 and answer the following questions:

1. What is the significance of the flag in the background?
2. Which elements of the image suggest Washington's leadership was important at Valley Forge?
3. How does the artist depict the difficulties encountered at Valley Forge?
4. Using elements from the representation and your own knowledge, identify the events leading up to the Valley Forge campaign in 1778.

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The year 1777 took us to the greatest depths of discouragement – even despair. During the summer, General Howe captured Philadelphia, a strategic victory because he now held a major port; and a symbolic victory, because he had captured the home of our Continental Congress. Howe now threw a force of 15,000 men against us, creating bloody encounters at Brandywine and Germantown. As this disastrous year drew to a close, and winter set in, I searched for a camp. My generals suggested several suitable cities, such as Wilmington, but the Congressmen insisted on Valley Forge, to the northwest of Philadelphia. With a heavy heart, I gave in to the Congress.

In doing so, I put myself in the worst possible position that any Commander in Chief could suffer: that of not being able to provide adequately for the men in my care. Logistically, Valley Forge was any army's nightmare: open, wind-swept paddocks with no housing at all. We would need to build, from the ground up, log cabin huts for 14,000 men and stables for 2000 horses. We would have to construct hospitals, toilets, cattle enclosures and barns. Using log-cabin construction, a temporary city rose from the prairie, with 12 soldiers living in a hut a few metres wide and long. It became, at that time, the fourth biggest city in the country. Despite this bold start, it also rapidly became a prolonged disaster that tried men's souls and very nearly destroyed our army.

Source 6.18 *Washington and Lafayette at Valley Forge*, by Alonzo Chappel, 1857

The horror of Valley Forge was not caused by Mother Nature: that winter was milder than some, and certain days were even quite fine, although there were also six severe snowstorms. My men suffered instead from human weakness and stupidity. My army had not been paid for two months. The urgently needed supply of planks of wood to build huts did not arrive. We tried to cut down trees, but did not even have enough axes. Many men had to camp in canvas tents, amid winter snowstorms. Nor could we even build simple pit-toilets, because the ground was frozen, and our poor tools could not cut into the earth. The men urinated and defecated wherever they could. The only water supply was the muddy rivers in the area. There was no rubbish collection, so the streets were full of rotting refuse, and rats were everywhere. The promised supplies of fresh clothing never arrived, and I gazed in despair at my ragged men and half-naked soldiers.

Naturally, in these conditions, men sickened. The few hospitals in the area were already full of wounded men from the battles at Brandywine and Germantown, but now they were joined by new casualties far more serious than those caused by the British: our own Congress and army did this to my men.

George Washington: Disaster at Valley Forge, 1777–78

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For those admitted, they were put in a filthy bed. When they died, they were carried out and another patient laid in their place. In some cases, men sick with typhus and dysentery were turned away and told to make their own arrangements. These men then had to walk for miles from farm to farm, begging the owner to take them in and let them recover in a spare room. Those who failed, died. Many more contracted bronchitis, which turned to pneumonia. Others, unable to wash, contracted the itching disease of scabies. Worse still, the wounded and the sick were not separated. Soldiers who came in with a simple gunshot wound that could have been treated were placed among patients suffering typhus, and caught that disease from them and died.

Source 6.19 An engraving of Washington visiting wounded soldiers at Valley Forge

In a desperate letter to the President of the Continental Congress on December 23rd, 1777, I was moved to write: 'I am now convinced, beyond a doubt that unless some great and capital change suddenly takes place … this Army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things. Starve, dissolve, or disperse, in order to obtain subsistence in the best manner they can; rest assured Sir this is not an exaggerated picture …'

Disorder was turning into disaster. I hastily ordered my doctors to take over any large building – even barns, stables, court houses and general stores – and to convert them into hospitals. Still illness and death stalked the ranks of my army, and the carts continued to arrive, bringing sick men in their dozens. I ordered the construction of 12 temporary clinics for immediate care, to take the pressure off the hospitals. Still the tide of illness rose. Later, smallpox broke out, and while my existing troops had been inoculated, many new recruits arriving had not been protected. No wonder that one of my doctors suggested, in despair, that the easiest way to defeat the British would be to make them walk through Valley Forge, where illness and disease would kill them all in one stroke.

I now discovered that, of my 60 doctors, 12 had mistakenly been given leave at once, while another 12 had succumbed to the same illnesses as their patients. I mustered all my energy, recalled the doctors, ordered pits to be dug for rubbish and dead animals, ordered my troops to bathe regularly, and ordered new supplies of food and clothing. I even sent out an order that urinating on the ground instead of at a toilet would be punishable by death.

By the end of the winter, my army had been ravaged. Of 10,200 soldiers, only 3300 were well enough to fight. Being sent to a hospital was a death sentence: of all the soldiers sent to hospital, between 30% and 50% died. I wept when I received letters from soldiers humbly asking permission to be allowed to go home so they could at least die among their loved ones. By the end of it all, I had lost 2500 troops, amounting to one-sixth of my army.

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6.3 American problems

When Washington took over American forces in New England in 1776, there was no regular force but rather a series of rag-tag militia groups. Even though Congress had legislated to create a Continental Army to stand up to the British Regular Army, it was up to Washington to create it from militia men, urban workers, farmers, artisans and boys. This was a difficult undertaking for many reasons:

- Hardly any of the rank and file had experience from the French and Indian War.
- There was a lack of weapons and ammunition.
- The republican mood of the Revolution was not conducive to military discipline.
- There was a shortage of experienced officers to lead the men.
- Cultural divisions existed in the army, particularly between New Englanders and Southerners.
- Enlistments were slow because of fear, a lack of interest and colonial opposition to standing armies.
- Washington had to conduct an ongoing battle with Congress for weapons, clothing and food.

Given these constraints, the Patriot cause relied even more heavily upon Washington's leadership.

A MATTER OF FACT

Von Steuben arrived at Valley Forge on 23 February 1778, and reported for duty as a volunteer. On General Washington's recommendation, Congress appointed him Inspector General of the Army soon after. The Prussian quickly whipped the Continental Army into a professional fighting force, and his training program and procedures became standards for the American military well into the 19th century.

Source 6.20 Baron von Steuben drilling Continental Army recruits at Valley Forge in 1778. Painting by Edwin Austin Abbey, 1911.

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A MATTER OF FACT

Legend has it that at the Battle of Monmouth the wife of artilleryman William Hays, Mary Ludwig Hayes McCauly, heroically carried water to cool both the cannon and the soldiers in her husband's battery—hence the nickname "Molly Pitcher." Patriotic legend also asserts that when William Hays collapsed or was wounded, she took her husband's place in the gun crew for the rest of the battle.

Source 6.21 *The women of '76: 'Molly Pitcher' the heroine of Monmouth*, by Currier & Ives, hand-coloured lithograph from 1856

The Continental Army gained some new hope in October 1777 when our continental army routed General Burgoyne's troops at Saratoga, proving that we continentals could defeat a professional British force. This in turn reassured the French that we were likely to win our battle for Liberty. In February 1778, we heard that France had signed a formal alliance with the Thirteen Colonies to provide money and weapons to our cause. A number of French officers, as ardent for the cause of Liberty as we were, had already volunteered. Foremost among these was the Marquis de Lafayette, who became a lifelong friend to me.

Source 6.22 *Surrender of General Burgoyne*, by John Trumbull, 1822

By June, we had quit the dreadful fields of Valley Forge, and marched on Philadelphia, which we re-occupied after the departure of the British. We pursued them towards New York, and engaged them at Monmouth, where we drove them from the battlefield. Hardened by the experience of Valley Forge, and more methodical thanks to the drill exercises of the Baron Friedrich von Steuben during the stay at Valley Forge, my men were now determined to expel the British from our lands.

George Washington: New hope, 1778

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6.4 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
George Washington (Part 2)

Commander in Chief and President (1776–1789)

Much of what needs to be said of Washington from 1776 is covered throughout the discourse of his military campaigns; however, most significantly he was the founder and builder of the Continental Army. After arriving in Massachusetts, he decided to base the army on the Massachusetts Militia, as they had the most experience fighting the British at the Battle of Lexington-Concord, the Siege of Boston and the Battle of Bunker Hill.

> *My brave fellows, you have done all I asked you to do, and more than can be reasonably expected; but your country is at stake, your wives, your houses and all that you hold dear. You have worn yourselves out with fatigues and hardships, but we know not how to spare you. If you will consent to stay one month longer, you will render that service to the cause of liberty, and to your country, which you probably can never do under any other circumstances.*
>
> George Washington, trying to get his men to re-enlist, 31 December 1776

Source 6.23 George Washington at around age 65, by Gilbert Stuart, circa 1797

Washington actively used patriotism, nationalism and political ideology to inspire and motivate his men. His use of Paine's *American Crisis* at Valley Forge and his speeches to his men entered into the mythology of the nation. He came to embody the revolutionary spirit as his actions captured the hearts and minds of the American Patriot cause. During his campaigns around New York and New Jersey 1776, he employed 'Fabian tactics', realising that to meet the British Army in open battle would be disastrous. His actions definitively saved the army and the Revolution.

He realised early on the necessity to train the Continental Army properly:

> *To expect … the same service from raw and undisciplined recruits, as from veteran soldiers, is to expect what never did and perhaps never will happen. Men, who are familiarized to danger, meet it without shrinking; whereas troops unused to service often apprehend danger where no danger is.*
>
> George Washington, Letter to the President of Congress, 9 February 1776

At Valley Forge in 1778, the Prussian commander, Baron von Steuben, brought much-needed European discipline, which held them in good stead for the remainder of the war.

Washington's friendship with the Marquis de Lafayette aided in the French Alliance. The support of French forces on land and sea (for example, the naval Battle of Chesapeake in 1781) facilitated Washington's victory, which effectively ended the war (see Section 6.5).

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Using another classical example, he followed the Roman senator **Cincinnatus** in laying down his military command and returning to civilian life after the war, thus providing an example for future generations – and embodying the Enlightenment ideal of the **separation of powers**; that is, the military must remain distinct and under the control of an elected government. Washington also 'talked down' the conspirators at Newburgh in 1783 (see Section 7.6).

Cincinnatus (519–430 BCE) a Roman aristocrat and statesman who served as consul in 460 BCE and dictator in 458 and 439 BCE; he became a model of civic virtue primarily because he lay down military command and returned to civilian life after he served his term as dictator

separation of powers a fundamental principle of the United States Constitution, whereby powers and responsibilities are divided among the legislative, executive and judicial branches

Source 6.24 *George Washington with his family*, by Edward Savage, circa 1789–1796

Source 6.25 An older President Washington, by Gilbert Stuart, circa 1795–1796

Finally, after his retirement, and in the midst of the troubles of the 1780s (due to the flawed nature of the Articles of Confederation, under whose incompetence he had suffered at Valley Forge), he attended the Philadelphia Convention 1787 at the request of friends. He was elected chairman of the convention; he presided over discussion rather then led it, although the wide support he enjoyed from the states due to his reputation allowed him to be an effective chairman. He fully supported the Constitution, becoming one of the most prominent and influential **Federalists**. The fact that he was a Virginian was a powerful motivator for the Southern states to eventually ratify the Constitution. The office of president of the new union was literally created with him in mind. He was inaugurated as the first President of the United States of America in 1789.

Federalist a person who supports federalism, which is a system of government in which power is divided between both a federal/national government and regional/state governments

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We achieved some real victories – such as the Battle of Monmouth in June 1778 – and had seen General Howe forced to leave the field, to be replaced by General Clinton. But in May 1780, the British made a new effort, captured Charleston and began making Georgia into a British stronghold. In the same year, General Cornwallis began a campaign to secure North and South Carolina for the British, then invaded Virginia, and almost captured Thomas Jefferson.

Meanwhile, my own army was falling apart, largely because our Congress still could not organise to pay them what was owed. There was talk that there was a conspiracy against me among the Congressmen. My dear wife Martha joined me and was shocked to find the troops in such a discontented and rebellious state, with desertion very common. Then, in January 1781, my worst fears were realised: the Pennsylvanian and New Jersey troops erupted into open mutiny. Even my loyal aides – Sullivan, Morgan and Hamilton – deserted me. I was also sickened by the treason of Benedict Arnold, who went over to serve the British.

Source 6.26 *George Washington* (detail), by Charles Willson Peale, 1776

By April, I judged that we were at the end of our tether …

George Washington: 'We are at the end of our tether', 1781

A MATTER OF FACT

Benedict Arnold was one of Washington's most capable generals in the Continental Army. His name is now synonymous with betrayal and treachery in the United States – as he deliberately accepted money to join the British Army in 1780, and fled to England after the war.

6.5 The world turned upside down

Yorktown, 1778–83

Defeat, limited success and missed opportunities in the North caused the British to change tack. The decision was made to transfer the campaign to the South to take advantage of the presence of far greater numbers of Loyalists than in either New England or the mid-Atlantic region. Southern Loyalists had travelled to Britain to inform the government that the King's forces would fare better in the South.

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Source 6.27 *The surrender of Lord Cornwallis*, by John Trumbull, 1820

General Clinton left New York on 26 December 1779 for Charleston. The British captured the most important city in the South, taking 5000 Continental soldiers prisoners. The British believed this would draw Loyalists to their cause and turn the tide of the war. For a while it did; from 1779 to 1781 the British won a series of victories – Savannah in 1778, Waxhaws in 1780 (with the aid of an exceptionally brutal Loyalist Commander Banastre Tarleton) and Guilford Court House in 1781 – while still holding strategic points in the North.

However, while the assumption of command by Lord Cornwallis worked well militarily, in terms of winning over the populace (which was the key in this insurgent-style war) he failed completely. Unlike his predecessors, such as Howe, Cornwallis was willing to 'unleash the dogs of war'. He was far more prone to allow his troops to loot and pillage, shell towns and demand food from the populace.

In addition, Lord Dunmore had previously offered freedom to slaves if they fought for the British; this increasingly lost the support of the ruling elite of the South, who all owned slaves. Finally, in seeking to bring together British troops, Cornwallis ran across a massive Continental Army of 17,000 men, boosted by recently arrived French troops under Washington. Cornwallis was forced back to Yorktown. Even then, it was only the temporary blocking of naval supplies by the French fleet that compelled Cornwallis to surrender (see Source 6.27). The war continued on a small scale in the North, but the loss at Yorktown – in concert with the entry of foreign powers to what effectively was now a global conflict for the British – meant that the war effectively was over. Loyalists began leaving for Canada and Britain.

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Source 6.28 *Siège de Yorktown*, by Auguste Couder, 1836. Rochambeau and Washington give their last orders before the battle.

This was a time to make a decisive move. I had a force of 5000 Continental troops, strengthened by the same number of French soldiers commanded by De Rochambeau, with the promise of 3000 more French troops coming by sea. It occurred to me that, if our French and American troops could attack by land, and Admiral de Grasse's ships could attack by sea, we might be able to overcome the British forces at Yorktown in Virginia. Using complete secrecy, I ordered our troops to march, but told them nothing of their destination. We played a game of deceit, even building a fortress in New Jersey to give the impression we were gathering there to launch an attack. By the time we reached Yorktown in October 1781, I had 17,000 men at my command and a good battery of artillery. We surrounded the city, made heavy fire upon the British defences, and forced the British to ask for a truce. This was the master blow we needed. The British generals now feared our combined American and French army. Sensing victory, local men now flocked to join our army whenever we marched. In Britain, by contrast, the people lost faith in the government of Lord North, which fell from power. As the new government in London took up the reins of power, they were already considering the terms of a peace treaty. As I watched the British Redcoats humbly hand in their muskets – and hand over the sword of General Clinton, who lacked the courage to attend the formal surrender – I reflected on the six hard years of struggle, and noted in my journal: 'Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth.'

George Washington: Victory at Yorktown, 1781

ISBN 978-1-107-50647-3

The story so far

- When the war began, British commanders made poor calculations by initiating attacks in the hope of securing a harsh military defeat of the colonies. Due to its reputation as having a more Loyalist population, New York became the new destination for the British Army, which launched attacks in the surrounding area; however, the army suffered problems such as short supplies, territorial disadvantage and enemy knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses.
- Washington's successes in New Jersey in 1776 helped to establish him as a patriotic father and eventual President of the United States. Despite the successes of the British Army, their brutality only helped the Patriots' cause.
- The British plan to divide the resistance in 1777 failed at Saratoga due to the difficult terrain, the weight of their baggage, their slow speed and the red uniforms of the troops making them ideal targets for the harassing militia forces.
- Despite what we know now about the importance of Valley Forge (1778), at the time the awful conditions meant a hard struggle and heavy casualties for the American troops.
- After experiencing limited success in the North, the British decided to concentrate on the South in the hope of more victories due to the higher concentration of Loyalist forces. This was unsuccessful and the loss of Yorktown, combined with the entry by foreign powers into an international campaign against the British, effectively ended the War of Independence.

CHAPTER REVIEW

DEVELOPING CLEAR DEFINITIONS

Write explanations defining each of the following:

Significant ideas and events	Significant individuals
Loyalism	George Washington
Fabian tactics	General William Howe
Patriotism	General John Burgoyne
Strategy	Benjamin Franklin
Battles of Saratoga (1777)	William Pitt
Valley Forge (1778)	Lord Cornwallis
Siege of Yorktown (1781)	Baron von Steuben
	De Rochambeau
	King Louis XVI

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PRACTISING PARAGRAPH ANSWERS

1 Who were Patriots and who were Loyalists during the Revolutionary War?

2 What was the main effect on British Americans of British troops campaigning in the colonies?

3 Why was the Battle of Saratoga so important?

4 What were the difficulties that faced British forces in the Americas?

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1 'Without George Washington's leadership the cause of the United States would have been lost.' Discuss this view, providing evidence for your own evaluation of the importance of George Washington, his conduct of the war and his success against the British.

2 'I know that the conquest of English America is an impossibility. You cannot, I venture to say it, you CANNOT conquer America … As to conquest, therefore, my Lords, I repeat, it is impossible' (William Pitt, 1777). Discuss the reasons why the British did not win the War of Independence.

READING MORE DEEPLY

Easy

Chernow, R., *Washington: A Life*, Penguin Press, New York, 2010.

Moderate

Bouton, T., 'The Trials of Confederation', in E. Gray & J. Kamensky, Eds, *The Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, pp. 370–87.

Challenging

Fischer. D.H., *Washington's Crossing,* Pivotal Moments in American History, New York, Oxford University Press, 2004.

Fischer provides a step-by-step account of Washington's campaign after crossing the Delaware in 1776. He attributes much of the Americans' success to their open and flexible system, which gave them an advantage over the rigid and hierarchical system maintained by the British and German forces. Fisher proposes that not only did the success of Washington and his peers save the faltering American Revolution, but it also gave it new purpose and significance.

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7

The new nation, 1783–1787

> *…to provide a cure for the evils under which the U.S. laboured*
>
> – EDMUND RANDOLPH, VIRGINIAN DELEGATE TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION ARGUING WHY A STRONG NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WAS NEEDED, 11 SEPTEMBER 1787

OVERVIEW

The Treaty of Paris formally ended the war in 1783, but the majority of fighting had ceased by 1781. Prior to the ending of the war, the newly founded Articles of Confederation Government – with the vital and pivotal leadership of Washington – had blundered its way to victory. It is doubtful whether this would have occurred without him. The 'New Society' was now confronted with a vast array of problems: debt, inflation, unpaid and mutinous soldiers, and bickering between the states.

In fact, in some cases colonial unity was adopted only reluctantly in the face of a common enemy, but with the war at an end was there any need for a stronger union? During the period of 'salutary neglect' (see Section 1.8), the colonies may have pioneered and developed a shared sense of republicanism due to the reality of their 'internal sovereignty', but this was individualised to each colony. In a way, the period from May 1776, when Congress instructed the states to create individual state constitutions and declarations of rights, effectively encouraged the creation of a collection of separate republics. Ultimately, however, this period formed the framework that would see the creation of a strong federal government and the rise of what historians often call the 'revolutionary generation' of the Founding Fathers.

KEY ISSUES

- What were the terms of the Treaty of Paris (1783)?
- What was the structure of the New Society?
- What sorts of issues confronted the New Society?

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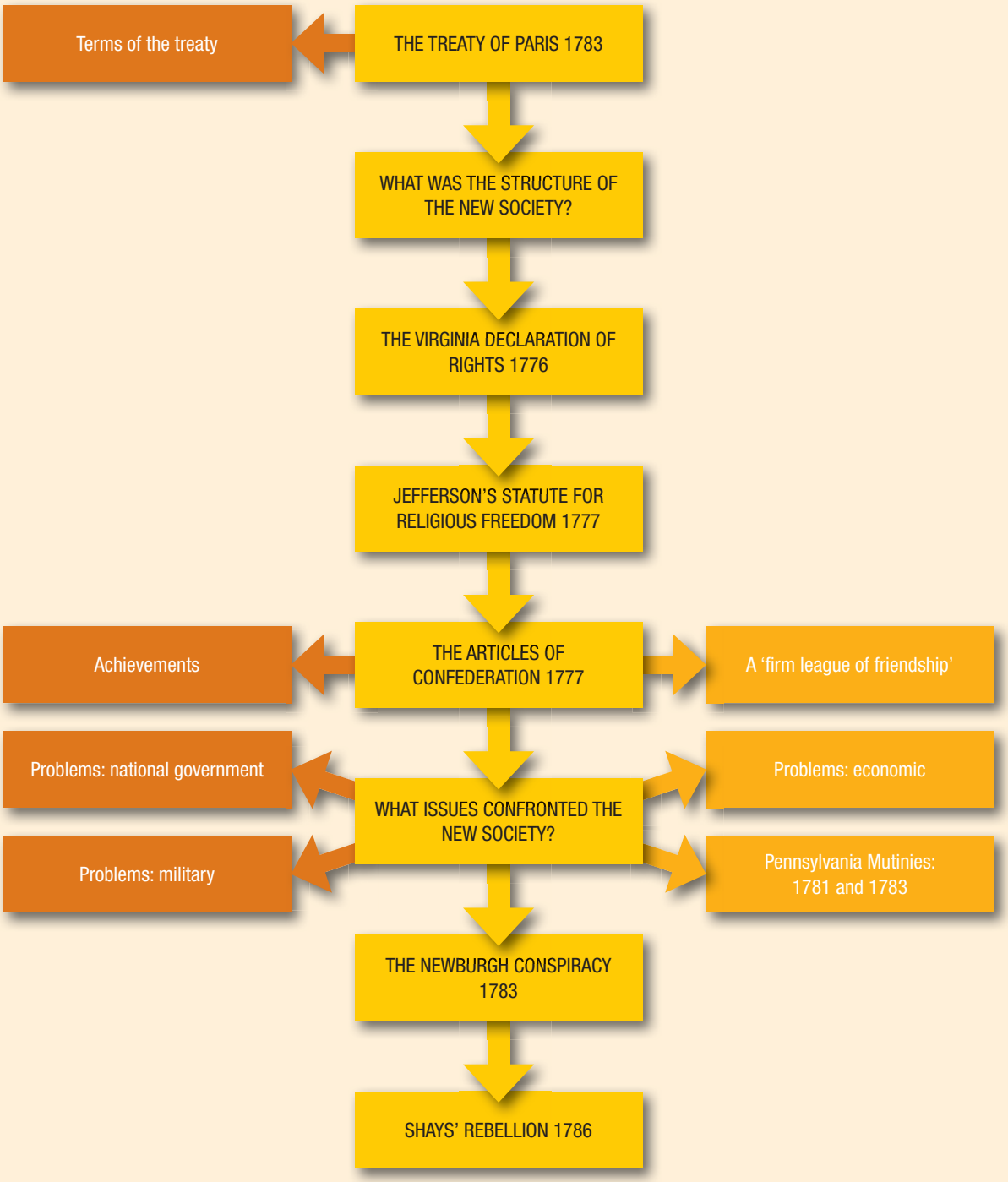
FLOW OF CHAPTER



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7.1 The Treaty of Paris, 1783

The Treaty of Paris formally ended the Revolutionary War and was very favourable to the United States, with the British conceding much territory. Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and John Jay negotiated with the British delegate Richard Oswald in Paris. It was a victory for the United States, but it did not solve all their problems.

Source 7.1 Benjamin West's oil painting from 1783–84 of the delegations at the Treaty of Paris: Americans John Jay, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Laurens and William Temple Franklin are depicted. Perhaps understandably, the British delegation refused to pose, and the painting was never completed.

The terms of the treaty included:

- formal British acknowledgement and recognition of the independence and sovereignty of the United States
- the surrender to the United States of all British territory between the Appalachian Mountains and the Ohio River

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- the drawing of borders between the United States and British-occupied Canada to the north
- American companies to enjoy fishing rights in the oceans to the east of British Canada and off the coast of Newfoundland
- the honouring of private and commercial debts in existence before the Revolution
- American states to enjoy unrestricted access to the Mississippi River, an important waterway for trade and transport for new settlers over the Appalachians.

Source 7.2 A map of United States and European territorial claims, 1783

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A MATTER OF FACT

Source 7.3 Engraved portrait of Deborah Sampson, female American Revolutionary War soldier by Herman Mann, circa 1797

Though most of the fighting of the Revolutionary War was completed by 1781, smaller skirmishes were still reported until 1783. As women couldn't officially enlist to fight for the Continental Army, some determined Patriots disguised themselves as men to join in the fighting. One famous example was Deborah Sampson, from Plymouth, Massachusetts. Sampson served for 17 months from May 1782 under the name of 'Robert Shurtliff'. After falling severely ill with a fever in 1783, Sampson's secret was discovered when a doctor removed the bindings used to hide her breasts. He kept her secret safe, and Sampson went on to serve until her discharge from service in October 1783.

7.2 What was the structure of the New Society?

With the *Declaration of Independence* turning all the Thirteen Colonies into states, Congress realised that some form of constitution was needed to establish control and provide a blueprint for future governance. Great Britain did not (and does not) have a constitution per se; rather, its constitution is considered to be embodied in the legislation, court judgments, treaties and parliamentary conventions developed over hundreds of years (that is, its **fundamental law**).

fundamental law the law, written or unwritten, that establishes the character of a government by defining the basic principles to which a society must conform, by describing the organisation of the government and regulation, distribution and limitations on the functions of different government departments; and by prescribing the extent and manner of the exercise of its sovereign powers

Quite clearly, the Americans could not follow this model. Instead, Congress decided that each state should establish a new government and write its constitution as a single document – effectively leaving the creation of the United States government to the individual states.

In a way this was an adaptation and 'correction' of the British system. If the *Declaration of Independence* was, in the words of Winston Churchill, 'a restatement of *Magna Carta*', then each state would replicate what was central to the British Government – the constitution. This proved to be an exceptionally fruitful exercise, with 10 states writing constitutions between 1776 and 1778. They essentially embodied the revolutionary thought (based on Enlightenment ideals) that had been brought into existence by the conflict with Britain.

Each constitution laid out the branches of government and was written to correct perceived faults of the British Constitution; for example:

- Nearly all created governments with two houses, mirroring the British bicameral model (only Pennsylvania, New Hampshire and Georgia created unicameral governments).

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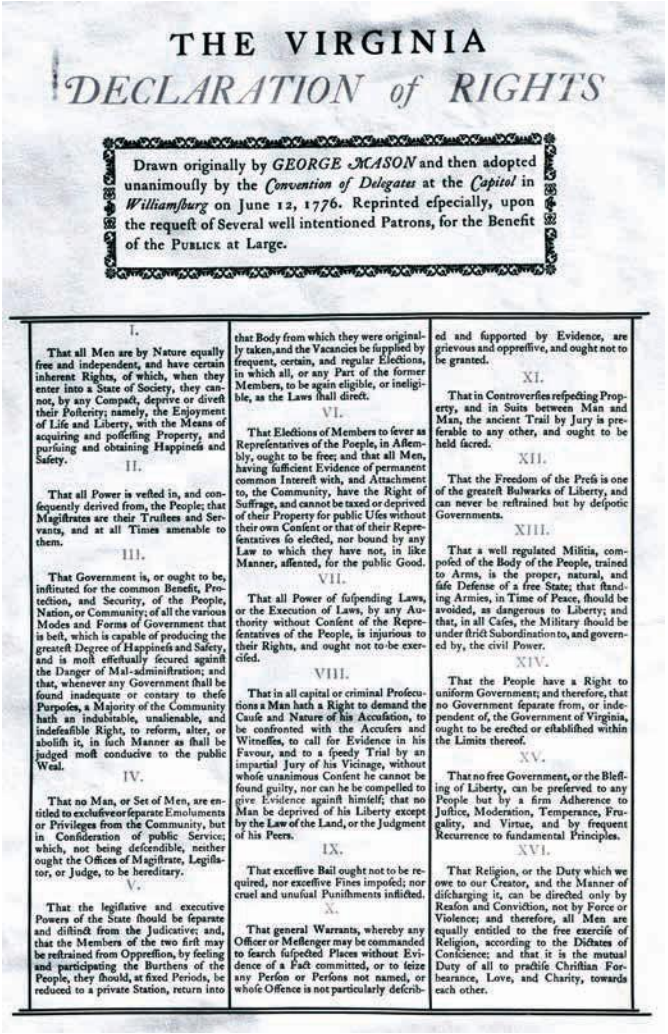
- The states feared that if they had a powerful governor (executive), it would simply create a local version of British 'tyranny' (after all, the ongoing war had derived from a resistance to the British executive – George III and Parliament). These fears came to dominate the later ratifications debates, and to avoid this, the states legislated weak powers to state governors to limit the power of the executive. Further, governors served short terms, could not veto legislation and were advised by councils not of their own choosing.
- Each state's constitution included a declaration of citizens' rights, again mirroring the English Bill of Rights (1688).

Recognising the importance of a constitution – that it represented the introduction of fundamental law, and that it needed the consensus and approval of the population – the state of Massachusetts sent its draft constitution to 240 towns to be ratified. This process served as an example for the United States Constitution.

7.3 The Virginia Declaration of Rights, 1776



THE VIRGINIA
DECLARATION of RIGHTS

Drawn originally by *GEORGE MASON* and then adopted unanimouſly by the *Convention of Delegates* at the *Capitol* in *Williamſburg* on June 12, 1776. Reprinted eſpecially, upon the requeſt of Several well intentioned Patrons, for the Benefit of the PUBLICK at Large.

I.

That all Men are by Nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent Rights, of which, when they enter into a State of Society, they cannot, by any Compact, deprive or diveſt their Poſterity; namely, the Enjoyment of Life and Liberty, with the Means of acquiring and poſſeſſing Property, and purſuing and obtaining Happineſs and Safety.

II.

That all Power is veſted in, and conſequently derived from, the People; that Magiſtrates are their Truſtees and Servants, and at all Times amenable to them.

III.

That Government is, or ought to be, inſtituted for the common Benefit, Protection, and Security, of the People, Nation, or Community; of all the various Modes and Forms of Government that is beſt, which is capable of producing the greateſt Degree of Happineſs and Safety, and is moſt effectually ſecured againſt the Danger of Mal-adminiſtration; and that, whenever any Government ſhall be found inadequate or contary to theſe Purpoſes, a Majority of the Community hath an indubitable, unalienable, and indefeaſible Right, to reform, alter, or aboliſh it, in ſuch Manner as ſhall be judged moſt conducive to the public Weal.

IV.

That no Man, or Set of Men, are entitled to exclufive or ſeparate Emoluments or Privileges from the Community, but in Conſideration of public Service; which, not being deſcendible, neither ought the Offices of Magiſtrate, Legiſlator, or Judge, to be hereditary.

V.

That the legiſlative and executive Powers of the State ſhould be ſeparate and diſtinct from the Judicative; and, that the Members of the two firſt may be reſtrained from Oppreſſion, by feeling and participating the Burthens of the People, they ſhould, at fixed Periods, be reduced to a private Station, return into that Body from which they were originally taken, and the Vacancies be ſupplied by frequent, certain, and regular Elections, in which all, or any Part of the former Members, to be again eligible, or ineligible, as the Laws ſhall direct.

VI.

That Elections of Members to ſerve as Repreſentatives of the People, in Aſſembly, ought to be free; and that all Men, having ſufficient Evidence of permanent common Intereſt with, and Attachment to, the Community, have the Right of Suffrage, and cannot be taxed or deprived of their Property for public Uſes without their own Conſent or that of their Repreſentatives ſo elected, nor bound by any Law to which they have not, in like Manner, aſſented, for the public Good.

VII.

That all Power of ſuſpending Laws, or the Execution of Laws, by any Authority without Conſent of the Repreſentatives of the People, is injurious to their Rights, and ought not to be exerciſed.

VIII.

That in all capital or criminal Proſecutions a Man hath a Right to demand the Cauſe and Nature of his Accuſation, to be confronted with the Accuſers and Witneſſes, to call for Evidence in his Favour, and to a ſpeedy Trial by an impartial Jury of his Vicinage, without whoſe unanimous Conſent he cannot be found guilty, nor can he be compelled to give Evidence againſt himſelf; that no Man be deprived of his Liberty except by the Law of the Land, or the Judgment of his Peers.

IX.

That exceſſive Bail ought not to be required, nor exceſſive Fines impoſed; nor cruel and unuſual Puniſhments inflicted.

X.

That general Warrants, whereby any Officer or Meſſenger may be commanded to ſearch ſuſpected Places without Evidence of a Fact committed, or to ſeize any Perſon or Perſons not named, or whoſe Offence is not particularly deſcribed and ſupported by Evidence, are grievous and oppreſſive, and ought not to be granted.

XI.

That in Controverſies reſpecting Property, and in Suits between Man and Man, the ancient Trail by Jury is preferable to any other, and ought to be held ſacred.

XII.

That the Freedom of the Preſs is one of the greateſt Bulwarks of Liberty, and can never be reſtrained but by deſpotic Governments.

XIII.

That a well regulated Militia, compoſed of the Body of the People, trained to Arms, is the proper, natural, and ſafe Defenſe of a free State; that ſtanding Armies, in Time of Peace, ſhould be avoided, as dangerous to Liberty; and that, in all Caſes, the Military ſhould be under ſtrict Subordination to, and governed by, the civil Power.

XIV.

That the People have a Right to uniform Government; and therefore, that no Government ſeparate from, or independent of, the Government of Virginia, ought to be erected or eſtabliſhed within the Limits thereof.

XV.

That no free Government, or the Bleſſing of Liberty, can be preſerved to any People but by a firm Adherence to Juſtice, Moderation, Temperance, Frugality, and Virtue, and by frequent Recurrence to fundamental Principles.

XVI.

That Religion, or the Duty which we owe to our Creator, and the Manner of diſcharging it, can be directed only by Reaſon and Conviction, not by Force or Violence; and therefore, all Men are equally entitled to the free exerciſe of Religion, according to the Dictates of Conſcience; and that it is the mutual Duty of all to practiſe Chriſtian Forbearance, Love, and Charity, towards each other.

Source 7.5 The Virginia Declaration of Rights

The Virginia Declaration of Rights (see Source 7.5) particularly embodied the ideals that had developed throughout the revolutionary period. Written by George Mason, it was adopted by the Virginia Constitutional Convention on 12 June 1776. Extracts from the declaration and their relationship to revolutionary and Enlightenment ideals (as discussed in Chapter 1) appear below.

Source 7.4 A statue of George Mason at a memorial park in Washington DC

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DECLARATION OF RIGHTS made by the representatives of the good people of Virginia, assembled in full and free convention which rights do pertain to them and their posterity, as the basis and foundation of government.

Text	Revolutionary and Enlightenment ideals
Section 1. That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.	This is a direct reference to both John Locke's concept of 'natural rights' (which the American Patriots believed had been impinged) and the Enlightenment ideal of a 'social contract' that a government and a people enter into (see Section 1.5).
Section 2. That all power is vested in, and consequently derived from, the people; that magistrates are their trustees and servants and at all times amenable to them.	This relates to Rousseau's Enlightenment ideal that power derives from the people rather than the monarch, in a way echoing the English Bill of Rights, which limited the powers of the monarch in Britain – but not in the colonies.
Section 3. That government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people, nation, or community; of all the various modes and forms of government, that is best which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety and is most effectually secured against the danger of maladministration. And that, when any government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community has an indubitable, inalienable, and indefeasible right to reform, alter, or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal.	This expands on the nature of government, with the Enlightenment ideal of power emanating from the people. Further, it asserts that if the government in some way goes against the will of the people, they have both the right and the duty to replace it.
Section 4. That no man, or set of men, is entitled to exclusive or separate emoluments or privileges from the community, but in consideration of public services; which, nor being descendible, neither ought the offices of magistrate, legislator, or judge to be hereditary.	This is a direct reference to Thomas Paine's ideas in *Common Sense* (1776), repudiating the concept of inherited power and the British colonial system of royal favour and patronage when dealing with government positions and offices.
Section 5. That the legislative and executive powers of the state should be separate and distinct from the judiciary; and that the members of the two first may be restrained from oppression, by feeling and participating the burdens of the people, they should, at fixed periods, be reduced to a private station, return into that body from which they were originally taken, and the vacancies be supplied by frequent, certain, and regular elections, in which all, or any part, of the former members, to be again eligible, or ineligible, as the laws shall direct.	This is an enactment of John Locke's concept of the 'separation of powers'; it also restates the British idea established in the *Magna Carta* (see Section 1.5) that no one is above the law. Practically, this meant that the state governor and assembly would be separate and distinct from the judiciary, allowing them to act as a restraint on both arms of the government and protecting the American people from British-style tyranny. Further, the judges in the Virginia law courts would serve fixed terms and be subject to regular election to serve as a check on the corruption that resulted from royal favour and influence when appointing judges in the colonies prior to independence.

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Text	Revolutionary and Enlightenment ideals
Section 6. That elections of members to serve as representatives of the people, in assembly ought to be free; and that all men, having sufficient evidence of permanent common interest with, and attachment to, the community, have the right of suffrage and cannot be taxed or deprived of their property for public uses without their own consent or that of their representatives so elected, nor bound by any law to which they have not, in like manner, assented for the public good.	This relates to John Locke's Enlightenment ideal of natural rights: life, liberty and estate (property).
Section 7. That all power of suspending laws, or the execution of laws, by any authority, without consent of the representatives of the people, is injurious to their rights and ought not to be exercised.	This was designed to prevent the *Coercive Acts* (or 'Intolerable Acts') of 1774, as a consequence of which colonial assemblies had been dismissed by the British.
Section 8. That in all capital or criminal prosecutions a man has a right to demand the cause and nature of his accusation, to be confronted with the accusers and witnesses, to call for evidence in his favour, and to a speedy trial by an impartial jury of twelve men of his vicinage, without whose unanimous consent he cannot be found guilty; nor can he be compelled to give evidence against himself; that no man be deprived of his liberty except by the law of the land or the judgment of his peers.	Again, this relates to the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights; further, to prevent actions like the infamous *Administration of Justice Act 1774* (known as the 'Murder Act'), whereby the accused could be transferred to another British colony or to Great Britain to assure trials more conducive to the Crown by avoiding the prejudices of local juries.
Section 9. That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.	Again, this relates to the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights.
Section 10. That general warrants, whereby an officer or messenger may be commanded to search suspected places without evidence of a fact committed, or to seize any person or persons not named, or whose offense is not particularly described and supported by evidence, are grievous and oppressive and ought not to be granted.	This is effectively an answer to the 'Writs of Assistance' case by James Otis (1761; see Chapter 2) to protect individuals from illegal searches colonists believed had been conducted by the British.
Section 11. That in controversies respecting property, and in suits between man and man, the ancient trial by jury is preferable to any other and ought to be held sacred.	Again, this relates to the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights.
Section 12. That the freedom of the press is one of the great bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained but by despotic governments.	Again, this relates to the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights, as well as being reminiscent of the English Bill of Rights: 'the freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament'.

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Text	Revolutionary and Enlightenment ideals
Section 13. That a well-regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, trained to arms, is the proper, natural, and safe defense of a free state; that standing armies, in time of peace, should be avoided as dangerous to liberty; and that in all cases the military should be under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power.	This effectively echoes the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the subsequent English Bill of Rights (1689): 'no standing army may be maintained during peacetime without the consent of parliament'. This section also addressed commonly held American fears as expressed through opposition writers Trenchard and Gordan, in *Cato's Letters*, that standing armies represented a prelude to tyranny.
Section 14. That the people have a right to uniform government; and, therefore, that no government separate from or independent of the government of Virginia ought to be erected or established within the limits thereof.	Again, this relates to the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights, but is also an early embodiment of the 'state's rights' concept that would be a sticking point for opponents of the United States Constitution.
Section 15. That no free government, or the blessings of liberty, can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue and by frequent recurrence to fundamental principles.	'Fundamental principles' relates to Locke's concept of 'natural law'.
Section 16. That religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity toward each other.	This relates to the Enlightenment ideal of religious freedom.

Focus questions

1 What were the changes that were brought to the New Society by the state constitutions and Declarations of Rights?
2 In what ways was the Virginian Declaration of Rights designed to stop the rise of a 'tyrant'?
3 Which section of the Virginian Declaration of Rights eliminated the British system of **patronage**? How was this done?

patronage a system used in British America, whereby colonial officials were appointed through their connections to men of power and rank

A MATTER OF FACT

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the English Bill of Rights (1689) was established shortly after the Glorious Revolution (1688) that had expelled a Catholic King, James II, from the throne in favour of the Protestant William III of Orange. The Bill limited the powers of the king, effectively subordinating them to the Parliament in Great Britain. However, it did not restrict the powers of the monarch in the colonies. Hence, the American Revolution shared many similarities with the Glorious Revolution.

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7.4 Jefferson's Statute for Religious Freedom, 1777

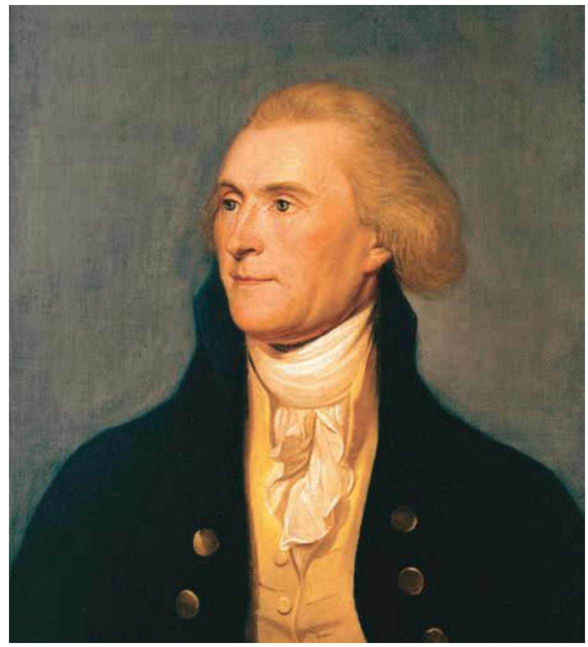
Within this creative period, where Enlightenment and revolutionary ideals seemingly materialised into legislation for governance, Thomas Jefferson brought into being one of the pillars of the modern industrialised state: the Statute for Religious Freedom. It guaranteed, in law, the freedom to practise religion (or not) in any way an individual saw fit.

The first premise was really an embodiment of the Enlightenment ideal of the separation of church and state (the 'separation of powers'). At the time in Europe, the state religion legitimised the rule of the monarch; for example, the Catholic Church in France and Spain, the Orthodox Church in Russia and the Church of England in Great Britain. The state, in turn, supported the state religion through compulsory taxes.

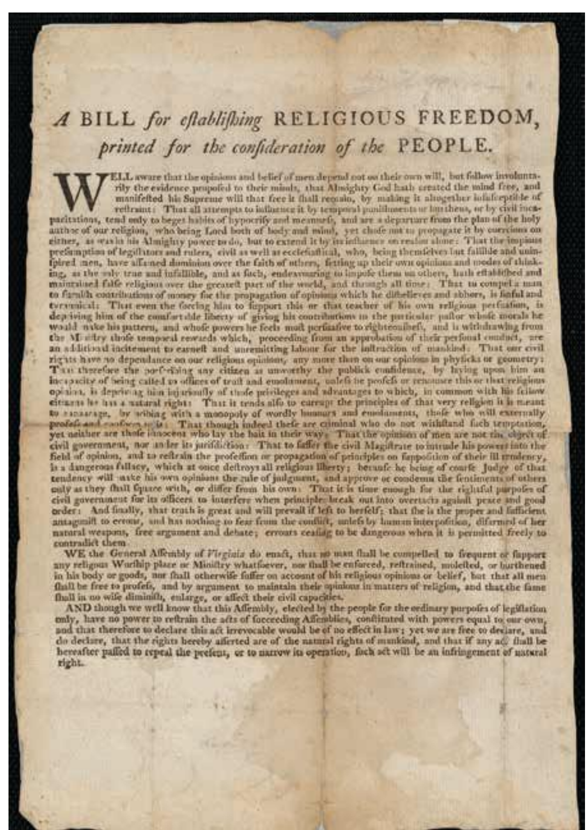
Similarly, in Virginia, where the statute was enacted, people were required to pay taxes to support the clergymen of the Church of England, and their marriage ceremonies had to be performed by Church of England ministers.

While Jefferson's statement of the principles of separation of church and state supported complete religious freedom, it also undercut these longstanding connections of mutual support between church and state. These ideas were originally drafted in 1777 as the Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom (see Source 7.7). It stated, in part:

> *Be it enacted by General Assembly that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of Religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities.*
>
> Thomas Jefferson, 1777



Source 7.6 Thomas Jefferson



A BILL *for establishing* RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, *printed for the consideration of the* PEOPLE.

WELL aware that the opinions and belief of men depend not on their own will, but follow involuntarily the evidence proposed to their minds, that Almighty God hath created the mind free, and manifested his Supreme will that free it shall remain, by making it altogether insusceptible of restraint: That all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burthens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the holy author of our religion, who being Lord both of body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either, as was in his Almighty power to do, but to extend it by its influence on reason alone: That the impious presumption of legislators and rulers, civil as well as ecclesiastical, who, being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their own opinions and modes of thinking, as the only true and infallible, and as such, endeavouring to impose them on others, hath established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world, and through all time: That to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors, is sinful and tyrannical: That even the forcing him to support this or that teacher of his own religious persuasion, is depriving him of the comfortable liberty of giving his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern, and whose powers he feels most persuasive to righteousness, and is withdrawing from the Ministry those temporal rewards which, proceeding from an approbation of their personal conduct, are an additional incitement to earnest and unremitting labour for the instruction of mankind: That our civil rights have no dependance on our religious opinions, any more than on our opinions in physicks or geometry: That therefore the proscribing any citizen as unworthy the publick confidence, by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to offices of trust and emolument, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion, is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages to which, in common with his fellow citizens he has a natural right: That it tends also to corrupt the principles of that very religion it is meant to encourage, by bribing with a monopoly of wordly honours and emoluments, those who will externally profess and conform to it: That though indeed these are criminal who do not withstand such temptation, yet neither are those innocent who lay the bait in their way: That the opinions of men are not the object of civil government, nor under its jurisdiction: That to suffer the civil Magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion, and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles on supposition of their ill tendency, is a dangerous fallacy, which at once destroys all religious liberty; because he being of course Judge of that tendency will make his own opinions the rule of judgment, and approve or condemn the sentiments of others only as they shall square with, or differ from his own: That it is time enough for the rightful purposes of civil government for its officers to interfere when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order: And finally, that truth is great and will prevail if left to herself; that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict, unless by human interposition, disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate; errours ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them.

WE the General Assembly of *Virginia* do enact, that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious Worship place or Ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.

AND though we well know that this Assembly, elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no power to restrain the acts of succeeding Assemblies, constituted with powers equal to our own, and that therefore to declare this act irrevocable would be of no effect in law; yet we are free to declare, and do declare, that the rights hereby asserted are of the natural rights of mankind, and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present, or to narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right.

Source 7.7 Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom

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Cambridge University Press

Although it was introduced in the Virginia General Assembly on 12 June 1779, it did not pass. James Madison, without whom it probably would never have been enacted, engineered its passage in the General Assembly in 1786 and thus shared with Jefferson the credit for detaching the church from the state in Virginia.

To understand the radical nature of this ideal, and its continuing legacy in the Western world, we need to remember that our **secular** society effectively was pioneered and created by Jefferson's statute.

Jefferson's belief was that real liberty – that is, freedom of thought – was impossible without this separation; essentially, he believed that no person could speak or give their real opinion if there existed a state religion that they feared to contradict. Again, this legislation codified the revolutionary ideal that grew from John Locke's natural right of liberty.

The statute disestablished the Church of England in Virginia and guaranteed freedom of religion to people of all religious faiths, including Catholics, Jews and members of all Protestant denominations.

The Virginia law was also one of the sources that Congress drew upon when drafting the US Bill of Rights in 1789.

secular the state of being separate from religion, or not being exclusively allied with or against any particular religion

Focus questions

1 Explain what Jefferson considered to be 'real liberty'.
2 Explain or describe how the Statute for Religious Freedom brought change to the New Society.

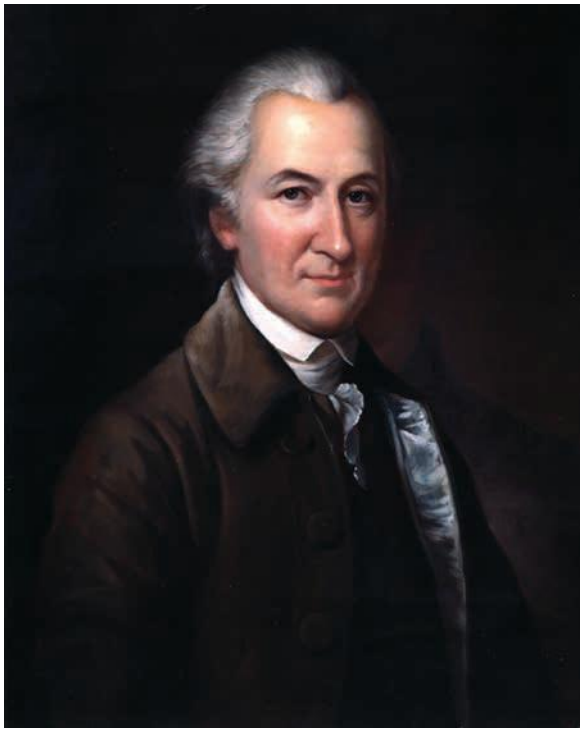
Source 7.8 Jefferson believed that the Statute for Religious Freedom was of similar importance to his involvement with the *Declaration of Independence*. It was one of the three achievements he wished engraved on his tombstone.

ISBN 978-1-107-50647-3

7.5 The Articles of Confederation, 1777

'A firm league of friendship'

The Articles of Confederation formed the first federal government of the United States, and its successes and failures are essential to understanding both the latter stages of the War of Independence and the subsequent Constitution and Bill of Rights. The Thirteen Colonies had all been founded and governed independently of one another, and the first attempt at uniform government reflected this. Under instruction from Congress, the colonies, now known as 'states', had all written separate constitutions. Naturally, the states wrote constitutions that tended to reflect local needs, and little attention was paid to the formation and needs of the new national government. In time, this would nearly prove to be disastrous. As Edward Countryman notes, 'Congress had some of the qualities of a national government, but in other ways it was more like an alliance of sovereign republics'.



Source 7.9 John Dickinson

The Articles of Confederation were devised by committee in 1776. John Dickinson (see Source 7.9) wrote the majority of them, which were then presented to Congress for debate. With the ongoing war, the Articles were not raised until 1777, when they were passed as a 'firm league of friendship with each other, for their common defense, the security of their liberties, and their mutual and general welfare'.

The Constitution was written for the purpose of forming a confederacy and governing the United States of America, but the states retained sovereign power except in issues of national importance. It contained 13 separate articles that outlined the structure of government, the responsibilities of the states, voting procedures, sources of revenue and matters of law, foreign affairs and defence. It also created a Confederation Congress, where each state had one vote, with a three-quarter majority (nine of Thirteen Colonies) required to pass laws and a unanimous vote was required for amendments of the Articles.

These provisions to maintain democracy created a weak central government that found it difficult to act due to the power of the states. That said, Congress was able to claim some successes:

- It successfully prosecuted and won the War of Independence.
- It managed to supply the army during the course of the war, although not always to the satisfaction of the generals (see the discussion of Valley Forge in Chapter 6).
- It ratified the Treaty of Paris in 1783.
- It passed the *Land Ordinance Act 1785*, under which public lands were surveyed and subdivided into townships and then sold privately, accelerating settlement.

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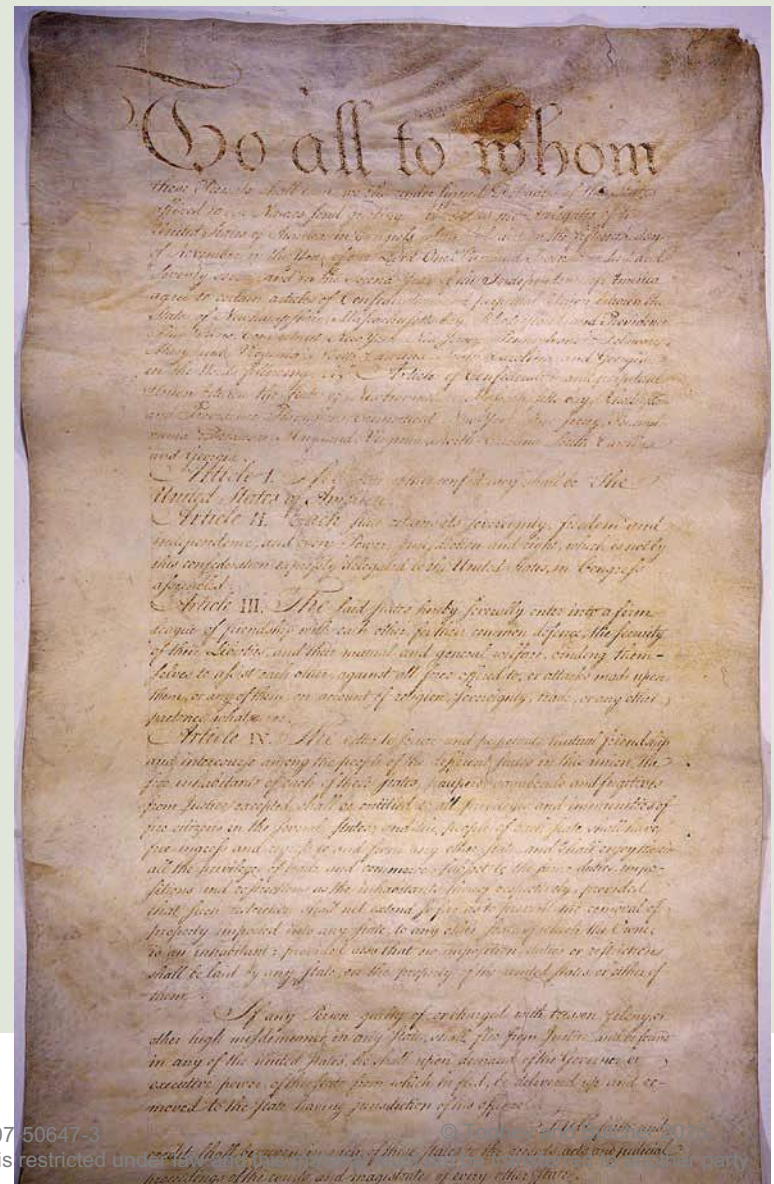
- It passed the *North West Ordinance 1787*, which dealt with the political organisation of new lands, setting a pattern for the entry of future new states:
  - The Ordinance broke the new lands into states.
  - A state could send a non-voting representative to Congress once it reached a population of 5000 male adults; further, it could form its own constitution and legislature.
  - A state would assume full statehood when its population reached that of the smallest state in the Confederation.
  - Slavery would not exist in the new states, a decision that would later be fought over in the Ratification Debates (see Chapter 8) and the Civil War.

Despite these positive steps, the new government faced numerous crises as the states came to bicker and fight among themselves, rebellions and mutinies were sparked by unpaid salaries to army personnel, and fiscal and trade policies almost led to economic ruin.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 7.1: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The Articles of Confederation


To all to whom

Source 7.10 The first page of the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union

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The Articles of Confederation and perpetual Union between the states of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

Article I. *The style of this Confederacy shall be 'The United States of America'.*

Article II. *Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every power, jurisdiction, and right, which is not by this Confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled.*

Article III. *The said States hereby severally enter into a firm league of friendship with each other, for their common defense, the security of their liberties, and their mutual and general welfare, binding themselves to assist each other, against all force offered to, or attacks made upon them, or any of them, on account of religion, sovereignty, trade, or any other pretense whatever.*

Article IV. *The better to secure and perpetuate mutual friendship and intercourse among the people of the different States in this Union, the free inhabitants of each of these States – paupers, vagabonds and fugitives from justice excepted – shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of free citizens in the several States … and shall enjoy therein all the privileges of trade and commerce, subject to the same duties, impositions, and restrictions as the inhabitants thereof respectively … If any person guilty of, or charged with, treason, felony, or other high misdemeanor in any State shall flee from justice, and be found in any of the United States, he shall, upon demand of the Governor or executive power of the State from which he fled, be delivered up and removed to the State having jurisdiction of his offense …*

Article V. *In determining questions in the United States in Congress assembled, each State shall have one vote. Freedom of speech and debate in Congress shall not be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Congress, and the members of Congress shall be protected in their persons from arrests or imprisonments, during the time of their going to and from, and attendance on Congress, except for treason, felony, or breach of the peace.*

Article VI. *No State, without the consent of the United States in Congress assembled, shall send any embassy to, or receive any embassy from, or enter into any conference, agreement, alliance or treaty with any King, Prince or State … No two or more States shall enter into any treaty, confederation or alliance whatever between them, without the consent of the United States in Congress assembled, specifying accurately the purposes for which the same is to be entered into, and how long it shall continue … No vessel of war shall be kept up in time of peace by any State … No State shall engage in any war without the consent of the United States in Congress assembled, unless such State be actually invaded by enemies …*

Article IX. *The United States in Congress assembled, shall have the sole and exclusive right and power of determining on peace and war, except in the cases mentioned in the sixth article …*

Article XII. *All bills of credit emitted, monies borrowed, and debts contracted by or under the authority of Congress, before the assembling of the United States, in pursuance of the present confederation, shall be deemed and considered as a charge against the United States, for payment and satisfaction …*

Article XIII. *Every State shall abide by the determination of the United States in Congress assembled, on all questions which by this confederation are submitted to them. And the Articles of this Confederation shall be inviolably observed by every State, and the Union shall be perpetual; nor shall any alteration at any time hereafter be made in any of them; unless such alteration be agreed to in a Congress of the United States, and be afterwards confirmed by the legislatures of every State.*

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1 List the powers (quoting the source article) that the Articles of Confederation government possessed.
2 Explain what the purpose of 'the firm league of friendship' was. (Quote and discuss.)
3 In whose name would 'bills of credit … monies borrowed, and debts contracted' be under? Using your own knowledge and the source (quote), explain why this became such a problem for the New Society.
4 Explain what the purpose of Article VI was. What problems did this article try to prevent?

A MATTER OF FACT

It is interesting to note that the Southern states that seceded from the United States during the Civil War adopted the name the Confederate States of America. Quite clearly, 'an alliance of sovereign republics' that were free to govern themselves was exactly what the Southern states sought in order to maintain slavery.

7.6 What issues confronted the New Society?

National government problems

Because nearly all sovereignty (apart from foreign affairs) lay in the hands of the states, the national government had its hands tied in many spheres. The government could not pass laws, tax or even raise and pay for a national army without state approval.

However, the main problem was the law-making process: the Articles of Confederation stated that Congress required unanimity (all states to agree) before a change could be made to the Articles, and nine of the Thirteen Colonies had to agree for a law to be passed. This rarely (or never, in the case of Articles) occurred, with state interests overwhelmingly overriding the national interest. After direct hostilities in the War of Independence ceased in 1781, Congress was almost powerless in trying to oust the British, who refused to vacate forts and encouraged breakaway movements and insurrection.

Economic problems

> *[The] problems of trade could never be solved … till Articles [were] re-drafted … [N]ational government needed a thorough overhaul.*
>
> Hugh Brogan, 2001

Congress had no power to make trade agreements on behalf of the states, nor could it establish customs duties, trade regulations or industries. The states passed Acts serving their own interests and, with Congress legally unable to regulate this, trade between the states became a complex and expensive affair, with states establishing trade agreements, tariffs and subsidies that often directly disadvantaged other states; for example:

- New York and Pennsylvania created import duties that saw New Jersey farmers suffer.
- It cost more in taxes to send goods from Connecticut to Massachusetts than to England.

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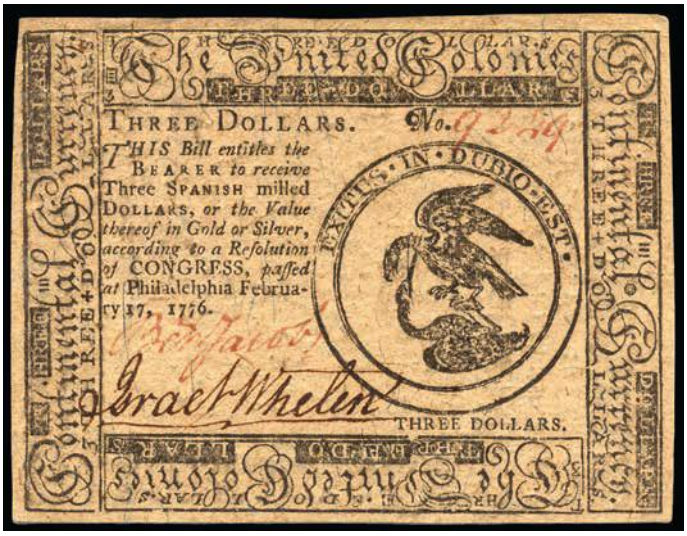
Internationally, America's reputation also slumped:

- Loans from foreign powers for the war had to be repaid, yet America (due to 150 years of British mercantilism) lacked the industries to create their own products for export.
- Because Congress had no taxation power, and the states could decide what they wished to contribute, unsustainable situations occurred. For example, in 1781 Congress planned to raise $5 million from the states in order to run national affairs and the government; they raised $422,000.
- All states, as well as the Continental Army, printed their own currency during the war. As more revenue was needed, Congress simply printed more banknotes, leading to massive inflation (see Source 7.11). This was never corrected and confidence in trade and business declined as a result.
- Farmers were particularly hurt, as they could no longer sell their produce to the British market and were also punished by debtors' courts, which led to Shays' Rebellion (discussed later in this chapter).
- Congress had $54 million in war debt.
- The states had $21 million in war debt.
- There was no national currency or bank, making trade between states even more difficult.
- The states' balance of trade was damaging and unsustainable: the states imported far more than they exported as they lacked the capacity to manufacture and export goods.



Source 7.11 Paper money issued by Congress

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 7.2: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Read the following extract from G.J. Lamb on weaknesses within the Articles of Confederation:

> *The war effort demanded a measure of central authority; the Second Continental Congress had organized a government under the Articles of Confederation for that purpose. Struggling to break free from a strong government, however, Americans were understandably reluctant to establish another strong government in its place. The notorious weakness of the Articles Government was probably intentional.*
>
> *Once independence had been achieved, however, disturbing flaws began to appear. Shays' Rebellion in Massachusetts posed a threat to order; worthless paper money printed in Rhode Island clearly threatened property and the status of the wealthy. Threats like these could only be dealt with by a vigorous and competent central government. The Articles Government, moreover, had no authority to negotiate trade agreements; each of the new states was forced to negotiate on its own, with far less than satisfactory results. It was at a meeting in Annapolis called to deal with this latter problem that discussions soon focused on the need for a stronger central government.*

1 According to Lamb, why were the Americans reluctant to form a strong central government?
2 What reasons does Lamb give to justify the need for a competent central government?
3 Which level of government had the power to negotiate trade?

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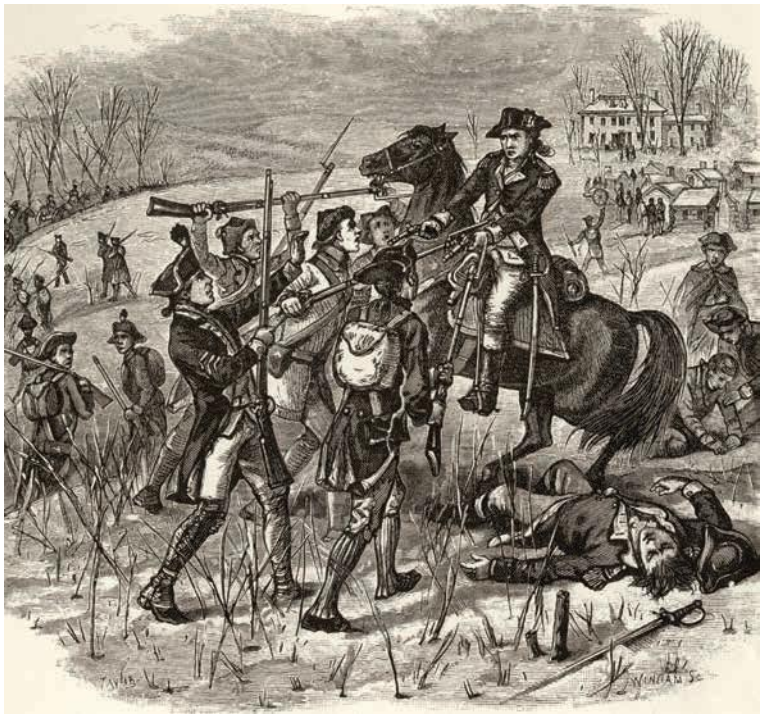
Military problems

The national government's limited power to raise naval or military forces, along with its inability to control the states' militias, effectively saw the United States defenceless. Further, because American trading vessels were no longer under the protection of the British Royal Navy, they regularly fell victim to pirates. The government's inability to raise revenue also led to a serious domestic issue: mutinies by unpaid soldiers.

Pennsylvania mutinies: 1781 and 1783

There were two Pennsylvania mutinies. The Pennsylvania Line Mutiny of 1781 (see Source 7.12) protested the appalling conditions that the Continental Army soldiers suffered, as well as payments owed: many had been paid no more than their initial $20 bounty for three years' service. In contrast, the troops in other states had received enlistment bounties of hundreds of dollars – up to $1000 in New Jersey. Even new Pennsylvania recruits were given large bounties, while the original recruits were given neither wages nor re-enlistment incentives.



Source 7.12 *Mutiny of the Pennsylvania Line*, 1781

However, the circumstances of many soldiers did not change over the next two years. In the Pennsylvania Mutiny of 1783 (also known as the Philadelphia Mutiny), nearly 400 soldiers of the Continental Army protested over unpaid wages from the war. Alexander Hamilton, then a delegate from New York, persuaded the soldiers to allow Congress to meet later to address their concerns. Ultimately, they were paid, but inflation created further angst.

The Newburgh Conspiracy, 1783

In late 1782, the Continental Army was camped in a field near Newburgh, New York. They were there to sit out the winter, but supply shortages caused discontent among the junior officers, exacerbated by the conditions they had endured for most of the war, months of back pay still owed them and questions over pensions. Talk of action against Congress ensued:

- The officers circulated letters criticising Congress and raising the prospect of a coup.

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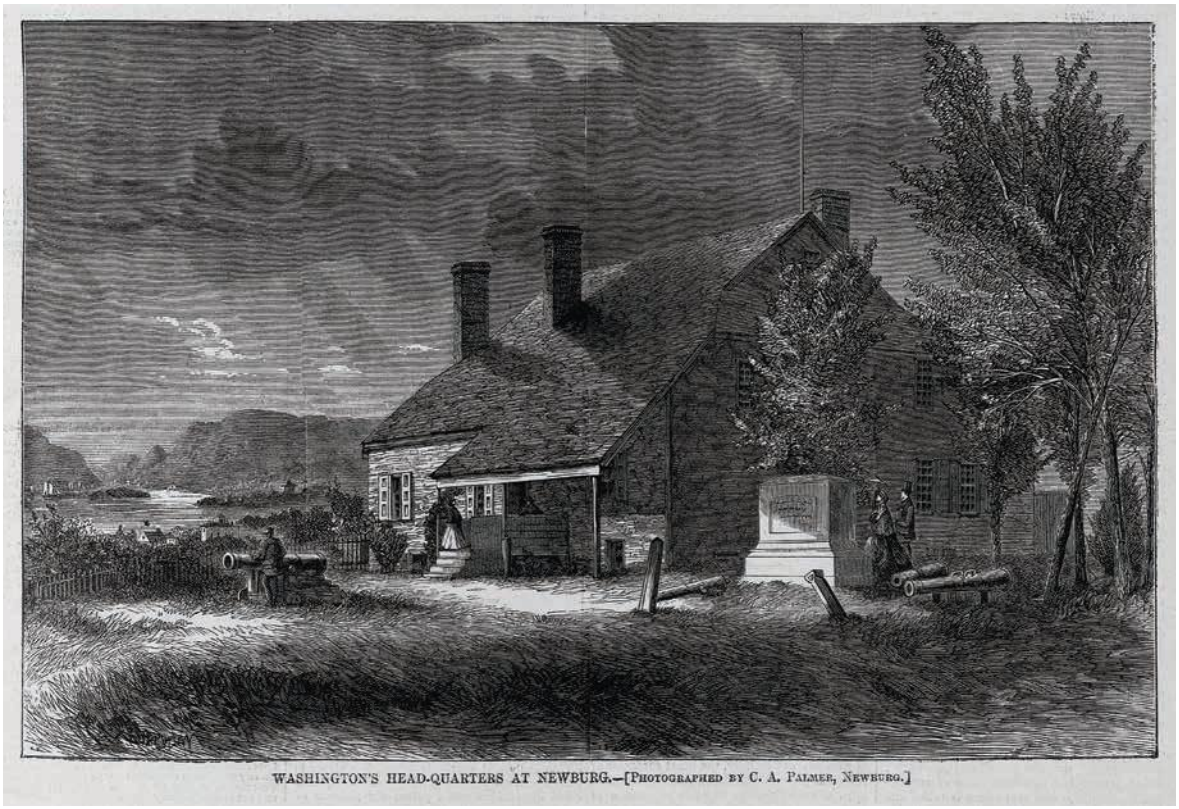

WASHINGTON'S HEAD-QUARTERS AT NEWBURG.—[PHOTOGRAPHED BY C. A. PALMER, NEWBURG.]

Source 7.13 Washington's headquarters at Newburgh

- The discontented officers held a meeting at a local church in 1783. Here George Washington took the floor and calmed some of the officers, but the issue of back pay and pensions continued to fester.
- The officers drafted a petition, *Petition from Newburgh Officers*, which they sent to Congress in April 1783. They found some support in Congress from nationalists who desired a strong central government. This bloc would later take up the Federalist cause in the Ratification Debates (discussed in Chapter 8).
- However, the problems remained unresolved and in June 1783 almost 500 soldiers marched on Philadelphia. Gathering at Independence Hall, they threatened the Congress, which eventually relocated to Princeton, New Jersey.

Historian John Phillips Resch suggests that, while the Newburgh Conspiracy was more 'political bluff' than serious coup, nonetheless it 'reinforced popular perceptions that the Continental Army, like all regular armies, was … corrupt, that it threatened liberty and that it deserved to be treated as a necessary evil'. Another historian, Richard Kohn, suggests it was stirred by conspirators in Congress itself:

> *They would incite a mutiny in the Army – spark the explosion – then make certain it was immediately snuffed out. It was a treacherous double-game fraught with uncertainty. But to the nationalists, the whole future of the country was at stake.*

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A MATTER OF FACT

Prior to the United States Constitution, the federal government only commanded the Continental Army in times of war; relying on the state militias for defence. The Pennsylvania Muting of 1783, and the refusal of the Executive Council of Pennsylvania (the Pennsylvania Government) to stop it, highlighted just how vulnerable the federal government was to a possible coup. This ultimately resulted in Congress vacating Philadelphia and creating a federal district, the District of Columbia, to serve as the site of the nation's capital, Washington.

7.7 FLASHPOINT!

Shays' Rebellion, 1786

The manifold problems of the Articles of Confederation Government were not just played out in mutinies; an actual insurrection took shape in Massachusetts.

Many soldiers were returning to civilian life without pay and few received their promised land grants. In an attempt to make a living as farmers, many borrowed money from city creditors, yet poor prices for agricultural goods, due to the economic depression, led to many defaulting on these loans.

The creditors pressured the state governments to open debtors' courts, the most prominent of these being in Massachusetts. Courts had powers to enforce the payment of loans; if this was not achieved they could seize property and jail offenders.

Many who fought in the Revolution saw this as unfair and unjustified: they were paying higher taxes than ever and many were disenfranchised, as the property requirement to vote was raised.

Source 7.14 Woodcut depicting rebel leaders Daniel Shays and Job Shattuck

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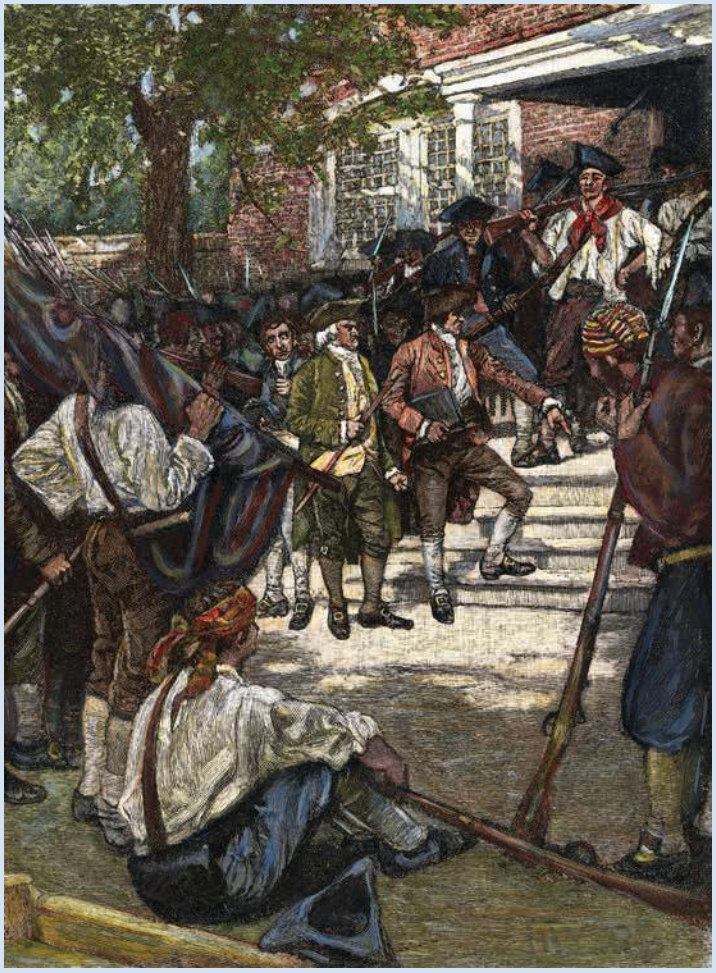
Daniel Shays was a captain in the Continental Army who became a farmer in western Massachusetts after the war. In 1786 his property was seized by a debtors' court, so he joined fellow countrymen in protesting against the debt recovery policy of the Massachusetts State Government.

They employed tactics that were used in the prelude to the war by such men as Samuel Adams. After distributing pamphlets, they met in town and in September 1786 several hundred men marched on the court at Springfield, closing it.

Shays continued to gather supporters in what grew into a rebellion threatening Boston. With no national army to suppress unrest, Boston merchants paid to have a militia formed to fight the rebels. Ultimately the rebellion was crushed. Several hundred participants were indicted, but most of these were pardoned under a general amnesty. Eighteen were convicted and sentenced to death, but most of them had their convictions overturned on appeal, were pardoned or had their sentences commuted. Shays himself was pardoned in 1788 and he returned to Massachusetts from his exile in the Vermont woods; he died in poverty in 1825.

General Henry Knox warned his former commander, George Washington, about the rebels:

> *They see the weakness of government; they feel at once their own poverty, compared to the opulent, and their own force, and they are determined to make use of the latter in order to remedy the former. Their creed is that the property of the U.S. has been protected from the confiscations of Britain by the joint exertions of all, and therefore should be the common property of all.*



Ultimately, the rebellion was used by Federalists to argue for the formation of a stronger central government, both to solve economic problems and to protect the country against social unrest that a state on its own might not be able to suppress.

A MATTER OF FACT

Of Shays' Rebellion, Washington wrote 'if three years ago any person had told me that at this day, I should see such a formidable rebellion against the laws & constitutions of our own making as now appears I should have thought him a bedlamite – a fit subject for a mad house.'

Source 7.15 A depiction of a mob seizing a Massachusetts courthouse

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The story so far

- The Revolutionary War ended in victory for the United States and was formally concluded through the Treaty of Paris in 1783.
- The *Declaration of Independence* turned the Thirteen Colonies into states governed by the Articles of Confederation Government, which ordered the states to write their own constitutions. These separate constitutions served as the basis for the subsequent Constitution and Bill of Rights.
- The Virginia Declaration of Rights particularly embodied Revolutionary ideals, as did Thomas Jefferson's Statute for Religious Freedom, which legalised religious freedom for individual citizens.
- The first federal government was formed through the Articles of Confederation, which were passed as a 'firm league of friendship' between the once independently governed states. Apart from foreign affairs, the new national government had very little power compared to the states, and needed unanimity in order to pass any law. Furthermore, the states were separated by individual trade agreements as internal trade became expensive and complicated. The country was largely defenceless due to the national government's limited power to raise naval or military forces or to control the states' militias.
- To protest the appalling conditions and lack of pay suffered by soldiers, the Pennsylvania Line Mutiny occurred in 1781. By 1783, the Newburgh faction of the army decided to march on Philadelphia to threaten Congress with a coup. Additionally, Daniel Shays lead an insurrection against the debt recovery policy in Massachusetts, which was an important precedent for the creation of a more robust central government.

CHAPTER REVIEW

DEVELOPING CLEAR DEFINITIONS

Write explanations defining each of the following:

Significant ideas and events	Significant individuals
Constitution	Thomas Jefferson
Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776)	Daniel Shays
Statute for Religious Freedom (1776)	
Articles of Confederation (1777)	
Treaty of Paris (1783)	
Newburgh Conspiracy (1783)	
Shays' Rebellion (1786)	

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PRACTISING PARAGRAPH ANSWERS

1 What were the terms of the Treaty of Paris (1783)?

2 How did American lawmakers change their society to correct the faults of the British colonial system?

3 What were the main problems that confronted the New Society?

4 Why did Jefferson believe the Statute for Religious Freedom was so important?

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1 The structure of the New Society was deeply flawed. Discuss this view, providing evidence to support your answer.

2 'Shays' Rebellion was the real revolution.' Discuss how the problems in the New Society betrayed its people, providing evidence to support your answer.

ONLINE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

'The Constitution, the Articles, and Federalism', *Crash Course US History #8*, Video (access via http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/?id=6107).

An amusing summation of the period by John Green.

READING MORE DEEPLY

Easy

Morgan, G., 'Present at the creation: The making of the Federal Constitution' (pp. 95–131), *The Debate on the American Revolution*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2007.

Moderate

Zinn, H., *A People's History of the United States*, Harper, New York, 1980.

Challenging

Wood, G., *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1969.

Wood, G., *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, Vintage, New York, 1992.

Wood tends to focus on the revolutionary ideology of the period from a conservative viewpoint and provides a marked contrast with Zinn's views. *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787* won the Bancroft Prize and the John H. Dunning Prize in 1970.

ISBN 978-1-107-50647-3

8

The United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights, 1787–1789

> *What is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary.*
>
> – JAMES MADISON, 1788

OVERVIEW

The crises of the 1780s had at times threatened the existence of the newly founded nation, with the Newburgh Conspiracy and, in particular, Shays' Rebellion, exposing in gory detail the flaws of the Articles of Confederation. The **conventions** at Annapolis in 1786 and Philadelphia in 1787 were the culmination of the efforts of the so-called 'revolutionary generation' and produced the two critical documents of the new nation: the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

convention a formal assembly of representatives or delegates to discuss and take action on matters of common concern

The earlier process in which the states created their own constitutions – and, for most, a declaration of rights – provided an example for the federal cause. Further, it left the creative political process at the conventions to the states, thereby embodying basic revolutionary and Enlightenment principles of power emanating from the people. However, diversity of the states, both culturally and economically, made this process difficult. How did the Founding Fathers find a solution to govern so many differing interests?

KEY ISSUES

- How was the crisis of the New Society solved?
- What was the structure of the society that the new Constitution set up?
- How was the Constitution ratified?
- Who missed out on the benefits of the New Society?

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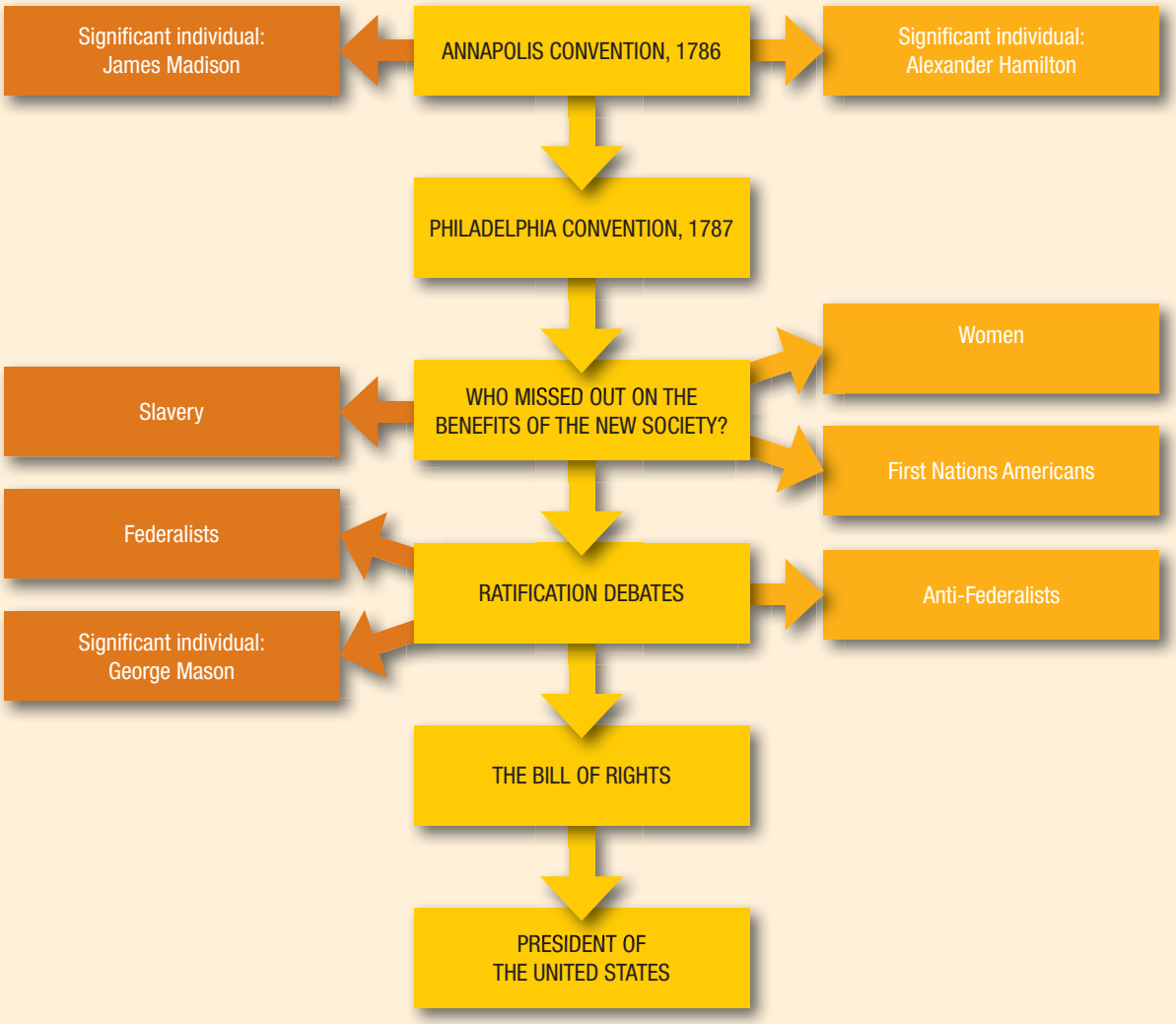
FLOW OF CHAPTER



Source 8.1 A monument in a field in Southwestern Massachusetts commemorating the final battle of Shays' Rebellion

ISBN 978-1-107-50647-3

Cambridge University Press

8.1 Annapolis Convention, 1786

With the shock of Shays' Rebellion clearly in the minds of all, a total of 12 delegates from the states of New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Virginia met at Annapolis, Maryland in 1786. The meeting was organised by Edmund Randolph and James Madison of Virginia and brought together the states that were calling for a constitutional convention. The proceedings were called the 'Meeting of Commissioners to Remedy Defects of the Federal Government'.

There were many such defects to address, but of particular concern were the barriers that limited trade or commerce between the largely independent states under the Articles of Confederation. Ultimately, however, the delegates felt that there were not enough states represented to make any substantive agreement, so they produced a report that was sent to Congress and to the states requesting the holding of a broader meeting to be held in Philadelphia. Their hope was that more states would be represented and that their delegates or deputies would be authorised to examine areas broader than simply commercial trade (i.e. the nature and detail of the Articles of Confederation themselves).

The direct result of the Annapolis Convention was the Philadelphia Convention of 1787; however, there was an indirect outcome that would hold arguably more significance. This was the meeting of James Madison and Alexander Hamilton. This 'meeting of minds' resulted in a powerful alliance that enabled them to dominate the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia and the later **Ratification** Debates.

ratification the declaration by which a nation formally accepts, with or without reservation, the content of a formal meeting such as a convention

8.2 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
James Madison (1751–1836)

- Madison was a lawyer, writer and politician who was the son of a wealthy Virginia tobacco planter. After graduating from college in 1772 as a young man, Madison entered the elite Virginia House of Burgesses.
- Despite his youth, Madison quickly proved to be a highly skilled legislator, with a peerless understanding of political history and Enlightenment thinking, and knowledge of what good government looked like.
- Madison was a major contributor to the Virginia state constitution, the Virginian Bill for Religious Freedom, the Second Continental Congress and the Annapolis convention.
- But Madison is most famous for his work in the 1787 Philadelphia Convention, which embraced his Virginia Plan as the basis for the new constitution. With Alexander Hamilton, Madison was a contributing author to the Federalist Papers that helped secure ratification of the Constitution.
- From 1789 he sat in Congress, where he played a leading role in developing and enacting the Bill of Rights, and later served two terms as the fourth President of the United States.
- Madison is today often remembered as the 'father of the Constitution' and the main author of the Bill of Rights.

Source 8.2 James Madison at age 32, by Charles Willson Peale, 1783

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8.3 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
Alexander Hamilton (1755–1804)

- Hamilton was a politician and lawyer who played an important role in the development of the new republic.
- Hamilton moved from his birthplace in the West Indies to the colony of New Jersey as a young man, and fast became swept up by the developing revolution, involving himself in colonial politics and enlisting in the New York militia.
- His military endeavours and sharp intellect earned Hamilton the honour of serving as George Washington's chief of staff, even though he was only in his early 20s.
- Hamilton was elected to the Confederation Congress in 1782, but was soon frustrated by its inability to tax, and its lack of control over the states.
- Hamilton became one of the leading advocates for constitutional reform and the strengthening of federal power, playing significant roles in the Annapolis Convention (1786), the Philadelphia Convention (1787) and the Federalist push for ratification (1787–88).
- Hamilton eventually served as the first Secretary of the Treasury under George Washington's presidency, but was killed in a duel with vice-president Aaron Burr in 1804.

Source 8.3 This is a later imagining by an artist of how Hamilton may have appeared during the Revolutionary War. Alexander Hamilton in the Uniform of the New York Artillery, by Alonzo Chappel, circa 1850s.

8.4 Philadelphia Convention, 1787

The Philadelphia Convention of 1787 was ostensibly designed to address problems in governance brought on by the Articles of Confederation; that is, it was intended to revise the Articles. However, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and other proponents set out to create a new government rather than fix the existing one. Their masterstroke was to ensure the election of George Washington

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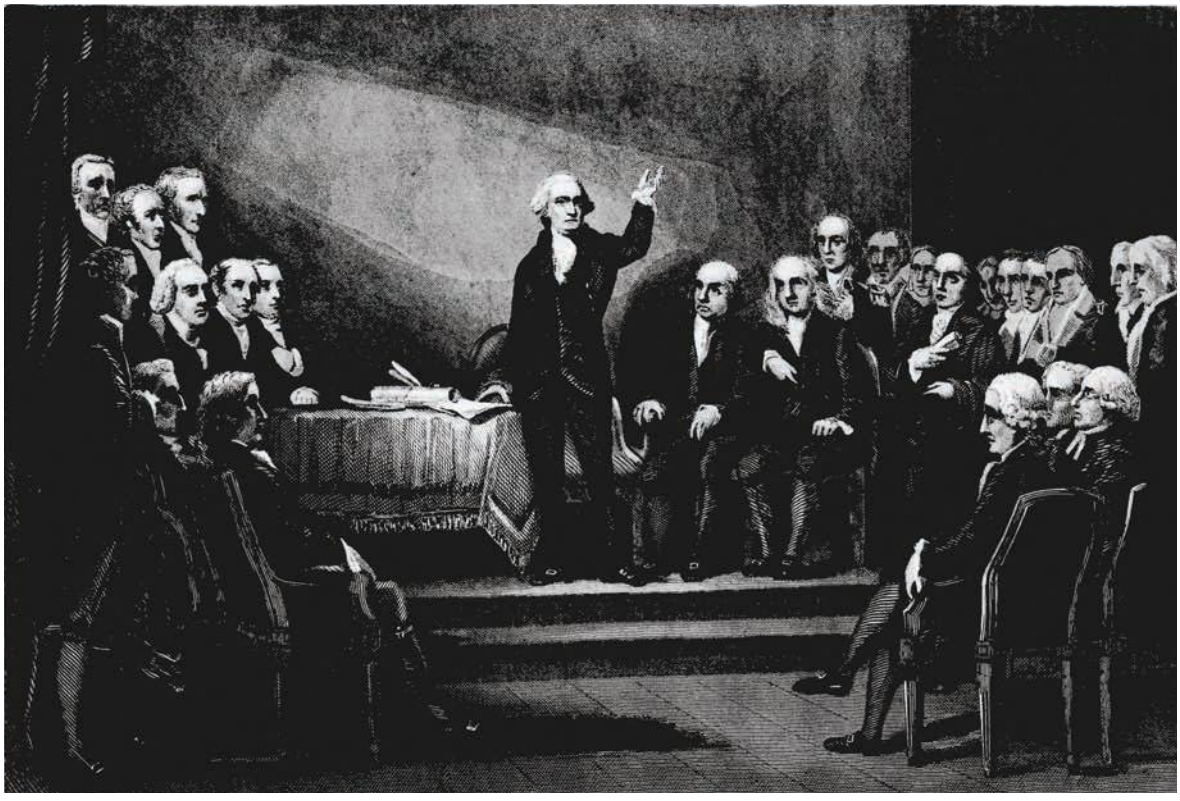
as president of the convention. The states, more than ever, were keen to protect their rights. Only the authority and reputation of Washington, confirmed by his resignation as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, could bring a sense of order and respect to the delegations from the states.

Nonetheless, there were many disputes, including:

- the structure of the government (two houses or one)
- if a two-model structure was adopted, how the senate seats would be apportioned (by state or population)
- the method of election for senators
- how 'proportional representation' was to be defined (i.e. whether to include slaves or other property)
- how the division of executive power would be arranged (either between three individuals or with one elected president)
- if the presidential model was adopted, how the president would be elected, the length of his term, whether re-election was permissible, and what offences would be **impeachable**
- whether to abolish the slave trade, and how to define the 'fugitive slave clause', which demanded an escaped slave be returned to the state from which they escaped
- whether the selection of judges would be a legislative or executive decision.

impeachable making one subject to impeachment, which results from a crime or offence serious enough to warrant a public official losing their position and facing formal charges



Source 8.4 Washington addressing the Convention

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Four different plans regarding the structure of government were proposed:

1. The Large State Plan (or Virginia Plan) was written by James Madison and proposed two houses of Congress, both elected by apportionment according to population, which would result in the larger states dominating.
2. The Small State Plan (or the New Jersey Plan) was written by William Patterson and proposed a single house of Congress, with representation of one vote per state, which would ensure smaller states were not disadvantaged.
3. The Hamilton Plan (or the British Plan) was written by Alexander Hamilton and resembled the British system of strong central government. It was not considered as it too closely resembled the British model and took away all state authority.
4. The Charles Pinckney Plan was not debated, though he later claimed it formed the basis for the model ultimately adopted by the convention.

popular sovereignty the principle that the legitimacy or right to rule is found in the approval of the people; hence, all political power resides with the people

It was ultimately agreed to modify Madison's Virginia Plan with its separation of powers, **popular sovereignty**, social contract and natural rights. The famous Connecticut Compromise was the result of the modifications. It was written by Roger Sherman and combined elements of the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan. Its innovation was to create a House of Representatives (lower house), with the number of representatives from each state based on its population, and a Senate (upper house, made up of two Senators per state) that represented the states. Together, these two houses would be known as Congress. Benjamin Franklin proposed two main modifications so that it was acceptable to the larger states:

1. a requirement that revenue bills would originate in the House of Representatives, which kept economic power in the hands of the house that directly represented the people (though the Senate would hold the power to amend these bills)
2. the separation of Senate delegations from state legislatures, so Senators would not vote in blocs as instructed by their states, but instead would be free to vote as their conscience dictated.

The United States Constitution

The United States Constitution was the culmination of revolutionary ideology and its application to governance. As previously mentioned, if James Otis believed there was a flaw in the British Constitution, then the Americans would set up a society based on 'English Liberty', and use Enlightenment-based revolutionary ideology to correct those flaws.

The structure of the New Society prescribed by the United States Constitution was based on the Enlightenment ideal of a 'Separation of Powers': the tripartite system suggested by Baron de Montesquieu in *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748), which described the separation of political power among a legislature, an executive and a judiciary. In the case of the United States, this meant Congress (the legislature), the President (the executive) and the Supreme Court (the judiciary). Each branch would act as democratic check on the others. The powers of the three branches are outlined in the first three articles of the United States Constitution.

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Article I: Congress (legislature)

Extract	Analysis
Section 1	
'All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.'	Governance would be based on the Enlightenment ideal of 'power emanating from the people' in the form of Congress, consisting of the Senate (representing the states) and the House of Representatives elected by voters, at least if you were free, had enough property and were male.
Section 2	
'The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.'	The method and rotation of appointment of the House of Representatives (the Lower House) was designed to avoid hereditary office and make members of the House of Representatives accountable to the populace through election. 'The Qualifications requisite for Electors [i.e. those allowed to vote] of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature', meant that electors for the federal House of Representatives would have to meet the same property qualifications as those allowed to vote in their respective state.
'Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons.'	This outlined the number of people each member of the House of Representatives would represent, and the amount of tax collected from them. Further, it stated (in somewhat veiled language) who would effectively miss out on the benefits of the new society (see Section 8.5).
'The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.'	The power of impeachment (the ability to charge the president with an offence) was given to the House of Representatives, again built upon the Enlightenment ideal of power emanating from the people. Effectively, only direct representatives of the people could try the president.
Section 3	
'The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.'	This outlined the structure and length of office of the Senate (the upper house) and rotation of appointment, again forming a check on hereditary power and potential tyranny.
'The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that Purpose, they shall be on Oath or Affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried the Chief Justice shall preside: And no Person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present.'	This gave power to try all Impeachments to the Senate, again separating the powers: only the House of Representatives could charge the president and only the Senate could try him or her. Note the use of 'When the President of the United States is tried'. The Founding Fathers wished to create a system that would continuously self-correct.

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Extract	Analysis
Section 8	
'The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;'	Congress had the power to deal with the economic problems that had crippled the Articles of Confederation government in the 1780s (see Section 7.6). It could now levy taxes in a way that the Articles of Confederation Government could not, thereby allowing for debts to be paid and a military force for defence to be supported.
'To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;'	Congress had the power to regulate trade with foreign nations and the states, remedying the ridiculous trade situations that had existed between the states during the Articles of Confederation Government. The statement 'and with the Indian Tribes' gives further insight into the perception of First Nation Americans as effectively a foreign nation (see Section 8.5).
'To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;'	The hyperinflation of the 1780s could effectively be avoided; instead of the 14 different currencies (one for each state and the Continental Army) there would now be one national currency (see Section 7.6).
'To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;'	This measure – whereby Congress had to approve funding for the army every two years – was designed to avoid the potential tyranny of a 'standing army' and to subordinate the military to civilian authority, thereby enacting Enlightenment ideals of the separation of powers.
'To provide and maintain a Navy;'	Congress could maintain a navy to protect the trade of the United States, which had been exposed to piracy in the 1780s due to the Articles of Confederation Government's inability to fund a navy (see Section 7.6).
'To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;'	Congress had the power to suppress insurrections such as Shays' Rebellion in 1786 (see Section 7.7).

Article II: The President (executive)

Extract	Analysis
Section 1	
'The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected.'	In order to avoid tyranny and the British system of Royal Patronage, presidential terms would be restricted to four-year terms and subject to elections.
Section 2	
'The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States.'	In a further embodiment of Enlightenment ideals of separation of powers, the military would be subordinate to a civilian authority.

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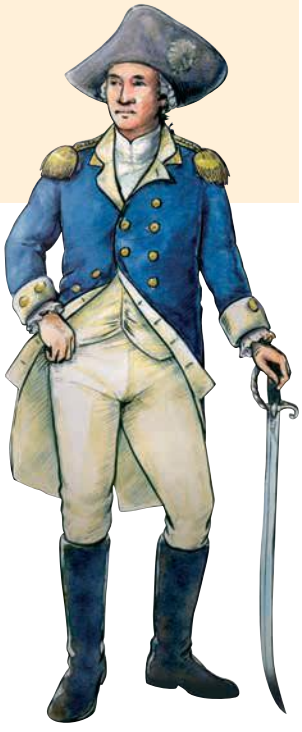
Extract	Analysis
Section 4	
'The President, Vice President and all Civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.'	All office holders in Congress and the presidency would be subject to impeachment – a further democratic check against tyranny.

Article III: The Supreme Court (judiciary)

Extract	Analysis
Section 1	
'The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish.'	A Supreme Court would preside over the new federal government's judicial powers.
Section 2	
'The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution, the Laws of the United States, and Treaties made, or which shall be made, under their Authority;—to all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public ministers and Consuls;—to all Cases of admiralty and maritime Jurisdiction;—to Controversies to which the United States shall be a Party;—to Controversies between two or more States;—between a State and Citizens of another State;—between Citizens of different States;—between Citizens of the same State claiming Lands under Grants of different States, and between a State, or the Citizens thereof, and foreign States, Citizens or Subjects.'	The Supreme Court basically could interpret laws passed by Congress. It had authority with any matter that involved the Federal Government of the United States.

VCAA Examination questions for AOS 2, Sections A or B, that ask you to make a commentary or analysis of the New Society require you to refer to the structure of the United States Government as outlined in the first three articles of the 1787 Constitution and the 1789 Bill of Rights (see Section 8.8).



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8.5 Who missed out on the benefits of the New Society?

Slavery

Slavery is such an atrocious debasement of human nature, that its very extirpation, if not performed with solicitous care, may sometimes open a source of serious evils. The unhappy man who has been treated as a brute animal, too frequently sinks beneath the common standard of the human species. The galling chains, that bind his body, do also fetter his intellectual faculties, and impair the social affections of his heart … To instruct, to advise, to qualify those, who have been restored to freedom, for the exercise and enjoyment of civil liberty … and to procure for their children an education calculated for their future situation in life; these are the great outlines of the annexed plan, which we have adopted.

Benjamin Franklin, 1789

Slavery was an obvious contradiction of the revolutionary ideology; it clearly violated the spirit of the *Declaration of Independence*, and many of the most famous southern Founding Fathers – including George Washington, Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson – were slave owners. By the early 1780s, slavery had been abolished in New England and Pennsylvania, essentially because the climate didn't suit the labour-intensive crops of the Southern states. And in the newly opened-up lands of the Northwest Territories (today's American Midwest), slavery was prohibited. However, in the South, it remained the basis of the economy, and the need to 'unite' the Northern and Southern states through a process of ratification (consent) meant the issue was 'whitewashed' in the creation of the Constitution. For example, the 'Three-fifths Clause' of Article I counted a slave as 'three-fifths of free other persons'. The effect of this was twofold: on the one hand it reduced the representation of the

Source 8.5 *The Old Plantation – Slaves on a Virginia Plantation*, Anonymous, circa 1785–95

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Southern states in the House of Representatives, which was based on proportional population; but on the other it reduced the apportioned tax liability of those same states. Compromises such as this would come back to haunt the Union. It also created yet another contradiction: how could property be counted towards direct representation in the House of Representatives?

A MATTER OF FACT

In a speech titled 'On the Compromises of the Constitution' in June 1788, Alexander Hamilton posed some questions about the constitutional treatment of slaves that harked back to the very reasons for revolution. 'They are men, though degraded to the condition of slavery. They are persons known to the municipal laws of the States which they inhabit, as well as to the laws of nature. But representation and taxation go together, and one uniform rule ought to apply to both. Would it be just to compute these slaves in the assessment of taxes, and discard them from the estimate in the apportionment of representatives? Would it be just to impose a singular burden without conferring some adequate advantage?'

A MATTER OF FACT

John Trumbull's painting also depicts William Lee, Washington's enslaved personal servant, who for many years spent more time in Washington's presence than any other man. Lee was an expert horseman, and fought alongside Washington throughout the Revolutionary War. According to historian Fritz Hirschfeld, Lee 'rode alongside Washington in the thick of battle, ready to hand over to the general a spare horse or his telescope or whatever else might be needed'. Lee was also the only one of Washington's slaves freed outright in Washington's will.

Source 8.6 *George Washington*, by John Trumbull, 1780

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Women

In British America, a variety of restrictions (depending on the colony) were placed on women:

- A woman's property became her husband's at the time of marriage.
- Women could not become judges, lawyers or jurors.
- Marriage was an unequal contract between master (husband) and servant (wife).
- Divorce was rare and difficult to get, often requiring a private bill passed by a colonial government.
- Daughters often only inherited moveable property rather than land.

The Revolution did ease some restrictions on women, but limits remained; for example, some states passed divorce laws, but they were still difficult for women to obtain, although in some states women found it easier to participate in trade. John Adams' wife, Abigail, feared the Revolution would amount to little if it did not lessen the power husbands had over wives. She wrote to her husband in March 1776: 'Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors.' As she put it, 'all Men would be tyrants if they could'.

Once consequence of the Revolution was the emergence of the ideal of a 'Republic Mother' (see Source 8.7), who was charged to remain in the domestic sphere (so as not to be tainted by society) and to prepare her husband and sons to act in a virtuous way in the public sphere.

Source 8.7 A depiction of the ideal Republican family, with the women in a nurturing domestic role. *The Artist and His Family*, by James Peale, 1795.

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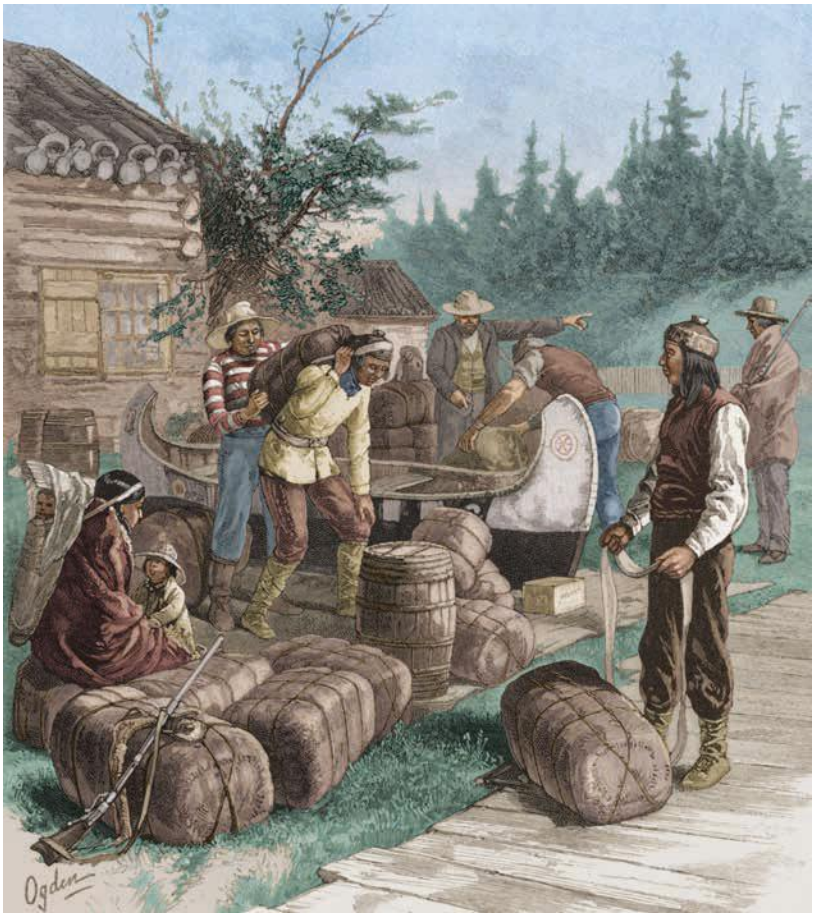
First Nations Americans

Events such as Pontiac's Rebellion (see Chapter 2) and the massacres of peaceful Conestoga tribespeople by a vigilante group called the Paxton Boys in Pennsylvania in 1763 would suggest deep hostility existed between British Americans and First Nations Americans, but it really depended on where the colonists were living. For example, individuals who had extensive contact with 'natives' were often impressed by their knowledge of the American environment and their willingness to engage in trade (see Source 8.8).

As war loomed, First Nations Americans wished to remain neutral, a stance that was supported by Congress; however, war inevitably came into First Nations territories and they were forced to take sides. Most tribes sided with the British, because they believed their future would be more secure under the Crown. These alliances were used against King George III, who was accused of bringing 'on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions'.

As a consequence, war between the Continental Army and the First Nations Americans was particularly brutal, and conflict between the groups continued after the Treaty of Paris in 1783, which ended the Revolutionary War. In fact, the Revolution actually increased the pace of the dispossession of the lands of First Nations Americans. For example, the Proclamation Line of 1763, which prevented settlers from moving beyond the Appalachian Mountains, was now defunct. In addition, Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution authorised Congress to 'regulate commerce with foreign nations … and with the Indian tribes', effectively classing them as a foreign nation. As a result, First Nations Americans had no standing in the American judicial system, and they would suffer greatly because of this in the years after the Revolution. The dispossession of the lands of First Nations Americans would continue for another 150 years.



Source 8.8 First Nations Americans trading furs

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8.6 Ratification Debates

Following the Pennsylvania Convention, the draft Constitution was taken to the people for discussion and approval. This process, which came to be known as the 'Ratification Debates', was seen to be a physical embodiment of Enlightenment and Revolutionary ideals: that the Constitution would be a social contract with the people. Power in the New Society of the United States would emanate from them.

Anti-Federalists

However, the approval of the Constitution faced stern opposition from a group of men who came to be known as Anti-Federalists. Their concerns included:

- the need for a decentralised system of authority
- threats to personal liberties
- threats to states' rights
- the potential for the misuse of corporate power
- that it would pave the way for a new aristocracy
- that the office of president could lead to the rise of another tyrant – this time indigenous.

The various writings of Americans who raised doubts about the United States Constitution in the late 1780s through to the early 1790s became known collectively as the Anti-Federalist Papers. These were written in opposition to the Federalists' papers. Major authors included George Mason of Virginia, Cato (likely George Clinton of New York), Brutus (likely Robert Yates of New York), Centinel (Samuel Bryan of Pennsylvania), the Federal Farmer (either Melancton Smith of New York, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia or Mercy Otis Warren of Massachusetts) and Patrick Henry of Virginia.

Source 8.9 George Clinton of New York most likely contributed to the Anti-Federalist Papers under the pen name of 'Cato'. *George Clinton*, by Ezra Ames, circa 1814.

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ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 8.1: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

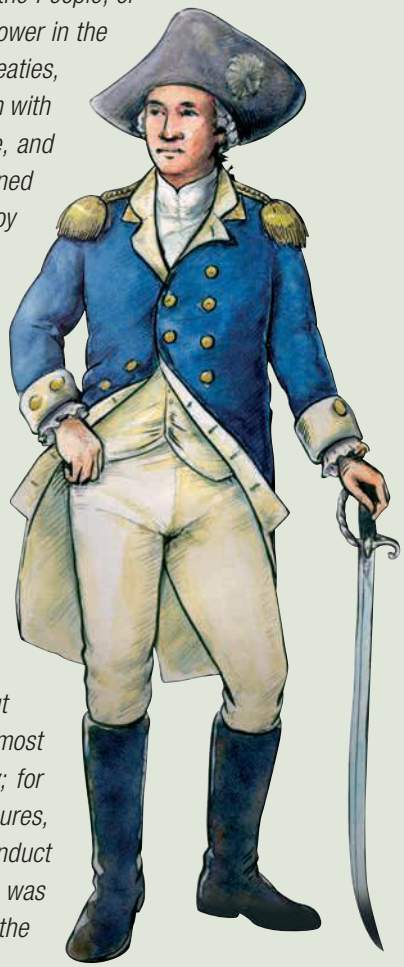
George Mason's objections: Letter to Washington, September 1787

Objections to The Constitution of Government formed by the Convention.

There is no Declaration of Rights; and the Laws of the general Government being paramount to the Laws and Constitution of the several States, the Declarations of Rights in the separate States are no Security. Nor are the people secured even in the Enjoyment of the Benefits of the common-Law which stands here upon no other Foundation than its having been adopted by the respective Acts forming the Constitutions of the several States.

In the House of Representatives there is not the Substance, but the Shadow only of Representation; which can never produce proper Information in the Legislature, or inspire Confidence in the people; the Laws will therefore be generally made by Men little concerned in, and unacquainted with their Effects and Consequences.

The Senate have the power of altering all Money-Bills, and of originating Appropriations of Money, and the Salaries of the officers of their own Appointment, in conjunction with the President of the United States; although they are not the Representatives of the People, or amenable to them. These with their other great powers (viz: their Power in the Appointment of Ambassadors and all public Officers, in making Treaties, and in trying all Impeachments) their Influence upon and Connection with the supreme Executive from these Causes, their Duration of Office, and their being a constant existing Body almost continually sitting, joined with their being one complete Branch of the Legislature, will destroy any Balance in the Government, and enable them to accomplish what Usurpations they please upon the Rights and Liberties of the People.



The Judiciary of the United States is so constructed and extended, as to absorb and destroy the Judiciaries of the several States; thereby rendering Law as tedious intricate and expensive, and Justice as unattainable, by a great Part of the Community, as in England, and enabling the Rich to oppress and ruin the Poor.

The President of the United States has no constitutional Council (a thing unknown in any safe and regular government) he will therefore be unsupported by proper Information and Advice; and will generally be directed by Minions and Favourites – or He will become a Tool to the Senate – or a Council of State will grow out of the principal Officers of the great Departments; the worst and most dangerous of all Ingredients for such a Council, in a free Country; for they may be induced to join in any dangerous or oppressive Measures, to shelter themselves, and prevent an Inquiry into their own misconduct in Office; whereas had a constitutional Council been formed (as was proposed) of six members; viz two from the Eastern, two from the

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Middle, and two from the Southern States, to be appointed by Vote of the States in the House of Representatives, with the same Duration and Rotation of Office as the Senate, the Executive wou'd always have had safe and proper Information and Advice, the President of such a council might have acted as Vice President of the United States, protempore, upon any Vacancy or Disability of the chief Magistrate; and long continued Sessions of the Senate wou'd in a great Measure have been prevented.

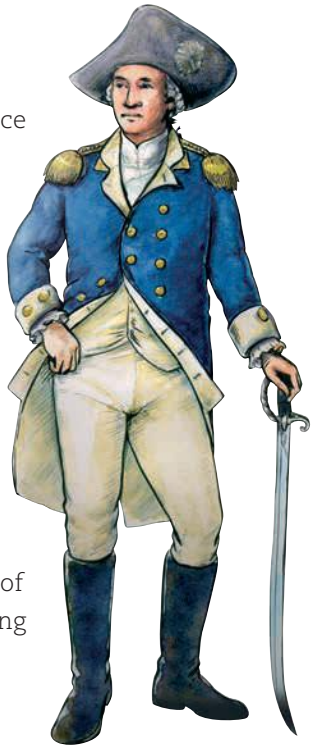
From this fatal Defect of a constitutional Council has arisen the improper Power of the Senate, in the Appointment of public Officers, and the alarming Dependence and Connection between that Branch of the Legislature, and the supreme Executive. Hence also sprung that unnecessary and dangerous Officer the Vice President; who for want of other Employment, is made President of the Senate; thereby dangerously blending the executive and legislative Powers; besides always giving to some one of the States an unnecessary and unjust Pre-eminence over the others.

1 What does Mason mean when he states 'the Judiciary of the United States is so constructed and extended, as to absorb and destroy the Judiciaries of the several States'?
2 What are three problems Mason has with the Constitution? Use quotes from the source document in your answer.
3 What is Mason's greatest concern regarding the position of the president?

Federalists

The advocates of a strong central government came to be known as the Federalists. In response to the Anti-Federalist cause, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay released a series of papers known as the Federalist Papers: 85 articles published in opposition to the 'anti-authoritarian spirit of '76' evident in the Anti-Federalists' arguments. They answered the Anti-Federalists' critique, arguing that the Constitution would:

- empower people
- outline voting procedures
- provide for the separation of powers, preventing any one body or office from assuming authority.



They also argued that a strong federal government could properly defend the republic in a way that the Articles of Confederation government almost failed to (see the discussion in Chapter 7). Further, the 18th-century argument that republics were suited to small cities and would fail in large countries was irrelevant because of the adoption of an 'extended republic': in a small republic factions dominate, but in an extended republic they cancel each other out. According to Madison, 'Ambition must be made to counteract ambition'.

Ultimately, the Bill of Rights (discussed in Section 8.8) cooled the opposition of the Anti-Federalists and the larger states, with the 10th amendment to the Bill of Rights, which confirmed the residual powers of the states. Virginia and New York, the two largest states, would be among the last to ratify.

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Source 8.10 An interpretation of the signing of the Constitution at the Philadelphia Convention, by Howard Chandler Christy, circa 1940

8.7 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL
George Mason (1725–1792)

- George Mason was elected to the Virginian legislature (the Virginia House of Burgesses) in 1759 and was a leader in the cause of American rights in opposition to British tyranny as the author of the 'Fairfax Resolves' in 1774.
- He was a member of the Virginia Convention of 1775–76, where he drafted the Virginian Declaration of Rights and a good part of the Virginian Constitution; he was also active in the work leading up to the Philadelphia Convention that framed the United States Constitution. However, he did not sign the Constitution and opposed its ratification due to fear of inadequate limits on federal power to prevent tyranny, and urged the addition of a Bill of Rights.

Source 8.11 George Mason

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- Mason was also one of the principal slave owners (along with Washington and Jefferson) who deplored the existence of slavery and favoured abolition, with compensation by government to owners of freed slaves.
- His opposition to the Constitution formed the basis of the Anti-Federalists' cause. His letter to Washington (see Analysis Activity 8.1 earlier in the chapter) outlines the majority of the problems below; most other Anti-Federalists line up with at least one of his views.

Anti-Federalist	Their problems with the Constitution	Federalist response
• George Mason, Virginia • 'Agrippa' (probably James Winthrop, Massachusetts)	Lack of a Declaration of Rights: the Revolutionary and Enlightenment ideal that power emanated from the people means a declaration of rights is needed to protect them	The Bill of Rights
• George Mason • Agrippa • Luther Martin, New York	Believed that the Constitution didn't guarantee individual rights	The Bill of Rights Amendments I–IX
• George Mason • Patrick Henry, Virginia	Believed that the Constitution didn't guarantee states' rights	Federalist Paper 17: Hamilton states, 'The people of each state would be apt to feel a stronger bias towards their local governments than towards the government of the union.' For this reason, Hamilton was of the opinion that the backing of the people would help state governments to resist interference with their state rights. Bill of Rights Amendment X
• George Mason	Was critical of judicial powers; that the federal judiciary would be more powerful than the states' judiciaries	Federalist Paper 78: Hamilton identifies the judicial arm of the proposed government as the weakest of the three branches for having 'no influence over either the sword or the purse … It may truly be said to have neither FORCE nor WILL, but merely judgment'. Congress was in control of the purse, while the president had ultimate power over the military, so there was little concern that the judiciary would be able to overpower either of them.
• George Mason	Believed Senate terms were too long	Federalist Papers 62 and 63: Madison argues that the Senate constitutes a necessary and stable element of the government that is vital to uphold strong and lasting relationships with other nations. He argues that the Senate's six-year terms gives Senators adequate time to be responsible for their actions and they themselves act as fair checks on the people; for even though they are usually just, they are also 'subject to the [periodic] infection of violent passions'.

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Anti-Federalist	Their problems with the Constitution	Federalist response
		Madison provides historical examples of republics with Senators who were elected for life. It is this model that threatens the liberty of the people, and he uses this to justify the six-year terms in the Constitution, arguing the limited terms meant that the Senate combined stability with the principle of liberty.
• George Mason	Critical that the office of President was not supported by a council (like Governor in Virginia), so could fall under the control of a 'minion' or the Senate Further, the power of pardon of Article II would allow him to set free people with whom he had committed a crime	Federalist Paper 69: Hamilton compares the President's powers with those of the King of Britain. He argues that while there are similarities, the King ultimately has much greater power than the President, for his power 'would be nominally the same with that of the King of Great Britain but in substance much inferior to it. It would amount to nothing more than the supreme command and direction of the military and naval forces as first general and admiral of the confederacy; while that of the British king extends to the declaring of war and to the raising and regulating of fleets and armies; all which by the constitution under consideration would appertain to the Legislature'.
• Richard Henry Lee, Virginia • The Federal Farmer (Likely Melancton Smith, New York; Richard Henry Lee, Virginia; or Mercy Otis Warren, Massachusetts)	Believed that the Federal government had too much power	Federalist Paper 23: The principal purpose of the Union, according to Hamilton, is 'the common defence of the members – the preservation of the public peace as well against internal convulsions [e.g. Shays' Rebellion] as external attacks [e.g. the British]; the regulation of commerce with other nations and between the States; the superintendence of our intercourse, political and commercial, with foreign countries.' Hamilton argued that giving the federal government less than complete power would be 'improvidently to trust the great interests of the nation to hands which are disabled from managing them with vigor and success'.

Focus questions

1 Of all of the arguments the Anti-Federalists proposed, which do you find the most convincing? Why?
2 Many of the Anti-Federalists came from Virginia and other Southern states. Why is that significant?

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8.8 The Bill of Rights

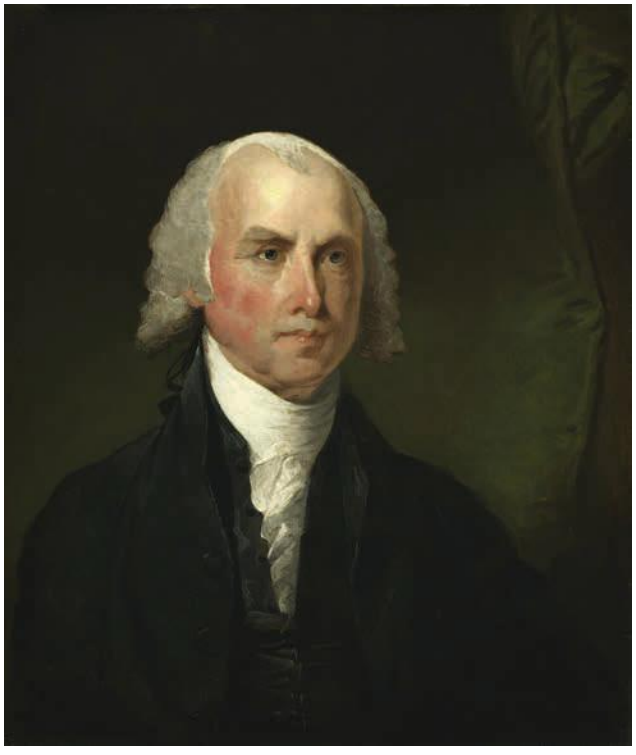
It came time to ratify the Constitution, to submit to a vote in state conventions, with approval of nine of the thirteen required to ratify it … The Constitution became even more acceptable to the public at large after the first Congress, responding to criticism, passed a series of amendments known as the Bill of Rights. These amendments seemed to make the new government a guardian of the people's liberties: to speak, to publish, to worship, to petition, to assemble, to be tried fairly, to be secure at home against official intrusion. It was therefore, perfectly designed to build popular backing for the new government.

What was not made clear – it was a time when the language of freedom was new and its reality untested – was the shakiness of anyone's liberty when entrusted to a government of the rich and powerful.

Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States 1492–Present*, pp. 98–101

The adoption of the Bill of Rights served to answer many of the fears of the states and Anti-Federalists. The states wished to see clauses included that protected their rights; while the American colonists fought to retain their birthrights to English liberty under the law, causing George Mason to utter: 'We claim nothing but the Liberty and privileges of Englishmen.' Eleven states already had created declarations of rights alongside their constitutions, and James Madison pledged to Continental Congress to introduce a form of the Bill (only ratified afterwards). The response was immediate, the 'spirit of freedom aroused by the American Revolution had been rekindled'; it would become a 'symbol for the new nation's commitment to liberty under the law'.

Based on the Virginian Declaration of Rights and ratified in 1791 with 10 amendments, the Bill of Rights came to be known as the 'most admirable aspect of American law-making' and the 'cornerstone of American civil liberty'.



Source 8.12 *James Madison*, by Gilbert Stuart, circa 1821

A MATTER OF FACT

*Ultimately, the Bill of Rights protect three different types of human rights: (1) **rights of conscience**, including the First Amendment's freedom of speech and religion; (2) **rights of those accused of crimes**, such as the Eighth Amendment's protection against excessive bail and fines; and (3) **rights of property**, such as the Fifth Amendment's provision that no one may be deprived of property without 'due process of law'.*

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Source 8.13 The Bill of Rights, amendments

Text	Embodiment of Revolutionary ideology
Amendment I Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.	This essentially incorporated Jefferson's Statute for Religious Freedom into the Bill of Rights.
Amendment II A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.	This reflected the needs of the period of 'salutary neglect', where 'internal sovereignty' was assured by the ability of each colony to defend itself with its own militia. According to the colonies, this was the only appropriate way to defend liberty (as opposed to a standing army). Further, actions taken by royal governors (such as in Lexington-Concord, where the British had attempted to disarm the local populace) were now illegal. There was now (famously – or infamously) 'the right of the people to keep and bear Arms'.
Amendment III No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.	British actions under the *Quartering Act*, whereby soldiers were quartered in towns across British America, were now illegal.
Amendment IV The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.	James Otis' 'Writs of Assistance Case' of 1761 was now embodied within the law.
Amendment V No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.	This reflected the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights: life, liberty and estate (property).

(continued)

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Text	Embodiment of Revolutionary ideology
Amendment VI In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence.	This was a response to the infamous 'Murder Act' (the *Administration of Justice Act 1774*), whereby the accused could be transferred away to another British colony or to Great Britain to assure trials more conducive to the Crown, avoiding the anti-British prejudices of local juries.
Amendment VII In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.	This reflected the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights: life and liberty.
Amendment VIII Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.	This reflected the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights: life and liberty.
Amendment IX The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.	This reflected the Enlightenment ideal of natural rights: life and liberty; that is, the Constitution couldn't be used as a justification for denying others their natural rights.
Amendment X The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.	This ensured that the United States government would differ from the British Parliament in that it would guarantee the sovereignty of the states, acknowledging their 'internal sovereignty' in a way the British Government had not.

Source 8.14 Amendment II to the Bill of Rights granted the right 'to keep and bear Arms' for the American people – still a contentious issue today.

Focus question

Discuss and explain how the Bill of Rights answered the Anti-Federalists' arguments.

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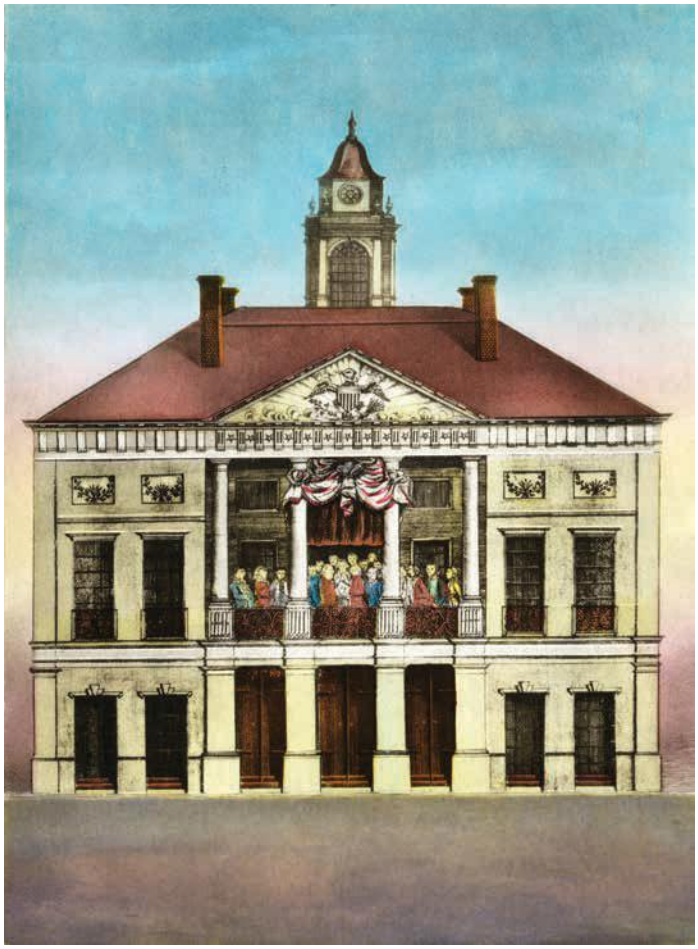
8.9 The President of the United States, 1789

George Washington was inaugurated as the first President of the United States on 30 April 1789. Robert Livingston, the Chancellor of New York, swore him in, following the ratification of the Constitution. It was the first of Washington's two terms as President (with John Adams in the role of Vice President). The office had been essentially created with him in mind. His status as a war hero and vanquisher of the British, his action of laying down military office, his impartial chairing of the Philadelphia Convention and his Southern origins made him the mortar for the newly created nation.



Source 8.15 Two images of the inauguration of George Washington as President: **Left:** *Federal Hall, NY*, by Amos Doolittle, 1789; **Right:** *The Inauguration of President George Washington*, by Nathaniel Currier, 1876

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ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 8.2: VISUAL ANALYSIS

Source 8.16 *America Guided by Wisdom*, by Benjamin Tanner, circa 1815

Examine Source 8.16 and answer the following questions:

1 What is depicted on the shield? Discuss what it represents and its significance.
2 Who is the standing female figure wearing the crested helmet? What does she represent?
3 How does this image depict the prosperity of the New Society created by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights?
4 Do you think the image accurately depicts the problems that were inherent in the New Society? Why or why not?

The story so far

- After the blow of Shays' Rebellion, delegates from the states met for the Annapolis Convention in 1786, the 'Meeting of Commissioners to Remedy Defects of the Federal Government'. This meeting led to the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 where a new government was created through the Constitution.
- Despite contradicting revolutionary ideology, slavery continued in the South, with slaves being recognised as only three-fifths of a citizen in the Constitution. The Revolution also failed to ease

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many restrictions on women, whose property and marriage rights remained unequal to men's. Conflict with First Nations Americans continued after the Treaty of Paris in 1783 and resulted in First Nations Americans having no standing in the American judicial system and suffering the continued dispossession of their lands.

- Ratification debates began in the 1780s with Anti-Federalists opposing the constitution in favour of decentralised authority and states' rights, and Federalists advocating strong central government with a constitution to empower the people. George Mason, a prominent Anti-Federalist, insisted upon the existence of a Bill of Rights and refused to sign the Constitution due to his fear that federal power would not have adequate limitations.
- Eventually the Bill of Rights, comprising 10 amendments to the Constitution, was adopted as a way to address the fears of the states and Anti-Federalists. It became an enduring symbol of the United States' commitment to liberty.
- Subsequently, George Washington became the first President of the United States after being inaugurated in 1789.

CHAPTER REVIEW

DEVELOPING CLEAR DEFINITIONS

Write explanations defining each of the following:

Significant ideas and events	Significant individuals
Annapolis Convention (1786)	George Mason
Philadelphia Convention (1787)	Alexander Hamilton
Ratification	James Madison
Anti-Federalists	
Federalists	
Bill of Rights	
Presidency	

PRACTISING PARAGRAPH ANSWERS

1 Why were so many of the Anti-Federalists Virginians?

2 What were the main arguments of the Federalists?

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3 Did the New Society benefit everyone?

4 How were the Anti-Federalists won over to the Federal cause?

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1 Did the American Revolution cause major changes to their society? Discuss this view, providing evidence to support your answer.

2 'The society created by the Founding Fathers was to be based on liberty.' To what extent do you believe this to be true? Provide evidence to support your answer.

ONLINE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

Easy

'American Revolution Topics', Alpha History (see the link at http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/?id=6108).

READING MORE DEEPLY

Easy

Bailyn, B., '*Postscript*. Fulfilment: A Commentary on the Constitution', *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, The Belknap Press, Cambridge, 1967, Enlarged edition, 1992, pp. 321–79.

Moderate

Pearsall, S., 'Women in the American Revolutionary War', in E. Gray & J. Kamensky, Eds, *The Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, pp. 273–90.

Challenging

Beard, C., *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, 1913.

Progressive historian Charles Beard examines the underlying motives of the Founding Fathers and suggests they were more influenced by financial concerns than the oft-lauded life, liberty and estate ideals of the Enlightenment.

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9

Area of Study 2, 1776–1789: Exam questions and answers

> *… feeble communities, independent of each other, have resorted to a Union … for the common safety ag[ain]st powerful neighbors, and for the preservation of peace and justice among themselves.*
>
> JAMES MADISON, PREFACE TO NOTES OF DEBATES IN THE FEDERAL CONVENTION OF 1787

OVERVIEW

This chapter will give you some guidance on how to complete the VCE Exam for the American Revolution in Section A or B of Area of Study 2 (AOS 2). These answers have been gleaned from former students who have mastered the material and performed well in both SACs and the VCE. You can a model an appropriate answer and can use this when you are preparing for SACs and the final exam.

One way to get a handle on the scope of the Revolutions course is to break down what you need to know into a manageable spreadsheet. Copy the following crib sheet for the AOS 2 Course (1776–1789) onto one A4 sheet and do the same for AOS 1 (1754–1776; see Chapter 5). Paste it on your wall at home, on cards, on the front of your workbook, or on your phone, tablet computer or laptop – wherever helps you study – and you will always have a quick refresher at your fingertips. The Revolutions course means you can be assessed on any idea, event, leader, popular movement or group, and historical interpretations surrounding these issues, so you have to cover all of these scenarios, plus a few challenging left-field possibilities, in your preparation. We want you to enjoy the great story of America, but we also want you to pass the very challenging VCE final examination that you face in November. This spreadsheet will help you contextualise the questions and sources you will be asked in that paper. Note the questions in bold type have been covered in the VCE final examination over the period 2005–2014.

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Source 9.1 VCE American Revolutions History Course, Area of Study 2,1776–1789

Events	Leaders	Ideas	Groups/movements	Documents	Historians
1776: Battle of Long Island **Crossing the Delaware – Battle of Trenton**	**General Howe** **George Washington**	Liberty Nationalism Patriotism	**Continental Army**	1776: Thomas Paine's *American Crisis*	Hugh Brogan
1777–1781: Articles of Confederation	John Dickinson	Liberty		1777: Articles of Confederation	Edward Countryman
1778: Saratoga and the French Alliance Valley Forge	Benjamin Franklin George Washington Prussian General Baron von Steuben	Nationalism Patriotism	Continental Army	1776: Thomas Paine's *American Crisis*	Hugh Brogan
1781: Yorktown	General Clinton **George Washington** Lafayette	Liberty Nationalism	Continental Army		Gordon Wood
1783: Treaty of Paris **Newburg Conspiracy**	George Washington Benjamin Franklin				Edward Countryman
1786: Shays' Rebellion Annapolis Convention	Daniel Shays Alexander Hamilton, John Dickinson and James Madison	Natural rights Liberty	Convention		Howard Zinn
1787: Philadelphia Convention	Alexander Hamilton, George Washington and James Madison	Enlightenment and revolutionary ideals: separation of powers and natural rights	Convention	New Jersey Plan Virginia Plan The Constitution	Howard Zinn, Hugh Brogan and Gordon Wood
1787–90: Constitutional ratificaiton	Patrick Henry Alexander Hamilton and James Madison	Anti-Federalist Federalist	States	The Constitution Federalist Papers Anti-Federalist Papers	Howard Zinn and Gordon Wood
1789–91: Bill of Rights	James Madison	Federalism	States		Gordon Wood
1789: Inauguration of Washington as First President of the United States	George Washington	Federalism			

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Events	Leaders	Ideas	Groups/movements	Documents	Historians
	George Washington	**Nationalism Patriotism Federalism**	**Continental Army**		Hugh Brogan
	John Dickinson	Natural rights	Congress/ Conventions	1777: Articles of Confederation	Edward Countryman
	Benjamin Franklin	Nationalism Federalism	Congress		
	Thomas Jefferson	Revolutionary and Enlightenment ideals Anti-Federalism		1776: *Declaration of Independence* 1777: **Virginia *Statute for Religious Freedom***	
	James Madison Alexander Hamilton John Jay	Federalism	Congress/ Conventions	1787: The Constitution 1789: Bill of Rights 1787–88: Federalist Papers	Gordon Wood
	Patrick Henry Samuel Adams	Anti-Federalist	**Congress/ Conventions**	1780–1790s: Anti-Federalist Papers	Edward Countryman

Source 9.2 Cannons today at the Valley Forge National Historical Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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9.1 AOS 2, Section A

right wing relating to belief systems that prioritise tradition, perceive social hierarchy as inevitable or even desirable, and support economic deregulation and the rights of the individual to pursue their own economic and social goals

left wing relating to belief systems that are usually progressive, idealistic, future thinking and invested in social justice by promoting equality and the rights of disadvantaged members of society

In this first part of the examination paper, students are required to analyse an image or document from the period 1776 to 1789. This is considered to be a discriminating question and is designed to challenge all students. It is divided into four parts.

- Parts a and b test comprehension, and are worth two marks each. They require you to identify key points, ideas, arguments or assumptions made in the source.
- Part c tests analysis skills and is worth six marks. It requires you to quote from the extract and demonstrate your knowledge of the period by going beyond the source, placing it in context and introducing evidence relevant to the source that is not in the source.
- Part d is a critical evaluation exercise and is worth 10 marks. It requires you to critique the image or document, assessing its reliability, strengths and limitations, positive or negative viewpoint, and its political provenance (e.g. **right wing** or **left wing**), along with its accuracy, completeness and assumptions. You need to provide evidence for your answer, as well as acknowledging the existence of different points of view, different interpretations and any significant omissions.

Past questions

Full VCE exam papers are available online (access via http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/?id=5891), but here's a summary of VCE questions for AOS 2, Section A, from 2005 to 2014.

Source 9.3 VCE American Revolutions History Course, Area of Study 2, 1776–89

Year	Question
2005	Edward Countryman, *The American Revolution*, 1985 (structure of the New Society)
2006	The United States Constitution (structure of the New Society)
2007	Letter of George Washington to John Jay, 1 August 1786 (problems with the Articles of Confederation Government)
2008	John Howe, 'Republican thought and the political violence of the 1790s', *American Quarterly*, 1967 (problems with the Articles of Confederation and the 1787 Constitution Convention)
2009	Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*, 1988 (structure of the New Society and *Declaration of Independence*, especially plight of those who weren't included in the structure)
2010	Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 1991 (structure of the New Society and its ideological connection to the Enlightenment)
2011	'The Pillar of the Great Federal Edifice rises daily', anonymous cartoon in the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 30 January 1788 (Constitutional Convention and Ratification Debates)
2012	Morton Borden, *Parties and Politics in the Early Republic, 1789–1815* (the United States Constitution)
2013	Howard Chandler Christy, *Scene at the Signing of the Constitution of the United States*, 1940, painting (the United States Constitution)
2014	Benjamin Tanner, *America Guided by Wisdom*, circa 1815, engraving (structure of the New Society)

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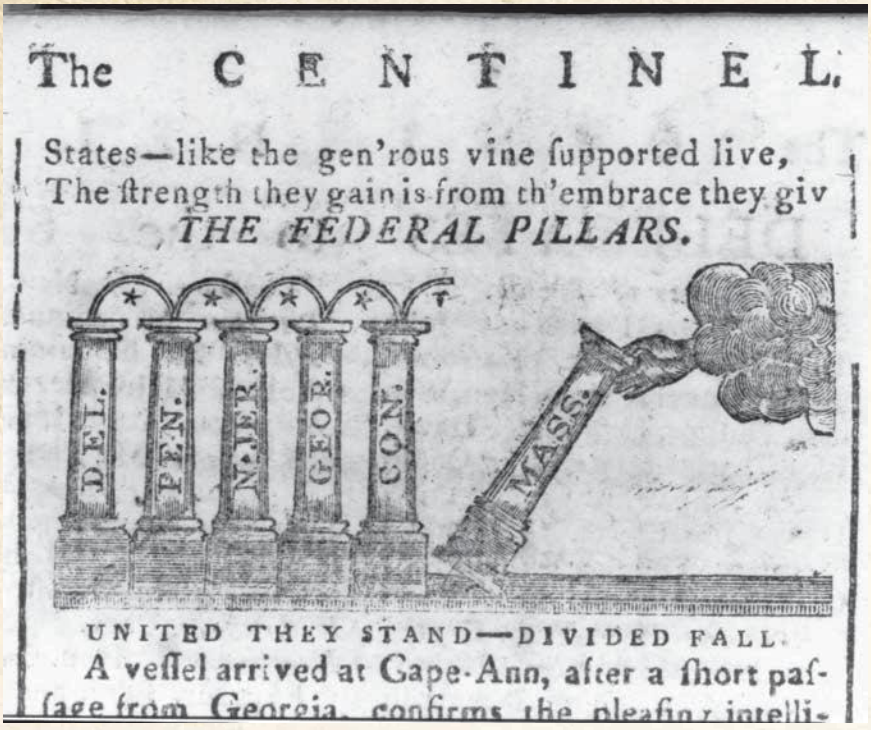
9.2 Sample answers

This section is designed to help you prepare for your assessments by modelling possible responses to VCE-style exam questions. Here is a series of sample responses to typical questions from AOS 2, Section A of the VCE exam.

SAMPLE ANSWER: VISUAL ANALYSIS



Source 9.4 'The Federal Pillars', published in *The Massachusetts Centinel*, 16 January 1788

a Identify two features from the depiction that suggest that there was popular support for the image.

1 The fact that what is ostensibly the hand of God is erecting the pillars for the superstructure is showing that even God supports the Constitution.

2 That there are already some states that have had their pillars erected; ergo, they are in support of the Constitution, with more on the way.

b Identify two features from the depiction that refer to the conflict that was involved in the Ratification Debates of 1787.

1 The very fact that the erection of a federal government in America requires God's assistance is indicative that it will require metaphysical 'godly' power to achieve this mighty feat.

2 That only six out of 13 states have accepted the Constitution (five erect, and one being erected).

c Using the image and your own knowledge discuss the difficulties and problems that arose during the Ratification debates.

The Founding Fathers, who, in the words of Jefferson, were 'demigods', achieved an amazing feat by creating a governing system for a newly formed nation that was in the midst of many problems that could have prevented its ratification in any

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states. The image demonstrates the magnitude of this feat by the very fact that not only do the 'The Federal Pillars' appear to be sturdy, but they are being erected by God Himself. The very point of the Revolution was to fight against tyranny for 'liberty'; however, what many Anti-Federalists saw was – as Patrick Henry said – 'a rat'; the rat being the fears that the Constitution would wrest all power away from the states and place it in the hands of America's nouveau riche: the gentry. This lack of a power balance was coupled with laws written into the Constitution on who may vote and be elected, namely, the aforementioned gentry of America, and this was seen by such enlightenment figures as being little more than a new aristocracy of Washington's and Franklin's replacing the Hutchinson's of yore. Furthermore, there was the issue of human rights to be settled. While the Constitution itself did not contain a strict set of Amendments that would protect the basic rights of her citizens, the Anti-Federalists pushed for a Bill of Rights to be included in the Constitution, ensuring that the people of America would have God-given rights to protect their liberty and newfound 'freedom'. As for rights, there was the deliberate lack of rights for minorities such as the Indians – who were to be dispossessed to put it lightly – to appease the land speculators, and also the Southern states whose fears of losing their rights to hold slaves (the 'right' they came into the war for) would be taken away. Finally, the civil unrest among the people, epitomised by Shays' Rebellion, and the Army's attempt to overthrow the government, compounded the fears of what some called 'counter-revolutions' taking place, and a Civil War breaking out to decide on the rights and amend America's problems that would eventually be settled in the Constitution.

d Evaluate the extent this image accurately portrays the nature of the Ratification Debates between 1787 and 1789. Refer to other historians' views.

The Ratification Debates of 1787–88 are best surmised by looking at the airing of grievances by the Anti-Federalists. The extract does give the reader a period, first-hand perspective on what a person from Massachusetts would have thought of this new 'Federal Superstructure', aided by God himself in its inception, which is, as right-wing historians like Bailyn, Wood and Brogan would point out, 'unquestionably the crowning act of the Revolution'. Just look at what it accomplished: it appeased the gentry class land owners by giving them the freedom to expand, it created a unified currency system, wiped the debts of those who fought for their country and, most of all, put in place what is ostensibly a democratic government that unified the states and is still effective today. While these views are very much valid, it is important to look at more moderate and left-wing historians' views that more or less mirror the arguments by Anti-Federalists during the Debates. For example, the freedom to 'expand' America came at a great cost to a people, as Zinn would point out – where this extract and highly right-wing historians would overlook the very fact that America's 'Manifest Destiny' and expansion west came at the cost of the destruction of the Native American culture and people by way of massacres. Not only that, but the rights that were given to the people only extended so far as white Americans with money. As Countryman and Zinn point out, these 'minority' classes (African-Americans, First Nations Americans, the poor – mostly former soldiers – and women) were given no rights at all, with First Nations Americans being not even considered and any slaves deemed to be 3/5ths a human. While the belief that the Founding Fathers were 'demigods' is more or less an exaggeration of the magnitude of their accomplishment, the very fact that, as Wood points out, these men were 'kept in check' by the Anti-Federalists is important to note. So while Washington would free his slaves at death, and would wipe the debts of all former soldiers, there were still others like Henry who despite his preaching that all men are created equal, would hold slaves until his death. However, the arguments for the people's rights to be included in a document did bear seed and would appease them in the form of the Constitution's brother document, the Bill of Rights. Even the unification of the states had many questioning the true democratic nature of the government. As Countryman states, it could 'not be considered Democratic even by today's standards' and that even though it 'had the people's consent, it did not have their involvement'. This of course referred to the fears that the states, who previously held all the power and required a unanimous vote under the Articles of Confederation for a law to be passed, feared that the government would become an American aristocracy club where only those who met the Property Qualification of $20,000 could have any say, and even though it did for many years remain like this, the undeniable fact that America required, and is still functioning under the same system today, is a testament to the achievement of the creation of America's 'Federal Superstructure' in the Constitution.

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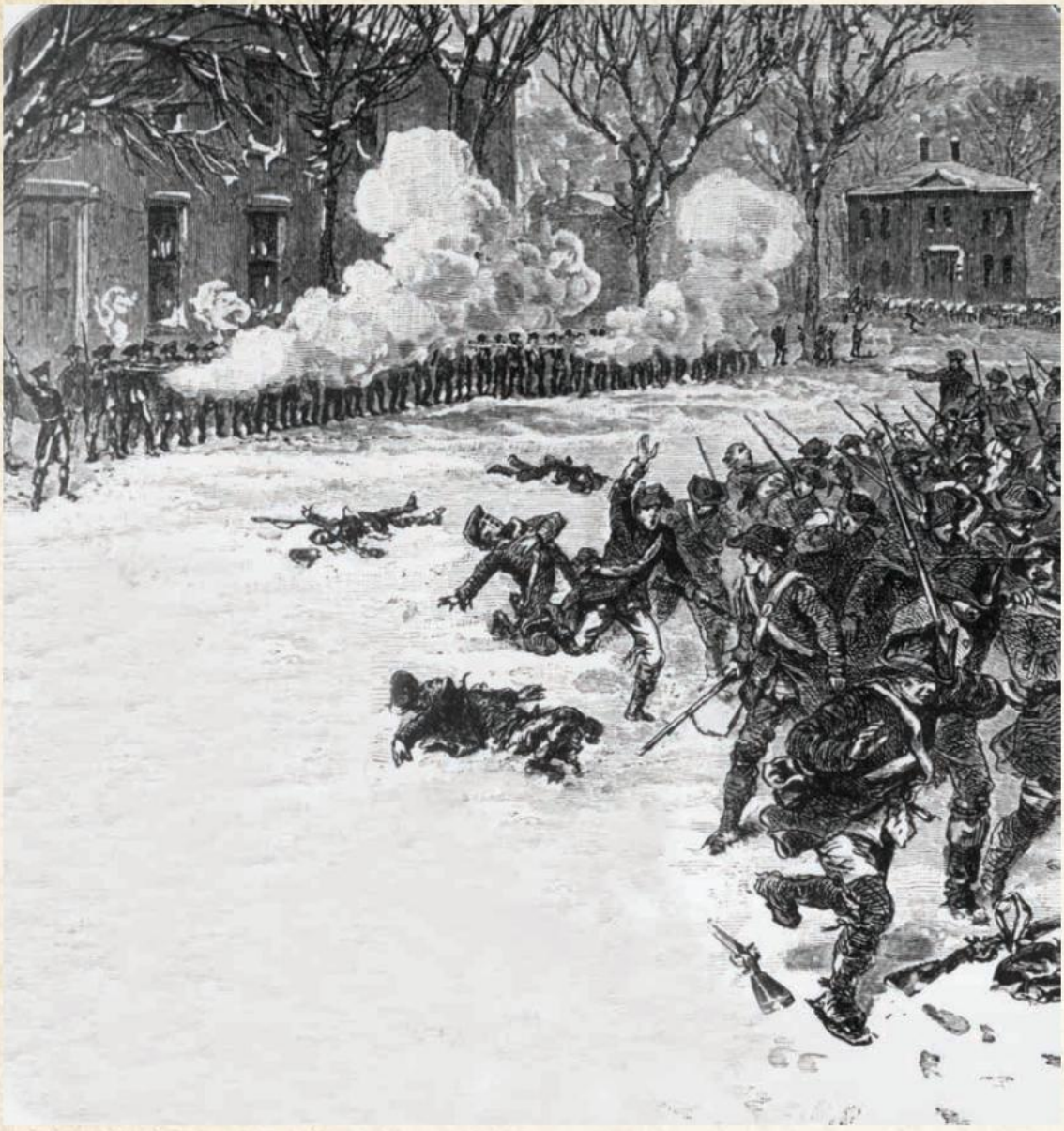
SAMPLE QUESTION: VISUAL ANALYSIS



Source 9.5 Image of Shays' Rebellion being put down by General Lincoln

a Name two groups that are represented in the drawing.
b Name two ways the representation portrays opposition to the Massachusetts Government.
c Using your own knowledge and the document explain the causes of the event depicted in the representation.
d To what extent is this representation useful in understanding the problems within the New Society in 1783–86? Refer to other historians' views.

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9.3 AOS 2, Section B

In this second part of the examination paper, students are required to complete an essay on the formation of the New Society. It is worth 20 marks. Below is the suggested essay structure.

- First, work out exactly what the topic is asking you so that you can establish a clear contention.
- Look for key words and terms.
- The topic could consist of several different elements; make sure you address each!

Introduction (one paragraph)

- Briefly discuss the historical context related to the topic, but avoid adding too much material here as it will likely be out of the area of study.
- Establish a clear contention that fully addresses the topic. Hint: use key words and terms from the topic.
- Briefly outline your supporting arguments, drawing one argument (often the topic sentence) from each of the body paragraphs. Avoid the overt use of historical evidence; save this for the body paragraphs.

Body (three or four paragraphs)

- For each of these paragraphs, devise a topic sentence that explores and supports your contention.
- Use historical evidence and discussion – events, dates, issues, statistics, leaders and historical figures.
- Link the discussion of evidence back to your contention.
- In your body paragraphs, it is advisable to include another historian's view that provides confirmation of your position and a counter-argument to your case; however, analysis of it should return to your position.
- Remember, the vast bulk of your content should be your analysis of primary historical evidence; do not rely on other historians' views to establish your case.

Conclusion

- This should be a brief summation and synopsis of your case (based on topic sentences from your paragraphs).
- Include a closing statement that reiterates and fully addresses the topic. Hint: emphasise in this statement anything you wish the examiner to focus on.

Past questions

Full VCE exam papers are available online (access via http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/?id=5891).

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9.4 Sample questions

This section is designed to help you prepare for your assessments by modelling possible responses to VCE-style exam questions. Here is a series of practice questions from AOS 2, Section B of the VCE exam.

1 Many historical schools of thought believe that the New Society created by the Revolution was the culmination of Enlightenment ideals. To what extent is this true? Use evidence to support your answer.

2 'In the decades following the Revolution, America changed so much and so rapidly that Americans not only became used to change, but came to expect and prize it.'

Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic*, 1789–1815

– To what extent did the American Revolution create a New Society?

3 The preamble to the United States Constitution states, 'We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union'. To what extent did the Constitution and the Bill of Rights set up a 'perfect Union'?

Source 9.6 In 2006 historical re-enactors commemorated the 225th anniversary of the Victory of Yorktown, Virginia during the Revolutionary War.

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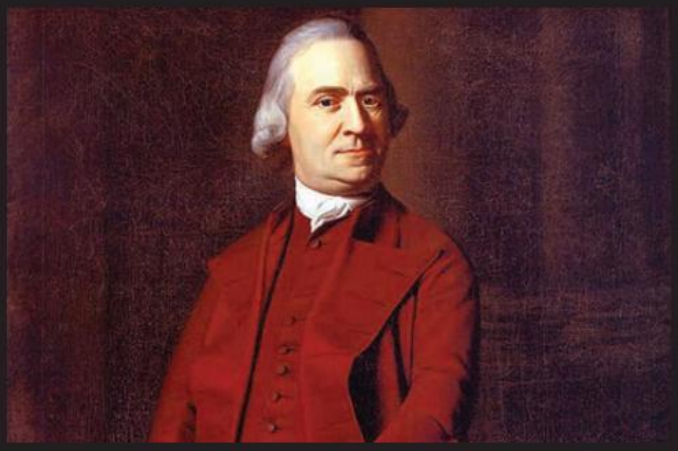

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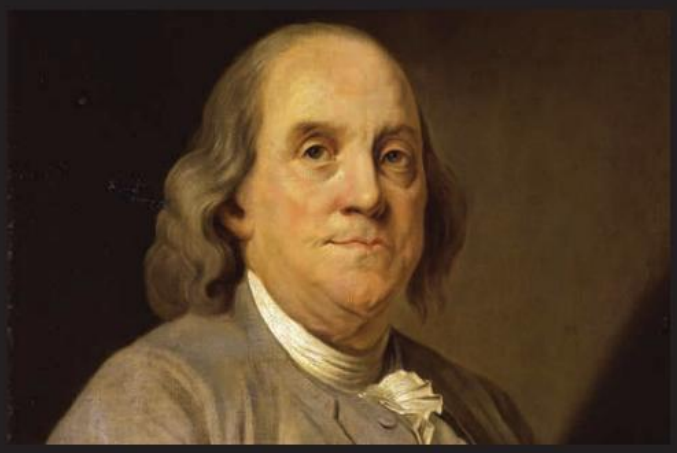

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part three

The Revolution in retrospect

> *Who shall write the history of the American Revolution? Who can write it? … Who will ever be able to write it?*
>
> – JOHN ADAMS, 1815

OVERVIEW

Now that you have studied the dramatic narrative of the revolutionary birth of the United States of America, you will be better placed to answer the question that opened this book: 'Why study America?' One reason is because it helps to shed some light on the state of our world today. America dominates the world much in the same ways that the Romans did in the Ancient World at the peak of their powers around the time of Caesar and Jesus. As publisher Henry Luce first pointed out in a *Time Magazine* editorial in February 1941, the 20th century was the 'American century'. However, in his great book *Civilisation*, historian Niall Ferguson teases out the fact that we are witnessing a changing of the guard and that America's 100 years of being the world's supreme superpower is in a state of flux. Whether America's dominance is still being consolidated, has plateaued or is in a state of decline is the thrust of Ferguson's book. The Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French, British and now the Americans have all had their place in the sun. Will the 21st century be truly an 'Asian century' of China and India supplanting the United States as some politicians tell us? Only time will tell.

Chapter 10 summarises the key interpretations of the American Revolution as a whole. It offers guidance in analysing the differing views of various historians, each of whom has offered their particular perspectives of the Revolution. The chapter includes a useful bank of quotes from key historians on various events in the Revolution that can assist your research and revision.

Source 10.1 Flag of the United States of America

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10

Historical interpretations, 1754–1789

> *All history is present history in the sense that the concerns of the present are bound somehow to affect the way history is studied and written. All history is also personal, since it is impossible to avoid the influence of one's own opinions and prejudices on the selection and emphasis of one's historical material.*
>
> – HISTORIAN PAUL CARTLEDGE

OVERVIEW

As mentioned near the end of Chapter 1, you are required to write about historical interpretations and historians' individual opinions in your assessments in the VCE. The critical question of the history discipline is: why do historians choose to prioritise or emphasise some features of the past to draw their conclusions? The answer, as Paul Cartledge suggests, lies in the fact that history is 'personal': try as we may, our own life experience and subsequent bias colours how we interpret and select the evidence we base our historical analyses on.

The American Revolution has always been a controversial issue to write on in the United States. As historians Edward G. Gray and Jane Kamensky recently argued, American histories of the Revolution 'are, at their deepest level, origin stories, which is one reason so many books about the Revolution have the word birth in their titles' (pp. 2–3). Essentially, the study of the American Revolution in America is tied into the American 'creation myth' – patriotic ideas of the birth of the nation. As Niall Ferguson states in his work, *Empire: How Britain made the Modern World*, America's creation myth is based on a justified struggle against an 'evil empire' to create a society based on liberty.

This myth is reinforced every morning at every school across the United States, as young Americans pledge allegiance to their nation's flag. The United States was created with the Enlightenment ideal of 'power emanating from the people', and central to this concept is the duty to behave with 'civic virtue' and to serve the Republic – which young Americans pledge to do every morning. Thus, questioning the United States' 'creation myth' is fraught with difficulty, at least for those who live in the United States.

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ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 10.1: VISUAL ANALYSIS

Look at the image depicted in Source 10.2. What is this artist telling you about George Washington? Is it a positive or negative interpretation of Washington? What makes you think this is the case? Collate your findings on the whiteboard. Congratulations – you have just judged a historical interpretation.

A MATTER OF FACT

Pictured with Washington is his grey horse Blueskin, one of his two primary mounts along with Nelson, a chestnut gelding, during the Revolutionary War. After the war both horses lived out their days at Mount Vernon.

Source 10.2 *George Washington*, by John Trumbull, 1782

A MATTER OF FACT

The 'American creation myth' also forms a key theme of the iconic original Star Wars trilogy (Episodes IV–VI): a noble rebel alliance versus an evil and militarily superior empire.

It is interesting to note how omnipresent debates about historical interpretations about America's creation are in US culture. These 'culture wars' are played out in everyday life, reflecting the inherent biases related to family environment, background, class, life experience and political views that everyone brings to their view of society and history. For example, a brief search on the internet will produce some rather interesting websites; in particular, you will see conservative and left historians mauling each other as they attempt to assert their personal views of the causes and effects of US history, often using these positions to justify current or recent political, social and cultural events.

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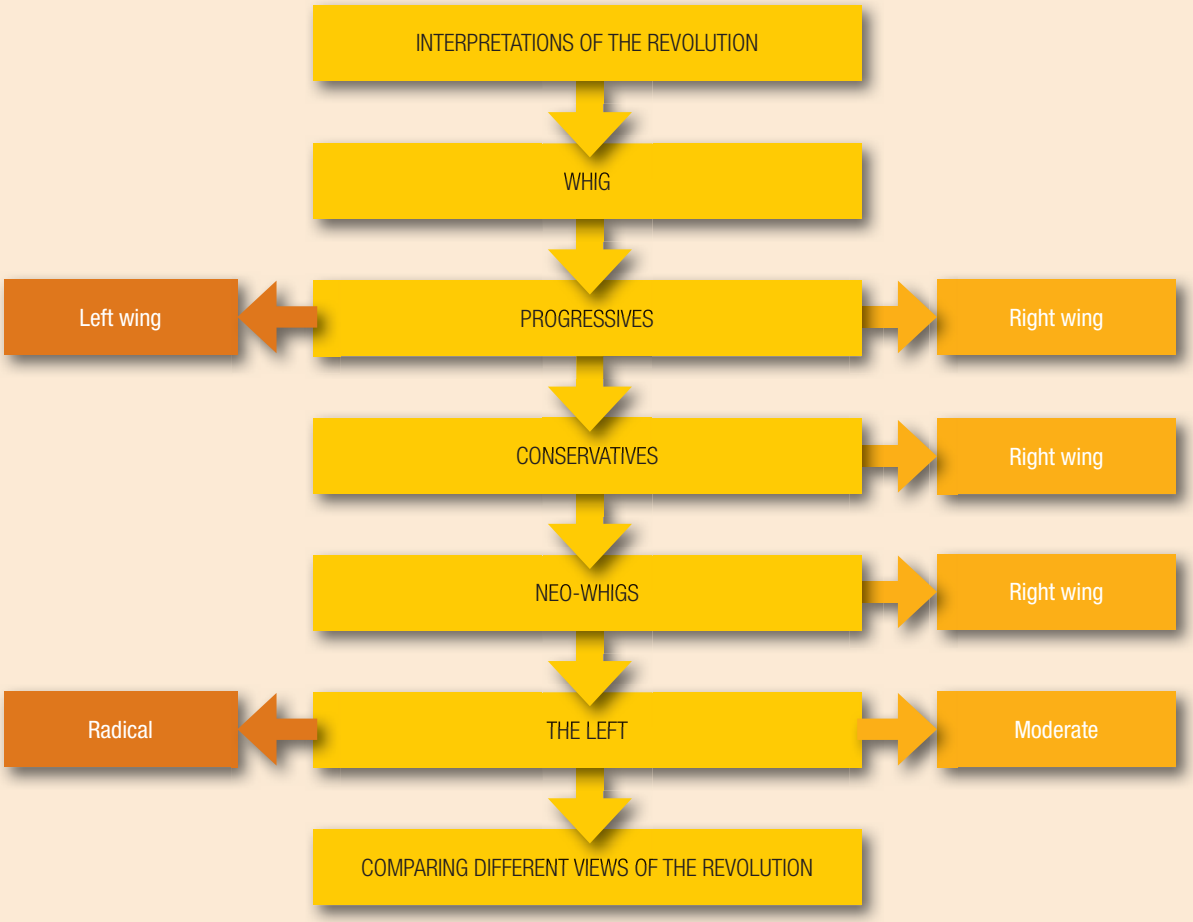
These debates also appear in popular culture. In the 1997 film *Good Will Hunting*, Matt Damon's street-smart character debates a privileged Harvard student in a bar over the works and ideas of Neo-Whig historian Gordon Wood (Neo-Whig ideology is discussed later in this chapter). The student is shocked to be schooled in historical interpretations by a seemingly ill-educated working-class Bostonian. Elsewhere in the film, Damon's character urges his professor to read Howard Zinn's radical left take on US history, *A People's History of the United States* (see Source 10.6), stating that it will 'blow his hair back'. This example from a popular Hollywood movie shows how prevalent debates about America's historical origins remain within that culture.

KEY ISSUES

- What are historical interpretations?
- How have different historians interpreted the American Revolution?
- How do you write about and compare different views of the Revolution?

FLOW OF CHAPTER



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10.1 Interpretations of the Revolution

Over two hundred years have passed since the events of the Revolution, and ever since historians have produced many books dedicated to the topic. In a recent book on the topic of historical interpretations, *The Debate on the American Revolution*, Gwenda Morgan suggests that any attempt to deal with the sheer amount of writing on the Revolution 'requires tough choices to be made over what to put in rather than what consciously to leave out' (p. 4).

Though you may one day study this topic in greater detail at university, in order to succeed in your VCE assessments you only really need to know a brief sketch of each school of thought so that you can clearly identify which school a historian belongs to.

Each of the key interpretations or schools of thought on the American Revolution (with the exception of the British-based Imperial school) is now examined in turn, in chronological order.

10.2 Whig

The initial school of historical interpretation of the American Revolution was known as the Whig school of the early 1800s. This was made up of historians who focused on the heroic and the ideological, and the belief that the Revolution was a key event in history that was the culmination of Enlightenment ideas and an inexorable progress towards liberty and democracy. The Whig historians emphasised the role of thoughtful leaders like Washington and Jefferson, and elites in general, in driving the Revolution. Some members of the Whig school had actually lived through the events of the Revolution. As you would expect, these first historians had some difficulty being objective about the great events they had experienced. Certainly, this school did not question the 'American creation myth' and were staunch supporters of the notion of 'justified revolution' (discussed in Chapter 1).

Whig history is virtually the orthodox perspective, since most Americans would usually consider this interpretation to be the right one (and it's the way their grade school history is usually taught).

Significant authors	George Bancroft John Fiske

10.3 Progressive

The Progressive school was named after US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Progressive Era of reform in the 1930s. It was the most popular historical approach from the end of the 19th century through to the end of the Second World War. The Progressive school was highly influenced by the social upheaval of industrial urbanisation and the Great Depression that struck America in the 1930s. The social sciences – particularly economics, sociology and psychology – were gaining popularity during this period. Progressive historians applied these new fields to their study of historical events to produce a social understanding of history to balance what they perceived to be a bias towards political history. For this reason, Progressive historical accounts often focus on the distinctions between different groups, peoples and classes, capturing the social and economic tensions of American society.

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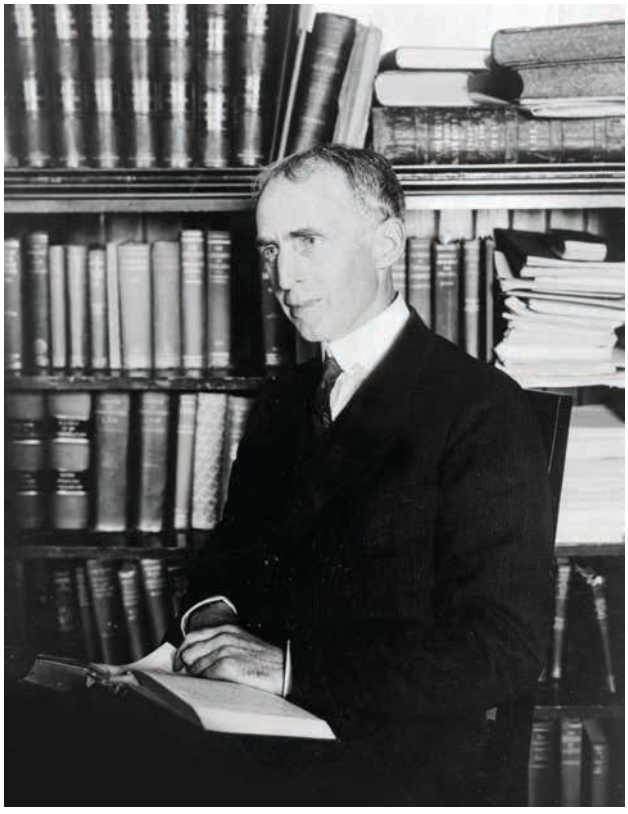
Consequently, the behaviour and (economic) motivation of colonial elites and the nature of class conflict during the Revolution were of particular interest to the Progressives, in contrast to the politically based interpretations of the Whig school in the 19th century, which had hero-worshipped the Founding Fathers.

Significant authors	Charles Beard Carl Lotus Becker Arthur Schlesinger



Source 10.3 Charles A Beard

10.4 Conservative (Consensus)

The ideology of the Conservative school – commonly referred to as the 'Consensus' historians – was expounded by Louis Hartz in his 1964 book *The Founding of New Societies*. He argued that nations that had grown out of colonies could be understood as 'fragments' of Europe, and that because there was no existing social system within the new society, the colonists replicated the social structures and ideals of their founding country. Therefore, because the Thirteen Colonies were founded in the early 17th century in the Age of Enlightenment, they adopted the political philosophy of John Locke and other Enlightenment thinkers. This philosophy was the prevailing 'consensus' that united the peoples of the Thirteen Colonies and formed the basis of the founding principles of the new nation of the United States of America.

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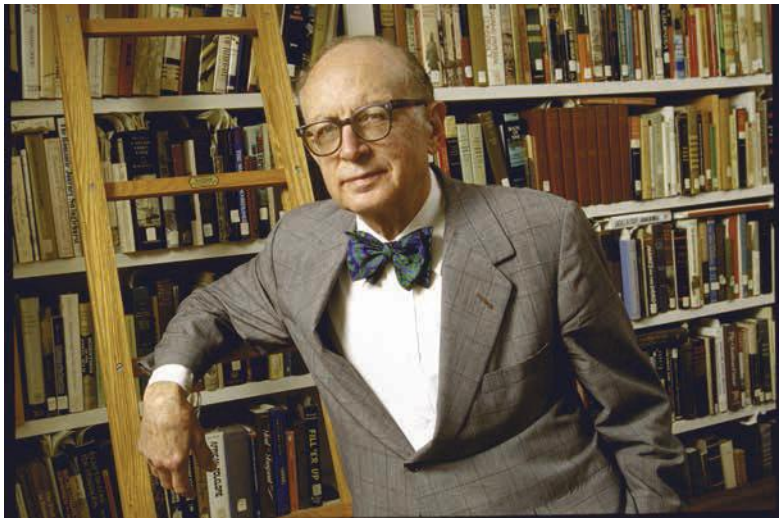
Another Consensus historian, Daniel Boorstin, argued that the American Revolution was essentially conservative; that is, at the time of the Revolution the colonists already possessed the society they eventually created through the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. This society had evolved during the period of salutuary neglect (see Section 1.8) and the Revolution merely re-established what the British Government tried to take away.

Some Consensus historians have argued directly against Progressive viewpoints, such as Forrest McDonald's dismissal of Beard's theory surrounding economic interest and the Constitution, and Robert Brown's argument against the class conflict angle taken by the Progressives for the reason that the 'middle-class democracy' existed before the Revolution even began.

Significant authors	Daniel Boorstin Robert Brown Louis Hartz Richard Hofstadter Forrest McDonald Edmund Morgan Allan Nevins David M Potter Clinton Rossiter



Source 10.4 Daniel Boorstin

10.5 Neo-Whig

Bernard Bailyn revitalised the Whig school with his 1967 work *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* in 1967, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and the Bancroft Prize in 1968. Bailyn and his student Gordon Wood returned to political ideology and radicalism as the basis for the Revolution. The Neo-Whigs focused on the political documents and debates as the basis of the Revolution and the desire to create a new society based on Enlightenment and liberal ideals. Harking back to the

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work of the Whigs, the Neo-Whigs suggest the Revolution represented a complete rejection of the aristocratic, privileged world of patronage and heredity that formed Old Europe and was a watershed moment in world history.

Significant authors	Bernard Bailyn Hugh Brogan Gordon Wood

Source 10.5 Bernard Bailyn

10.6 Left

The United States emerged from the Second World War as heroic champion of democracy and rebuilder of Europe and Japan. At home, economic prosperity reigned and a certain self-assurance characterised American society. However, by the end of the 1950s US confidence was undermined by increasing polarisation over the social consequences of racism, imperialism and poverty, and by the 1960s American society had changed enormously. The devastation of the Vietnam War and domestic issues stemming from the Civil Rights movement led to a reassessment of conflict in Northern American history. This school is informally divided into two. The Moderate Left includes historians such as Edward Countryman and Ray Raphael, who focus on the lives of common people rather than the political and ideological focus of the Neo-Whigs, the Conservatives and the Radical Left.

The 'new' or Radical Left focuses on similar themes to the Progressive movement, but avoids the **Marxist** theories that interpreted the facts through a foreign lens. Historians such as Howard Zinn and Francis Jennings explore the less flattering elements of Revolutionary history. The homogenised perception of American society – the ideal of 'consensus' America – had been destroyed by the Civil Rights and feminist

Marxist pertaining to the ideas of German theorist Karl Marx and his view of history as a 'process'

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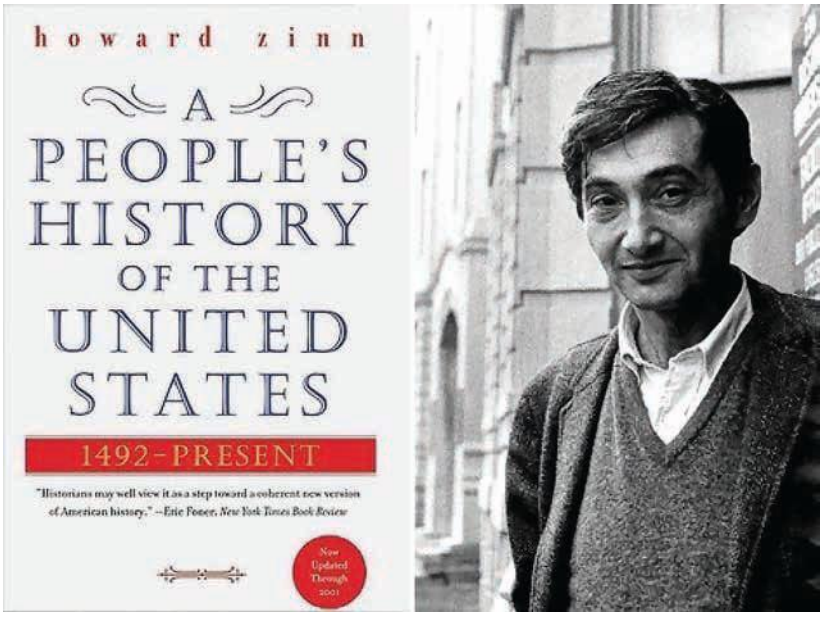
movements, leading to a new focus on pluralism, and with it the recognition of the many different people, ethnicities and social groups that made up American society and the roles they had played in American history. These groups included the First Nations Americans, African-Americans and women.

Significant authors	Moderate Left: Edward Countryman Ray Raphael Radical Left: Francis Jennings James Loewen Howard Zinn



Source 10.6 Howard Zinn and his influential book, *A People's History of the United States*

10.7 Comparing different views of the Revolution

discriminator a skill that justifies a high mark

The study of history in VCE (and tertiary level) requires the consideration and inclusion of multiple interpretations of history in your analysis. The best way to achieve this is to analyse and then compare and contrast important quotes by leading figures from each school and quote them to support your analysis. This is a key point – an important **discriminator** – as in the exam historians' opinions should be used competently to support an argument rather than be the argument in themselves.

The following tables are a suggested tool to use when you collate historical interpretations for study. They use four columns. The first identifies the school of thought, the second identifies the

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historian, the third provides the quote that best summarises the historian's view, and the fourth explains its relevance. The following quotations could assist your research and writing, particularly in your analysis of the consequences of revolution on American society.

Area of Study 1: British America, 1754–1776

Interpretation/ school of thought	Historian	Quote	Explanation
Neo-Whig	Hugh Brogan	'The Tea Party was the last straw for Britain. They were now resolved on very different measures.'	Brogan's analysis of the British reaction to the Boston Tea Party
Neo-Whig	Gordon Wood	'The *Declaration of Independence* set forth a philosophy of human rights … that was essential in giving the American Revolution a universal appeal.'	Wood on the importance of the *Declaration of Independence* (it unified the colonies by outlining their rights) and the violation done by the British Parliament
		'The republican leaders would resemble not the luxury-loving money-mongering lackeys of British officialdom but the stoical and disinterested heroes of antiquity – men, like George Washington, who seemed to Americans to embody perfectly the classical ideal of a Republican leader.'	Wood on the nature of the Founding Fathers of the Revolution
		'To the British the Boston Tea Party was the ultimate outrage. It led to the Coercive Acts which convinced Americans once and for all that Parliament had no more right to make laws for them than to tax them.'	Wood's analysis of the outcome and aftermath of the Boston Tea Party
Conservative/ Consensus	Daniel Boorstin	'The issue was separation and separation was accomplished. The American revolution was a "victory of constitutionalism" that sought to demand existing rights not encourage social conflict.'	Boorstin's suggestion that the Revolution merely won back rights that had existed prior to British interference
Conservative/ Consensus	George Bancroft	'Such was the inception of the Continental Congress of 1774. It was the last achievement of the Sons of Liberty of New York.'	Bancroft's assessment of the importance of the Sons of Liberty

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Interpretation/ school of thought	Historian	Quote	Explanation
Moderate Left	Edward Countryman	'The Stamp Act of 1765, the Townshend Taxes of 1767 and the Tea Affair of 1773 all grew out of British conviction that Parliament had the power to tax the colonists directly, that it represented and ruled them just as much as it did Britons at home.'	Countryman's analysis of the British Government's intent with the imposition of their taxation on the colonies
		'The end in that year of the "Great War for Empire" (or Seven Years' War) saw British politicians determined to assert the mother country's superiority, both as a matter of principle and as a matter of direct interest.'	Countryman's assessment of British policy after the Seven Years' War: the assertion of power
Radical Left	Howard Zinn	'The Continental Congress which governed the colonies through the war was dominated by rich men, linked together in factions and compacts by business and family connections.'	Zinn's analysis of the nature of the Continental Congress and its members
Radical Left	Francis Jennings	'However so far as the rebellious colonies were concerned, the Quebec Act was one more outrageous "Coercive Act" emanating from London. Liberties for Catholics … was an evil device … against the disaffected Protestant colonies.'	Jennings' analysis of the effect of the *Coercive Acts* of 1774 on the colonists; in particular, the religious dimension to their reaction regarding the *Quebec Act 1774*
Progressive	Charles Beard	'The point is, that the direct, impelling motive … was the economic advantages which the beneficiaries (that is, the rebels) expected would accrue to themselves first, from their action.'	Beard's summation of the economic motives behind the early rebel cause

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Area of Study 2: The United States 1776–1789

Interpretation/ school of thought	Historian	Quote	Explanation
Neo-Whig	Hugh Brogan	'It was the crowning act of the American Revolution.'	Brogan's Neo-Whig view of the Constitution
		'[The Constitutional Convention was an] astonishing and impressive affair … [overseen by] wise, capable, public-spirited men.'	Brogan on the Constitutional Convention; a commentary on the men who presided over it
		'Problems of trade could never be solved … till [the] Articles [were] re-drafted … national government needed a thorough overhaul.'	Brogan's view on the economic problems associated with the Articles of Confederation
Neo-Whig	Gordon Wood	'In fact, it was one of the greatest revolutions the world has known.'	Wood's analysis of the Revolution in general: that it was actually successful in comparison to others
		'In various ways, the Revolution worked to weaken slavery.'	Wood's analysis that the Constitution recognised slavery, in the 'Three-fifths Clause', acknowledging the issue and African-Americans instead of ignoring them as past documents had. Essentially a Neo-Whig defence of a flaw in the Constitution
		'[The Constitution] saved Congress from the states and the states from themselves.'	Wood's belief that the Constitution created a federal government with coercive power over the states, effectively stopping the petty squabbling that was tearing the union apart
		'[A]ll sovereignty rested with the people.'	Wood's analysis that the democratic nature of the Constitution allowed citizens to vote their leaders in and out: they were directly represented
		'[The Articles of Confederation were hampered by [an] inability to regulate commerce … [to] save Congress from states and states from themselves … [and to prevent] political abuses.'	Wood's analysis of how the Articles of Confederation Government was detrimental to America and the union of states

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Interpretation/ school of thought	Historian	Quote	Explanation
Neo-Whig	Bernard Bailyn	'[The Constitution was the] apotheosis of the revolution … its ideological fulfilment.'	Bailyn's belief that the Constitution was the pinnacle of the Enlightenment ideas of natural rights and liberty
Conservative/ Consensus	George Bancroft	'[The Constitution was] liberty's greatest protection.'	Bancroft's analysis of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights; that it protected the new-found liberty of people against tyranny as they had control through direct representation
Moderate Left	Edward Countryman	'[The Constitution] came as close as possible to having its basis in the consent of its people' but 'even by the standards of the day it was not democratic'.	Countryman's observation that while the Constitution was ratified by Congress and appointed assemblies of men in each state, there was a $20,000 property qualification for the right to vote
		'[T]he Constitution neither strengthened nor undermined slavery; faced with a fundamental moral problem, the delegates chose ultimately to avert their gaze.'	Countryman's assessment that the 'Three-fifths Clause' (the Great Compromise) in the Constitution avoided slavery so as to placate the South by counting slaves in the allocation of funds but not acknowledging them as people
Radical Left	Howard Zinn	'The Constitution … serves the interests of the wealthy elite.'	Zinn's assessment of the Constitution; that it was structured to oppress people through property qualifications, the 'Three-fifths Clause' (slaves), debt guarantee and longer terms in Congress
		'It seems that the rebellion against British rule allowed a certain group of colonial elite to replace those loyal to England … and leave poor, white working people in very much their old situation.'	Zinn's belief that a colonial elite hijacked the Revolution to place themselves in power, while those below still faced the same problems, as evidenced by Shays' Rebellion (1786)
		'They [the Founding Fathers] certainly did not want an equal balance between slaves and masters, propertyless and property holders, Indians and white.'	Zinn's assessment that the Constitution (Philadelphia Convention, 1787) was written by the wealthy for the wealthy, protecting their position of new-found power

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Interpretation/ school of thought	Historian	Quote	Explanation
Radical Left *(continued)*	Howard Zinn *(continued)*	'[I]nspirational language … covered up serious conflicts of interest … [It supported the] establishment of a supremacy for the rich and powerful [that] serves the interests of the wealthy elite.'	Zinn's criticism of the Bill of Rights as a rhetorical document that disguised how the Constitution protected and benefited the rich and powerful
		'[S]ome Americans were clearly omitted from this circle of united interest.'	Zinn's assessment that slaves, First Nations Americans and women didn't benefit from the Constitution and the Bill of Rights: the Constitution was for free (white) men only
Progressive	Charles Beard	*Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*	Beard's contention that the structure of the Constitution of the United States was motivated primarily by the personal financial interests of the Founding Fathers

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 10.2: QUOTATION TIMELINE

1 Select four or five events from the American Revolution in chronological order. Your task is to find some further interpretations of events by historians.
2 Ensure they come from competing historical schools of thought.
3 Research their work on the internet and then source their published works at a school, public or university library (sometimes works are also published on the internet).
4 Use the index of topics at the back of the book to find the topic or issue.
5 Read the section to gain the most relevant quote (you don't have to read the entire book!). Select and copy out the quote. Note that you can always shorten the quote to distil it to its most relevant form. Use an ellipsis (…) to indicate missing words and square brackets to insert your own words to make disconnected phrases grammatical (see the tables above for examples).
6 Use the suggested table structure below. Fill in the table with the quotes you've collected and your own interpretation of each historian's viewpoint.
7 Gather two differing views on each major event or issue within the timeline. Also include some views on a few significant individuals or leaders. Federalists and Anti-Federalists are your starting points.

Suggested study table headings:

Name of event/date	School of thought/ interpretation	Historian	Quote	Your explanation

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Glossary

actual representation a form of democratic government in which every citizen is represented in the government by someone acting on his or her behalf (in Australia, your local, state and federal members perform this role for you and you can approach them directly)

Albany Plan a plan to unite the Thirteen Colonies proposed by Benjamin Franklin at the Albany Congress in July 1754

American dream the ideal that all American citizens are entitled to equal rights and the ability to realise their ambitions

Anglican relating to the Church of England

Appalachians a mountain range in eastern North America that bordered most of the Thirteen Colonies

aristocracy a rigid social system based entirely on one's hereditary or aristocratic connections (George Washington was refused entry into the officer class of the British Army because he didn't have these connections)

artisan skilled workers drawn from all levels of society, including poor shoemakers and tailors to elite metal workers or silversmiths

Battle of Bunker Hill a famous hour-long battle fought on 17 June 1775 in Boston between the British and Massachusetts militia; even though the British won the battle, they suffered three times the casualties of the militia

Bill of Rights a declaration of individual rights and freedoms, usually issued by a national government; a list of fundamental rights included in each state constitution

boycott the deliberate choice to avoid purchasing goods as a protest against their manufacturer or country of origin

British Parliament the official political body that ran Britain and all British colonies in partnership with King George III

broadside a large poster-sized article that could be displayed in a public place, usually containing a scathing attack on one's enemies; the Americans used this form of media very successfully against the British

Chancellor of the Exchequer the title held by the British Cabinet minister who is responsible for all economic and financial matters; equivalent to the role of Treasurer or Minister of Finance in other nations

Cincinnatus (519–430 BCE) a Roman aristocrat and statesman who served as consul in 460 BCE and dictator in 458 and 439 BCE; he became a model of civic virtue primarily because he lay down military command and returned to civilian life after he served his term as dictator

civic virtue the belief that a society of virtuous citizens could run a nation and voluntarily subordinate their private interests to the common good of the whole society; together they could resist the corruption or tyranny of an oppressive force

class consciousness a Marxist term to describe a section of society all holding the same ideas or values

colony a place governed by another country and settled by their people

Committees of Correspondence organised letter-writing civilian groups that circulated news, intelligence and revolutionary ideas around the Thirteen Colonies after their formation in 1772

Committees of Safety Patriot civilian groups who operated in the Thirteen Colonies from 1770 to the end of the Revolutionary War. They closely monitored the activities of British soldiers, and were especially active in the colony of Massachusetts in 1774–75.

Confederation a group of nations or states that work together in an alliance while maintaining some independent power

Continental Army the professional or regular army raised by the Second Continental Congress and trained by Washington to fight the War of Independence

Continental Congress an assembly of delegates representing the Thirteen Colonies in North America that met twice in Philadelphia, in 1774 and 1775

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convention a formal assembly of representatives or delegates to discuss and take action on matters of common concern

Currency Act one of several acts created by the British Parliament designed to regulate the use of paper money in America

Declaratory Act British legislation passed in 1766 granting Parliament the authority to pass all laws for its American colonies. Initially it did not cause much of a reaction but came to be viewed as a dangerous sign of British intentions.

deference the act of recognising a 'superior' class of people; in America before the Revolution, people were expected to stop and let a 'gentleman' pass or to tip their hat to them in recognition that they were of a superior class

discriminating also known as a discriminator; relating to a skill that justifies a high mark in the VCE

discriminator a skill that justifies a high mark

dissident a person disagreeing with the established government or system

divine right the idea that a king or queen is placed in their position by God and that all others below them are inferior

economic the theme that involves any issues to do with money, such as taxation, inflation, unemployment, wages and prices of goods

effigy a model of a person, often used for the purpose of protest

empire a group of nations ruled by a single leader (usually a monarch – a king or queen) or government

English Bill of Rights an Act of the British Parliament passed in 1689, which declared the rights and liberties of citizens; it also settled the succession of Mary II and William III

Enlightenment an English and French philosophical movement in the 18th century whose ideas would inspire many of the American Founding Fathers

Fabian tactics named for Fabian the 'Delayer', a Roman politician and general who avoided battles with the famous Carthaginian general, Hannibal, due to the superiority of the Carthaginian enemy; British Americans were well read in ancient history, and Washington knowingly employed these tactics

Fairfax Resolves 1774 a set of resolutions adopted by a committee in Fairfax County in the colony of Virginia on 18 July 1774, in the early stages of the American Revolution; written primarily by George Mason, the resolutions rejected the British Parliament's claim of supreme authority over the American colonies

Federalist a person who supports federalism, which is a system of government in which power is divided between both a federal/national government and regional/state governments

First Nations the pre-settlement indigenous communities of North America; a respectful alternative term for 'Native Americans'

Founding Fathers men such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin and others of the Revolutionary era who created the foundations of the American nation

Franklin, Benjamin (1706–1790) one of the Founding Fathers; he negotiated the 1783 Treaty of Paris (ending the Revolutionary War) and helped to draft both the *Declaration of Independence* and the Constitution of the United States

frontier land undiscovered by colonialists beyond an established border

fundamental law the law, written or unwritten, that establishes the character of a government by defining the basic principles to which a society must conform; by describing the organisation of the government and regulation, distribution and limitations on the functions of different government departments; and by prescribing the extent and manner of the exercise of its sovereign powers

George III the reigning King of England for the entire American Revolutionary period (1763–1789)

Glorious Revolution the union of English parliamentarians and William III of Orange-Nassau that overthrew King James II of England, leading to his daughter Mary II and William III jointly taking the throne (also known as the Revolution of 1688)

government the official political body that runs a country

Great Awakening a religious revival in American colonies from the late 1730s to the 1760s sparked by George Whitfield (1714–1770), an itinerant English Methodist preacher whose evangelical fervour and eloquence led to many conversions

Grenville, George the British Prime Minister who devised the *Sugar Act 1764* and the *Stamp Act 1765* to raise colonial revenue for Britain; these were spectacularly unsuccessful in America and cost him his job as Prime Minister

Henry, Patrick (1736–1799) a lawyer, politician and plantation owner who became known as a great orator and advocate for American independence

heredity the passing of traits to offspring from parents or ancestors

Hessians German soldiers who were in the paid employ of the British

historians men and women who attempt to make sense of the past and usually specialise in one country or period of history

historiography the study of the writing and interpretation of the past

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House of Commons the lower house of the British Parliament. Holds more power than the House of Lords, as the people elect its members, and it is where the Prime Minister leads the ruling party. This is the House that made the key decisions affecting the Thirteen Colonies during the Revolution.

House of Lords the upper house of the British Parliament, made up of upper nobility and clergy whose membership is a hereditary privilege. Holds less power than the House of Commons, as members only have the power to comment on or delay Bills already passed by the House of Commons.

Hutchinson, Thomas (1711–1780) a businessman and governor from Massachusetts who became hated for not publicly opposing the *Stamp Act*

ideology a governing set of ideas or beliefs held by a group

impeachable making one subject to impeachment, which results from a crime or offence serious enough to warrant a public official losing their position and facing formal charges

impressment the forced membership into the British Army or Navy

insurgent warfare a rebellion against an established authority, often armed and sometimes involving subterfuge or subversive tactics; similar to the term 'guerrilla warfare'

intelligentsia the well-educated thinkers, writers and artists of a society

justified revolution the idea that revolution is both justified and right

leaders significant individuals (men and women) who influence ordinary people

left wing relating to belief systems that are usually progressive, idealistic, future thinking and invested in social justice by promoting equality and the rights of disadvantaged members of society

legislature the political body or assembly who are empowered to make and change laws (legislation), like a parliament

Loyal Nine a hardline anti-British group in Boston that became the core and the drivers of the Sons of Liberty activities in that city in the period 1765–75

Loyalist a colonist loyal to Britain

manifest destiny the 18th- and 19th-century American establishment belief that all of America would eventually be conquered and be rightfully theirs

Marxist pertaining to the ideas of German theorist Karl Marx and his view of history as a 'process'

mercantilism an economic system whereby the first priority of setting up new colonies is that they enrich the Mother Country (Britain in the case of America)

meritocracy a society based on being recognised for one's talents and ability and not from hereditary connections

middling sort or middling class was an 18th-century term for people with wealth, land or property who engaged in commerce. The origin of the modern term 'middle class'.

militia the part-time army of each colony, often having had limited training and very poorly equipped in comparison to the British Army

minutemen colonial militia prepared to arm themselves against the British in less than a minute's notice

natural rights John Locke's idea that people are entitled to certain privileges and basic freedoms simply because they exist

Navigation Acts a series of British laws dating from the early 1600s designed to help the British mercantilist system operate successfully; the British Parliament, Navy and customs officials had sweeping powers to enforce these laws but many American merchants successfully flouted these policies

'No taxation without representation' a popular revolutionary slogan that argues that taxes can only be levied on a populace by its elected representatives

Old World the rigid class-based social structure of Europe

Olive Branch Petition a last-ditch peace offering sent by the Second Continental Congress to King George III in July 1775 to avoid going to war with Britain

Oliver, Andrew (1706–1774) a merchant and official in Massachusetts who became responsible for enforcing the Stamp Tax there

Patriot 18th-century colloquial term for anyone who supported the Revolution

patronage a system used in British America, whereby colonial officials were appointed through their connections to men of power and rank

Pontiac's Rebellion led by Chief Pontiac, an attempt by an alliance of warriors from various First Nations tribes to drive British soldiers and settlers out of their lands in 1763

popular sovereignty the principle that the legitimacy or right to rule is found in the approval of the people; hence, all political power resides with the people

president the leader or head of state of a republic – a government in which power resides with the people who elect their own representatives

prime minister the elected leader of the ruling party in the British Parliament

property qualification an assets-based criteria of attaining a certain amount of property or money before one qualifies to vote or to be elected to government

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ratification the declaration by which a nation formally accepts, with or without reservation, the content of a formal meeting such as a convention

rebels colonists who fought against the British

Redcoats, or 'lobsterbacks' slang for British soldiers, especially during the revolutionary period

republic a form of government where elected officials are chosen by and represent their citizens to enforce the rule of law. In modern parlance, a republic often means a government without a monarch.

republican referring to republic – a form of government where elected officials are chosen by and represent their citizens to enforce the rule of law; in modern parlance, a republic often means a government without a monarch

revolution a process of massive political upheaval that changes the way in which a country is governed; often a vertical shift in power from an absolute monarch to a popular government ruling on behalf of the people

right wing relating to belief systems that prioritise tradition, perceive social hierarchy as inevitable or even desirable, and support economic deregulation and the rights of the individual to pursue their own economic and social goals

Royal Proclamation Line a border that ran the length of the Appalachian Mountains, skirting the western border of most of the Thirteen Colonies, that Britain forbade Americans to cross; created by the British *Proclamation Act 1763*, arising out of the Treaty of Paris (1763)

salutary neglect a term in American history that refers to the unofficial and long-term 17th- and 18th-century British policy of lenient or lax enforcement of parliamentary laws meant to keep American colonies obedient to England

satire the use of humour, irony or ridicule to criticise people or their behaviour

secular the state of being separate from religion, or not being exclusively allied with or against any particular religion

Seider, Christopher a member of a large mob that attacked a custom official's house, and who was shot and killed by the owner, the Loyalist Ebenezer Richardson

separation of powers a fundamental principle of the United States Constitution, whereby powers and responsibilities are divided among the legislative, executive and judicial branches

slavery the forced labour of human beings without payment; in the American context this refers to African people taken from their homeland against their will. In what was termed 'chattel slavery', the slaves were the property of the 'master' and could be bought and sold on a whim. Husbands, wives and children could all be split and sold separately. Each child of a slave was a slave for life and so were their children.

social contract a contract between those in power and their people or followers; the American colonists felt King George III had violated the social contract, which justified the Revolution

social mobility an ability to move up the social hierarchy on the basis of talent, as opposed to royal patronage

Sons of Liberty a collection of underground groups that formed to fight the Stamp Tax and later became aggressive supporters of American independence

sovereignty the right of a government or a people to make decisions and form laws within its own borders

Stamp Act a British law of 1765 to raise funds from the Thirteen Colonies. This proved to be greatly unpopular and was a key source of revolutionary tension through the 1760s.

Stamp Act Congress the first mass meeting of nine of the Thirteen Colonies to determine a course of collective action against Britain's *Stamp Act*

standing army an army of professional soldiers that is always combat ready and can be used at any moment; seen as an affront and risk to liberty under Enlightenment ideals

Suffolk Resolves 1774 a declaration made on 9 September 1774 by the leaders of Suffolk County, in the colony of Massachusetts; the declaration rejected the *Massachusetts Government Act*, resolved on a boycott of imported goods from Britain unless the 'Intolerable Acts' were repealed, and promoted the formation of a militia for each colony

Sugar Act a revenue-raising Act passed by the British Parliament in 1764, which alarmed the colonists about the intent of the British and helped fuel the growing discontent

supplies resources such as food, water, clothing, bedding, ammunition and weapons

tarring and feathering an act of public humiliation and shame involving pouring hot and sticky tar onto a victim then covering them in feathers, and parading them around the town square. Not fatal, but physically and emotionally painful.

Tory a member of the dominant party in power in the British Parliament at the time of the Revolution; the party survived to become the modern Conservative Party, whose members are commonly still referred to as Tories; 'Tory' also became the term for any pro-British sympathiser during the Revolution

treatise a formal and systematic written work that examines and explains a specific subject

Treaty of Paris a peace treaty signed in Paris in 1763, ending the Seven Years' War between France and Britain fought mainly in North America (not to be confused with the next Treaty of Paris in 1783 signed between Britain and America recognising American independence)

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Vietnam War the conflict that took place between 1962 and 1975 where the powerful armed forces of the United States fought against the resourceful (North) Vietnamese in their homeland in South-East Asia. Used in the context of the American Revolution, this is a historical analogy that refers to the way that Britain had great military superiority over the Thirteen Colonies, but still lost the war.

Virginia House of Burgesses the representative colonial assembly of Virginia

Virginia Resolves a set of resolutions decreeing that the only taxation valid in Virginia was that enforced by a parliamentary assembly elected by Virginians, which effectively invalidated the British Government's taxes

virtual representation a system where the citizens are loosely represented by the entire legislature; the citizen is not involved in the election process

Washington, George (1732–1799) the first President of the United States, who fought in the early stages of the French and Indian War on the side of the British, then led the colonial forces to victory against the British in the War of Independence

Whig a member of a political faction and then a political party in the parliaments of England, Scotland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom; between the 1680s and 1850s, they contested power with their rivals, the Tories. Whig can also mean anyone liberal minded or progressive who was sympathetic to the cause of independence.

Writ of Assistance a search warrant from the government permitting a search for contraband items in American homes, warehouses, shops, ships etc.

zealot an ardent and fanatical follower of a religious creed or idea

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