

The American Revolutionary War

A Kid-Friendly Guide to Important Events in American History

Timeline of Important Events (1763–1783)

Growing Tensions

1763

The French and Indian War ends. Britain gains control of much of North America but places new taxes on the colonies to pay for the war.

1765

The Stamp Act taxes newspapers, documents, and printed materials, angering many colonists.

1767

The Townshend Acts place taxes on imported goods such as glass, paper, and tea.

1770

The Boston Massacre occurs when British soldiers fire into a crowd of colonists.

1773

The Boston Tea Party takes place when colonists dump British tea into Boston Harbor to protest taxes.

1774

The First Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia to discuss colonial rights.

War Begins

April 1775

The Battles of Lexington and Concord begin the American Revolutionary War.

May 1775

The Second Continental Congress meets and forms the Continental Army.

June 1775

The Battle of Bunker Hill shows the colonists can stand against the British army.

July 1775

The Olive Branch Petition asks the king for peace, but it is rejected.

Independence Declared

January 1776

Thomas Paine publishes *Common Sense*, encouraging colonists to support independence.

July 4, 1776

The Declaration of Independence announces that the colonies are free from British rule.

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December 1776

George Washington leads a surprise victory at the Battle of Trenton.

Turning Point of the War

1777

American forces win the Battle of Saratoga, convincing France to support the colonies.

1778

France officially allies with the United States, providing ships, troops, and supplies.

1777–1778

The Continental Army struggles through the difficult winter at Valley Forge.

ERA 5 — The War Moves South

1780

The British shift their strategy and focus on the southern colonies.

1780

American forces suffer a defeat at the Battle of Camden.

1781

American and French forces trap British General Cornwallis at Yorktown.

Victory and Independence

October 1781

The Battle of Yorktown ends with the British surrender.

1783

The Treaty of Paris officially ends the Revolutionary War and recognizes the United States as an independent nation.

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Think Like a Historian

Ask yourself:

- Why did the colonists want independence?
- What challenges did the Continental Army face?
- How did foreign allies help the colonies win the war?

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