

Explore More—The War for Independence

Directions: Listen to your teacher talk about life in the colonies during the War for Independence. Circle any words you don't understand. Underline or highlight important ideas in the text. Write notes in the margins to help you understand key points. Then answer the questions in your own words.

Was there a lot of fighting in the colonies during the War for Independence?

There were numerous battles in the colonies during the course of the War for Independence. It was after eight years of fighting that the British finally signed a peace treaty with the Americans. The British had a bigger army and a bigger navy, and their soldiers were better trained. But the colonists wanted their freedom, and they were willing to fight long and hard for it.

Where were the major battles?

The Battles of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts were the first battles of the War for Independence. These battles took place on April 19, 1775. I'm going to tell you about several major battles and turning points that followed. As I explain each one, please look at the corresponding letter on your map so you can see where it took place.

Fort Ticonderoga, New York, May 10, 1775

This is letter B on your map. Colonial rebels captured Fort Ticonderoga in New York.

Bunker Hill and Breed's Hill, Massachusetts, June 17, 1775

This is letter A on your map. The British won the battles for these two hills near Boston, but they lost many men. This was a turning point for the Continental Army. Even though they had fewer men and supplies, they defended themselves well.

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Battle of Quebec, Canada, December 1775

This is letter H on your map. The Continental Army lost the battle for Quebec and retreated to Fort Ticonderoga in New York.

Boston, Massachusetts, March 17, 1776

This is letter A on your map. The Continental Army forced the British out of Boston, Massachusetts.

Long Island, New York, August 27, 1776

This is letter G on your map. The British defeated the Continental Army and took over Long Island and later New York City.

Battles of Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey, December 26, 1776 and January 3, 1777

This is letter K on your map. The Continental Army surprised the British on December 25 and captured Trenton. The British recaptured Trenton, and then Washington and his men defeated the British in Princeton. This was a turning point for the Continental Army. Washington's good strategies encouraged the colonists. The fight for independence was still alive.

Fort Ticonderoga, New York, July 6, 1777

This is letter B on your map. The British captured Fort Ticonderoga.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 26, 1777

This is letter F on your map. The British captured Philadelphia.

Saratoga, New York, October 17, 1777

This is letter C on your map. The Continental Army defeated the British Army. This was a major turning point in the war. European countries such as France, Spain, and the Netherlands now believed the colonists could win the war.

Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, Winter 1777

This is letter I on your map. George Washington and his troops spent the winter at Valley Forge. This was a difficult winter, the coldest anyone could remember. The soldiers did not have enough blankets, clothing, or shoes. Men began to die from starvation, disease, and the cold.

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Monmouth (now Freehold), New Jersey, June 28, 1778

This is letter D on your map. The British Army and the Continental Army fought, but the result was unclear. At first, the American General told his troops to retreat. Then under the direction of Baron von Steuben, the Continental Army went back to battle. But the British troops had escaped.

Savannah, Georgia, December 29, 1778

This is letter L on your map. The British occupied Savannah, Georgia.

Charleston, South Carolina, May 12, 1780

This is letter J on your map. The Continental Army surrendered at Charleston, South Carolina.

Battle of Kings Mountain, North and South Carolina, October 7, 1780

This is letter M on your map. The Continental Army defeated the British and forced them into Virginia.

Yorktown, Virginia, October 19, 1781

This is letter E on your map. British General Cornwallis moved his troops to Yorktown. George Washington, the Marquis de Lafayette, and other French military leaders brought their troops to Virginia to meet the British forces at Yorktown. The French ships blocked the Chesapeake Bay. French military leaders put their men under Washington's command. Washington brought his army of more than 17,000 men and surrounded Yorktown. British General Cornwallis knew he was outnumbered on land and at sea. He surrendered. There were small battles for another year, but the war was basically over.

Did the American Indians take sides?

Most American Indians sided with the British. They believed the British would protect their land from settlement by colonists. The Iroquois were divided. Some Iroquois, such as the Mohawk, fought alongside the colonists. Others, such as Sagoyewatha, leader of the Seneca, fought for the British. Americans called him "Red Jacket" because he wore a red English jacket in battle.

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With all this fighting, what was life like for the colonists?

Almost everyone had hardships. Some colonists lost their homes or businesses during battles. Children could not go to school as often. Merchants had trouble getting food and goods because the British blocked trade routes. Because of these shortages, there were laws against hoarding goods and materials. This meant that people were not allowed to buy up or collect a lot of supplies because they thought there wouldn't be enough of it for everyone. There also were laws against profiteering—charging an excessive amount of money for food and goods that were in short supply.

Were there problems with money?

Yes. The colonists had difficulty financing the war and getting the Continental Army the supplies it needed. Money troubles started because colonial governments did not raise taxes to pay for the war. Instead, they printed paper money. Congress and state governments promised that paper money had value, but everyone knew it was not worth much. As paper money lost value, inflation increased. People needed more and more money to buy goods. ❖

Look at and circle each location as your teacher explains it.



YOUR TURN!

1. What do you think it was like to live in the colonies during the war?

2. Choose one of the battles you learned about. Do research to find out more about this battle. Who was at the battle? How many people died during the battle? What did this area look like? After you finish your research, draw a picture to show what the battlefield might have looked like during the war.

