

# Questions Galore!

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## STUDY GUIDE: THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

### Events Leading Up to the Revolution

- Post Office Act – 1710:** The English Parliament set up a mail system in the colonies controlled by the London Postmaster General and his New York deputy.
- Molasses Act 1733:** The English Parliament began taxing molasses, rum, and sugar that the colonists imported from any place that was not under English rule.
- French and Indian War 1754-1763:** This war arose as a territory dispute over portions of the Ohio River Valley. Washington led the Americans against the French. The English, under General Braddock, assisted the colonists against the French and the Indians. England declared war on France and then Spain, who had threatened to join France. This Seven Years' War ended with a treaty that required France to surrender all territory east of the Mississippi, excluding New Orleans. Spain gave Florida to the English but was allowed to keep Cuba.
- Sugar Act – 1764:** This tax doubled the tax that was already being paid on sugar, wine, coffee, and dyes that were imported from England. The colonists were also forbidden to purchase these products and other goods from foreign countries.
- Currency Act – 1764:** This act stated that the colonists could not issue their own paper money and required them to pay all debts with gold or silver.
- Quartering Act – March, 1765:** This act mandated that colonists must provide housing and food to English troops living in America.
- Stamp Act – March, 1765:** This taxed all printed materials, such as bills, legal papers, newspapers, almanacs, playing cards, and brochures. Once the tax was paid, a stamp was affixed to the document. As with many of the previous acts, the colonists refused to comply and boycotted the supplies that were being taxed. An underground organization, The Sons of Liberty, was formed. These colonists harassed British stamp officials and caused confrontation in the colonies. The colonial government asked the king to repeal this act as well as the Quartering Act. Benjamin Franklin even appeared in Parliament to warn about potential revolutions that might surface if the Stamp Act was not repealed.

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1775. He believed a revolution was inevitable, and he encouraged his countrymen to join him in the fight for independence when he stated, "Give me liberty, or give me death."  
**New England Restraining Act – 1775:** The English forbade the colonists to trade with any other country or even among themselves.  
**Lexington and Concord – April 19, 1775:** General Gage ordered British soldiers to destroy the Americans' ammunition supply that was kept at Concord and to capture the colonists' outspoken leaders, Samuel Adams and John Hancock. James Warren sent Paul Revere and William Dawes to mobilize their Minutemen, warn the colonists, and hide Hancock and Adams. The colonists met the British at Lexington, where the first shot of the Revolutionary War was fired as a stray "shot heard round the world" came from a British gun. Immediately both sides began shooting. However, they were surprised when American Minutemen and rebels attacked them from behind trees, bridges, and bushes. The real significance of this battle was that it convinced many undecided American citizens to support the Revolutionary War.

### People of the Revolution

**John Adams:** This Harvard graduate and lawyer became an important mediator, statesman, and ambassador during the Revolution. As a member of the Continental Congress, he was active in campaigning for the passage of the Declaration of Independence. He ran for the presidency on the Federalist Party ticket and won the election, becoming the second president of the United States. His son, John Quincy Adams, followed in his footsteps and became the sixth president of the United States.

**Samuel Adams:** This cousin of John Adams did not share his moderation. He was the leader of the Sons of Liberty, who opposed many of the English Acts and taxes.

**Ethan Allen:** Born in the wilderness, but sent to Yale, this patriot led the Green Mountain Boys and the army at Ticonderoga. He was captured in Canada and was sent to England. The English returned Allen to America because they feared colonial retribution if he was punished. Washington later gave him the title of colonel. He devoted his post-war activities to obtaining statehood for Vermont.

**Benedict Arnold:** This notorious traitor was a major general who was influential at the victory at Saratoga. When he fell into debt, he allowed the British to convince him to become a traitor. When the plot was discovered, he escaped with the British Army, Canada and England.

**Major John Buttrick:** This American leader told the soldiers at Concord not to fire unless fired upon.

**Benjamin Franklin:** This newspaper publisher and author of *Poor Richard's Almanac*, was also known for his inventions, scientific discoveries, and service in the Pennsylvania Assembly. He started the first public library in Philadelphia and invented many helpful inventions, including the Franklin stove and the lightning rod. During the Revolutionary

ship, he supposedly replied, “**I have not yet begun to fight,**” and he actually did win that battle. He engineered one of the most successful naval engagements in U.S. history

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against the British ship, *Serapis*, in 1779. Congress honored his heroic deeds by bestowing him with the only gold medal ever given to a Navy sailor.

**Marquis de Lafayette:** This wealthy Frenchman refused payment for his services in the American Revolution. He became a major general and a close advisor and friend to George Washington. He helped Americans gain financial support and additional backing from France and helped fight in the battles at Brandywine, Monmouth, and Yorktown.

**Thomas Paine:** This friend of Patrick Henry, Samuel Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams became famous for his pamphlet, *Common Sense*, which encouraged the Americans to assert their independence. His quote, "These are the times that try men's souls," came from this pamphlet. He also fought in the war, and he wrote many other articles that boosted morale within the ranks. He later wrote a book entitled The Age of Reason, and served as a member of Thomas Jefferson's cabinet.

**Molly Pitcher** - This was the nickname for Mary Ludwig Hays, who followed her husband to the army camps and devoted herself to cooking and cleaning for him. She even went onto the battlefields to bring him pitchers of water, and she hauled pitchers to the other soldiers as well, which is how she earned her nickname. When her husband passed out at his cannon, she fired it for him. She was later given a pension for her services during the war.

**Betsy Ross:** This woman took over her husband's upholstery business when he died. According to legend, George Washington and other statesmen made a visit to her in 1776 and asked that she fulfill their specifications for the new American flag. Supposedly, they wanted a six-pointed star, but Betsy suggested using a five-pointed one instead. She then stitched the first "Stars and Stripes" flag that was adopted by the Continental Congress in 1777. The house from which she ran her upholstery business is now restored as a historical site.

**Deborah Samson:** Allegedly, this woman enlisted in the Army under the alias Robert Shirliffe, and served for three years, even after being treated for two injuries, without discovery of her sex. When she came down with brain fever, typical in the ranks, her doctor discovered her identity. He told her commanding officer, who ordered her to deliver a letter to George Washington. Washington handed her a discharge and enough money to get home. After the war, he granted her a pension and some land in return for her services in the war.

**Joseph Warren:** He discovered the British plans to capture both the ammunition supply at Concord, and the patriots, Hancock and Adams. He dispatched William Dawes and Paul Revere to warn the colonists.

**George Washington “The Father of our Country”:** Washington was the major leader during the Revolutionary War and was elected the first president of the United States.

### British Leaders

**Battle of White Plains – October 28, 1776:** General Howe succeeded in capturing this important New York fort and causing Washington's army to retreat again, this time across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania.

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**Battle of Trenton – December 26, 1776:** Washington led his men across the river in boats where they surprised the sleeping German mercenary soldiers (Hessians) on Christmas night at Trenton. The German soldiers surrendered.

**Battle of Princeton – January 3, 1777:** Washington mastered another surprise attack and defeated British troops in New Jersey.

**Flag – June 14, 1777:** Congress decided on a prototype for the U.S. flag: thirteen red and white stripes in alternation and thirteen white stars on a background of blue.

**Battle of Brandywine/Germantown – September 11, 1777:** English forces, under Howe and Cornwallis, attacked at Brandywine and took Philadelphia, the temporary capitol, from which Congress was forced to escape. Washington surprised their army at dawn, but major confusion resulted, and his troops were forced to retreat.

**Saratoga – October 7, 1777:** Howe, Clinton, and Burgoyne were victorious at Ticonderoga. At the first battle of Saratoga, Burgoyne was successful over Gates and Arnold, but at the second battle of Saratoga, Gate's forces defended successfully against an attack by Burgoyne's tired forces. Arnold (at this point on the American side) went even further and attacked the forces once they were down. After this battle, Burgoyne retreated and asked for terms of surrender, which involved his retreat all the way to England. This battle was a significant turning point in the war.

**Valley Forge:** Washington's troops endured a freezing winter and starvation conditions.

**France enters the War:** Benjamin Franklin convinced the French to ally with the Americans. Four months later, England and France were also at war.

**British Attempt at Peace:** The English Parliament tried to pacify colonists by repealing the Tea Act and the Coercive Acts, but would not recognize America as independent, which was now the most prominent issue for colonists.

**Battle of Monmouth – June 28, 1778:** Clinton had been ordered from abroad to evacuate Philadelphia and go to New York. Washington, Lee, and Lafayette pursued his troops.

**Spain joins the war:** Spain offered their alliance to England in return for territory, but the British declined, so Spain entered on the French side, even though they didn't acknowledge the American cause.

**Charleston:** The British captured many American soldiers in Charleston as well as four American ships. This battle was the worst defeat for the colonial side during the Revolution.

**Difficulty supplying the Army:** Congress had difficulty providing food and supplies to its army.

**Benedict Arnold:** This American general became a traitor by making a deal with Clinton to lose the Battle at West Point. After his scheme was revealed, he fled to the British army, where he was made a brigadier general.

**Northwest Ordinance – July 13, 1787:** Under this ordinance, the western territories north of the Ohio River were accepted as states with equal rights as the original colonies. They would also have a free public education, trial by jury, religious freedom, and no slavery.

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**The Federalist – 1787:** Multiple essays were published supporting and denouncing the prospective Constitution by both Federalists and anti-federalists. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay were three of the most notable writers for the Federalist cause. The anti-Federalists were concerned that the government would be overrun by a rich elite that would forget the rights of the common person. The Federalists argued that they had built in checks and balances, and they promised to add a Bill of Rights.

**The Constitution is Ratified – June 21, 1788:** Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, and New Hampshire ratified the new Constitution making the necessary majority. Virginia, New York, and North Carolina followed suit, with Rhode Island joining two years later.

**New York City:** New York City was temporarily designated the center of the government and became our first U.S. capitol.

**George Washington 1<sup>st</sup> President – April 6, 1789:** George Washington was elected as our first president and John Adams became his vice president.

**Bill of Rights – September 25, 1789:** This stipulation was passed in 1791. These rights became the first 10 amendments to the Constitution.

**The Potomac Capitol:** The House of Representatives voted to set aside land on the Potomac River for the site of the new national capitol.

## Weapons and Military War Terms

### Artillery

**Bayonet:** These small swords were attached to rifles.

**Cannons:** Cannons were used in open field battles and were used to defend ships and forts. They weighed almost a ton and fired solid iron projectiles.

**Grenadiers:** At first this term referred to the soldiers who threw grenades, but later it came to mean the elite troops who performed the most hazardous assignments.

**Light Infantry:** These soldiers carried less equipment so they could move faster.

**Militia:** These soldiers were the lowest in training and fought with muskets.

**Minutemen:** These soldiers were well-trained, rural reserves that got their nickname because they had to be ready to fight on a minute's notice.

**Musket:** This type of "muzzle-loaded" gun became obsolete because it was laborious to load and only accurate at close ranges. Bullets, called rounds, were stuffed into the gun after gunpowder and a rag were inserted. Reloading was time-consuming, and rifles eventually replaced the muskets.