CHAPTER 8

America Secedes from the Empire, 1775–1783

# PART I: Reviewing the Chapter

## A. Checklist of Learning Objectives

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Explain how American colonists could continue to proclaim their loyalty to the British crown even while they engaged in major military hostilities with Britain after April 1775.

2. Explain why Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* finally inspired Americans to declare their independence in the summer of 1776, and outline the principal ideas of republicanism that Paine and other American revolutionary leaders promoted.

3. Explain both the specific political grievances and the universal ideals and principles that Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence used to justify America’s separation from Britain.

4. Show why the American Revolution should be understood as a civil war betweenAmericans as well as a war with Britain, and describe the motivations and treatment of the Loyalists.

5. Describe how Britain’s original strategic plan to crush the Revolution was foiled, especially by the Battle of Saratoga.

6. Describe the fundamental military strategy that Washington and his generals, especially Nathanael Greene, adopted, and why it proved successful.

7. Describe the key role of the French alliance in winning American independence, including the final victory at Yorktown.

8. Describe the terms of the Treaty of Paris, and explain why America was able to achieve a diplomatic victory that far exceeded its military and economic strength.

## B. Glossary

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms.

1. **mercenary** A professional soldier who serves in a foreign army for pay. “. . . the Americans called all the European mercenaries Hessians.”

2. **indictment** A formal written accusation charging someone with a crime. “The overdrawn bill of indictment included imposing taxes without consent. . . .”

3. **dictatorship** A form of government characterized by absolute state power and unlimited, arbitrary control by the ruler or rulers. “The [charges] included . . . establishing a military dictatorship. . . .”

4. **neutral** A nation or person not taking sides in a war. “Many colonists were apathetic or neutral. . . .”

5. **civilian** A citizen not in military service. “The opposing forces contended . . . for the allegiance . . . of the civilian population.”

6. **traitor** One who betrays a country by aiding an enemy. “. . . they regarded their opponents, not themselves, as traitors.”

7. **confiscate** To seize private property for public use, often as a penalty. “The estates of many of the fugitives were confiscated. . . .”

8. **envoy** A messenger or agent sent by a government on official business. “Benjamin Franklin, recently sent to Paris as an envoy, truthfully jested that Howe had not captured Philadelphia. . . .”

9. **rabble** A mass of disorderly and crude common people. “This rabble was nevertheless whipped into a professional army. . . .”

10. **blockade** The isolation of a place by hostile ships or troops, preventing the movement of people or goods. “Now the French had powerful fleets. . . in a position to jeopardize Britain’s blockade and lines of supply.”

11. **privateer** A private vessel temporarily authorized to capture or plunder enemy ships in wartime. “More numerous and damaging than ships of the regular American navy were swift privateers.”

12. **graft** Taking advantage of one’s official position to gain money or property by illegal means. “It had the unfortunate effect of . . . involving Americans, including Benedict Arnold, in speculation and graft.”

# Part II: Checking Your Progress

## A. True-False

Where the statement is true, circle **T**; where it is false, circle **F**.

1. T F George Washington was chosen commander of the American army primarily because of his military abilities and experience.

2. T F Following the Battle of Bunker Hill, King George made one last attempt at reconciliation with his American subjects and their Continental Congress.

3. T F The American invasion of Canada in 1775 was based in part on the false belief that oppressed French Canadians would rise up in revolt and join the thirteen colonies in revolt.

4. T F Tom Paine’s *Common Sense* was most important because it advocated not only American independence but a republican form of government based on consent of the people.

5. T F The Declaration of Independence justified American independence not on the basis of the historic rights of Englishmen, but on the basis of the universal natural rights of all humankind.

6. T F The Declaration of Independence made the colonists seditious rebels against the king and enabled them to seek foreign assistance for their cause.

7. T F The Loyalists considered the Patriots to be the traitors to their country (Britain) and themselves to be the true patriots.

8. T F Most Loyalists were executed or driven from the country after the Patriot victory.

9. T F The Loyalists were strongest in New England and Virginia.

10. T F The most critical result of General Burgoyne’s defeat at Saratoga in 1777 was that it led to the American alliance with France.

11. T F Americans’ enlightened revolutionary idealism made them believe that the rule of law and free commercial trade, not traditional power politics, should be the basis of all international relations.

12. T F By using delay and strategic retreat, General Nathanael Greene successfully thwarted the British attempt to crush the Revolution in the South 1780–1781.

13. T F At Yorktown, the Americans finally showed that they could win an important battle without French assistance.

14. T F American diplomats in Paris were successful in guaranteeing American political independence but failed to gain the territorial concessions they wanted.

15. T F Although Britain lost its North American colonies in the Revolutionary War, it gained strategic and military dividends that paid off in the much larger wars with Napoleon for control of Europe.

## B. Multiple Choice

Select the best answer and circle the corresponding letter.

1. During the initial period of fighting between April 1775 and July 1776, the colonists constantly insisted that their goal was

a. the removal of all British troops from America.

b. to restore their rights within the British Empire.

c. complete independence from Britain.

d. to end the arbitrary power of King George III to impose taxes on them.

e. local autonomy and self-rule within the wider British empire.

2. George Washington proved to be an especially effective commander of American forces in the Revolution because

a. he was able to rally previously skeptical New Englanders to the Patriot cause.

b. of his exceptionally brilliant military mind.

c. of his eloquence in defining the political goals for which Americans fought.

d. his humble background inspired the ordinary soldiers in the Revolutionary army.

e. of his integrity, courage, and moral forcefulness.

3. The bold American military strategy that narrowly failed in December 1775 involved a/an

a. two-pronged attack on British forces in New Jersey.

b. invasion of Canada by generals Arnold and Montgomery.

c. attack on British forts in the Ohio country.

d. naval assault on British warships in Boston harbor.

e. attempt to divide British forces by conquering and controlling the Hudson Valley.

4. Many of the German Hessian soldiers hired by King George III to fight for the British

a. hated the American revolutionaries and their cause.

b. helped draw in the Prussian King Frederick II as a British ally.

c. were ineffective in battle against American militiamen.

d. had little loyalty to the British cause and ended up deserting.

e. helped recruit the numerous Germans in Pennsylvania to the Loyalist cause.

5. Thomas Paine’s appeal for a new republican form of government attracted many Americans because

a. they believed that social class differences promoted by monarchy were wrong.

b. they expected that it would encourage an alliance with republican France.

c. they were impressed that Paine was drawing on the best classical ideas from Plato’s *Republic*.

d. they were fearful that wealthy southern planters like Washington wanted to establish nobility in America.

e. their own experience with local and colonial self-governance had prepared them for the idea that they did not need a monarch.

6. The Declaration of Independence’s proclamation that all governments everywhere should be based on universal human rights and consent of the people soon had an impact on

a. the movement to abolish the British monarchy.

b. the French Revolution and its Declaration of the Rights of Man.

c. Thomas Jefferson’s decision to emancipate his own slaves.

d. the first attempts to create an international organization comparable to the United Nations.

e. political philosophers like Edmund Burke and Voltaire.

7. Which of the following was *not* among the groups that produced large numbers of Loyalists?

a. Conservative and well-off Americans

b. Recent immigrants from Scotland and Ireland

c. Presbyterians and Congregationalists

d. African Americans

e. Members of the Anglican and Quaker churches

8. Besides George Washington, the most militarily brilliant and effective American officer in the early campaigns of 1776 and 1777 was General

a. Nathanael Greene.

b. Baron von Steuben.

c. Benedict Arnold.

d. William Howe.

e. John Burgoyne.

9. The Battle of Saratoga was a key turning point of the War for Independence because it

a. prevented the British from keeping control of the key port of New York City.

b. demonstrated that the Americans could fight more than guerrilla wars.

c. displayed George Washington’s brilliance as military strategist.

d. effectively destroyed British military power in the middle colonies.

e. foiled the British attempt to isolate New England and it brought French assistance to the Revolutionary cause.

10. In his successful negotiation of a military alliance with France, Benjamin Franklin attempted to personally represent

a. the power of the new, continent-wide American republic.

b. the American ideals of homespun simplicity and democratic social order.

c. his knowledge and status as a leading scientist on both sides of the Atlantic.

d. his skill as a political propagandist and coiner of wise, clever sayings.

e. the elegant polish and sophisticated manner that would impress the French court.

11. The British relied on the numerous Loyalists to aid them in fighting the Patriots especially in

a. Rhode Island and the rest of New England.

b. the western Illinois country.

c. the warfare at sea.

d. the Carolinas.

e. Canada.

12. Most of the Six Nations of the Iroquois under Joseph Brant fought for Britain against the American revolutionaries because

a. they disagreed with the principles of the Declaration of Independence.

b. they believed that a victorious Britain would contain westward American expansion.

c. they were paid as mercenary soldiers by the British government.

d. they hoped to drive the American colonists off the North American continent.

e. the British promised them their own independent nation in upstate New York.

13. The British defeat at Yorktown was brought about by George Washington’s veteran Continental Army and the

a. French navy under Admiral de Grasse.

b. American navy under John Paul Jones.

c. American militia under George Rogers Clark.

d. Armed Neutrality under Catherine the Great.

e. local Virginia militia.

14. In the peace negotiations at Paris, the French wanted the new American republic to

a. be divided into three smaller nations.

b. negotiate a separate peace with Britain.

c. guarantee that they would not spread revolutionary ideas in France.

d. help France regain Quebec from the British.

e. be confined to the territory east of the Appalachian Mountains.

15. The British yielded the Americans a generous peace treaty that included the western territories primarily because of the

a. desire of the weak Whig ministry in London for friendly future relations with the United States.

b. threat of further war with France.

c. military power of the United States.

d. willingness of the Americans to yield on other issues like trade and fishing rights.

e. Americans were willing to guarantee British control of Canada.

## C. Identification

Supply the correct identification for each numbered description.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ The body that chose George Washington commander of the Continental Army

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ The British colony that Americans invaded in 1775 in hopes of adding it to the rebellious thirteen

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ The inflammatory pamphlet that demanded independence and heaped scorn on “the Royal Brute of Great Britain”

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ The document that provided a passionate explanation and justification of Richard Henry Lee’s official resolution passed by Congress on July 2, 1776

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Another name for the American Tories

6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ One of George Washington’s most brilliant military victories, when he surprised the British and Hessians the day after Christmas, 1776

7. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Pennsylvania valley where Washington’s army nearly starved and froze to death in the winter of 1777–1778

8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ The river valley that was the focus of Britain’s early military strategy and the scene of Burgoyne’s surrender at Saratoga in 1777

9. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Term for the alliance of Catherine the Great of Russia and other European powers who did not declare war but assumed a hostile neutrality toward Britain

10. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ English translation of the new American republic’s official motto, *novus ordo seculorum*

11. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Self-denying document drafted by Congress in 1776 to guide American diplomacy that specified no political or military alliances but only commercial relations

12. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Legalized pirates, more than a thousand strong, who inflicted heavy damage on British shipping

13. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ British political party that replaced Lord North’s Tories in 1782 and made a generous treaty with the United States

14. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ The key American fort on the Hudson River that General Benedict Arnold attempted to hand over to the British

15. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Treaty between the United States and the Iroquois that represented the first Indian treaty ever signed by the new nation.

## D. Matching People, Places, and Events

Match the person, place, or event in the left column with the proper description in the right column by inserting the correct letter on the blank line.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. \_\_\_ George Washington  2. \_\_\_ Bunker Hill  3. \_\_\_ Benedict Arnold  4. \_\_\_ Thomas Paine  5. \_\_\_ Richard Henry Lee  6. \_\_\_ Thomas Jefferson  7. \_\_\_ Nathanael Greene  8. \_\_\_ General Burgoyne  9. \_\_\_ General Howe  10. \_\_\_ Benjamin Franklin  11. \_\_\_ George Rogers Clark  12. \_\_\_ John Paul Jones  13. \_\_\_ Saratoga  14. \_\_\_ Yorktown  15. \_\_\_ Joseph Brant | a. British general who chose to enjoy himself in New York and Philadelphia rather than vigorously pursue the American enemy  b. Brilliant American general who invaded Canada, foiled Burgoyne’s invasion, and then betrayed his country in 1780  c. American naval commander who successfully harassed British shipping  d. Author of an explanatory indictment, signed on July 4, 1776, that accused George III of establishing a military dictatorship  e. Shrewd and calculatingly homespun American diplomat who forged the alliance with France and later secured a generous peace treaty  f. Mohawk chief who led many Iroquois to fight with Britain against American revolutionaries  g. The decisive early battle of the American Revolution that led to the alliance with France  h. Military engagement that led King George III officially to declare the colonists in revolt  i. Brilliant “Fighting Quaker” whose strategy of retreat and delay finally defeated the British in the Carolinas  j. A wealthy Virginian of great character and leadership abilities who served his country without pay  k. The British defeat that led to the fall of North’s government and the end of the war  l. Leader whose small force conquered key British forts in the West  m. A radical British immigrant who put an end to American toasts to King George  n. Fiery Virginian and author of the official resolution of July 2, 1776, formally authorizing the colonies’ independence  o. Blundering British general whose slow progress south from Canada ended in disaster at Saratoga |

## E. Putting Things in Order

Put the following events in correct order by numbering them from 1 to 6.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Lord North’s military collapses, and Britain’s Whigs take power, ready to make peace.

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Thomas Jefferson writes an eloquent justification of Richard Henry Lee’s resolution.

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Burgoyne and Howe are defeated both by the generalship of Washington and Arnold and by their own blundering.

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ The Treaty of Paris is signed, guaranteeing American independence.

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ The British launch a frontal attack on entrenched American forces near Boston and suffer drastic losses in their victory.

6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Washington’s army and the French navy trap General Cornwallis, spelling the end for the British.

## F. Matching Cause and Effect

Match the historical cause in the left column with the proper effect in the right column by writing the correct letter on the blank line.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Cause | Effect |
| 1. \_\_\_ The Battle of Bunker Hill  2. \_\_\_ Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*  3. \_\_\_ Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence  4. \_\_\_ The Patriot militia’s political education and recruitment  5. \_\_\_ The blundering of Burgoyne and Howe and the superb military strategy of Arnold and Washington  6. \_\_\_ The Battle of Saratoga  7. \_\_\_ Clark’s military conquests and Jay’s diplomacy  8. \_\_\_ The trapping of Cornwallis between Washington’s army and de Grasse’s navy  9. \_\_\_ The collapse of the North ministry and the Whi g takeover of the British government  10. \_\_\_ Jay’s secret and separate negotiations with Britain | a. Led to American acquisition of the West up to the Mississippi River  b. Caused King George to proclaim the colonies in revolt and import Hessian troops to crush them  c. Led to a favorable peace treaty for the United States and the end of French schemes for a smaller, weaker America  d. Caused the British to begin peace negotiations in Paris  e. Inspired universal awareness of the American Revolution as a fight for the belief that “all men are created equal”  f. Caused the British defeat at Yorktown and the collapse of North’s Tory government  g. Led to the failure of Britain’s grand strategy and the crucial American victory at Saratoga  h. Made France willing to become an ally of the United States  i. Stirred growing colonial support for declaring independence from Britain  j. Won neutral or apathetic Americans over to the Patriot cause |

## G. Developing Historical Skills

### Distinguishing Historical Fact and Historical Meaning

Some historical events can be understood as simple facts requiring little explanation. But other historical events have meaning only when their significance is analyzed. The text contains examples of both kinds of historical events. Comparing them will help sort out the difference between the two.

Indicate which of these pairs of historical events is (a) a simple factual event requiring little explanation and which is (b) an event whose meaning needs to be interpreted in order to be understood. In each case, list the meaning the text gives to the second kind of event.

1. The British burning of Falmouth (Portland), Maine, and King George’s proclamation that the colonies were in rebellion

2. Tom Paine’s *Common Sense* and the death of General Richard Montgomery

3. Richard Henry Lee’s resolution of July 2, 1776, and Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence

## H. Map Mastery

### Map Discrimination

Using the maps and charts in Chapter 8, answer the following questions.

1. *Revolution in the North, 1775–1776*: Which two British strong points in Canada did the American generals Arnold and Montgomery attack in 1775?

2. *New York-Pennsylvania Theater, 1777–1778*: When Washington recrossed the Delaware River before the Battle of Trenton on December 26, 1776, which state did he come from, and which state did he go to?

3. *New York-Pennsylvania Theater, 1777–1778*: Which of the three British generals who were supposed to meet near Albany, New York, moved in the opposite direction and failed to get to the appointed gathering?

4. *Britain Against the World*: Besides France, which two European nations directly declared war on Britain during the American Revolution?

5. *War in the South, 1780–1781*: Name three cities in the South occupied at one time or another by General Cornwallis.

6. *George Rogers Clark’s Campaign, 1778–1779*: Which river did George Rogers Clark move down as he went to conquer western forts from the British?

7. *George Rogers Clark’s Campaign, 1778–1779*: Which three British posts did Clark capture?

### Map Challenge

Using the maps of *The Revolution in the North* and *New York-Pennsylvania Theater, 1777–1778* as a basis, write a brief essay explaining why control of the Hudson River–Lake Champlain Valley was strategically crucial to both the British and the Americans in the Revolutionary War.

# PART III: Applying What You Have Learned

1. Why were Americans so long reluctant to break with Britain. How does the Declaration of Independence explain ”the causes that impel them to separation” (see Appendix)?

2. Why was the Battle of Saratoga such a key battle in the Revolutionary War? Did Saratoga put the Americans on a clear path to victory, or only prevent them from being quickly defeated?

3. Why did Tom Paine’s radical vision of republican virtue and the rights of the people appeal to so many Americans at the time of independence? Why did more conservative Patriots develop a different vision of America’s republican future?

4. In what ways was the Revolution a civil war among Americans as well as a fight between Britain and those Americans seeking independence? Why have the Loyalists generally been forgotten in the story of America’s beginnings?

5. How did the idealism and self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence shape Americans’ outlook and conduct during the Revolutionary War, including their attempt to establish entirely new principles of international relations?

6. Argue for and against: Even though it was necessary to achieve American independence, the American alliance with the reactionary French monarchy violated revolutionary ideals and demonstrated their impracticality as a basis for international relations.

7. Argue for and against: Washington was a great general not so much because of his victories but because of his brilliant strategic retreats.

8. In what ways did the principles of the American Revolution and the Declaration of Independence emerge from the practical historical experience of the American people, and in what ways did it reflect the abstract Enlightenment beliefs in a new age of progress, liberty, and human rights?