

Summary: Declaring Independence

The Steps to Independence

After the battles of 1775, the American colonies and Britain were at war. Some colonists were Patriots. They wanted independence. Others still thought of King George as their king. One famous Patriot, Thomas Paine, wrote a pamphlet called *Common Sense*. He wrote that the king treated the colonists unfairly. He said the only way to stop this was to become independent. He also wrote that the colonists had nothing to gain and much to lose by staying tied to the king. Thousands of people read the pamphlet, and support for independence grew.

Declaration of Independence

Congress asked Thomas Jefferson and others to write a declaration of independence. Jefferson wrote about the rights of all people in the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson wrote that people have the right to live, the right to be free, and the right to seek happiness. He wrote that if a government does not protect these rights, people have the right to form a new government. He wrote that King George had tried to take away rights and force taxes on the colonies. The Declaration said the colonies should separate from Britain and that only free colonies could protect the colonists' rights.

Importance of the Declaration

On July 4, 1776, the Congress accepted the Declaration. The delegates knew it was dangerous to sign it. Britain would say it was treason. But delegates signed. The Declaration is still important because it says the American people believe in equal rights for all. Today we know that the words "all men are created equal" include everyone: women, men, children, and every race and group. But in 1776, people's ideas were different. Only white men who owned property had the right to vote. Laws that recognized equal rights of other groups were passed later.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

independence *noun*, freedom from being ruled by someone else

declaration *noun*, a statement that declares or announces an idea

rights *noun*, freedoms that are protected by a government's laws

treason *noun*, the crime of fighting against one's own government

After You Read

REVIEW What were Thomas Paine's arguments for independence?

Underline the sentences that tell you Paine's ideas.

REVIEW According to the Declaration, why did the colonies have the right to their own government?

Underline the sentences that say why the colonies had a right to their own government.

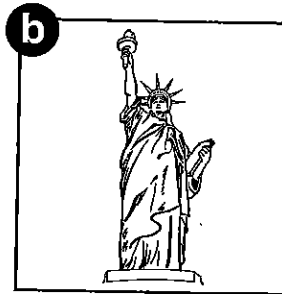
REVIEW Why is the Declaration so important to Americans? Underline the sentence that says why the Declaration is still important.

Support for Language Development

1. Write the letter of the picture and word that goes with the definition below.



treason



independence



rights

_____ freedom from being ruled by someone else

_____ the crime of fighting against one's own government

_____ freedoms that are protected by a government's laws

2. Read the sentences below. Which happened first? Write "1" in front of the first event. Write "2" in front of the second event. Write "3" in front of the third event.

_____ A. Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence.

_____ B. Thomas Paine wrote *Common Sense*.

_____ C. Delegates signed the declaration.

3. Draw a line from the name in the left column to the correct sentence in the right column.

King George

signed the Declaration of Independence.

Congress

was a pamphlet that pushed for independence.

Patriots

had tried to take away the colonists' rights.

Common Sense

felt independence from Britain was worth fighting for.

Summary: Life During the War

Taking Sides

On July 4, 1776, Congress declared independence. Not everyone thought this was a good idea. Many people thought Britain should rule America. When the Revolutionary War began, about half of the colonists were Patriots who supported independence. About one-fifth were Loyalists. The rest of the colonists were neutral.

Most Americans who worked for the British government were Loyalists because they wanted to keep their jobs. Many wealthy Americans were Loyalists because they thought war would hurt their businesses.

Some enslaved African Americans became Loyalists. The British offered them freedom if they helped the British in the war. A few fought in the army, and others built forts, drove carts, or worked as spies. Most American Indians stayed neutral. A few Indian nations fought for the Patriots, but more American Indians helped the British. They wanted the British to win and stop American settlers from taking their land.

Many enslaved African Americans were Patriots. Some were offered freedom if they became soldiers. Free African Americans also became soldiers. Some women Patriots worked as spies or messengers. Others helped at the soldiers' camps.

The Challenges of War

The War for Independence created many problems. People who lived near battlefields had to leave their homes. Both armies destroyed houses and robbed farms. Food, clothing, and supplies cost more. Inflation made it hard for people to buy things they needed. Some store and farm owners would not sell their goods. They wanted to wait for the prices to go higher so they could then sell their goods for more money. There were not enough supplies for soldiers and other people. Congress passed a law to stop store owners and farmers from waiting to sell their goods.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

Loyalists *noun*, people still loyal to the king

neutral *noun*, not taking sides

inflation *noun*, a rise in the prices of most goods

After You Read


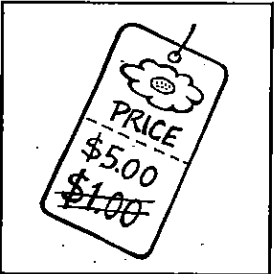

REVIEW Why did enslaved African Americans fight on both sides in the war? Circle the two sentences that tell the answer.

REVIEW Why was inflation a problem for Americans? Highlight the sentence that tells how inflation made it hard for people.

Support for Language Development

1. Write the vocabulary word on the line next to its meaning.

Loyalists	neutral	inflation
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	<hr style="width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	<p>not taking sides</p>
	<hr style="width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	<p>a rise in the prices of most goods</p>
	<hr style="width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	<p>people still loyal to the king</p>

2. Read the sentences that explain why people were Patriots or Loyalists. Write the letter for each sentence in the correct column.

- A. Some colonists thought Britain should rule America.
- B. Many colonists wanted America to be independent.
- C. Americans who worked for the British government wanted to keep their jobs.
- D. Some enslaved African Americans were offered freedom if they became Patriot soldiers.

Patriots	Loyalists

Summary: The War in the North

Washington's First Battles

The Continental Army was not as large or strong as the British army when the War for Independence started. British soldiers had better weapons and training. But the Americans had a great leader, George Washington. They were on their own land, which made it easier to plan attacks and defend themselves.

The Americans forced the British to leave Boston in the spring of 1776. In August, the British won the Battle of Long Island in New York. The Americans retreated and marched into Pennsylvania. George Washington planned an attack on the British in Trenton, New Jersey. He wanted to win a battle so his soldiers would not give up. On the night of December 25, the Americans rowed across the Delaware River. They attacked at dawn. The soldiers in Trenton were German mercenaries. They were still sleepy from celebrating Christmas, and the soldiers surprised them. The Americans won the battle and took almost 1,000 prisoners. The Patriots were very happy about this victory.

A Turning Point

The British marched into New York from Canada. They met the Americans at Saratoga. It was a hard battle, but the Americans won. After the Battle of Saratoga, France decided to help the Americans. They sent money, soldiers, and a navy. Later, Spain, the Netherlands, and Russia also helped the Americans.

The British captured Philadelphia and stayed there for the winter of 1777. The Americans stayed in tents at Valley Forge, about 20 miles away. Soldiers slept on the cold ground, and many men had no shoes. There was not enough food. Many soldiers died. Washington worked hard to get more food and uniforms. In the spring, Friedrich von Steuben, a German soldier, joined the army at Valley Forge. He trained the Americans to march and use their weapons better. They became better soldiers because of their training.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

retreat *verb*, to move away from the enemy

mercenary *noun*, a soldier who is paid to fight for a foreign country

victory *noun*, the defeat of an enemy

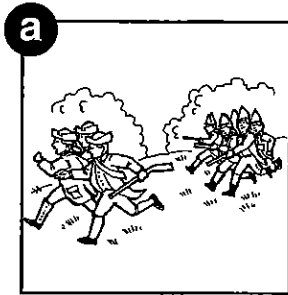
After You Read

REVIEW Why did Washington decide to attack Trenton? Circle the sentence that tells why George Washington wanted to win in Trenton.

REVIEW What happened at Valley Forge to make the Continental Army better soldiers? Underline two sentences that tell who joined the soldiers at Valley Forge and how he helped them become better soldiers.

Support for Language Development

1. Write the letter for the picture and word that goes with each definition.



retreat



mercenary



victory

- _____ the defeat of an enemy
- _____ to move away from the enemy
- _____ a soldier who is paid to fight for a foreign country

2. Read the following sentences. In the effects box, write the number of the sentence that matches the cause.

1. The men of the Continental Army became good soldiers because of their training.
2. Washington's army had to retreat.
3. The Americans took almost 1,000 prisoners and were overjoyed at the victory.

Causes

Effects

A. The Americans attacked the German mercenaries in Trenton.



B. Friedrich von Steuben taught the Americans to march and use their weapons properly.



C. The British defeated the Continental Army in the Battle of Long Island in New York.



Summary: Winning the War

The War in the South and West

After more than three years of war, the British had not defeated the Patriots. They decided on a new strategy. They thought the South had more Loyalists than the North. They hoped these Loyalists could help them. The British invaded the South. At first, the new strategy worked. By the summer of 1780, the British had won Georgia and South Carolina. Many Loyalists helped them, including Benedict Arnold, a famous Patriot hero who secretly changed sides and became a British general. Today he is known as a traitor.

The British won many battles in the South, but the Patriots fought back. One officer used surprise attacks. His soldiers sneaked up on the British, attacked, and quickly retreated. Another Patriot, Nathanael Greene, forced the British to chase his small army. This tired the British and used up their supplies. Patriots in the West fought back too. They captured British forts in the Ohio River Valley. Spain also joined the war and captured British forts.

The War Ends

The Patriots fought the last big battle against the British in Yorktown, Virginia. Washington marched his army from New York to Virginia, where the British leader Cornwallis and his men were. French ships helped the Patriots. Washington's army and the French navy trapped the British army. Cornwallis hoped that British soldiers and ships in New York would help him. But the British could not defeat the French navy. Cornwallis's men fought for a week, but Cornwallis knew they could not win. On October 19, 1781, the British army at Yorktown surrendered. The war continued for two more years, but there was not much fighting. In September 1783, the United States and Britain signed the Treaty of Paris. The treaty said America was independent. Now Americans needed a government for their new country.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

strategy *noun*, a plan of action

traitor *noun*, someone who is not loyal

surrender *verb*, to give up

After You Read

Check your understanding.




REVIEW What was Greene's strategy to defeat the British? Circle the two sentences that explained Greene's strategy.

REVIEW What did the Treaty of Paris say? Draw a box around the sentence that tells what the treaty said.

Support for Language Development

1. Write the vocabulary word on the line next to its meaning.

strategy	traitor	surrender
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	<hr style="width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	<p>to give up</p>
	<hr style="width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	<p>a plan of action</p>
 <p><i>Benedict Arnold</i></p>	<hr style="width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	<p>someone who is not loyal</p>

2. Which happened first? Write "1" in front of the first event. Write "2" in front of the second event. Write "3" in front of the third event. Write "4" in front of the fourth event.

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|---|--|
| <p>_____ A. Greene's strategy to wear out the British forced Cornwallis to retreat.</p> <p>_____ B. The British decided to change their strategy by invading the South.</p> | <p>_____ C. The United States and Britain signed the Treaty of Paris.</p> <p>_____ D. Washington's army and the French navy trapped the British at Yorktown.</p> |
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