

Summary: Moving Toward Independence

Conflicts Begin

In 1754, Britain and France fought the French and Indian War for control of the Ohio River Valley. Britain won and controlled most of the land east of the Mississippi River. The war cost a lot of money. Britain raised this money by making the colonists pay a tax. Colonists did not have representatives in the British government. Angry colonists said they should not be taxed without representation.

The Sons of Liberty and other groups protested the taxes. They attacked tax collectors and stopped buying British goods. The Daughters of Liberty wove cloth instead of buying it from Britain. Britain passed more taxes. Colonists in Boston protested by dumping tea into the harbor. This was called the Boston Tea Party. Britain passed laws to punish Boston. They took power away from colonial governments. Colonists called these laws the Intolerable Acts.

Breaking Away from Britain

The Intolerable Acts made the colonists angry. Many people thought it was time for a revolution. In September 1774, colonial representatives met at the First Continental Congress. They voted to stop trade with Britain. Colonists prepared to fight a war.

In 1775, British soldiers planned to go to Concord to look for weapons. Colonists discovered the plan. Paul Revere and others warned colonial fighters, called Minutemen. The British fought the Minutemen in Lexington. This was the first battle of the Revolutionary War. In June, Minutemen and British soldiers fought again at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Britain won, but colonists fought well.

In 1776, the Second Continental Congress met. Thomas Jefferson was asked to write the Declaration of Independence. It said the colonies were starting a new country because Britain had not protected their rights. The Declaration promised equal rights for Americans. It was approved on July 4, 1776.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

tax *noun*, money citizens pay to their government for services

revolution *noun*, an overthrow or forced change of a government

congress *noun*, an official gathering of people to make decisions

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

rights *noun*, freedoms protected by law



After You Read

REVIEW Why did the colonists protest the taxes that Britain made them pay? Draw a box around two sentences that tell why colonists did not think it was fair for Britain to tax them.

REVIEW Why did the colonists declare independence? Circle the sentence that tells why the colonists could start a new government.