

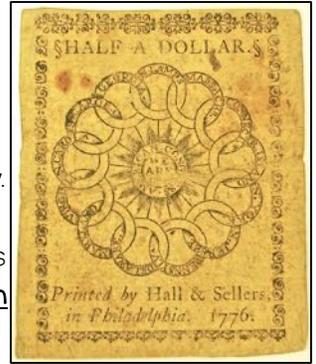
# Unit: American Revolution

## Lesson: Impacts of the American Revolution

Name \_\_\_\_\_

WB7.76

The outcome of the American Revolution had many impacts for both those living in the new country and the international community. The war shaped the political, societal, and economic policies in the post-Revolution period, but changes began to happen before the war ended. The **economy** of the colonies began to suffer during the war. It was expensive to continue the war, and eventually Congress ran out of gold and silver currency. To continue financing the war, Congress began to sell bonds to colonial investors and foreign governments, like France. Congress also printed paper money called Continentals. As more money was printed, the value decreased while the price of goods increased. **Inflation** occurred. It became difficult for the colonists to buy necessities. It was also difficult for Congress to make sure the army had needed supplies. America had few factories, and the British Navy blockaded the coasts preventing imported goods from reaching the colonists. They had to **smuggle** supplies from Europe. Some government officials even participated in **profiteering**, selling scarce goods for a profit. Corrupt merchants either **hoarded** goods so that they could charge a higher price, or they sold defective goods, like spoiled meat, weapons that did not work properly, or shoes that fell apart.



Early American Money

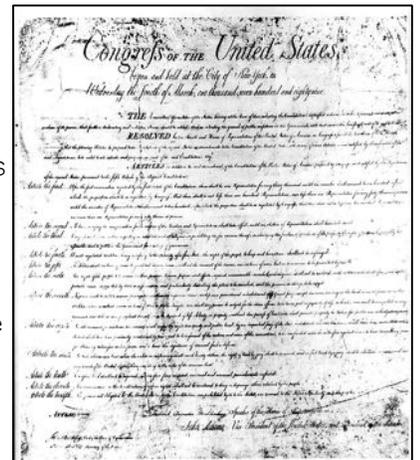


The colonies exported raw materials like rice, cotton, sugar cane, and tobacco to Great Britain.

Before the war, Great Britain pursued a policy of **mercantilism**. Great Britain only allowed the colonies to export **raw materials** to Great Britain, and Great Britain would then use them to manufacture goods to export to other countries. Some of these goods were sold back to the colonies because the colonies did not have the factories needed to produce the goods. In the post-Revolution period, however, new opportunities in trade and manufacturing opened up for Americans. The British Empire no longer controlled America's economy by limiting its trade and manufacturing. Americans were also free to build their own factories and not have to rely on Great Britain. Because western lands were opened up for settlement, Americans could farm those fertile lands. However, the economy of the new country still struggled. Farmers in debt had difficulty paying their creditors, or people from whom they had borrowed money. Their farms were taken away and sold to repay the debt. States

began to impose tariffs on goods from other states, which slowed trade between states. Great Britain refused to trade with America and prevented trade with the British West Indies in the Caribbean. Since Great Britain's Navy no longer protected American ships, pirate attacks on American ships increased, which disrupted trade with countries in Europe and Asia.

Politics also began to change before the war ended. During the war, the new states had already begun writing their own constitutions and forming state governments. This was an important change because the British Constitution was not written down. The states wanted a formal constitution on paper. Many states also included a Bill of Rights in their constitutions to protect the rights of individuals and describe the role of the government. The colonists could now seek to eliminate laws they did not like, or create laws they wanted. When America declared its independence in 1776, the period of constitution-making and state building began. After the war ended, political participation in some states increased because more people gained the right to vote. In addition, citizens who were not from wealthy families could play important roles in local and state governments. Before the war, only those who were affluent could participate. John Locke believed in equality for all men, and this belief caused society to become less aristocratic and more



US Bill of Rights (ratified 1791)

# Unit: American Revolution

## Lesson: Impacts of the American Revolution

Name \_\_\_\_\_

WB7.77

**egalitarian.** The idea that ability, effort, and virtue, not wealth or family, defined one's worth began to spread. However, this new belief applied only to white men. Also, since states were allowed to create their own constitutions, these varied state to state. In South Carolina only white men who owned a large amount of property could vote, and only white men with even more property could run for office. As a result, only 10% of the white male population was eligible to run for political office. Pennsylvania, on the other hand, removed property requirements for voting and running for office. As long as a white man paid taxes, he could vote or run for office. These inconsistencies made it difficult for Congress to govern the new country after the war ended.

The Treaty of Paris formally ended the war, and it was an international effort. Representatives from the newly formed United States of America, France, Great Britain, and Spain negotiated the terms. Each country wanted what was in its own best interest. America wanted complete freedom from Great Britain and land in North America; Great Britain wanted to avoid giving America full independence; France worried that America might become a world power (even though France helped defeat Great Britain); and Spain wanted the land between the Appalachian Mountains and Mississippi River. There was not any representation of the Native Americans at the negotiations, even though many tribes fought alongside the British, and their land was being taken. In September 1783, the Treaty of Paris was signed. America gained full independence, which Great Britain recognized, and acquired the land between the Atlantic Ocean and Mississippi River and between the Great Lakes and the Florida border. Spain had helped America defeat Great Britain by conquering Florida and driving out the British. Spain was given Florida and maintained possession of the Louisiana Territory (land west of the Mississippi). Even though France also allied with America, France did not gain any possessions or land. The country was left in debt from the war, which is one of the causes of the French Revolution that broke out in 1789. Great Britain gave up all rights to its former colony but kept possession of the land north of America, as well as its Caribbean islands. America agreed to end the persecution of loyalists who wanted to remain living in the country. British creditors were allowed to collect debts owed to them by Americans, and loyalists were to be given back their property that had been taken during the war. However, the future state governments failed to honor this part of the treaty. With no Native American representation, their lands were given to either America, Spain, or Great Britain. When the colonists won their freedom, the Native Americans lost theirs. Western settlement that was banned by the Proclamation of 1763 was now allowed. The new state governments that formed were not always friendly to the Native Americans and their territorial claims. Native Americans would be displaced and pushed farther west, and this would continue to cause fighting that would last until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1781, the Continental Congress ratified the Articles of Confederation. The Articles were created by representatives from all thirteen states and allowed each state one vote in the Continental



# Unit: American Revolution

## Lesson: Impacts of the American Revolution

Name \_\_\_\_\_

WB7.78



*Citizens elected judges.*

Congress, regardless of how many citizens lived in the state. Most states were fearful of a strong central government. As a result, state governors were given little power, so they could not become rulers. The legislative and judicial branches were elected regularly, so citizens could vote out those who were seen as ineffective. The Articles also denied Congress the power to levy or collect taxes, and Congress could not regulate foreign and domestic trade. As a result, the post-war Congress lacked power over the state governments. Congress was in massive debt from the war. Congress asked state governments to approve a tariff to help pay off the debt. One state, Rhode Island, did not approve the tariff, so it was rejected. As a result, Congress could not repay its debt to British merchants or loyalists, which was part of the Treaty of Paris. As a result, Great Britain then refused to remove British troops from its military forts on the Great Lakes. A weak federal government was not effective in governing the new nation, and changes were made in 1787 at the Constitutional Convention, which led to the US Constitution being ratified by all states by 1790.

Land holding changed after the war. Prior to the war, English law required land to be passed down from father to oldest son. As a result, land was held in the hands of a few wealthy individuals. When the war ended, the huge estates of loyalists were divided into smaller pieces and sold, and people also headed west to claim that land. There were still requirements that had to be met to own property, but they were not as strict as before.

One societal change involved the lives of women in America. During the war, women played an important role in politics and the war efforts. Most women also had to run their households while the men were away. They became more assertive and demanded more rights when the war ended. Abigail Adams told her husband, John, when he was drafting the Declaration of Independence to “remember the ladies.” However, after the war ended, women were not given equal rights to men. Before the war, many believed in the superiority of men over women. However, the Enlightenment Period introduced the idea that a republic could only succeed if all of its citizens were educated. Since women were the primary caregivers of children, they became responsible for raising and educating future citizens. Emphasis was placed on educating sons, though. This did give women more opportunities regarding education. The first American women institutions were founded in the 1790s, and this idea of educated women became known as “Republican Motherhood.” Unfortunately, this idea was largely restricted to wealthy families that had the resources to educate their children and where the women did not need to work outside the home. “Republican Motherhood” did not include most working women or enslaved women. Women were still not allowed to participate in politics or own land, and any property a married woman owned belonged to her husband. Women’s rights, or lack thereof, remained largely the same after the war ended. However, in the 1790s, women authors began to publish books aimed at women. Often these books included female heroines who faced obstacles in a male-dominated world. As women became more educated, they began to call for equal rights, which led to the first women’s rights movement in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.



*Judith Sargent Murray was a leading American author and advocate for women's rights (1751-1820).*



*The Abyssinian Baptist Church was founded in 1808. It is New York's first African-American Baptist Church.*

Another societal impact of the American Revolution was the beginning of the abolitionist movement. The British Army had promised freedom to enslaved African Americans owned by patriots if they fought for the British. When the war ended, the Treaty of Paris demanded that British troops leave the former enslaved African Americans behind. Many British military commanders, though, helped take them to Canada or Africa, so they would be free. Others were sold back into slavery, and some were sent to Caribbean islands. At the end of the war, the northern states had planned gradual emancipation, so that slavery would no longer exist in those states by the early 1800s. More northerners began to find slavery unacceptable, and they did not need slavery as part of their economic system. Even in the upper southern states, there was a movement towards freeing some slaves because slave labor was no longer needed to produce crops. The free African American

# Unit: American Revolution

## Lesson: Impacts of the American Revolution

Name \_\_\_\_\_

WB7.79

population grew quickly, and they established public institutions, such as churches, for themselves. In the lower southern states, though, slavery continued with no plan of ending it. For example, in the rice-growing states of South Carolina and Georgia, land owners did not free their slaves. Congress offered slave masters in these two states \$1000 for each enslaved person who enlisted in the Continental Army. However, both states refused the offer. Some African Americans were freed when the war ended because they had joined the Continental Army and fought against the British. Congress had promised freedom to any enslaved person who fought with the patriots. However, freedom for the African Americans was not equal to the white man's freedom. Even though slavery was slowly ending in the northern states, racism still existed, and laws were created to further oppress African Americans.

The Declaration of Independence demanded that all men were created equal and had equal rights. Most African Americans could not read, but white people who could read became increasingly aware of the ideals contained in the Declaration of Independence, and this helped to progress the abolitionist movement. The Declaration of Independence became a frequently referred to document by those who began to fight for equality, including the abolitionist movement in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and the women's rights movements in the 1840s and 1910s. The words, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness..." were used by early women's rights activists to fight for women's rights as well as abolitionists to end slavery.



The Haitian Revolution occurred 1781-1804

The Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution inspired similar revolutions around the world including France, Haiti, and South America, and democratic governments began to emerge. Countries that wanted to rid themselves of a ruler used the American Revolution as a model. The Declaration of Independence explains why a country should fight for freedom, what rights its citizens should have, how the government should protect its citizens' rights, and what happens if the government fails to protect these rights. Several countries successfully replaced their ruler with a democratic government, and over half of the countries in the United Nations have some type of document that could be

called a declaration of independence. Even when Texas fought for its independence from Mexico, they wrote the Texas Declaration of Independence. The purpose of the war was to fight for America's independence, but it also inspired many other people who were oppressed by their government in fighting for their freedom.

