

1775
Second Continental
Congress

1775
Olive Branch
Petition

1776
Common Sense
published

1776
Declaration of
Independence

1774

1775

1776

3 Ideas Behind the Revolution

SECTION PREVIEW

Objectives

- 1 Describe the importance of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*.
- 2 Identify the four parts of the Declaration of Independence.
- 3 **Key Terms** Define: *Common Sense*; Second Continental Congress; Olive Branch Petition; Declaration of Independence; Enlightenment; natural rights.

Main Idea

New ideas about equality and self-government contributed to the outbreak of the American Revolution.

Reading Strategy

Organizing Information Create a graphic organizer describing the four parts of the Declaration of Independence.

The American Revolution really took place on two levels. At one level it was a struggle for power between the American colonists and Great Britain over the question of who would rule them. The winner of this struggle was decided on the battlefield. The other level on which the Revolution took place was the level of ideas. The colonists were rethinking the proper role of citizens, government, and the relationship between the two. It was during the Revolution, and the years leading up to it, that Americans learned to demand that government respect citizens' rights.

Common Sense

One important document that expressed both levels of the Revolution was *Common Sense*, a 47-page pamphlet written by Thomas Paine.

Common Sense first appeared in Philadelphia in January 1776. Paine's direct writing style suggested that anyone could understand the conflict between Great Britain and the colonies. To simplify his writing Paine avoided the references to Greek and Latin literature that were common at the time:

KEY DOCUMENTS

“The period of debate is closed. Arms as the last resource decide the contest. . . . Every thing that is right or reasonable pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, ‘TIS TIME TO PART.’”

—Common Sense, 1776

Within a year some 500,000 copies of *Common Sense* were sold. The pamphlet convinced many readers, including those who had favored a peaceful settlement of differences with the British government, to support a complete break with Britain instead.

Turning Point: The Declaration of Independence

Common Sense appeared at a time when the **Second Continental Congress** was meeting in Philadelphia. The Congress had first gathered in May 1775, less than a month after British troops and colonial militia clashed at Lexington and Concord. Most of the delegates to the First Continental Congress returned for the meeting. However, there were some important newcomers. Among the

Main Idea CONNECTIONS

How did *Common Sense* contribute to the outbreak of the Revolution?

Expressing Problems Clearly

The ability to express a problem clearly means being able to describe the nature of a situation or a question that is difficult, puzzling, or open to debate. When you express a problem clearly, you are taking the first step toward understanding and solving it.

Following Parliament's passage of the Stamp Act in 1765, articles like those excerpted on this page appeared in American and British newspapers.

Use the following steps to practice expressing problems clearly.

1. Analyze the information. When you are confronted with a problem, study the information involved. Read excerpts A and B. (a) What was the nature of the case made by the

American colonist in excerpt A? (b) What information was given by the British writer in excerpt B?

2. Identify the basic concepts involved. Problems usually arise out of a specific set of circumstances. However, they often revolve around a general principle, such as fairness. To identify this concept, try to express the problem in terms of what each side wants for itself. (a) What benefit did the American writer want to achieve for the colonists? (b) What did the British writer want?

3. Identify the function of the supporting details. In any problem, details often are presented that may not be basic to the problem itself. (a) The British writer characterizes the colonists'

opposition to an act of Parliament as "an alarming crisis." Is this a basic part of the problem? Why or why not? (b) What other details in these excerpts did not relate to the basic issue of disagreement?

4. Express the problem clearly. Now that you have identified the main area of dispute and stripped away irrelevant details, you are ready to express the problem clearly. How would you describe the dispute between the British supporters of the Stamp Act and its American opponents?

TEST FOR SUCCESS

Why did John Adams consider the Stamp Act to be unconstitutional?

A "In all the calamities which have ever befallen this country, we have never felt so great a concern, or such alarming apprehensions, as on this occasion. . . . We [find] this tax to be unconstitutional. We have always understood it to be a grand and fundamental principle of the [British] constitution, that no freeman should be subject to any tax to which he has not given his own consent, in person or by proxy [representation]. And . . . that no freeman can be separated from his property but by his own act or fault. We take it clearly, therefore, to be inconsistent with the spirit of the . . . principles of the British constitution, that we should be subject to any tax imposed by the British Parliament; because we are not represented in that assembly in any sense, unless it be by a fiction of law."

John Adams, *Instructions of the Town of Braintree Massachusetts on the Stamp Act*, October 14, 1765

B "The question now is, Whether those American subjects are, or are not, bound by the resolutions of a British parliament? If they are not, they are entirely a separate people from us. On the other hand, if the people of America are bound by the proceedings of the English legislature, . . . [then] the present crisis . . . is really an alarming one. The people of the colonies know very well that the taxes of the Mother country are every day increasing; and can they expect that no addition whatsoever will be made to theirs? . . . In assisting the colonies we had an eye to our own interest. It would be ridiculous otherwise to squander away our blood and our treasure in their defense. But surely the benefit was mutual; and consequently the disadvantage [of taxes] should be mutual too."

"William Pym" to the *London General Evening Post*, August 20, 1765, reprinted in the *Newport Mercury*, October 28, 1765

new faces were Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania and John Hancock of Massachusetts. In June another new delegate, Thomas Jefferson, arrived from Virginia.

At first the delegates, like the American people, were deeply divided. Members such as Samuel Adams, John Adams, Patrick Henry, and Richard Henry Lee leaned toward independence. Moderates, led by John Dickinson, favored seeking some compromise with Britain that would increase colonial self-rule.

In November 1775, the Congress learned that George III had refused the **Olive Branch Petition**. Written by Dickinson, the document had expressed the colonists' continued loyalty to the monarch and their desire for peace. It begged the king to halt the fighting until a solution could be found.

Drafting a Declaration In June 1776, after more than a year of war, the Congress decided it was time for the colonies to cut their ties with Britain. The Congress appointed a committee to prepare a statement of the reasons for the separation—a **Declaration of Independence**. (See the full text of the Declaration on the pages

following this section.) Members of the committee were lawyer and planter Thomas Jefferson; Boston lawyer John Adams; Roger Sherman, a judge from Connecticut; Robert Livingston, the lawyer son of a wealthy New York family; and the well-known Benjamin Franklin. The committee chose Jefferson to draft the statement.

Jefferson's political ideas were influenced by the **Enlightenment**, an 18th-century movement that emphasized science and reason as key to improving society. He also drew ideas from earlier political thinkers, such as John Locke. In this Englishman's writing, Jefferson found support for revolution. Locke wrote:

KEY DOCUMENTS

“Governments are dissolved . . . when such a single person or prince sets up his own arbitrary will in place of the laws. . . . Secondly, when the prince hinders the legislative [legislature] from . . . acting freely. . . . Thirdly, when by the arbitrary power of the prince, the electors, or ways of election are altered, without the consent, and contrary to the common interest of the people.”

—John Locke,

Second Treatise of Government, 1689

TURNING POINT: *The Declaration of Independence*

The Declaration of Independence states that governments derive their power from “the consent of the governed.” As the time line below indicates, the right of the people to vote has been steadily broadened.



1776

The Declaration of Independence is signed.

1870

The Fifteenth Amendment grants African American males the right to vote.

1965

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 protects the voting rights of African Americans.

1971

The Twenty-sixth Amendment lowers the voting age to 18.



1800

1818

Constitutions of new western states, unlike earlier state constitutions, do not limit the vote to owners of property.

1900

1920

The Nineteenth Amendment grants women the right to vote.



2000

The Foundations of Democracy

Ancient Greece (c. 500 B.C.)	Democratic government originated in ancient Greek city-states 2,500 years ago. The word <i>democracy</i> comes from the Greek words <i>demos</i> , "the people," and <i>kratein</i> , "to rule."
Magna Carta (1215)	In 1215, English barons forced King John to sign a charter guaranteeing certain civil and political freedoms. Over time, these protections became the rights of all English people.
The Petition of Right (1626)	In 1626, the English Parliament forced Charles I to sign the Petition of Right, a document that limited the power of the monarchy. It included protections against (1) imprisonment without jury trial, (2) the institution of martial law during peacetime, (3) the mandatory quartering of troops, and (4) taxation without the permission of Parliament.
English Bill of Rights (1689)	This document forbade the crown from suspending or passing laws and from raising taxes without Parliament's consent, guaranteed the right to a fair and speedy trial, and forbade cruel and unusual punishment.
Social Contract Theory (1651)	Philosopher Thomas Hobbes described the relationship between the state and the governed as a social contract. Individuals surrendered their will to the state, which saved the people from anarchy.
Natural Rights (1690)	Political philosopher John Locke put forth an opposing view of the social contract. Locke maintained that the state exists to preserve the natural rights of its citizens—the right to life, liberty, and property. If the government fails in its duty to the citizens, the citizens then have the right to resist or rebel against that government.

Interpreting Tables Democracy has evolved into a delicate balance between the rights of individuals and the need for social order. **Government** How are limits on government power a part of that balancing act?

The Parts of the Declaration Jefferson divided the Declaration of Independence into four sections: an introduction, a declaration of rights, a list of complaints against the king, and a resolution of independence.

1. In the introduction, or preamble, Jefferson explained the purpose of the Declaration.

2. In the second section, Jefferson explained the political ideas on which the document was based. Here is where he drew most heavily on the writings of John Locke. Locke believed that people had **natural rights**—rights which belonged to them simply because they were human, not because kings or governments had granted them these rights. Jefferson used the expression "inalienable rights"—meaning, rights that could not be taken away. Then he listed some of them: "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

According to Locke's theory, people formed governments to protect their natural rights. If a government failed to act in the best interests of the people it governed, then the people had the right to revolt and replace the government with a new one.

3. Following the statement on rights was a third section that laid out a long list of wrongs the colonists believed had been committed by the British king. "The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of

repeated injuries," Jefferson wrote, "all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny."

4. Jefferson concluded the Declaration with a fourth section, titled "Resolution of Independence by the United States." In it he wrote, "these United Colonies are . . . and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States."

The Declaration Is Adopted On July 4, the date now celebrated as Independence Day, delegates joined in voting to approve the Declaration. Jefferson's document did much more than declare a nation's independence, however. It also defined the basic principles on which American government and society would rest. The United States would be a nation in which ordinary citizens would have a strong voice in their own government.

Abigail Adams

AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY Abigail Smith, born on

November 22, 1744, grew up in a Massachusetts household. Her youth was a comfortable one. Shortly before her twentieth



Abigail Adams
(1744–1818)

birthday, Abigail married 29-year-old John Adams. She entered her husband's family and, following the laws and customs of the time, she became subject to his authority.

In the 1770s, as John Adams became one of the leaders of the opposition to British rule, Abigail remained shut off from public debate because she was a woman. However, she did not hesitate to express her opinions to her husband. Several weeks before John was named to the committee to write the Declaration of Independence, Abigail sent him a letter in Philadelphia, where he was attending the Continental Congress:

AMERICAN VOICES

“I long to hear that you have declared an independency—and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment [stir up] a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.”

—Abigail Adams, March 31, 1776

Some of Abigail's comments were intended to tease John. She was serious, however, in her complaints about the status of women in American society. She employed the very ideas that men were using against Britain to suggest that it was time to rethink the relationship between men and women.

COMPARING PRIMARY SOURCES

RULE BY THE PEOPLE

In trying to decide whether or not to declare independence, colonists debated whether people were capable of ruling themselves.

For Rule by the People

“The American Congress derives all its power, wisdom, and justice, not from scrolls of parchment signed by kings but from the people. A more august [respectable] and a more equitable legislative body never existed in any quarter of the globe.”

—Anonymous newspaper editorial, November 14, 1774

Against Rule by the People

“Suppose we were to revolt from Great Britain, declare ourselves independent, and set up a republic of our own—what would be the consequence? I stand aghast at the prospect; my blood runs chill when I think of the calamities.”

—Rev. Charles Inglis, *The True Interest of America*, 1776

ANALYZING VIEWPOINTS What are the assumptions behind each writer's statement?

John did not attempt to follow through on Abigail's request. However, the two had an affectionate relationship and truly respected each other. The humor and friendship that can be seen in their letters remained a part of their marriage through bad times and good, until her death in 1818. Together they weathered the Revolution and eventually became the first presidential couple to live in the White House.

SECTION 3 REVIEW

Comprehension

- Key Terms Define:** (a) *Common Sense*; (b) Second Continental Congress; (c) Olive Branch Petition; (d) Declaration of Independence; (e) Enlightenment; (f) natural rights.
- Summarizing the Main Idea** Describe some of the political ideas that influenced the outbreak of the American Revolution.
- Organizing Information** Make a list of reasons why Thomas Paine's pamphlet, *Common Sense*, was so important.

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing Time Lines** Review the time line at the start of the section. How did the king's rejection of the Olive Branch Petition contribute to the Declaration of Independence?
- Making Comparisons** Compare and contrast Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* with the Declaration of Independence.

Writing Activity

- Writing an Expository Essay** Write an essay in which you explain the four parts of the Declaration of Independence.

THE DECLARATION OF *Independence*

In Congress, July 4, 1776

THE UNANIMOUS DECLARATION OF THE THIRTEEN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

"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." That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasions from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us in time of peace, Standing Armies, without the Consent of our legislature.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitutions, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offenses:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments;

For suspending our own Legislature, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection, and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms. Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free People.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of Justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by the Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved, and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

JOHN HANCOCK

President of the Continental Congress 1775–1777

NEW HAMPSHIRE

*Josiah Bartlett
William Whipple
Matthew Thornton*

MASSACHUSETTS BAY

*Samuel Adams
John Adams
Robert Treat Paine
Elbridge Gerry*

RHODE ISLAND

*Stephen Hopkins
William Ellery*

CONNECTICUT

*Roger Sherman
Samuel Huntington
William Williams
Oliver Wolcott*

NEW YORK

*William Floyd
Philip Livingston
Francis Lewis
Lewis Morris*

NEW JERSEY

*Richard Stockton
John Witherspoon
Francis Hopkinson*

John Hart

Abraham Clark

DELAWARE

*Caesar Rodney
George Read
Thomas McKean*

MARYLAND

*Samuel Chase
William Paca
Thomas Stone
Charles Carroll
of Carrollton*

VIRGINIA

*George Wythe
Richard Henry Lee
Thomas Jefferson
Benjamin Harrison
Thomas Nelson, Jr.
Francis Lightfoot Lee
Carter Braxton*

PENNSYLVANIA

*Robert Morris
Benjamin Rush
Benjamin Franklin
John Morton
George Clymer
James Smith
George Taylor
James Wilson
George Ross*

NORTH CAROLINA

*William Hooper
Joseph Hewes
John Penn*

SOUTH CAROLINA

*Edward Rutledge
Thomas Heyward, Jr.
Thomas Lynch, Jr.
Arthur Middleton*

GEORGIA

*Button Gwinnett
Lyman Hall
George Walton*

Reviewing the Declaration

VOCABULARY

Choose ten words in the Declaration with which you are unfamiliar. Look them up in the dictionary. Then, on a piece of paper, copy the sentence in the Declaration in which each unfamiliar word is used, and after the sentence write the definition of the unfamiliar word.

COMPREHENSION

1. Which truths in the second paragraph are "self-evident"?
2. Name the three unalienable rights listed in the Declaration.
3. From what source do governments derive their "just powers"?
4. What right do people have when their government becomes destructive?
5. In the series of paragraphs beginning, "He has refused his Assent," to whom does the word "He" refer?
6. Which phrase in the Declaration expresses the colonists' opposition to taxation without representation?
7. According to the Declaration, what powers does the United States have "as Free and Independent States"?
8. List the colonies that the signers of the Declaration represented.

CRITICAL THINKING

1. **Cause and Effect** Why do you think the colonists were unhappy with the fact that their judges' salaries were paid by the king?
2. **Drawing Conclusions** As Section 3 of this chapter explains, the Declaration was divided into four parts. Write down the first phrase of each of those four parts.
3. **Identifying Assumptions** Do you think that the statement "all men are created equal" was intended to apply to all human beings? Explain your reasoning.
4. **Recognizing Bias** What reference do you see to Native Americans? What atti-

tudes toward Native Americans does this express?

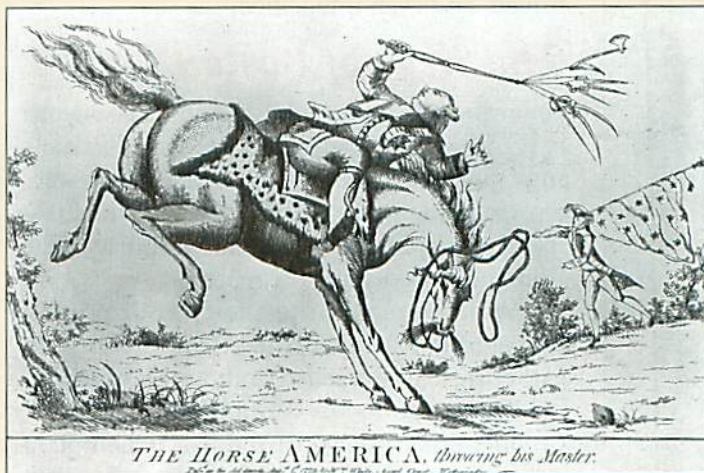
5. **Drawing Conclusions** What evidence is there that the colonists had already unsuccessfully voiced concerns to the King?

ISSUES PAST AND PRESENT

1. Write a letter to the Continental Congress from the perspective of a woman or an African American who has just read the Declaration in 1776. In your letter, comment on the Declaration's statement that "all men are created equal" and also express your attitude toward American independence.
2. What evidence in the Declaration is there of religious faith? How do you think this religious faith influenced the ideals expressed in the Declaration?
3. Examine the unalienable rights of individuals as stated in the Declaration. Do you think these rights are upheld today? Give examples to support your answer.

ANALYZING POLITICAL CARTOONS

1. This cartoon was published in 1779.
(a) Read the caption and identify the horse.
(b) Who is the master being thrown? (c) How do you know?
2. Examine the figure on the horse. (a) What is he holding? (b) What does it represent?
3. What is the cartoonist's overall message?



1775
*Battle of
Bunker Hill*

1776
*The American
Crisis is published*

1776
*Battle of
Trenton*

1777
*Battle of
Princeton*

1777
*Battle of Saratoga;
Burgoyne surrenders*

1775

1776

1777

1778

4 Fighting for Independence

SECTION PREVIEW

Objectives

- 1 Describe the siege of Boston and its outcome.
- 2 List the strengths and weaknesses of the British and American forces.
- 3 Explain the importance of battles in the North between 1776 and 1777, including the American victory at Saratoga.
- 4 **Key Terms** Define: Battle of Bunker Hill; casualty; Loyalist; mercenary; Battle of Trenton; Battle of Saratoga.

Main Idea

Despite considerable weaknesses, the Americans won important battles against the British between 1775 and 1777.

Reading Strategy

Reinforcing Main Ideas As you read the section, create a chart listing the major American victories in one column and the reasons for these victories in the other.

While the Declaration of Independence was not issued until July 4, 1776, Britain and the American colonists had been fighting since the Battles of Lexington and Concord in April 1775. King George III had not expected a war, much less a long one. "Once these rebels have felt a smart blow, they will submit," he had vowed after the clashes at Lexington and Concord. After all, the nation he ruled was the most powerful on Earth. But the fighting continued, and even intensified.

The Siege of Boston

Following the clashes at Lexington and Concord in April 1775, as many as 20,000 armed Patriots surrounded Boston. Though the Patriots were disorganized, their presence prevented the 6,000 British troops under General Thomas Gage from quickly crushing the rebellion.

With the main British force bottled up in Boston, the Patriots turned their attention to gathering badly needed military equipment. In May a group of Vermont militia under Colonel Ethan Allen crossed Lake Champlain and surprised the British troops at Fort Ticonderoga in northern New York. The

capture of the fort provided the Patriots with cannons and other supplies.

The Battle of Bunker Hill In June 1775 the Americans occupied two hills north of Boston. General Gage decided that the rebels must be driven from these strategic high grounds. On June 17, 1775, the British army attacked. In an awesome display of power, the tightly packed lines of red-coated troops marched up Breed's Hill with battle flags flying and drummers tapping out the beat. But as the British neared the American position, 1,600 Patriots poured unending musket fire into their ranks. The advancing troops slowed, stopped, and then fell back.

The British launched another assault. Again, heavy Patriot fire from the top of the hill drove them back. Determined, the British commander General William Howe ordered yet a third attack. This time, picking their way over the bodies of their fallen comrades, the troops succeeded in taking Breed's Hill. The Patriots, having used all of their ammunition, were forced to retreat. British forces then quickly overran the second, weaker Patriot position on nearby Bunker Hill.