

# 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

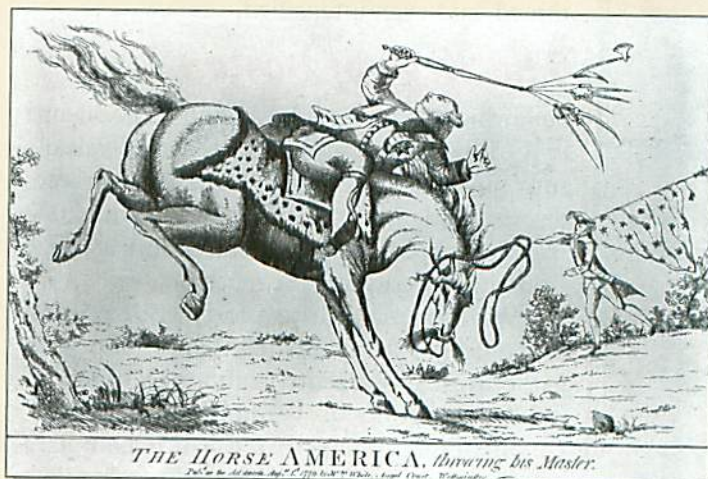
1. **Cause and Effect** Why do you think the colonists were unhappy with the fact that their judges' salaries were paid by the king?
2. **Drawing Conclusions** As Section 3 of this chapter explains, the Declaration was divided into four parts. Write down the first phrase of each of those four parts.
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 attitudes 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.



In a costly attempt to intimidate American forces, waves of British troops climb Breed's Hill toward the waiting enemy.

#### Geography

Why did General Gage target Breed's Hill?



The British emerged victorious from the **Battle of Bunker Hill**, but at a tremendous cost. Nearly 1,100 of 2,400 British soldiers had been killed or wounded. Patriot **casualties**—that is, persons killed, wounded, or missing—amounted to fewer than 400. “You can never conquer us,” wrote a defiant Patriot after the battle. “All America will revenge our cause.”

**The British Leave Boston** Warning that the Americans “are now spirited up by a rage and enthusiasm as great as ever people were possessed of,” General Gage asked for permission to march on Rhode Island or New York. Yet General Howe, still confident of an easy victory, advised against it. So for the next nine months Gage’s small army remained pinned down in Boston.

In July George Washington arrived from Philadelphia, where the Congress had named him commanding general of the Patriot forces. While Gage’s troops remained in Boston, Washington worked to transform the Patriot militia groups into the Continental Army.

In January 1776, General Henry Knox arrived outside Boston. He brought with him cannons his Patriots had hauled through the snowy forests from Fort Ticonderoga. Washington placed these big guns on Dorchester Heights, south of Boston. From there he could shell the British forces in the city and the British ships in Boston Harbor.

Realizing that they could no longer defend their position, the British abandoned Boston in March 1776. The British fleet moved the army to the Canadian city of Halifax, taking along some 1,000 **Loyalists**, or people who remained loyal to Great Britain. The Loyalists had no desire to be left behind with no one to protect them from the rebels.

## Strengths and Weaknesses

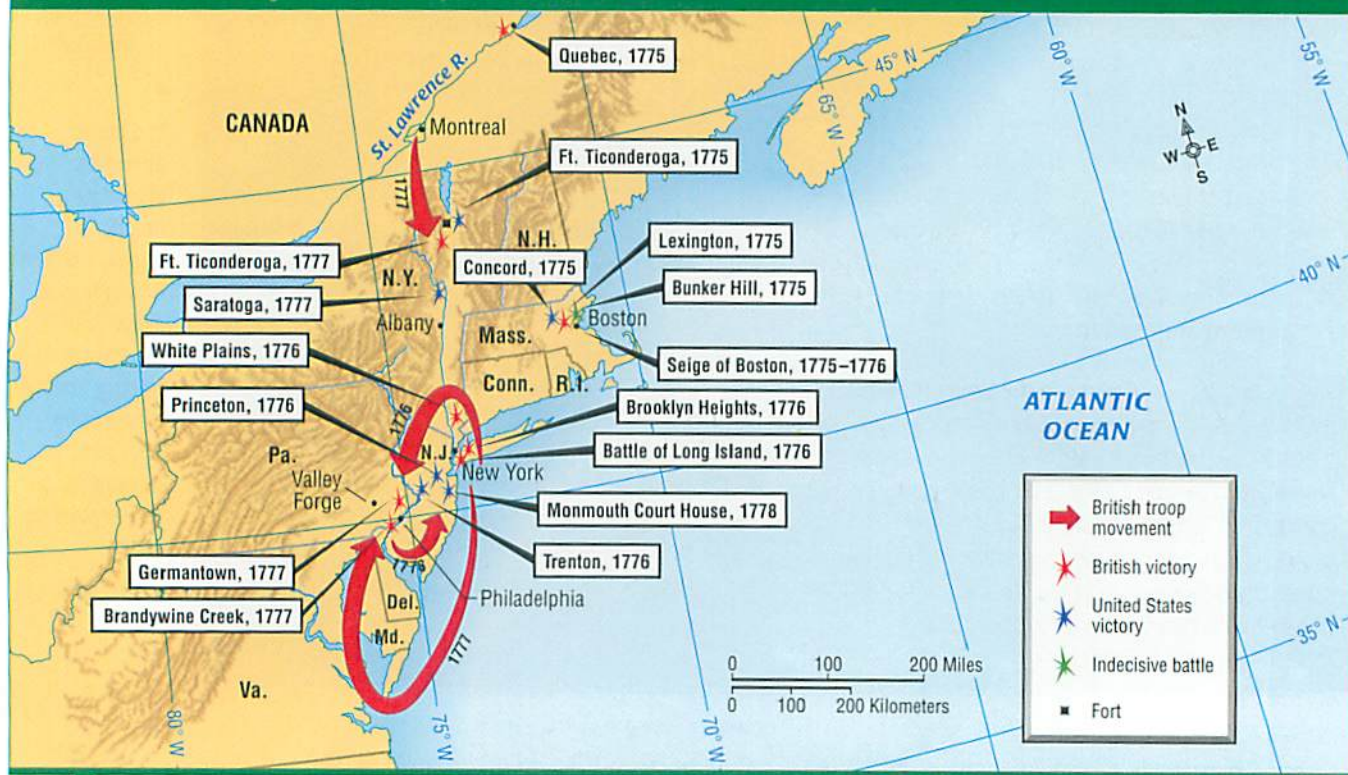
According to John Adams, about one third of colonists were Patriots. Another third were Loyalists, or Tories as the Patriots called them. Adams believed that the remaining third of Americans were neutral in the war. While the population may have been divided, each of the two sides in the war had its own strengths and weaknesses.

**The British** Britain’s main strength was its well-equipped, disciplined, and trained army. In addition, the British navy was the world’s finest. It provided support by transporting and landing troops and protecting supply lines at sea.

The British also received help from a number of sources. Roughly 50,000 Loyalists fought with the British army. Some African Americans, largely in the South, also helped Great Britain. The British promised freedom to all slaves who served their cause.



## War for Independence, 1775–1778



The major battles of the early part of the war took place in the North. **Location** Where were most of these battles fought?

Additional help came from Native Americans. Most Indian nations believed an American victory would be harmful to their interests. In the South and West, the Creeks, Cherokees, and Shawnees fought alongside British and Loyalist forces. In the North the Mohawks, led by Joseph Brant, and most other Iroquois nations sided with the British.

The British also hired about 30,000 **mercenaries**, foreign soldiers who fight for pay. The colonists called these troops “Hessians” because most of their officers came from the German province of Hesse.

On the other hand, the British also had their problems. The war was not popular in Great Britain. Many British citizens resented paying taxes to fight the war and sympathized with the Americans. British troops had to fight in hostile territory and British commanders resisted adapting their tactics to conditions in America.

**The Americans** The very things that were British weaknesses were American strengths. Patriot forces were fighting on their own territory. Many of their officers were familiar with

the tactics that had worked in the French and Indian War. George Washington, in particular, proved to be an exceptional commander.

For much of the war, the Americans lacked a well-supplied, stable, and effective fighting force. New recruits were constantly arriving while experienced soldiers, their time of service up, were heading home. As he tried to plan strategy, Washington never could be sure how many troops he would have.

More African Americans served in the Patriot cause than supported the British. Washington’s army had some all-black units, but more often, African Americans served in white units.

### Fighting in the North

In the summer of 1776, General Howe and a large British army appeared off the New York coast. The British had decided to concentrate on the Middle Colonies, where many Loyalists lived. In a series of battles, including the Battle of Long Island, some 32,000 British and German troops battered Washington’s poorly trained and poorly equipped army.



**Retreat from New York** By October the British had captured New York City and driven the Continental Army into Pennsylvania. Many troops deserted Washington. By the winter of 1776 the entire Patriot cause seemed on the point of collapse. Fearing for their safety, members of the Continental Congress fled Philadelphia.

In December 1776 Thomas Paine produced another pamphlet to inspire Americans once again to the cause of freedom. He called this work *The American Crisis*. It began with this eloquent statement:

**KEY DOCUMENTS**

“These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it NOW, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.”

—Thomas Paine, *The American Crisis*

**Trenton and Princeton** Desperate times called for heroic measures. Washington and his troops met the challenge. Abandoning the tradition that armies did not fight during winter, on Christmas night of 1776 Washington left his Pennsylvania camp and went on the attack. Some 2,400 troops were ferried across the ice-choked Delaware River in small boats. Early the next morning they

surprised about 1,400 Hessians stationed in Trenton, New Jersey. Nearly the entire Hessian force was captured, while the Americans suffered only five casualties in the **Battle of Trenton**.

A few days later Washington made a similar attack on nearby Princeton. Leaving fires burning so the local Tories would think his troops were still in camp, he led some 5,000 troops on a difficult nighttime march. One of the soldiers later described the ordeal:

**AMERICAN VOICES**

“The horses attached to our cannon were without shoes, and when passing over the ice they would slide in every direction. . . . Our men, too, were without shoes or other comfortable clothing; and as traces of our march towards Princeton, the ground was literally marked with the blood of the soldiers’ feet.”

—Soldier at the Battle of Princeton

The next morning, British troops under General Charles Cornwallis spotted Washington’s army and attacked. However, the Americans drove them back, inflicting heavy losses, and captured the town.

The victories in December 1776 and January 1777 greatly boosted Patriot morale and convinced more Americans to support the Patriot cause. “Volunteer companies are collecting in every county,” a British traveler observed after the battles. “In a few months the rascals will be stronger than ever.”



Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze's *George Washington Crossing the Delaware* captures the patriotic feelings inspired by Washington's victories at Trenton and Princeton. **Geography** What difficulties did fighting in winter pose?



## Victory at Saratoga

Despite the increasing Patriot numbers, the months that followed held no success for the Continental Army. In July 1777 Howe moved his 15,000-man army from New York to attack the rebel capital at Philadelphia. Washington's 10,500 defenders were defeated at Brandywine Creek, on the outskirts of the city, in early September. Late in the month, the British occupied Philadelphia, as the Congress once again fled. In early October, Washington counterattacked to drive the British from the city, but lost again at the Battle of Germantown.

### Main Idea CONNECTIONS

Why was the American victory at Saratoga important?

#### A British Attack from the North

While Howe was advancing to capture Philadelphia, another British army was on the move in northern New York. Led by General John Burgoyne, its objective was to cut New England off from the rest of the colonies. In June Burgoyne moved out of Canada with a mixed force of about 8,000 British and German troops, Loyalists, Canadians, and Native Americans. The force quickly recaptured Fort Ticonderoga and then moved south through the dense New York forest toward Albany.

As the Americans retreated in Burgoyne's path, they destroyed bridges and felled trees across the road to slow his advance. Burgoyne's slow progress caused his army to run low on supplies. Meanwhile, the colonial force continued to grow, as the Continental Army and Patriot militias assembled to confront the invaders.

In mid-September the Americans, led by General Horatio Gates, attacked Burgoyne's forces. This series of American victories, which

took place around Saratoga, New York, is called the **Battle of Saratoga**. Finally, on October 17, 1777, surrounded by a force now much larger than his own, Burgoyne surrendered his army. It was the biggest American victory yet and it marked the turning point of the war.

**Help from Abroad** A few months after the Continental Congress declared independence, it sent Benjamin Franklin on a mission to Paris. Although France secretly aided the Americans in their struggle against its longtime enemy, Franklin pushed for an open alliance. The British defeat at Saratoga convinced the French that the Americans had a real chance of winning the war. On February 6, 1778, France and the United States signed a treaty of alliance.

The alliance with France helped the Americans tremendously. It meant not only more supplies, but loans of money, French troops, and a navy. In addition, Britain now had to defend itself in Europe. A year later Spain joined the war as France's ally, followed by the Netherlands in 1780. From Louisiana, Spanish governor Bernardo de Gálvez, who also had been secretly aiding the Patriots, attacked British outposts in Florida and along the Mississippi River.

Even before France and Spain entered the war, a number of Europeans volunteered to help the American cause against the British. Among them were the Marquis de Lafayette and Johann de Kalb from France. Both became generals in the Americans' Continental Army. Polish military engineer Thaddeus Kosciuszko helped American forces build effective defenses. German Baron Friedrich von Steuben was largely responsible for training the Continental Army and transforming it into an effective fighting force.

## SECTION 4 REVIEW

### Comprehension

- 1. Key Terms** Define: (a) Battle of Bunker Hill; (b) casualty; (c) Loyalist; (d) mercenary; (e) Battle of Trenton; (f) Battle of Saratoga.
- 2. Summarizing the Main Idea** Outline the factors that contributed to important American victories at Boston, Trenton, Princeton, and Saratoga.
- 3. Organizing Information** Using the map in this section, sketch a map of the American colonies and label the major battles described in this section.

### Critical Thinking

- 4. Analyzing Time Lines** Explain how Patriot victories at Trenton and Princeton contributed to victory at Saratoga.
- 5. Demonstrating Reasoned Judgment** What do you think were the Americans' greatest strengths in the early years of the war?

### Writing Activity

- 6. Writing an Expository Essay** Write an essay outlining the events that led up to the siege of Boston.