American Revolution

Major Battles and Events
Three Major Phases of the War

- New England 1775-1776
- Mid Atlantic 1776-78
- Southern 1778-1781
April 1775 Lexington and Concord

- Revere, Dawes, and Prescott
- British march on Lexington
- “Shot heard around the world.”
- Militia confront British at Concord
- British forced to retreat to Boston
May 1775 Fort Ticonderoga

- Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold
- Green Mountain Boys
- Capture cannons, gunpowder, and supplies
June 1775 Bunker Hill

- Americans occupy Breed’s Hill
- British full scale attack
- “Do not fire until you see the whites of their eyes”
- Militia men hold their ground
In 1774 the General Court, meeting in Salem, called for a Continental Congress, which was convened that fall in Philadelphia. Its most significant action was a call to end commerce with England. In Massachusetts, support for the Congress was part of a more general movement, led by the Sons of Liberty, toward extralegal authority in the Bay Colony. Courts were closed, royal officials were forced to flee to the safety of Boston, and a list of grievances against the king, known as the Suffolk Resolves, was drafted. A committee of safety, which was in effect a government for the colony independent of royal authority, was set up and a separate treasury was established for the defense of the colony.

The war for independence began in Massachusetts on April 19, 1775, when a collection of some 70 minutemen engaged British troops on Lexington Green and fired the “shot heard ’round the world.” The British, victorious at Lexington, pressed on to Concord, where at the “rude bridge that arched the road” they were beaten back by the colonists and forced into retreat, being harassed as they fled and suffering heavy casualties. The American Revolution, as a military action, had begun.

Two months after Lexington and Concord, on June 17, 1775, in the battle of Bunker Hill, the British overran colonial defenses and captured this high ground close to Boston, but again they paid heavily in lives. George Washington, on orders from the Continental Congress, then took command of colonial forces and, in 1776, set siege to Boston that led the British to evacuate on March 17. Less than four months later, the Congress declared independence. The American Revolution, begun in Massachusetts, was fought to a successful conclusion in the southern colonies.
July –August 1775 King George Draws a Line in the Sand

- Olive Branch Petition
- Declaration of the Causes and Necessity for Taking up Arms
- King George’s Proclamation
- Rebels are deemed traitors
- Colonists begin to unify in response
Jan. 1776 Paine’s “Common Sense”

- Common Sense spreads through colonies
- Builds on Locke’s ideas
- **King and Parliament** equally wrong
- Complete Separation
- Loyalists- cowards and fools
June - July 1776

- Lee’s Resolution
- Jefferson uses Locke and Enlightenment
- Adams and Franklin help Jefferson
- Contentious vote on document
- Declaration of Independence passes
August- September 1776
Siege of New York

- British arrives with large navy and army
- Washington defeated in series of battles
- General Howe fails to deliver KO
- British occupy New York
Dec. 1776 Washington’s Crossing - Battle of Trenton

- Hessians caught by surprise
- Major morale boost
- New recruits for Americans
Jan 1777 Battle of Princeton

- British detachment stumbled onto Washington’s Army
- Washington wins
Fall 1777 Battle of Brandywine and Germantown

- Washington loses both Battles
- Howe wastes time in Philadelphia
- Burgoyne left without help in NY
Sept-Oct 1777 Battles of Saratoga

- Gates and Arnold defeat British
- Burgoyne surrenders entire army
- *French give support after American victory*
June 1778 Battle of Monmouth

- Molly Pitcher
- Americans hold the field
- Considered a draw, but another morale boost
African American Participation

- New England Battles
- Some fought for the British
- Dunmore Proclamation VS. Virginia Assembly
- Hollywood Portrayals
Battle of Camden 1781 and Southern Battles

- Prior to this Savannah and Charleston are under siege
- Gates is routed and loses credibility
- Greene harasses Cornwallis throughout the South with guerilla tactics
Battle of Yorktown 1781

- Americans siege Yorktown
- French block retreat
- British surrender to Americans
Treaty of Paris 1783

- Jay, Adams, and Franklin negotiate
- Independence Recognized
- United States boundaries: Great Lakes to the North, Mississippi River to the West and Spanish Florida to the South
- Loyalist property restored
- England wanted to prevent French from gaining strength in New World