

# PERIOD 3: 1754–1800

**Chapter 4** *Imperial Wars and Colonial Protest, 1754–1774*

**Chapter 5** *The American Revolution and Confederation, 1774–1787*

**Chapter 6** *The Constitution and the New Republic, 1787–1800*

In less than fifty years the British went from consolidating their control along the Atlantic coast of North America to watching 13 of their colonies unite in revolt and establish an independent nation.

**Overview** After the Seven Years' War ended in 1763, the British desired more revenue to pay for protecting their empire while many American colonists saw themselves as self-sufficient. These clashing views resulted in the colonies declaring independence, winning a war, and founding a new nation. Initially governed by Articles of Confederation with a weak federal government, the new United States soon replaced it with a new constitution that created a federal government that was stronger, though still with limited powers. Out of the debates over the new constitution and policies emerged two parties. The test of the stability of the American system came in 1800, when one party, the Federalists, peacefully transferred power to the other, the Democratic-Republicans. Throughout this period there was a continuous westward migration resulting in new opportunities, blended cultures, and increased conflicts with the American Indians and other European nations.

**Alternate View** Some historians start the story of the birth of the United States in 1763, at the end of the Seven Years' War. Starting in 1754 emphasizes that fighting the war drove the colonies and the British apart. While the United States declared independence in 1776 and ratified the Constitution in 1788, not until 1800 had it clearly survived the divisions of the early years.

## Key Concepts

**3.1:** Britain's victory over France in the imperial struggle for North America led to new conflicts among the British government, the North American colonists, and American Indians, culminating in the creation of a new nation, the United States.

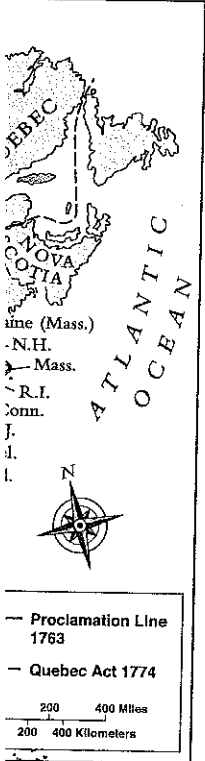
**3.2:** In the late 18th century, new experiments with democratic ideas and republican forms of government, as well as other new religious, economic, and cultural ideas, challenged traditional imperial systems across the Atlantic World.

**3.3:** Migration within North America, cooperative interaction, and competition for resources raised questions about boundaries and policies, intensified conflicts among peoples and nations, and led to contests over the creation of a multiethnic, multiracial national identity.

**Source:** *AP United States History Curriculum Framework 2014–2015*

a representative assembly, and  
 direct attack on the American  
 claimed along the Ohio River.  
 enact similar laws in America  
 The predominantly Protestant  
 Catholicism.

**PROCLAMATION LINE  
 OF 1763**



**American Revolution**

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 ies.

**Enlightenment Ideas** The era of the Enlightenment (see Chapter 3) was at its peak in the mid-18th century—the very years that future leaders of the American Revolution (Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, and Adams) were coming to maturity. Many Enlightenment thinkers in Europe and America were Deists, who believed that God had established natural laws in creating the universe, but that the role of divine intervention in human affairs was minimal. They believed in rationalism and trusted human reason to solve the many problems of life and society, and emphasized reason, science, and respect for humanity. Their political philosophy, derived from Locke and developed further by the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, had a profound influence on educated Americans in the 1760s and 1770s—the decades of revolutionary thought and action that finally culminated in the American Revolution.

**HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: WHY DID THE COLONIES REBEL?**

Did America's break with Great Britain in the 18th century signify a true revolution with radical change, or was it simply the culmination of evolutionary changes in American life? For many years, the traditional view of the founding of America was that a revolution based on the ideas of the Enlightenment had fundamentally altered society.

During the 20th century, historians continued to debate whether American independence from Great Britain was revolutionary or evolutionary. At the start of the century, Progressive historians believed that the movement to end British dominance had provided an opportunity to radically change American society. A new nation was formed with a republican government based on federalism and stressing equality and the rights of the individual. The revolution was social as well as political.

During the second half of the 20th century, a different interpretation argued that American society had been more democratic and changed long before the war with Great Britain. Historian Bernard Bailyn has suggested that the changes that are viewed as revolutionary—representative government, expansion of the right to vote, and written constitutions—had all developed earlier, during the colonial period. According to this perspective, what was revolutionary or significant about the break from Great Britain was the recognition of an American philosophy based on liberty and democracy that would guide the nation.

### THINK AS A HISTORIAN: QUESTIONS ABOUT COMPARISONS

Historians often compare events to highlight similarities and differences. They might compare two contemporary developments or two developments in different time periods. Which **THREE** of the questions or statements below would be best answered with an essay that emphasizes comparison?

1. How did Pontiac's Rebellion support the British argument for the Proclamation of 1763?
2. Explain how the Declaratory Act was a cause of the Boston Tea Party.
3. Describe the similarities between Patrick Henry and James Otis.
4. How was the relationship between the colonies and Great Britain before and after the Seven Years' War different?
5. Analyze differences between Bacon's Rebellion and the Stamp Act Congress.

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: HOW RADICAL WAS THE REVOLUTION?

Was the American Revolution (1) a radical break with the past or (2) a conservative attempt simply to safeguard traditional British liberties? One approach to this question is to compare the American Revolution with other revolutions in world history.

In his *Anatomy of a Revolution* (1965), historian Crane Brinton found striking similarities between the American Revolution and two later revolutions—the French Revolution (1789–1794) and the Russian Revolution (1917–1922). He observed that each revolution passed through similar stages and became increasingly radical from one year to the next.

Other historians have been more impressed with the differences between the American experience and the revolutions in Europe. They argue that the French and Russian revolutionaries reacted to conditions of feudalism and aristocratic privilege that did not exist in the American colonies. In their view, Americans did not revolt against outmoded institutions but, in their quest for independence, merely carried to maturity a liberal, democratic movement that had been gaining force for years.

In comparing the three revolutions, a few historians have concentrated on the actions of revolutionary groups of citizens, such as the American Sons of Liberty. Again there are two divergent interpretations: (1) the groups in all three countries engaged in the same radical activities, and (2) the Americans had a much easier time of it than the French and Russians, who encountered ruthless repression by military authorities.

Another interpretation of the American Revolution likens it to the colonial rebellions that erupted in Africa and Asia after World War II. According to this view, the colonial experience in America caused a gradual movement away from Britain that culminated in demands for independence. Other studies of the military aspects of the Revolution have pointed out similarities between American guerrilla forces in the 1770s and the guerrilla bands that fought in such countries as Cuba in the 1950s and Vietnam in the 1960s. Recall that the British controlled the cities while the American revolutionaries controlled the countryside—a pattern that in the 20th century was often repeated in revolutionary struggles throughout the world. Typically, as in the case of the American Revolution, insurgent forces were weak in the cities, but strong in the surrounding territory.

Since the American Revolution pre-dated the other modern revolutions it is compared to, its influence on them is a topic of study. Seeing the American Revolution in the context of other uprisings provides insights to help understand it better.

### ***Election Results***

The election of 1800 swept the Federalists from power in both the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government. A majority of the presidential electors cast their ballots for two Democratic-Republicans: Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr. Because both these candidates received the same number of electoral ballots, it was necessary (according to the rules in the original Constitution) to hold a special election in the House of Representatives to break the tie. In December 1800 the Federalists still controlled the House. They debated and voted for days before they finally gave a majority to Jefferson. (Alexander Hamilton had urged his followers to vote for Jefferson, whom he considered less dangerous and of higher character than Burr.)

Democratic-Republican lawmakers elected in 1800 took control of both the House and the Senate when a new Congress met in March 1801.

### ***A Peaceful Revolution***

The passing of power in 1801 from one political party to another was accomplished without violence. This was a rare event for the times and a major indication that the U.S. constitutional system would endure the various strains that were placed upon it. The Federalists quietly accepted their defeat in the election of 1800 and peacefully relinquished control of the federal government to Jefferson's party, the Democratic-Republicans. The change from Federalist to Democratic-Republican control is known as the Revolution of 1800.

### **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: WHAT DOES THE CONSTITUTION MEAN?**

From the moment it was drafted in 1787, the U.S. Constitution has been a continuing subject of controversy. As political issues changed from one era to the next, Americans changed their views of how the Constitution should be interpreted. The dispute between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists over the proper powers of the central government has never been completely resolved and, to a certain extent, continues to be debated by modern-day Republicans and Democrats.

In the decades preceding the Civil War (1790–1860), the chief constitutional issue concerned the nature of the federal union and whether the states could nullify acts of the federal government. The North's triumph in the Civil War settled the issue in favor of centralized power and against southern champions of states' rights. In the post-Civil War era, northerners regarded Hamilton and other Federalist Framers of the Constitution as heroes. At the same time, states'-rights advocates were portrayed as demagogues and traitors.

In the early 20th century, a change in politics again brought a change in scholars' views toward the Framers of the Constitution. Reacting to the excesses of big business, certain historians identified economic factors and class conflict as the primary force behind the Constitutional

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 dates received the same number of  
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 controlled the House. They debated  
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 for Jefferson, whom he considered  
 Burr.)  
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Convention of 1787. Published in 1913, at the height of the Progressive  
 era, Charles Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*  
 argued that, in writing the Constitution, the Framers were chiefly moti-  
 vated by their own economic interests in preserving their wealth and  
 property. Beard's controversial thesis dominated historical scholarship on  
 the Constitution for almost 50 years. Expanding on Beard's thesis, some  
 historians have argued that even the sectional differences between north-  
 ern Framers and southern Framers were chiefly economic in nature.

In recent years, many historians have concluded that the economic  
 interpretation of the Framers' motives, while valid up to a point, over-  
 simplifies the issues of the 1780s. Historians place greater stress on the  
 philosophical and intellectual backgrounds of the delegates at Philadel-  
 phia and explain how they shared similar 18th-century views of liberty,  
 government, and society.

**KEY TERMS BY THEME**

<p><b>Founders (ID, CUL)</b>          James Madison          Alexander Hamilton          Framers of the          Constitution          Gouverneur Morris          John Dickinson          Federalists          Anti-Federalists          The Federalist Papers          Bill of Rights;          amendments          Washington's Farewell          Address          "permanent alliances"          Alien and Sedition Acts          Kentucky and Virginia          Resolutions</p>	<p><b>Expansion (PEO, POL)</b>          Battle of Fallen Timbers          Treaty of Greenville          Public Land Act (1796)</p> <p><b>A Constitution (POL)</b>          Mt. Vernon Conference          Annapolis Convention          Constitutional          Convention          checks and balances          Virginia Plan          New Jersey Plan          Connecticut Plan; Great          Compromise          House of          Representatives          Senate          Three-Fifths          Compromise          Commercial          Compromise          electoral college system          legislative branch          Congress</p>	<p><b>A New Republic (POL)</b>          executive depart-          ments; cabinet          Henry Knox          Edmund Randolph          Judiciary Act (1789)          federal courts          Supreme Court          national debt          Whiskey Rebellion          Federalist era          Democratic-Republi-          can party          political parties          two-term tradition          John Adams          Revolution of 1800</p>
<p><b>Disputes (WXT)</b>          slave trade          infant industries          national bank          tariffs; excise taxes</p>	<p><b>Foreign Affairs (WOR)</b>          French Revolution          Proclamation of Neu-          trality (1793)          "Citizen" Genêt          Jay Treaty (1794)          Pinckney Treaty (1795)          right of deposit          XYZ Affair</p>	

## PERIOD 3 Review: 1754–1800

### Long-Essay Questions

Directions: Write an essay to respond to one of each pair of questions. Cite relevant historical evidence in support of your generalizations and present your arguments clearly and logically.

Choose ONE of the following two long-essay questions.

1. It has been argued that the American Revolution came about primarily through an evolving series of meetings, conventions, and congresses. Support, modify, or refute this contention using specific evidence.
2. It has been argued that the United States Constitution came about primarily through an evolving series of meetings, conventions, and congresses. Support, modify, or refute this contention using specific evidence.

Choose ONE of the following two long-essay questions.

3. For some historians, the leadership provided by the Founders during events leading up to the Revolutionary War was the key to the successful developments. Support, modify, or refute this contention using specific evidence.
4. For some historians, the leadership provided by the Founders during events leading up to the writing of the Constitution was the key to the successful developments. Support, modify, or refute this contention using specific evidence.

Choose ONE of the following two long-essay questions.

5. For some, the role of enslaved African Americans and American Indians before and during the Revolutionary War had a significant influence on events. Support, modify, or refute this contention using specific evidence.
6. For some, the role of enslaved African Americans and American Indians before and during the writing of the Constitution had a significant influence on events. Support, modify, or refute this contention using specific evidence.