

American Revolutionary War: 1776-1783

Major Events:

- Lexington (April, 1775) – “Shot heard ‘round the world”
- 1776-1777 has been called “America’s dark hour” – troops were defeated and the Continental Army was near collapse (lacked soldiers and supplies)
- Battle of Trenton (December, 1776) – Victory encouraged Americans to continue fighting
- 1777 -- British attempted to capture New York to divide the New England Colonies from the Middle Colonies; the plan failed
- Battle of Saratoga (October, 1777) – American victory convinced France to form an alliance with the Americans; February 1778 – France and the Americans signed the Treaty of Alliance; France declares war on Britain and provides supplies, monetary loans, leadership (Marquis de Lafayette – trusted aide to Washington), and eventually troops to the Americans
Possible French Motives: Wanted revenge for the loss of land as a result of the French and Indian War
- Winter of 1778 – Washington and his troops endure a terrible winter at Valley Forge (lacked food, clothing, and shelter); Washington’s greatest challenge was to keep the Continental Army together – Desertion a major problem
- Summer of 1779 – Spain declares war on Britain; The Spanish attacked British strongholds in the Mississippi Valley from Louisiana; provides supplies, monetary loans, and the use of the port of New Orleans
Possible Spanish Motives: Saw it as an opportunity to expand its empire in North America
- Battle of Yorktown (October, 1781) – General Cornwallis surrendered to General Washington
- Treaty of Paris (1783): Great Britain recognized the independence of the colonies