

SOCIAL STUDIES · GRADES 5–6

The American Revolution

How the United States was born

Why did it happen?

By the 1760s, Britain controlled 13 colonies on the east coast of North America. To pay off war debts, Britain raised taxes on the colonies — but the colonies had no representatives in the British Parliament. 'No taxation without representation' became the rallying cry. Tensions grew over a decade until war broke out in 1775.

Key events

1764–1765 — Sugar Act, Stamp Act. Colonies protest the new taxes.

1773 — Boston Tea Party. Colonists dump 342 chests of British tea into Boston Harbor.

April 1775 — Battles of Lexington and Concord. The war begins.

July 4, 1776 — Declaration of Independence. The colonies declare themselves free.

1777 — Battle of Saratoga. Colonial victory. France joins on the colonies' side.

1781 — British surrender at Yorktown. War effectively over.

1783 — Treaty of Paris. Britain officially recognizes the United States.

1787 — US Constitution drafted.

1789 — George Washington becomes the first US President.

