

The American Revolution: Introductory Notes

John Adams said the real revolution occurred in "the minds of the people" and set the date for its beginning at 1760 when

- George III became king of England
- Thomas Jefferson went to college
- The French surrendered Canada to Britain

Even before that, the revolution had begun.

- There was a spirit of liberty brought by colonists
- Local self-government
- Influence of Enlightenment ideas

England's commercial empire

- Based on the theory of mercantilism (aka mercantile system), in which colonies existed for the exclusive benefit of the homeland
 - Benefits
 - Colonies would trade exclusively with Britain
 - Colonies would produce raw materials for her
 - Colonies would consumer her goods
 - Colonies would NOT compete with her manufacturers
 - England's mercantile approach to her commercial expansion involved
 - Maximizing her foreign trade surplus
 - Building a merchant marine
 - Establishing colonies
 - This mercantile system was expressed in the Navigation Acts (mid-1600s)

England's relationship to the 13 colonies

- Based on imperialism – the domination by one country of the political, economic, or cultural life of another country or region
- After the Seven Years' War Britain kept an army in North America to protect colonists from Native attacks – this also cost money

The trouble began shortly after the end of the Seven Years' War

- Debt-ridden parliament in Britain was trying to recover the expense of the war
- Parliament wanted the colonies to help pay off the debt, therefore imposed taxes on various British imports; the colonists called these tax laws the **Intolerable Acts**
- In the 13 colonies there was bitter hostility to these taxes and a drastic decline in British imports, which forced parliament to back off; the colonists held firmly to the claim that if they didn't have representation in parliament, they should not be taxed by parliament – "No taxation without representation."
- Parliament removed tax on all goods except tea

The American Revolution

Name _____

Date _____

After the Seven Years' War the British decided to keep troops in North America in order to protect the colonies. The British government tried to tax Americans in order to pay for past victories and the troops stationed in America.

Complete the following chart from the information given on pages 299-304 in *Crossroads*. All of the following are Acts or events that contributed to the American Revolution.

	Description	Consequences (What did this lead to? How did it contribute to the American Revolution)
Royal Proclamation (1763)		
Stamp Act (1765)		
Boston Massacre (1770)		
"Boston Tea Party" (1773)		
The Quebec Act (1774)		

The 13 colonies developed their own ways of living by 1770s. During the American Revolution they won their independence from Britain.

Revolution = a complete change in a nation's government

People in the American colonies were given more freedom to rule themselves than were colonists of any other European nation at that time.

- Each colony had its own legislature, including a governor's council and an elected assembly, which had the power to pass most tax laws
- The colonies also controlled their own local governments
 - Towns, counties usually chose their own judges, police, and jury members
 - In New England colonies, local matters were discussed in town meetings
- Religious freedom grew
- Many came to the 13 colonies to build a better life
 - New England
 - Shipbuilding
 - Merchants
 - Owners of fishing fleets
 - Middle Colonies
 - Trading
 - Industries
 - Farming
 - Souther colonies
 - Tobacco
 - Rice
 - Large farms

It took 8 years to win the Revolution.

- France helped by sending army leaders, ships, money
- Spain, Netherlands also fought against Britain

1783 USA was an independent democracy – a free nation whose people governed themselves