

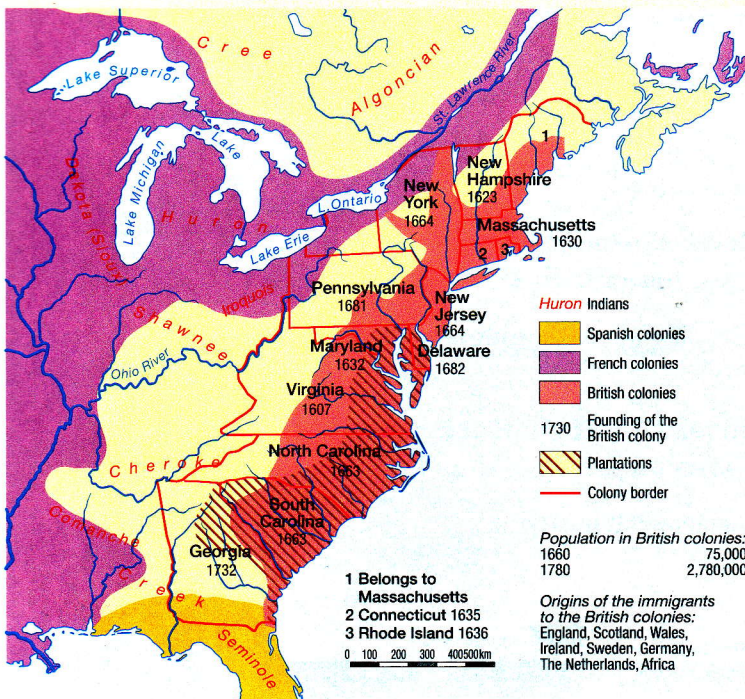
1.3 The colonies

Who rules¹ in the colonies?

The royal government in London ruled its colonies through royal governors. But in North America, all free men had a say in government². They elected representatives³ to a parliament (assembly⁴) which had the right, for example, to vote on⁵ taxes for their colony. Yet⁶ free women had no right to vote.

The distance between England and its colonies made control of them difficult, and the colonies practically governed themselves.

S8 Colonies in North America, 1750



S9 The historian Alan Taylor writes about the white colonial population, 2003

During the seventeenth century, New England (New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island) received only 21,000 emigrants – very few compared to the 120,000 transported to the Chesapeake Bay area (Virginia, Maryland) or the 190,000 who colonized the West Indies (St. Kitts, Barbados, Bermuda, Nevis). Yet in 1700 New England’s population had grown to 91,000, while only 85,000 whites lived in the Chesapeake Bay area and 33,000 in the West Indies.

Alan Taylor, "The People of British America, 1700–1750" (2003), from: www.fpri.org/orbis/4702/taylor.peoplebritishamerica1700.html, 20 September 2005. Simplified by the author.

- 15 a Read the text and start an English-German vocabulary list "Political terms and phrases".
- b "The political system of the colonies was democratic." Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your opinion (see **Activate your English**, p. 8).
- 16 **Extra research:** Photocopy the map in S8. Compare it with a present-day map of the United States and label your copy with the most important cities in the former colonies.
- 17 a Compare the distances between the cities (see Task 16) with the distances between your hometown and some cities in Europe.
- b Speculate on how the distances affected life in the colonies.
- 18 a Organize the information (given by Taylor) in S9 in a table like the one below.
- b Speculate about possible reasons for the differences. Vocabulary help: *White people might/could have ...*

Colonies	Arrival of white emigrants during the 17th century	White population in 1700
...

- 1 rule herrschen
- 2 have a say in government ein Mitspracherecht in der Regierung haben
- 3 representative Abgeordneter
- 4 assembly Versammlung
- 5 vote on sth. über etwas abstimmen
- 6 yet jedoch, aber

1.4 From resistance¹ to open rebellion (1763–1776)

1763: The turning point in American colonial history?

By the mid-1700s, Britain and France were bitter rivals for colonies in the Caribbean islands and on the North American continent. From 1756 to 1763 they fought the Seven Years War both in Europe and in America. At the end of the war, when the British army captured² Montreal and Quebec in “New France”, the dream of a French empire³ in North America was over. In 1763, the Peace Treaty of Paris gave all the lands between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mississippi River to the British.

The conflict between Britain and its American colonists began in 1763. In this year Parliament in London passed a law⁴ to raise money⁵ for its 10,000 troops in the colonies through a Stamp Tax. Colonists had to pay a tax on every piece of printed paper: ship’s papers, legal documents, licenses, newspapers and even playing cards were taxed. A stamp on the pieces of paper showed that the tax had been paid. The colonists protested at once. Parliament had no right to tax them, they argued, since they elected no members of the Parliament in London.

The build-up⁶ to revolution – A timeline

The following timeline shows how resistance* against the sugar tax in 1764 turned into an open rebellion against the British King in 1776:

1764 Sugar Act increases tax on all sugar; angry reactions, threat⁷ of a boycott of English products.

1765 Stamp Act results in widespread opposition: meeting of delegates⁸ from the different colonies in New York under the slogan “No taxation without representation”; protest meetings; attacks against stamp masters; boycott of British goods; riots⁹.

1766 Stamp Act repealed¹⁰.

1767 Townshend Duty Act imposes taxes¹¹ on paper, glass and tea imported from England. Boycott of British imports.

1768 Customs officers¹² are attacked by a mob in Boston; rioting against British property¹³; British troops are stationed in Boston.

1770 Townshend Duty Act repealed (except tea).

1773 Tea Act excludes¹⁴ colonial merchants and ship owners from the profitable tea trade¹⁵. Public anger¹⁶ forces British ships full of tea to return to England. “Boston Tea Party”: In December, colonists dressed as Indians throw tea into the water to protest against the tax on tea.

1774 Coercive Acts (called “Intolerable Acts” in America) close the port in Boston and give more power to the royal governors.

September/October: Representatives from all the colonies (except Georgia) attend the **First Continental Congress** and protest against the acts. The Congress votes to stop all trade with Great Britain until Parliament repeals the “Intolerable Acts”.

1775 In New England men begin arming themselves.

April: The British commander in Boston sends soldiers to Concord (near Boston) to find illegal guns and munitions. At Lexington Green, the British are attacked by 70 armed Massachusetts militiamen¹⁷ (Minutemen). The first shots kill eight and wound ten Americans.

August: King George III declares that the colonists stand in open rebellion to his authority and that the “rebels” in the colonies will be hung as traitors¹⁸.

S 10 British government stamp showing that a tax has been paid, 1765

French text on the stamp:

“Ho(n)ni soit qui mal y pense” (Ein Schuft, wer Böses dabei denkt).



- 1 resistance *Widerstand*
- 2 capture sth. *etwas einnehmen*
- 3 empire *Reich*
- 4 pass a law *ein Gesetz verabschieden*
- 5 raise money *Gelder aufbringen*
- 6 build-up *Aufbau*
- 7 threat *Drohung*
- 8 delegate *Abgeordneter, Beauftragter*
- 9 riot *Aufbruch, Krawall*
- 10 repeal (a law) *(ein Gesetz) aufheben, abschaffen*
- 11 impose taxes *Steuern auferlegen*
- 12 customs officers *Zollbeamte*
- 13 property *Besitz*
- 14 exclude sb. *jdn. ausschließen*
- 15 trade *Handel*
- 16 anger *Wut, Zorn*
- 17 militia *Bürgerwehr, Miliz*
- 18 traitor *Verräter*

1776 January: Thomas Paine publishes bestselling pamphlet¹ *Common Sense* (120,000 copies are sold in three months). In it, he speaks openly of “independence” from Britain and of a government in which the people rule through their elected representatives.

4 July: Declaration of Independence². Representatives of the thirteen colonies of North America, meeting for the Second Continental Congress since May 1775, declare their separation, freedom and independence from the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

- 1 pamphlet *Streitschrift*
- 2 Declaration of Independence
Unabhängigkeits-
erklärung
- 3 disobedience
Ungehorsam
- 4 injustice/unjust
Un-
gerechtigkeit/ungerecht
justice/just
Gerechtigkeit/gerecht
- 5 refusal *Weigerung*
- 6 insurrection *Aufruhr,
Aufstand, Erhebung*
- 7 suicide *Selbstmord*
- 8 aim *Ziel, Absicht*
- 9 dismissal *Entlassung*
- 10 abdication *Abdankung*
- 11 overthrow *Umsturz
(einer Regierung)*
- 12 investigation *Unter-
suchung*
- 13 act a law that has been
passed by a parliament
- 14 engraving *Stich,
Druckgrafik*

Forms of resistance

When governments make unpopular laws or take actions which are highly unpopular, people openly show their resistance*. Protest, disobedience³ or resistance can take many different forms:

- verbal protests (public debates, songs, etc.);
- written or printed protests to bring wider attention to the injustice⁴ (political cartoons, pamphlets, etc.);
- refusal⁵ to follow instructions or laws;
- economic protests (strikes, etc.);
- armed/violent resistance (mob riots, insurrections⁶, civil war, etc.).


Other non-violent and violent examples of 21st-century resistance are: sit-ins, hunger strikes, street demonstrations, letters to the editor, kidnappings, suicide⁷ bombings.

The aim⁸ and result of resistance can be: the repeal of a law, reforms, the dismissal⁹ of a minister, the abdication¹⁰ of a monarch, the overthrow¹¹ of a government, independence.

Use the following questions to structure your investigation¹² of resistance down through history: What do people do to resist? What is the aim of the protest actions? What do people risk by resisting?


S 11 Daniel Chodowiecki (1726–1801), Resistance to the Stamp Act of 1765¹³, engraving¹⁴, Germany, 18th century

An angry Boston crowd burns a pile of stamps in resistance to the Stamp Act of 1765. Note that the artist included women and an African-American among the protesters.



S 12 Daniel Chodowiecki (1726–1801), The Boston Tea Party on 16 December 1773, engraving, Germany, 18th century

Colonists dressed as Indians throw tea into Boston Harbour to protest the tax on tea.



1.5 Winning independence

The American Revolutionary War (1775–1783)

The American Revolutionary War, also called the American War of Independence, lasted¹ from 1775 to 1783. It ended two centuries of British rule for most of the North American colonies and created the new United States of America.

The “shot heard round the world” fired at Lexington on 19 April 1775 (see timeline, pp. 13–14) began the war, and the Peace Treaty of Paris ended it eight and a half years later on 3 September 1783.

General George Washington (see Biography, p. 20) commanded the American army of 20,000 poorly paid and trained militiamen. 42,000 professional soldiers fought in the British army, along with 30,000 troops which the British government had bought from a number of German princes². It seemed completely impossible that the “rebel army” could defeat the British. But General Washington proved to be a fine commander, and took advantage of the mistakes of the British generals. In 1778 Major General Baron von Steuben, who had been an officer in the Prussian³ army, began training the American regiments. Slowly he turned them into a more powerful army.

Without French help, however, the colonists could not have defeated Britain’s troops. France secretly gave supplies⁴ and money to the colonies from 1776 to 1778. After declaring war on England in June 1778, the French government also sent soldiers and ships.

In the Treaty of Paris (1783), Great Britain formally recognized⁵ the thirteen colonies as the United States of America.

Biography

Thomas Jefferson

Jefferson, a lawyer and wealthy plantation owner, was born in Virginia in 1743. The Declaration of Independence of 1776



(S 14) was written mostly by him. His ideas on self-government and the natural rights of the people greatly influenced the Declaration. In 1801, Jefferson became President of the United States and served until 1808. He died in 1826.

S 14

Extracts from the Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1776

English version

(1) When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another [...], a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

(2) We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to

German translation

Wenn es im Laufe von geschichtlichen Ereignissen für ein Volk notwendig wird, die politischen Bande aufzulösen, die es bisher mit einem anderen vereinten [...], so erfordert die geziemende Achtung vor der Meinung der Welt, dass es die Gründe angibt, die es zur Trennung zwingen.

Wir halten diese Wahrheiten für selbstverständlich, dass alle Menschen gleich geschaffen worden sind; dass sie von ihrem Schöpfer mit bestimmten unveräußerlichen Rechten ausgestattet sind, zu denen Leben,

1 last dauern

2 prince Fürst

3 Prussian/Prussia
preußisch/Preußen

4 supply here: munitions,
arms, food, etc
(Nachschub)

5 recognize sth. etwas
anerkennen.

secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new Government [...].

(3) The history of the present King of Great Britain [...] is a history [...] of an absolute tyranny¹ over these [colonies]. [He made it hard for parliaments to meet. He tried to abolish² parliaments. He kept armies in the country without the people's consent³. He introduced taxes without the people's consent. He began a war against Americans.] [...]

(4) We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America [...] do, in the name [...] of the good people of these colonies, [...] declare, that these united colonies are [...] free and independent States [...], and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is [...] totally dissolved. [...]

Freiheit und Streben nach Glück gehören; dass zur Sicherung dieser Rechte Regierungen unter den Menschen eingesetzt sind, die ihre rechtmäßige Gewalt von der Zustimmung der Regierten herleiten; dass, wenn immer eine Regierungsform diesen Zielen schadet, es das Recht des Volkes ist, sie zu ändern oder abzuschaffen und eine neue Regierung einzusetzen [...].

English version: www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/index.htm, 20 December 2005. German translation: Wolfgang Lautemann et al. (ed.), *Geschichte in Quellen*, vol. 4, BSV, München, 1981, p. 90.

- 23 a** Match the following summaries A–C to the first three extracts from the Declaration of Independence in S 14:
- A** This part is a list of things the American colonists believed the King of England had done wrong, and which justified their fight for independence.
- B** This part explains the purpose⁴ of the document.
- C** This part describes individual rights and the relation between people and their governments ("theory of good government").
- b** Write down your own summary of the last extract in S 14.
- 24** Write down the text of parts 3 and 4 (S 14) in German. Do not try to translate word-for-word, but instead concentrate on the meaning.
- 25** In your own words:
- a** Explain what the purpose of the Declaration of Independence was.
- b** List the rights each person has by nature. Explain what the terms exactly mean.
- c** Describe the relation between people and government.
- d** Explain what a "good government" is (see Task 23).
- e** Discuss why, according to the explanation of what a good government is, the list of grievances⁵ in part 3 of the Declaration justified the separation from Great Britain.
- 26** Identify the democratic principles named in the Declaration of Independence that all democratic governments are founded on.
- 27** Making connections: Explain France's possible motives for supporting the American "rebels".
- 28 Extra research:** Give a presentation on Thomas Jefferson, the man who was mainly responsible for writing the Declaration of Independence.

- 1 tyranny Tyrannei, Gewaltherrschaft
- 2 abolish sth. etwas abschaffen, beseitigen
- 3 consent Zustimmung
- 4 purpose Zweck
- 5 list of grievances Beschwerdeliste, Klage