



# Major Events of the American Revolution

Lexington & Concord, New York, *The Crisis*,  
Trenton, Saratoga, Valley Forge, Yorktown,  
Treaty of Paris

*American Revolutionary War*

# Continental Army

Commander: Gen. George Washington



## Strengths



- ❖ Highly motivated – fighting for cause
- ❖ Home field advantage – knew the land
- ❖ Good leadership from Washington
- ❖ Foreign aid after 1778



## Weaknesses



- Not enough men – short enlistments
- Poor training – few professional soldiers
- Lack of supplies and money – paid with paper, not gold & silver
- No navy – few privateers vs. world's best navy

# British Army

Commanders: Gens. Howe and Clinton



## Strengths



- ❖ Large army and navy – superpower
- ❖ Well trained, experienced forces
- ❖ Plenty of money and supplies
- ❖ Aided by Loyalists in colonies



## Weaknesses



- “Away team” – great distance from home
- Not familiar with land
- Weak leadership – allowed Washington to keep fighting
- Lack of motivation at home – Lost support of British people

# Lexington & Concord

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4zpXaxg3is>
- **British troops** from Boston sent to **capture hidden weapons** and arrest Adams and Hancock
- **April 19, 1775: met by** colonial militia – aka **Minutemen - at Lexington, MA** – fired the **“shot heard ‘round the world”**
- Marched on to **Concord** – found **few weapons** but more militia
- **Fired on by Minutemen on march back to Boston** – heavy casualties



# Lexington & Concord



**Importance** of battle:

1. **First battle** of the **American Revolution** – while not official, war **had begun**
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress created **Continental Army** under **General George Washington**





# New York

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WN1NX9eRrrY>
- **August 1776** – General Howe landed at Long Island, NY with large British army and navy
- Outnumbered **Americans took 1,400 casualties, but Washington led escape** back to PA – British failed to end war right there



British held New York City for rest of the war

# New York

**Importance** of battle:

1. Revolution's "D-Day" – **British invaded America**
2. Shows **British strength** – overwhelming size, better training
3. Shows **British weakness** – lack of aggressive leaders allowed Continental Army to survive



# *The American Crisis*

America's best propaganda writer, **Thomas Paine**, **published *The American Crisis*** – urged Americans to keep fighting for independence

“THESE are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.”

What do you think  
Paine means by this?



# Trenton

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9XklvSkhRg>
- After months of defeats, Washington needed to give Americans hope for victory
- **December 25, 1776**: Crossed Delaware River overnight to **attack Hessians** (hired soldiers) **at Trenton, NJ**
- Surprised Hessians - **captured supplies**, cannons, and ammo with **no casualties**
- **Boosted American morale and army recruitment**



# Trenton

**Importance** of battle:



1. Gave American cause **hope** when nearing collapse
2. Shows **American strengths** – Washington's **leadership and motivation** to fight



*Washington Crossing the Delaware*

**Next: The  
Tide Turns**

# Part 2: The Tide Turns

- By 1777, **British** had given up trying to conquer **New England**
- Believed more Loyalists in Middle and Southern colonies
- Goal - isolate New England, use Loyalists to wear down resistance to British rule
- **Plan** - send **three armies** to Albany, NY to **cut off New England** colonies ...



Army 1: Gen.  
John Burgoyne



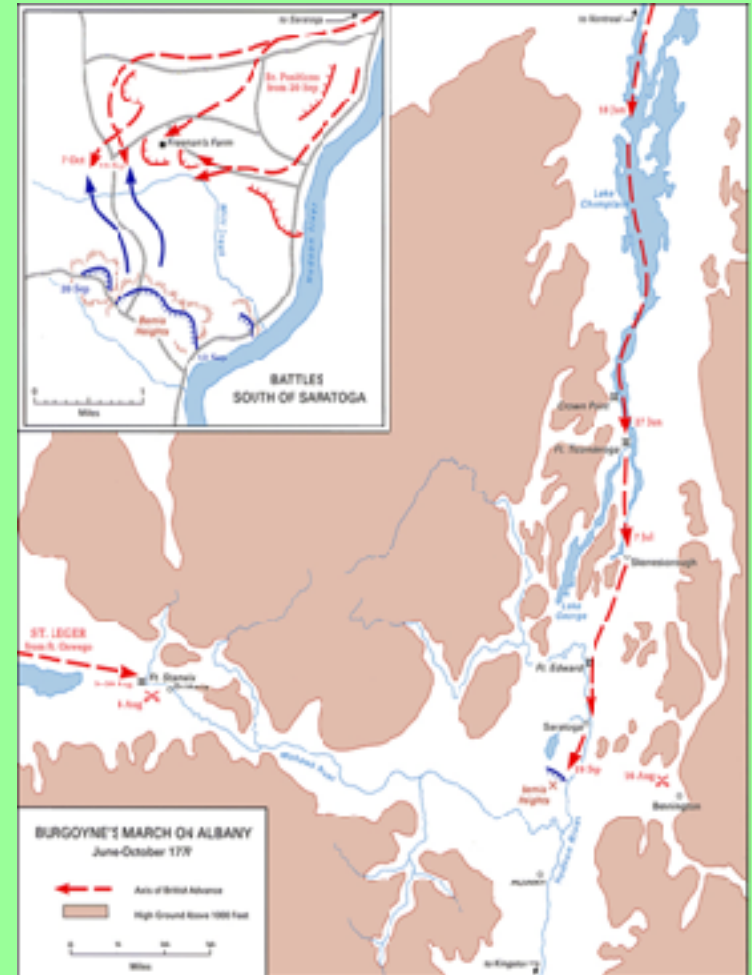
Army 2: Gen.  
William Howe



Army 3: Col.  
Barry St. Leger

# Saratoga

- Only **one army**, under Gen. John Burgoyne, **continued** toward Albany
- **Met by Continental forces** under Gen. Horatio Gates
- **Burgoyne** surrounded – **surrendered** army at **Saratoga**, NY in **October 1777**
- Major American victory and British defeat



# Saratoga

**Importance** of battle:

1. **British plan** to divide colonies **failed**

And this is **HUGE** ...

2. **Ben Franklin in France** trying to win foreign assistance – victory convinced **France and Spain** to **join American side**

3. Saratoga was the **TURNING POINT** of the war





# Valley Forge

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1Df1fmKVlc>
- **British captured American capital of Philadelphia**
- **Winter 1777** – **Washington's** army camped for 6 months at **Valley Forge, PA**
- **Lack of food, clothing, medicine, and shelter** – miserable conditions
- **1/4** of 10,000 troops **died** during winter



# Foreign Allies

- **Baron Freidrich von Steuben** – German officer who aided Washington at Valley Forge
- **Taught** army **how to use bayonets** – drilled troops into better, **disciplined army**



- **Marquis de La Fayette** – 19 yr. old French noble and friend to Washington who **believed in American cause**
- **Convinced French king to contribute money and troops to aid Americans**



# Yorktown

- Britain tried to conquer Southern colonies
- **1781 – British General Cornwallis moved army to Yorktown on VA coast**
- Wanted port location for support by British navy
- **Washington** moved army south to **attack British by land ...**





# French Aid Leads to Victory

- French navy defeated British fleet off VA coast
- Cornwallis trapped between American and French armies on land and French navy by sea
- **October 19, 1781** – **Cornwallis** and army of 8,000 **surrendered** to Washington
- **War** in America **over!**



# Yorktown

Importance of battle:

- **Last battle** between Americans and British



- **Parliament cut off support** for war – started negotiating for peace



- 1783 – Treaty of Paris officially **ended American Revolution**





# Treaty of Paris - 1783

1. **Britain recognized America's independence**
2. **Set U.S.-Canada border** – U.S. reached **Mississippi River**
3. **American fishermen** allowed to **fish** in Canadian waters
4. **British to leave** frontier forts (broken)
5. **U.S. to return property** to Loyalists (broken)
6. British to return escaped slaves in Canada (broken)

