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American Revolution: Background and Causes of the War

Britain gained a foothold in North America by establishing colonies there in the early 1600's. By the 1730's, 13 colonies thrived along the Atlantic Coast. Most colonists took pride in being a part of a great British Empire. Yet during the 1760's, tension began to grow between the colonies and the mother country. The two sides disagreed about the amount of power the British Parliament should hold over the distant colonies. In

1775, the disagreements led the colonists to mount an armed rebellion against British authority. While you probably know how the rebellion ended, do you understand the events that led up to this conflict? Complete this webquest to find out!

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Then, click on "Advanced." If prompted, log on with your ID and Password.

Find It!

Use the World Book search tool to find the answers to the questions below. Since this activity is about the American Revolution, it is recommended you start by searching the key words "American Revolution." You may also find answers in articles such as "Continental Congress," "Intolerable Acts," and "Proclamation of 1763." Write the answer below each question.

1. In the American Colonies, prior to the war, well-to-do _____ and _____ formed a small upper class, or *gentry*, in the seaboard colonies, but they lacked the wealth and power of the English _____.
2. A large middle class consisted mainly of _____ who owned their land, _____, and _____.
3. Unskilled workers and farmers who _____ their land ranked among the poor, or "lower sort."

***Users of the Advanced database can find extension activities at the end of this webquest.**

4. In addition, by the mid-1700's, about 20 percent of the colonists were slaves of _____ descent. Slaves lived in all the mainland colonies, though they were most numerous in the _____.
5. Farming was by far the main occupation in the American Colonies. It provided a living for nearly _____ of the people.
6. Only about _____ of the colonists lived in towns or cities. _____, with about 40,000 people, was the largest American city in 1775. The next largest cities were _____ and _____.
7. In the American Colonies, owning _____ gave most men the right to vote.
8. All colonies denied voting rights to _____ and to most _____.
9. Colonial _____ passed laws and could tax the people. However, the governor of a colony could veto any laws passed by the legislature. In most colonies, the governor was appointed by _____.

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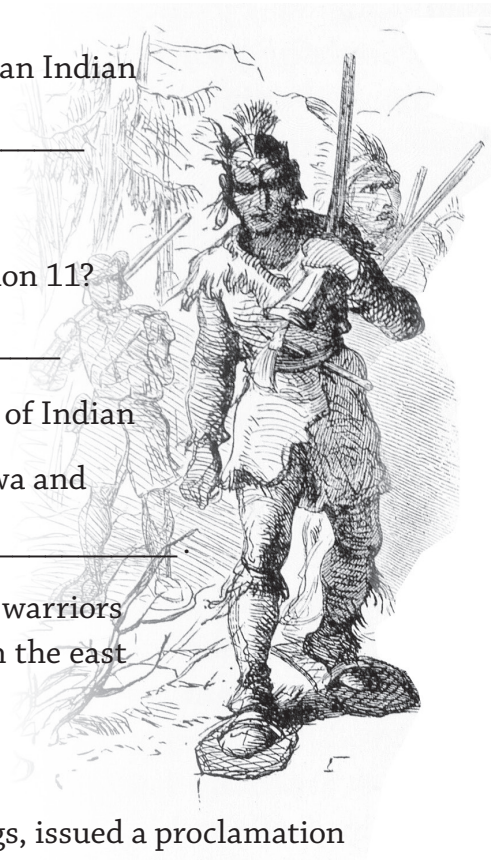
Research it: Unrest in the 1760's

The French and Indian War—pitting France against Britain, each with the support of Indian allies— was fought between 1754 and 1763. Before the war, France had helped prevent British colonists from settling on Indian hunting lands west of the Appalachians. Soon after Britain defeated France, settlers began crossing the frontier. Indians in these lands resented settlers' trespassing. In the absence of French competition, the British also offered the Indians less favorable trading terms.

Since this activity is about Pontiac's War and Proclamation of 1763, it is recommended you start by searching the key words "Pontiac's War" and "Proclamation of 1763."

10. British General Jeffery Amherst, commander of the British forces in North America, set limits on certain goods, including _____ and _____ that the Indians needed for hunting.





11. Many Indian warriors were influenced by the teachings of Neolin, an Indian spiritual leader. He urged the Indians to return to _____ and drive the British off of Indian lands.
12. What was a popular name for the Indian leader described in question 11?

13. In early 1763, _____ began to assemble an alliance of Indian groups to resist the British. In May, he led warriors from the Ottawa and several nearby *nations* (tribes) against the British fort at _____.
14. Name at least five of the tribes who joined Pontiac and his Ottawa warriors in attacking British settlements from Virginia and Pennsylvania in the east to present-day Indiana and Wisconsin in the west:
15. On Oct. 7, 1763, King George III, hoping to prevent future uprisings, issued a proclamation barring _____ on _____.
16. Would-be settlers and land speculators resented the restrictions. Many colonists simply _____ them. Furthermore, many Americans objected to the presence of _____ trying to enforce the proclamation.
17. In 1764, the British sent two expeditions into the _____ to attack warring Indians there. The British reached peace agreements with a number of groups that year. Pontiac signed a peace treaty in _____.

Map it!

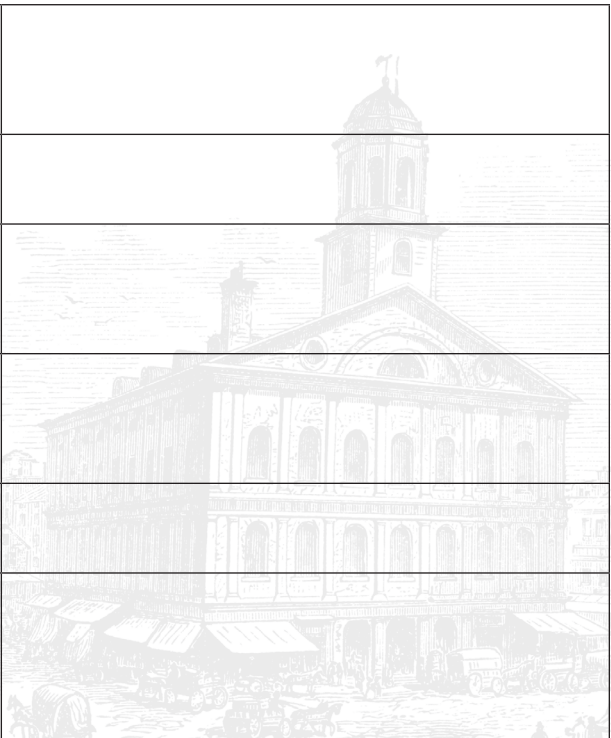
Within the World Book article *Pontiac's War*, you will find the map "Major battles of Pontiac's War (1763-1764)." Study the map and answer the following questions.

18. Much of the fighting in Pontiac's War took place in the Great Lakes region. Review the map above and name five of the present-day states where battles were fought:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

19. The map shows one major attack that occurred east of the Proclamation line of 1763.
Name this attack and describe how it differed from others that occurred during the war:

“Taxation without Representation”:

Below you will find descriptions of acts passed by the British Parliament in the years before the American Revolution. In the column on the right, name the British law and the year in which it was passed by Parliament. Answers may be found in the articles “American Revolution,” “Intolerable Acts,” and others. Use the World Book search tool to assist in your research.

20. A law that placed a threepenny tax on each gallon (3.8 liters) of molasses entering the colonies from ports outside the British Empire.	
21. This act ordered the colonies to supply the soldiers with living quarters, fuel, candles, and cider or beer.	
22. This act required the colonists to buy tax stamps for newspapers, playing cards, diplomas, and various legal documents.	
23. These acts placed duties on glass, lead, paint, paper, and tea imported into the colonies. Another act set up a customs agency in Boston to collect the duties efficiently.	
24. This act—the first of the “Intolerable Acts”—closed the port of Boston.	
25. This act—the second of the “Intolerable Acts”—changed the charter of Massachusetts. It provided for a council appointed by the Crown and prohibited town meetings without the governor’s permission, except to elect officers.	

Action and Reaction:

In the “Reaction” boxes below, briefly describe the British Parliament’s reaction to colonial protests:

26. **Action:** Rum distillers angrily protested that the tax under the Sugar Act would eat up their profits.

Reaction:

27. **Action:** In October 1765, delegates from nine colonies met in New York City and prepared a statement protesting the Stamp Act. The objections of that so-called Stamp Act Congress stemmed from the colonists’ belief that the right of taxation belonged only to the people and their elected representatives.

Reaction:

28. **Action:** To protest the duties levied under the Townshend Acts, Americans stopped buying British goods.

Reaction:

29. **Action:** Samuel Adams led Boston patriots' opposition to the Tea Act by dumping tea from British ships into Boston Harbor.

Reaction:

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The "Boston Massacre":

Protests against what the colonists called "taxation without representation" were especially violent in Boston. Peruse the "American Revolution" article and examine the related article "Boston Massacre" to help you find the answers to the questions in the next section.

30. In 1768, British officials sent soldiers to police Boston and to protect the city's

_____. Nearly _____ soldiers entered the city on October 1, and more soon followed.

31. On March 5, 1770, soldiers and townspeople clashed in a street fight. During the fight,

frightened British soldiers fired into a crowd of rioters. _____ men died, including a black patriot named _____.

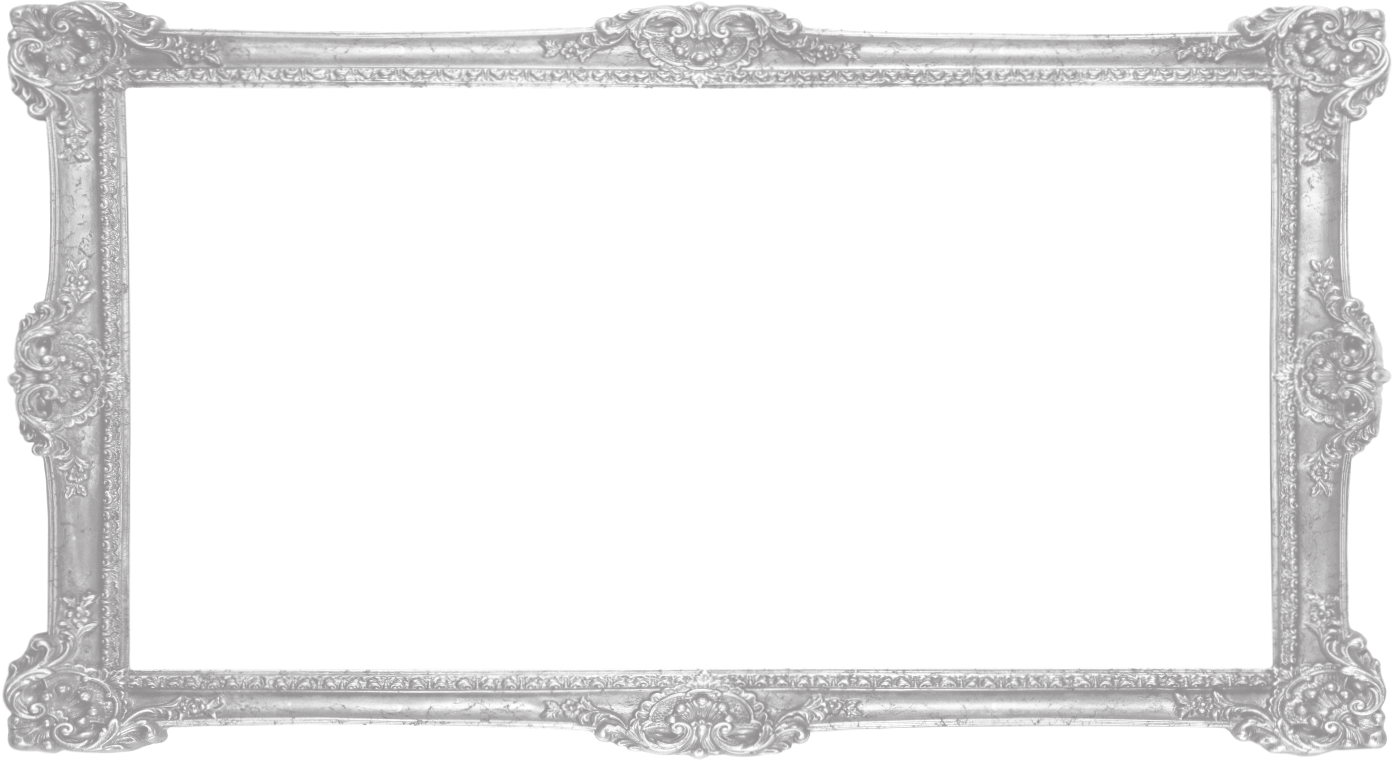
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See it!

Examine the illustration in the article "Boston Massacre" with the same name, as well as the caption that accompanies the image.

32. Who was the engraver who produced the print, and what details in the image convey the artist's support for one particular side?

33. In the box below, describe how an image of the “Boston Massacre” might look had it been produced by British supporters. Alternatively, illustrate such a scene yourself.



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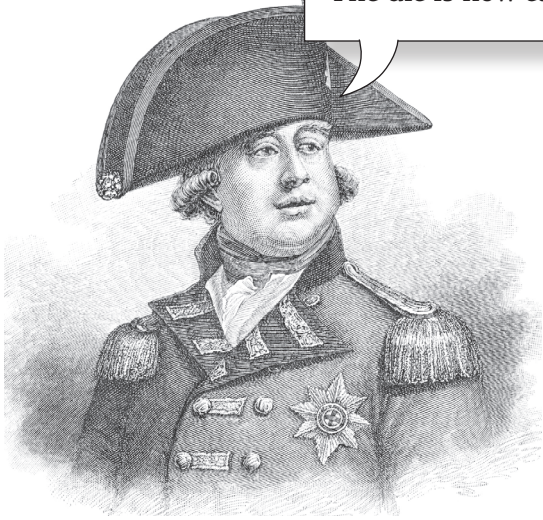
First Continental Congress:

Now, let's turn our focus to an important set of meetings known as the First Continental Congress. Answers will be found in the articles "American Revolution" and "Continental Congress."

34. The First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia from _____ to _____, to protest the _____.
35. The First Continental Congress was attended by _____ delegates representing _____ colonies.
36. Name six of the delegates who attended the First Continental Congress:
- A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____
 - E. _____
 - F. _____

37. How many of the delegates to the First Continental Congress called for independence from Britain? _____
38. The Congress voted to cut off _____ with Britain unless Parliament abolished certain laws and taxes, including the Intolerable Acts.
39. The Congress also approved resolutions advising the colonies to begin _____.
40. Complete this sentence uttered by Britain's King George III in late 1774:

The die is now cast, the colonies _____



Extension Activity 1: The Next Big Thing

While the most popular items to collect are baseball cards and comics books, collectables come in all shapes and sizes. Let's head up the next collecting craze with a product that's both familiar and educational – American Revolution Trading Cards!

Find the tab at the top of the "American Revolution" article that reads, "Related Information." In that section, you will find a list of related biographical encyclopedia articles. Choose five articles, from either side, and create that person's trading card.

Your cards must include the following:

On the front:

1. A picture of the person (you may need to draw it yourself)
2. Name and years of life

On the back:

3. Job
4. Location(s)
5. Involvement in the revolution
6. Hobbies, interests, or skills

Extension Activity 2: Important Dates

In the "American Revolution" article, locate the timeline titled, "Important dates in the American Revolution." Choose six important dates and create an editorial or single panel cartoon that appropriately illustrates each event. Check out the World Book article titled "Cartoon" for examples and inspiration.

Teacher page

Answers:

1. In the American Colonies, prior to the war, well-to-do merchants and planters formed a small upper class, or *gentry*, in the seaboard colonies, but they lacked the wealth and power of the English aristocracy.
2. A large middle class consisted mainly of farmers who owned their land, shopkeepers, and craft workers.
3. Unskilled workers and farmers who rented their land ranked among the poor, or “lower sort.”
4. In addition, by the mid-1700’s, about 20 percent of the colonists were slaves of African descent. Slaves lived in all the mainland colonies, though they were most numerous in the South.
5. Farming was by far the main occupation in the American Colonies. It provided a living for nearly 90 percent of the people.
6. Only about 10 percent of the colonists lived in towns or cities. Philadelphia, with about 40,000 people, was the largest American city in 1775. The next largest cities were New York City and Boston.
7. In the American Colonies, owning property gave most men the right to vote.
8. All colonies denied voting rights to blacks and to most women.
9. Colonial legislatures passed laws and could tax the people. However, the governor of a colony could veto any laws passed by the legislature. In most colonies, the governor was appointed by the king.
10. British General Jeffery Amherst, commander of the British forces in North America, set limits on certain goods, including gunpowder and ammunition that the Indians needed for hunting.
11. Many Indian warriors were influenced by the teachings of Neolin, an Indian spiritual leader. He urged the Indians to return to traditional ways and drive the British off of Indian lands.
12. Neolin was known as the Delaware Prophet.
13. In early 1763, Pontiac began to assemble an alliance of Indian groups to resist the British. In May, he led warriors from the Ottawa and several nearby *nations* (tribes) against the British fort at Detroit.
14. Answers include the Delaware, Miami, Ojibwa, Potawatomi, Seneca, Shawnee, and Wyandot.
15. On Oct. 7, 1763, King George III, hoping to prevent future uprisings, issued a proclamation barring white settlement on Indian hunting lands.
16. Would-be settlers and land speculators resented the restrictions. Many colonists simply ignored them. Furthermore, many Americans objected to the presence of British troops trying to enforce the proclamation.

17. In 1764, the British sent two expeditions into the Ohio Valley to attack warring Indians there. The British reached peace agreements with a number of groups that year. Pontiac signed a peace treaty in 1766.
18. Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania.
19. During the Conestoga Massacre of late 1763, colonists called the Paxton Boys attacked a group of peaceful Indians in Pennsylvania.

20. A law that placed a threepenny tax on each gallon (3.8 liters) of molasses entering the colonies from ports outside the British Empire.	The Revenue Act of 1764, also known as the Sugar Act
21. This act ordered the colonies to supply the soldiers with living quarters, fuel, candles, and cider or beer.	Quartering Act, 1765
22. This act required the colonists to buy tax stamps for newspapers, playing cards, diplomas, and various legal documents.	Stamp Act, 1765
23. These acts placed duties on glass, lead, paint, paper, and tea imported into the colonies. Another act set up a customs agency in Boston to collect the duties efficiently.	Townshend Acts, 1767
24. This act—the first of the “Intolerable Acts”—closed the port of Boston.	Boston Port Act, 1774
25. This act—the second of the “Intolerable Acts”—changed the charter of Massachusetts. It provided for a council appointed by the Crown and prohibited town meetings without the governor’s permission, except to elect officers..	Massachusetts Government Act, 1774

26. **Action:** Rum distillers angrily protested that the tax under the Sugar Act would eat up their profits.

Reaction: In 1766, Parliament reduced the tax on molasses to a penny a gallon

27. **Action:** In October 1765, delegates from nine colonies met in New York City and prepared a statement protesting the Stamp Act. The objections of that so-called Stamp Act Congress stemmed from the conists’ belief that the right of taxation belonged only to the people and their elected representatives.

Reaction: Parliament repealed the Stamp Act in 1766.

28. **Action:** To protest the duties levied under the Townshend Acts, Americans stopped buying British goods.

Reaction: In 1770, Parliament withdrew all the Townshend duties except the one on tea. It kept the tea duty to demonstrate its right to tax the colonies.

29. **Action:** Samuel Adams led Boston patriots' opposition to the Tea Act by dumping tea from British ships into Boston Harbor.

Reaction: Britain responded to the Boston Tea Party in 1774 by passing several laws that became known in America as the Intolerable Acts.

30. In 1768, British officials sent soldiers to police Boston and to protect the city's customs collectors. Nearly 1,000 soldiers entered the city on October 1, and more soon followed.
31. On March 5, 1770, soldiers and townspeople clashed in a street fight. During the fight, frightened British soldiers fired into a crowd of rioters. Five men died, including a black patriot named Crispus Attucks.
32. Paul Revere, a staunch patriot supporter, engraved the print. Answers may include the ruthless appearance of the British soldiers as they fire on what appears to be helpless colonial citizens.
33. Answers will vary, but descriptions would focus on frightened British soldiers facing an angry mob of protesters.
34. The First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia from Sept. 5 to Oct. 26, 1774, to protest the Intolerable Acts.
35. The First Continental Congress was attended by 56 delegates representing 12 colonies.
36. Answers will vary, but the articles mention the following leaders of the Congress (not to be confused with the leaders of the *Second Continental Congress*, held in 1775): Samuel Adams, George Washington, Peyton Randolph, Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, John Adams, John Jay, Joseph Galloway, and John Dickinson.
37. How many of the delegates to the First Continental Congress called for independence from Britain? None.
38. The Congress voted to cut off colonial trade with Britain unless Parliament abolished certain laws and taxes, including the Intolerable Acts.
39. The Congress also approved resolutions advising the colonies to begin training their citizens for war.
40. King George said, "The die is now cast, the colonies must either submit or triumph."

Extension Activities 1 & 2: Project outcomes will vary.