

Chapter 2: Origins of American Government

Section 2

Lecture Notes

AMERICAN
GOVERNMENT

PEARSON

► Objectives

1. Explain how Britain's colonial policies contributed to the growth of self-government in the colonies.
2. Identify the major steps that led to growing feelings of colonial unity.
3. Compare the First and the Second Continental Congresses.
4. Analyze the ideas in the Declaration of Independence.
5. Summarize the common features of the first State constitutions.

▶ Key Terms

- **confederation:** a joining of several different groups for a common purpose
- **Albany Plan of Union:** Benjamin Franklin's proposal that the 13 colonies form a congress to raise armed forces, regulate trade, and deal jointly with Native Americans
- **delegate:** a representative
- **popular sovereignty:** the principle that government exists only with the consent of the governed

► Introduction

- What events and ideas led to American independence?
 - Unpopular British colonial policies, such as taxation without representation.
 - Growing political unity among the colonies.
 - Colonial protests against British policies.
 - British efforts to punish some colonies for showing independence.
 - Fighting between colonists and British soldiers.

▶ British Colonial Policies

- The colonies became used to a large degree of self-rule for many years.
 - Distance made it hard for Parliament to manage colonial affairs or enforce trade laws.
 - Colonial legislatures took on broader powers, withholding pay from governors who disagreed with legislative proposals.
 - Britain provided colonial defense, managed foreign affairs, and provided a common currency and market.
 - Taxation was low and interference with colonial affairs was minimal.

▶ British Policies Change

- Checkpoint: How did Britain's dealings with the colonies change? When did they change?
 - After King George III came to power in 1760, British policies changed.
 - Parliament expanded and enforced laws to control colonial trade.
 - Parliament passed new taxes to pay for British troops stationed in North America.
 - Colonists had no say in these policies and protested “taxation without representation.”
 - British leaders ignored these complaints.

▶ Early Efforts at Unity

- Early efforts to unite the colonies failed.
 - Benjamin Franklin’s proposed Albany Plan of Union in 1754 would have created a colonial congress, but was rejected by the colonies.
- In 1765, Britain passed the **Stamp Act**.
 - This law required a stamp to be bought for all legal documents and newspapers.

▶ The Stamp Act Congress

- Nine colonies responded by forming the Stamp Act Congress in New York.
 - They sent a Declaration of Rights and Grievances to the king. This was the first unified colonial protest.
 - Parliament repealed the Stamp Act.

► Tensions Grow

- New laws continued to anger colonists.
 - They responded with boycotts and violence
- Colonists created **Committees of Correspondence** to organize resistance.
- Events like the **Boston Massacre** and **Boston Tea Party** raised tensions.



► First Continental Congress

- Met in Philadelphia in 1774 in response to the Intolerable Acts
- Included delegates from every colony but Georgia. Among them were John Adams, George Washington, and John Jay.
 - Sent a Declaration of Rights to King George that protested Britain's colonial policies.
 - Urged colonists to boycott trade with England until hated laws were repealed.
 - Gained the support of all 13 colonial legislatures and called for a second Congress to meet the following May.

▶ Second Continental Congress

- Met in Philadelphia in 1775
- Every colony sent delegates. John Hancock was chosen president of the Congress.
- The Battles of Lexington and Concord had already been fought and the Revolutionary War begun.
- A continental army was created and George Washington was made commander-in-chief.

▶ Second Continental Congress, cont.

- This Congress became America's first national government, from 1776-1781.
 - It had legislative and executive powers.
 - During the war, it raised a military, printed and borrowed money, and made foreign treaties.
 - Benjamin Franklin (right) was a leading member.



► Breaking from Britain

- Congress resolved to break away from Britain in 1776.
 - Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Roger Sherman, Robert Livingston, and Thomas Jefferson were named to write a proclamation of independence.
 - The delegates declared independence on July 2, 1776 and adopted the Declaration on July 4.


▶ Declaration of Independence

- Checkpoint: What was the purpose of the Declaration of Independence?
 - The Declaration severed ties with Great Britain and created a unique nation
 - No political system had ever been formed on the principles of equality, human rights, and representative government that derived its authority from the will of the people.

► The Road to Independence

- English colonists brought with them the ideas of the Enlightenment and limited government.
 - How did early events contribute to the signing of the Declaration of Independence?

The New World

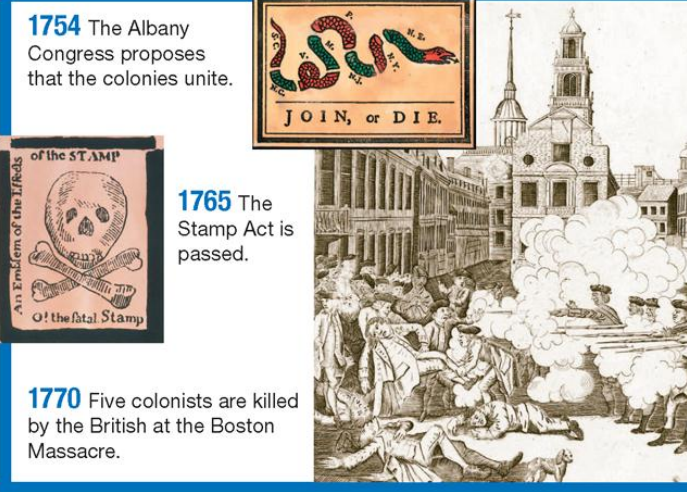


1607 Jamestown, Virginia, the first successful English settlement, is founded.

1620 The Pilgrims sign the Mayflower Compact.

1669 John Locke contributes to the constitution for the Carolina colony.

The Colonies Unite



1754 The Albany Congress proposes that the colonies unite.

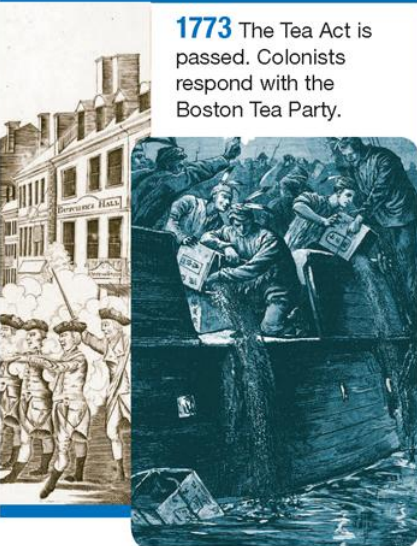
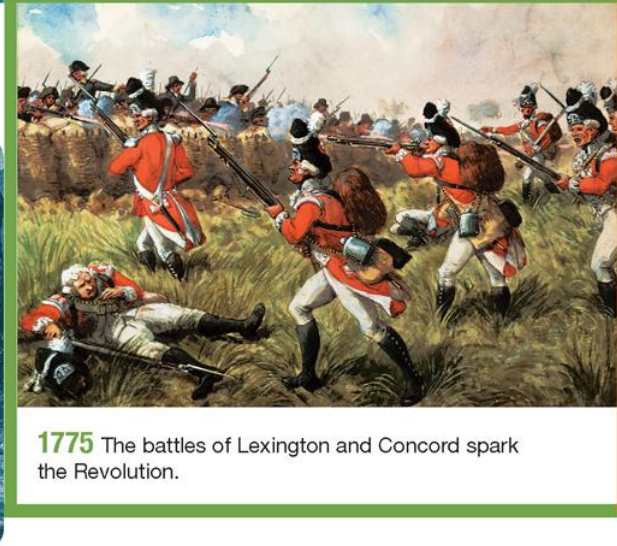
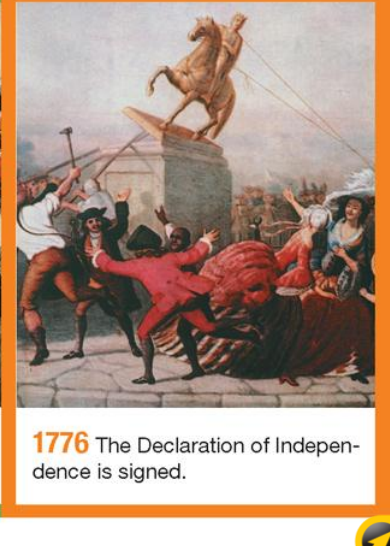
1765 The Stamp Act is passed.

1770 Five colonists are killed by the British at the Boston Massacre.



▶ The Road to Independence, cont.

- In time, these ideas began to shape the ideal of American government and the actions of the colonists.
 - How did early events contribute to the signing of the Declaration of Independence?

	War Begins	Independence
 <p>1773 The Tea Act is passed. Colonists respond with the Boston Tea Party.</p>	 <p>1775 The battles of Lexington and Concord spark the Revolution.</p>	 <p>1776 The Declaration of Independence is signed.</p>



▶ State Constitutions

- The Congress urged colonies to write their own constitutions.
 - A constitution sets out the principles, structures, and processes of government.
 - Most states adopted constitutions in 1776 and 1777.
 - The Massachusetts constitution of 1780 is the oldest of the current state constitutions.

► State Constitutions, cont.

- **Popular sovereignty** - government must have the consent of the governed
- **Limited government** - government has only the powers granted by the people in the constitution
- **Civil rights and liberties** - seven state constitutions included a bill of rights defining basic freedoms
- **Separation of powers** - power divided among legislative, executive, and judicial branches
- **Checks and balances** - each branch could limit the power of the other branches
- State constitutions gave most of the power to the legislature, set short terms of office, and limited the right to vote.

► Review

- Now that you have learned what events and ideas led to American independence, go back and answer the Chapter Essential Question.
 - How does the Constitution reflect the times in which it was written?