

SECTION 3

A Call to Arms

Guide to Reading

Main Idea

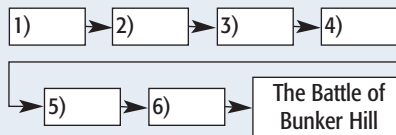
Colonial leaders met at Philadelphia in 1774 to discuss a united response to British policies. Seven months later American and British troops met in battle for the first time.

Key Terms

militia, minutemen, Loyalist, Patriot

Reading Strategy

Sequencing Information As you read the section, re-create the diagram below and list six events leading to the Battle of Bunker Hill.



Read to Learn

- what happened at the Continental Congress in Philadelphia.
- how the colonists met British soldiers in the first battle.

Section Theme

Groups and Institutions With the establishment of the Continental Congress, the colonies continued to protest.

Preview of Events

◆ 1774

September 1774
First Continental Congress meets

◆ 1775

April 19, 1775
Battles of Lexington and Concord are fought

May 10, 1775
Ethan Allen captures Fort Ticonderoga

◆ 1776

June 17, 1775
Battle of Bunker Hill is fought



Revolutionary War drum and fife

AN American Story

At first few colonists wanted a complete break with Britain. One of the most popular songs of the time, "The Bold Americans," called for *both* liberty and continued loyalty to the British king:

We'll honor George, our sovereign, while he sits on the throne.

If he grants us liberty, no other king we'll own.

If he will grant us liberty, so plainly shall you see,

We are the boys that fear no noise! Success to liberty.

As tensions mounted, however, a peaceful compromise was no longer possible.

The Continental Congress

Colonial leaders realized they needed more than boycotts to gain the liberty they sang about in "The Bold Americans." They needed the colonies to act together in their opposition to British policies.

In September 1774, 55 men arrived in the city of Philadelphia. Sent as delegates from all the colonies except Georgia, these men had come to establish a political body to represent American interests and challenge British control. They called the new organization the **Continental Congress**.



Causes and Effects of the Revolutionary War

Causes

- Colonists' tradition of self-government
- Americans' desire for a separate identity from Britain
- Proclamation of 1763
- Harsh British policies toward North America after 1763

Effects

- A long war with Great Britain
- Self-government for the United States
- World recognition of United States independence

Graphic Organizer Skills

Relations between Britain and America worsened during the 1760s and the 1770s.

Analyzing Information Why did the colonists fight for self-government?



grievances calling for the repeal of 13 acts of Parliament passed since 1763. They declared that these laws violated the colonists' rights. Their rights were based on the "laws of nature, the principles of the English constitution, and the several charters" of the colonies. The delegates also voted to boycott all British goods and trade. No British products could be brought into or consumed in the colonies, and no colonial goods could be shipped to Britain.

One of Congress's major decisions was to endorse the Suffolk Resolves. These resolutions had been prepared by Bostonians and others who lived in Suffolk County, Massachusetts. They called on the people of Suffolk County to arm themselves against the British. The people responded by forming **militias**—groups of citizen soldiers. Many wondered if war was coming. The answer came the following spring.

Reading Check Explaining What was the purpose of the Continental Congress?

The First Battles

Colonists expected that if fighting against the British broke out, it would begin in New England. Militia companies in Massachusetts held frequent training sessions, made bullets, and stockpiled rifles and muskets. Some companies, known as **minutemen**, boasted they would be ready to fight on a minute's notice. In the winter of 1774–1775, a British officer stationed in Boston noted in his diary:

“The people are evidently making every preparation for resistance. They are taking every means to provide themselves with arms.”

Britain Sends Troops

The British also prepared for conflict. King George announced to Parliament that the New England colonies were “in a state of rebellion” and said that “blows must decide” who would control America. By April 1775, British general Sir Thomas Gage had several thousand soldiers under his command in and around Boston, with many more on the way.

Delegates to the Congress

Major political leaders from all the colonies attended the Congress. Massachusetts sent fiery Samuel Adams and his younger cousin **John Adams**, a successful lawyer. New York sent **John Jay**, another lawyer. From Virginia came **Richard Henry Lee** and **Patrick Henry**, two of the most outspoken defenders of colonial rights, as well as **George Washington**.

Patrick Henry summed up the meaning of the gathering:

“The distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders are no more. . . . I am not a Virginian, but an American.”

Decisions of the Congress

Although the delegates were hardly united in their views, they realized they needed to work together. First they drafted a statement of



Gage had instructions to take away the weapons of the Massachusetts militia and arrest the leaders.

Gage learned that the militia was storing arms and ammunition at **Concord**, a town about 20 miles northwest of Boston. He ordered 700 troops under Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Smith to march

“to Concord, where you will seize and destroy all the artillery and ammunition you can find.”

Alerting the Colonists

On the night of April 18, 1775, Dr. Joseph Warren walked the streets of Boston, looking for any unusual activity by the British army. He saw a regiment form ranks in Boston Common and then begin to march out of the city.

Warren rushed to alert **Paul Revere** and **William Dawes**, leading members of the Sons of Liberty. Revere and Dawes rode to Lexington, a town east of Concord, to warn Samuel Adams and John Hancock that the British were coming.

Revere galloped off across the moonlit countryside, shouting, “The regulars are out!” to the

people and houses he passed along the way. When he reached Lexington, he raced to tell Adams and Hancock his news. Adams could barely control his excitement. “What a glorious morning this is!” Adams was ready to fight for American independence.

Fighting at Lexington and Concord

At dawn the redcoats approached Lexington. When they reached the center of the town they discovered a group of about 70 minutemen who had been alerted by Revere and Dawes. Led by Captain John Parker, the minutemen had positioned themselves on the town common with muskets in hand. A minuteman reported,

“There suddenly appeared a number of the King’s troops, about a thousand . . . the foremost of which cried, ‘Throw down your arms, ye villains, ye rebels.’”

A shot was fired, and then both sides let loose with an exchange of bullets. When the fighting was over, eight minutemen lay dead.





History Through Art

A View of the Town of Concord, 1775 by an unknown artist Two British officers (left) search for fleeing minutemen, while British troops march through Concord. **Why did the British march to Lexington and Concord?**



The British troops continued their march to Concord. When they arrived there, they discovered that most of the militia's gunpowder had already been removed. They destroyed the remaining supplies. At Concord's North Bridge, the minutemen were waiting for them.

Messengers on horseback had spread word of the British movements. All along the road from Concord to Boston, farmers, blacksmiths, saddle makers, and clerks hid behind trees, rocks, and stone fences. As the British marched down the road, the militia fired. A British officer wrote, "These fellows were generally good marksmen, and many of them used long guns made for duck shooting." By the time the redcoats reached Boston, at least 174 were wounded and 73 were dead.

Looking back, the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in "The Concord Hymn" that the Americans at Lexington and Concord had fired the "shot heard 'round the world." The battle for America's independence from Great Britain had begun.

Reading Check **Describing** What tactics did the colonists use against the British troops on their march back from Concord to Boston?

More Military Action

Shortly after Lexington and Concord, Benedict Arnold, a captain in the Connecticut militia, was authorized to raise a force of 400 to seize Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain. Ticonderoga was not only strategically located but was rich in military supplies. Arnold learned that Ethan Allen was also mounting an expedition in Vermont to attack the fort. Arnold joined with Allen's force, known as the Green Mountain Boys, and together they caught the British by surprise. The garrison surrendered on May 10, 1775.

Later during the war, Arnold conspired to surrender the key fort of West Point to the British and led British raids against the Americans in Virginia and Connecticut. Arnold became a general in the British army.

Building Forces

After the battles of Lexington and Concord, the committees of correspondence sent out calls for volunteers to join the militias. Soon the colonial militia assembled around Boston was about 20,000 strong. For several weeks, the American and British armies waited nervously to see who would make the next move.



The Battle of Bunker Hill

On June 16, 1775, about 1,200 militiamen under the command of Colonel William Prescott set up fortifications at Bunker Hill and nearby Breed’s Hill, across the harbor from Boston.

The British decided to drive the Americans from their strategic locations overlooking the city. The next day the redcoats crossed the harbor and assembled at the bottom of Breed’s Hill. Bayonets drawn, they charged up the hill. With his forces low on ammunition, Colonel Prescott reportedly shouted the order, “Don’t fire until you see the whites of their eyes.” The Americans opened fire, forcing the British to retreat. The redcoats charged two more times, receiving furious fire. In the end the Americans ran out of gunpowder and had to withdraw.

The British won the **Battle of Bunker Hill** but suffered heavy losses—more than 1,000 dead and wounded. As one British officer wrote in his diary, “A dear bought victory, another such would have ruined us.” The British had learned that defeating the Americans on the battlefield would not be quick or easy.

Choosing Sides

As American colonists heard about these battles, they faced a major decision. Should they join the rebels or remain loyal to Britain? Those who

Fact Fiction Folklore

The Battle of Bunker Hill

The Battle of Bunker Hill was fought on Breed’s Hill. Most of the fighting did actually take place on Breed’s Hill. The Patriot soldiers received instructions to set up defensive positions on Bunker Hill. For reasons that are unclear, they set up the positions on nearby Breed’s Hill.

chose to stay with Britain, the **Loyalists**, did not consider unfair taxes and regulations good reasons for rebellion. Some remained loyal to the king because they were officeholders who would lose their positions as a result of the Revolution. Others were people who lived in relative isolation and who had not been part of the wave of discontent that turned so many Americans against Britain. Still others expected Britain to win the war and wanted to gain favor with the British. The **Patriots**, on the other hand, were determined to fight the British to the end—until American independence was won.

Reading Check **Describing** What did the British learn from the Battle of Bunker Hill?

SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

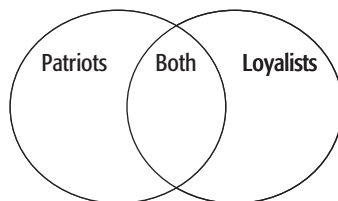
- Key Terms** One of the following terms does not belong with the other three. Identify the term that does not belong and explain why. Terms: **militia**, **minutemen**, **Loyalist**, **Patriots**.
- Reviewing Facts** What decisions were made by the First Continental Congress?

Reviewing Themes

- Groups and Institutions** Why did the Continental Congress pass a resolution to form militias?

Critical Thinking

- Making Inferences** What reasons might Loyalists have had to support Great Britain?
- Comparing** Re-create the diagram below. List the differences and similarities of the Patriot and Loyalist beliefs addressed in the text.



Analyzing Visuals

- Chart Skills** Review the cause-and-effect chart on page 142. What event in 1763 was significant to the independence movement?

Interdisciplinary Activity

Expressive Writing Write a one-act play in which ordinary men, women, and children in a small town react to news of the Battle of Lexington. Remember that reactions varied from colony to colony and that not all colonists wanted independence from Great Britain.