The Revolutionary War

Causes and Main Events
Part One:
Causes of the War
The French and Indian War

- Also called “The Seven Years War”
  
  -(actually lasted nine years, 1754-1763)

- Fought between the British on one side and the French and Indians on the other

- Fought for economic reasons
  
  - British wanted more land to produce more goods and expand their economy

- British settlers moved west, into French and Indian territory, starting the war
French and Indian War

- Began with dispute over Ohio rivers and Fort Duquesne

- George Washington led British troops against the French in Pennsylvania

- British unsuccessful at first, but eventually captured key French forts, including Fort Duquesne
Results of the War

- Britain won, gaining France’s land in America, but also gaining a lot of debt

- Set the stage for the Revolutionary War
Results Continued

-Who really lost the war?: the Indians

-Tensions between Native Americans and British colonists grew in these new territories

-In response, British Parliament issued Proclamation Line of 1763, which forbade colonists from settling in new territory

-Colonist’s response?: They ignored the Proclamation
Ideological Causes of the Revolutionary War

-these new beliefs led to a disrespect for British authority

-Republicanism: belief in government without a king

-Liberalism: belief in life, liberty, and owning property; government protects these rights by taking away some freedoms

-"Great Awakening": American Protestants became even more religious

"All mankind... being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions."

John Locke
Economic Cause: Taxes

- After the French and Indian War, Britain had a lot of debt

- Wanted to pay the debt by taxing the colonies, since the colonies were the ones who benefitted from the war
Taxes Continued

- Colonies had their own ways of setting taxes

- Became angry that Parliament had imposed new taxes without the opinions of the colonies: saw this as a violation of their rights

- Sugar Act (1764)

- Stamp Act (1765)

- Colonies protested Stamp Act, so Parliament got rid of the Stamp Act and replaced it with the Townshend Acts (more taxes)
Boston Massacre (1770)

- British soldiers killed five American colonists during a protest

- Exact details are disputed

- Increased the colonists’ mistrust of Britain
Boston Tea Party (1773)

- Response to a new tax on tea

- Tea was a part of daily life in the colonies, unlike sugar and paper

- A tax on tea meant that Britain could tax whatever they wanted in the lives of the colonists: It was a display of power

- Colonists dressed up as Indians and dumped almost 4 million Euros worth of tea (by modern-day standards) into the Boston harbor

- Colonists hoped this would make Britain stop the taxes
Intolerable Acts

- Passed by Britain in response to Boston Tea Party
- Took away Massachusetts’ right to self-government
- Forced colonists to house British soldiers
- Closed the Boston Harbor
Response of the Colonies

The government of Massachusetts told the colonies to:

1. Disobey the Intolerable Acts
2. Stop paying British taxes
3. Prepare for War

Patrick Henry: “If this be treason, make the most of it.”
Primary Source: Speech of Patrick Henry

“Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!”
First Continental Congress

- Delegates from the colonies met to coordinate how to resist the Intolerable Acts

- “First government of America”

- Justified their resistance based on both their rights as Englishmen and their rights as people (natural rights)

- Marks the start of the Revolutionary War

- Note: The colonies are not yet fighting to become independent from Britain; that happens later, during the war itself
The End! (for now)