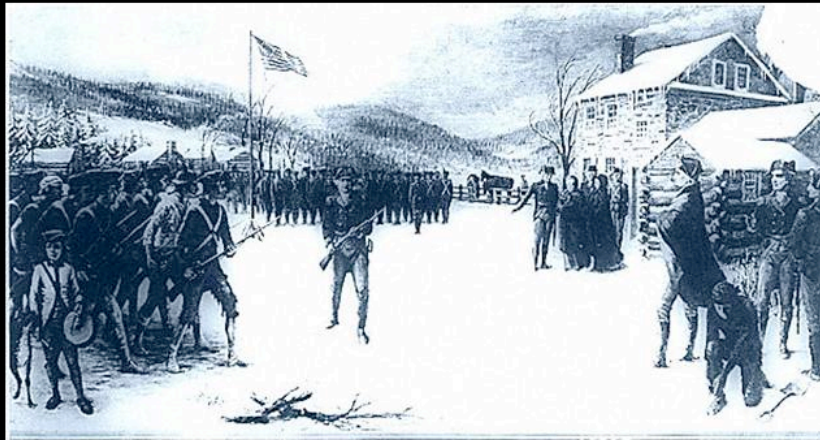


Teacher's Guide: Map PowerPoint

The American Revolution: From Lexington to Yorktown



From Lexington to Yorktown

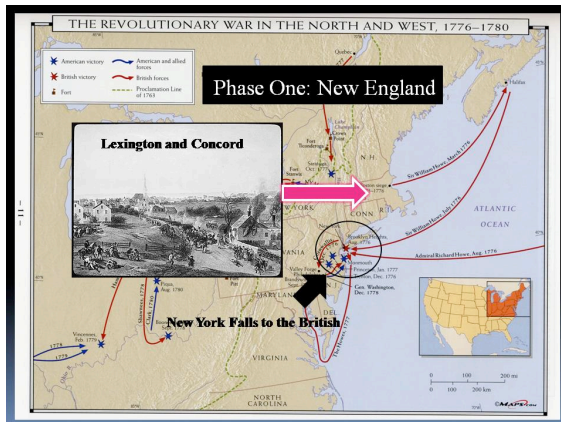


THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR



1. Introductory Slide: The Revolutionary War began on April 19, 1775 with the clashes at [Lexington and Concord](#) between the British army and the American militia, a full fifteen months before the Declaration of Independence. The war was fought in three distinct phases: Phase One centered in New England; Phase Two saw the war shift to the Middle Colonies; and Phase Three focused on the South.

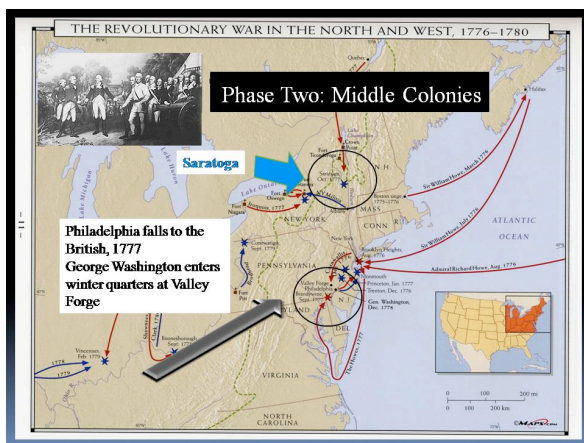
- Phase One: New England – The battles of Lexington and Concord saw the first major outbreak of fighting in the Revolutionary War. Thomas Paine would later write in *Common Sense* that:



“No man was a warmer wisher for reconciliation than myself, before the fatal nineteenth of April 1775, *but the moment the event of that day was made known, I rejected the hardened, sullen tempered Pharaoh of England for ever;* and disdain the wretch, that with the pretended title of FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE, *can unfeelingly hear of their slaughter, and composedly sleep with their blood upon his soul.*”ⁱ The site of

these two battles is indicated by the red arrow on the map. On June 17th, 1775 the Battle of [Bunker Hill](#) took place. Although the British were successful in the overall objective (removing the colonists from the hill overlooking Boston), the militia units fought bravely and inflicted substantial casualties on the Red Coats. Two weeks later, George Washington arrived and assumed command of the fledgling Continental Army. The British were ultimately forced to abandon Boston on March 17th, 1776 after Washington fortified Dorchester Heights with cannon from Fort Ticonderoga. The British sought refuge in Canada while the 2nd Continental Army deliberated on American Independence.ⁱⁱ In August, 1776, the British returned in force and seized New York. The city would remain in British hands throughout the entire Revolution.

- Phase Two: Middle Colonies – With the loss of New York, things looked bleak for the Americans. Thomas Paine wrote the first of his “Crisis Papers” which was read to the American troops immediately before the [battle of Trenton](#). It began: “*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.*

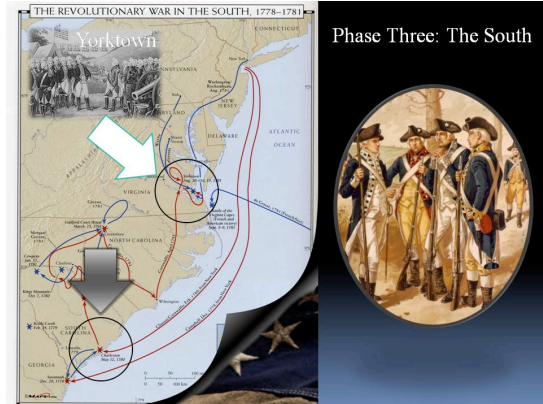


Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.”ⁱⁱⁱ The victory at Trenton provided a much needed boost to the morale of the Continental Army and helped preserve it into the following year.^{iv} 1777 saw Washington’s army defeated again and again. The loss of the Confederation capital, Philadelphia, was a devastating blow but was ameliorated somewhat by the brilliant victory at Saratoga. British

General John Burgoyne was forced to surrender an entire army and this directly led to the Treaty of Alliance with France which would prove critical in the ultimate success of the American

Revolution. The winter of 1777-1778 was notable for Washington's [encampment at Valley Forge](#).

4. Phase Three: The South – The formidable French navy began to challenge the British on the high seas, albeit somewhat unpredictably, but with the arrival of Louis XVI's troops in support of the American cause, there were reasons for a renewed sense of hope. The British offensive in the South, however, proved brutally effective. General Cornwallis successfully captured Charles Town, South Carolina and quickly followed that victory with another at Camden. Loyalist support in the south was strong and soon



American Tories were joining the British in their sweep through the Carolinas. As the British continued into the interior of the country, though, they were hindered by hostile terrain and poor supply lines. New mobile American tactics confounded the British and their loyalist troops. American forces won the battles of [Kings Mountain](#) and [Cowpens](#) forcing the British to seek a coastal town to re-supply their bloodied forces. After fighting ostensibly to a draw at [Guildford Court House](#), Cornwallis' army sought safety at Wilmington but the treacherous North Carolina waters were less than ideal so the British moved north to better conditions at [Yorktown](#), Virginia. There, with the aid of the French Navy blockading the entrance to the York River, a combined force under the commands of Washington and Rochambeau surrounded Cornwallis' forces leading to their surrender on October 19, 1781, effectively ending the major fighting of the Revolution.

ⁱ See Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, Section 3: "Thoughts on the present state of American Affairs," available <http://www.bartleby.com/133/3.html#txt1>.

ⁱⁱ American independence became official with the adoption of the Lee Resolution on July 2, 1776. The Declaration was passed two days later and was a detailed explanation of the events that had led to independency.

ⁱⁱⁱ Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* is available at various websites including [libertyonline](#).

^{iv} Students may be interested in reading David Hackett Fischer's outstanding book, *Washington's Crossing*. You may also have them look at Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze famous painting, "[Washington Crossing the Delaware](#)" which is housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The painting is discussed in detail in Fischer's book.