

## WEEK 18: HISTORY



Read “Resistance to British Rule” on page 3 of this assignment.

Answer these questions on notebook paper. **Write complete sentences**; no short answers.

1. Why did King George III think that it was fair to raise taxes on the colonists?
2. What was the Stamp Act?
3. What was the Quartering Act?
4. Why did the new rules and taxes anger the colonists?
5. What did the people of Boston do to protest the taxes?
6. What is a boycott?
7. Why did the Sons of Liberty throw boxes of tea into the Boston Harbor?
8. What did the British government do that pushed the colonists to the point of rebellion?

Read “All Men Are Created Equal” on page 5 of this assignment.

1. The Continental Congress was a group made up of 56 men from all of the colonies. When, where, and why did they first meet?
2. Who warned the towns of Lexington and Concord about the British troops who were coming?
3. Why did Congress pick George Washington to lead the army?
4. What is the name of the essay that Thomas Paine wrote to convince colonists that separating from Britain was a good idea?
5. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?
6. Why was it “a bold step” for the men to sign the Declaration of Independence?

Read Chapter 34: A Very Violent Revolution in the book.

1. Why did the people of France rebel against the king?
2. Thinking question: How was the French Revolution like the American Revolution?
3. Thinking question: How was the French Revolution different from the American Revolution?

## **WRITING**

We learned about writing a letter in class. For homework, write a letter to an important person asking him/her to support something you believe is important. You can write to your favorite athlete, your favorite performer, your favorite author, your favorite musician, anyone who is well-known. You can make up the mailing address for the person. Be sure your letter includes the six parts:

1. Date
2. Name and address of person you are writing to
3. Salutation
4. Body of letter. Don't forget to use an introduction and a conclusion.
5. Your closing
6. Your signature.



## Resistance to British Rule: 1763 to 1774

### A. A New Monarch

<sup>1</sup>King George III rose to the British throne in the middle of the French and Indian War. <sup>2</sup>He was only 22 at the time and felt it was important to establish his authority. <sup>3</sup>Soon after his reign started, the British government tried to stop colonists from smuggling in goods from enemy countries such as France. <sup>4</sup>Officials in the colonies could now get “writs of assistance” –documents that let customs officials randomly search the stores and homes of colonists. <sup>5</sup>If illegally imported goods were found, they could be seized without having a jury trial. <sup>6</sup>Next, King George signed the Proclamation of 1763 which limited colonial settlement across the Appalachians.



King George III

<sup>7</sup>The costs of fighting the French and Indian war and the costs to keep more British soldiers in the colonies to protect the colonists and Britain’s financial interests were great, so King George and his ministers decided it was fair to increase the colonists’ share of these costs. <sup>8</sup>The British government was also aware that the average citizen in Great Britain paid about twelve times more than an American colonist did in taxes each year. <sup>9</sup>To increase the colonists’ payments towards this debt, Britain passed the Sugar Act in 1764, collecting taxes on molasses and sugar imports. <sup>10</sup>On March 22, 1765, they passed the Stamp Act. <sup>11</sup>This law made colonists use specially marked paper for all newspapers, documents, licenses, legal forms, and even playing cards. <sup>12</sup>Violators, again, would face punishments without a trial by jury. <sup>13</sup>Finally, they passed the Quartering Act on March 24, 1765, forcing colonies to pay for supplies for soldiers in their borders. <sup>14</sup>Although

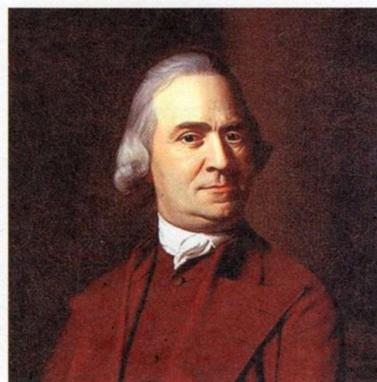
the colonists found these taxes unreasonable and excessive, the British government projected these new laws and taxes would only pay for about 20% of the cost of defending the colonies.

<sup>15</sup>For generations, American colonists felt they had managed their own affairs well. <sup>16</sup>They were used to self-rule and self-defense. <sup>17</sup>The new laws and taxes from Britain were upsetting and costly. <sup>18</sup>These rules and taxes also angered colonists because they were passed without colonial consent. <sup>19</sup>There were no seats for Americans in British Parliament. <sup>20</sup>The American slogan soon became “No taxation without representation.”

### B. Stamp Act Crisis

<sup>21</sup>Patrick Henry, a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses, made a fiery speech against the Stamp Act in May of 1765. <sup>22</sup>He urged the Virginia lawmakers to deny Parliament’s right to tax the colonies. <sup>23</sup>Colonists in New England, especially in the port city of Boston, were also inflamed. <sup>24</sup>During the summer of 1765, angry mobs of protesters hung effigies (crude models of an enemy) of tax collectors, vandalized their homes, and called for boycotts of taxed products. <sup>25</sup>Sometimes they would even “tar and feather” a tax collector.

<sup>26</sup>Samuel Adams was one of Boston’s most active leaders of a protest group called the Sons of Liberty. <sup>27</sup>He and others convinced representatives of nine of the colonies to meet in New York City in the fall to form a Stamp Act Congress. <sup>28</sup>This meeting was remarkable because it demonstrated to British Parliament that the colonies were not only against the new taxes, but bold enough to unite and take action to do something about it.



Samuel Adams

<sup>29</sup>The Americans then began a successful boycott in protest of British taxation policy.

<sup>30</sup>Colonists refused to buy British products. <sup>31</sup>The boycott was aided by people who shopped for most of the household supplies—colonial women.

<sup>32</sup>Stung by the financial ruin of the protests and boycott, Parliament canceled the Stamp Act in the spring of 1766.

### C. More Acts, More Protests

<sup>33</sup>Even though Parliament repealed the Stamp Act, it maintained it had the right to rule America as it saw fit. <sup>34</sup>A year after the Stamp Act crisis, Parliament passed the Revenue Act in 1766, (sometimes called the Townshend Duties) taxing glass, paint, lead, and tea imports. <sup>35</sup>This brought another round of colonial protests about “taxation without representation.” <sup>36</sup>Samuel Adams revived the Sons of Liberty protest group and convinced Massachusetts and other colonies to boycott British imports. <sup>37</sup>Women again refused to buy British goods. <sup>38</sup>More and more, they spun their own fabrics and sewed their own clothing for their families.

<sup>39</sup>In response, the British sent more troops to the colonies to keep the peace and collect the taxes. <sup>40</sup>Soon there were 4,000 “Redcoats” in Boston – a town of 20,000. <sup>41</sup>Tension flared as soldiers were quartered in colonists’ homes. <sup>42</sup>Soldiers guarding a Boston customs house (a place where the taxes on imports were collected) fired into an unruly colonial crowd in 1770 – an event American’s called the “Boston Massacre” (learn more in Lesson 10). <sup>43</sup>All over America, colonists were upset that their own government would use such force on their own citizens.

<sup>44</sup>A new British prime minister, Lord North, was pressured to end the Revenue Act. <sup>45</sup>Once more, the colonists saw the results that united action could bring.

### D. Tea – the Final Straw

<sup>46</sup>After three years of relative calm, Lord North started a plan that would eventually lose Britain her colonies in America forever. <sup>47</sup>Parliament passed the Tea Act in 1773. <sup>48</sup>This law was designed to help a British company sell their excess tea at bargain prices in the colonies. <sup>49</sup>Surprising to the British, the Americans reacted in anger. <sup>50</sup>Colonial merchants complained that the law gave a monopoly (total control) of tea sales in the colonies to a British company which undercut local businesses. <sup>51</sup>They wondered how

long a company with a monopoly would keep its prices low. <sup>52</sup>Once again the British government was imposing rules on the colonies without their consent. <sup>53</sup>Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty took action in protest when a ship, loaded with 45 tons of tea, docked in Boston harbor. <sup>54</sup>Disguised as Native Americans, the colonial protesters boarded the ship in December 1773 and destroyed the cargo by dumping the tea into the bay.

<sup>55</sup>News of the “Boston Tea Party” was met with anger in Parliament. <sup>56</sup>How could Americans possibly feel oppressed by inexpensive tea? <sup>57</sup>In reaction, the British government passed a set of laws in 1774 to punish Americans. <sup>58</sup>Boston harbor was to be closed until the ruined tea was paid for. <sup>59</sup>The Massachusetts colonial government was to be restructured so that Britain had more control over it. <sup>60</sup>New England town meetings were—by British law—limited to one a year. <sup>61</sup>More troops were sent to America and more financial burdens were placed on the colonies by a revised Quartering Act. <sup>62</sup>Jury trials were reduced even more. <sup>63</sup>Finally, lands in the Ohio River Valley were given to a new governmental body in Canada. <sup>64</sup>Parliament called these new laws the Coercive Acts (coercive means “force”). <sup>65</sup>Americans called these new laws the Intolerable Acts. <sup>66</sup>These acts pushed the colonies to the brink of open rebellion.

## “All Men Are Created Equal”: Declaration of Independence

### A. The Revolutionary War Begins

<sup>1</sup>While the Continental Congress was gathering again in Philadelphia in the spring of 1775 to decide what to do about the Intolerable Acts, colonists in Massachusetts readied for a possible British military attack by secretly collecting weapons. <sup>2</sup>Local farmers and merchants were trained to respond to an attack with short notice. <sup>3</sup>They took the name “minutemen.”

<sup>4</sup>The British appointed governor living in Boston learned that minutemen were storing military supplies at the nearby towns of Lexington and Concord in the spring of 1775.

<sup>5</sup>He sent 700 soldiers out to seize those supplies.

<sup>6</sup>Paul Revere and William Dawes, spies for the Sons of Liberty, learned of the British troop movement and raced on horseback out of town to warn the minutemen that “the British are coming.” <sup>7</sup>When British soldiers arrived at Lexington on the morning of April 19th, they were met by minutemen. <sup>8</sup>The shots that soon rang out there are often called “the shots heard around the world.” <sup>9</sup>They were the start of a war that would eventually change British North America and the world.

<sup>10</sup>More patriots swarmed in as the Redcoats moved on to Concord. <sup>11</sup>After a skirmish there, the British soldiers decided to retreat. <sup>12</sup>They soon were surrounded by thousands of minutemen. <sup>13</sup>The Redcoats suffered nearly 300 men dead or injured as they struggled the 16 miles back to Boston. <sup>14</sup>The Revolutionary War, sometimes called the War for Independence, started that day in April 1775.

### B. Common Sense

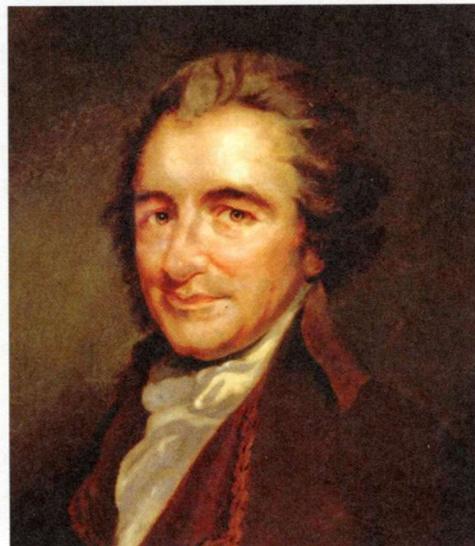
<sup>15</sup>Congress now saw the need to create a regular colonial army for self-defense. <sup>16</sup>It appointed a Virginian, with military experience from the French and Indian War, to lead the new Continental Army—George Washington. <sup>17</sup>Yet in



Minuteman Statue at Concord

1775, while American colonists were organizing to fight British soldiers, many still hoped that Britain and her colonies could still design a peace plan that would keep the colonies within the British government.

<sup>18</sup>In the spring of 1776, the desire of colonists to separate from the British king gained momentum upon the publication of an essay called *Common Sense* by an American named Thomas Paine. <sup>19</sup>He sold over 120,000 copies of his essay within a three month period. <sup>20</sup>It seemed as though every American read and agreed with Paine’s logical view. <sup>21</sup>In simple language, Paine successfully argued that 1) the British king and his advisors were corrupt, 2) the American economy could succeed on its own, and 3) America had a chance to start a new kind of model society. <sup>22</sup>“Why should tiny England rule the vastness of the American continent,” he asked? <sup>23</sup>“We have it in our power to begin the world over again.”



Thomas Paine

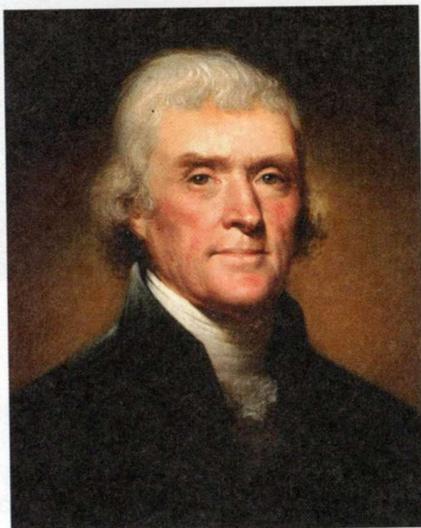
### C. Declaring Independence

<sup>24</sup>When the Continental Congress met again in Philadelphia in early June of 1776, most delegates (representatives of each colony) were ready to discuss separating the colonies from the Mother Country. <sup>25</sup>They debated the idea for about a month and on July 2, the colonists made a critical decision. <sup>26</sup>They voted to create a separate United States of America.

<sup>27</sup>Before that important vote took place, a committee, which included Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson, was directed to write a document that would explain to Britain, and the American people, why America would make such a decision. <sup>28</sup>Jefferson was the principal author. <sup>29</sup>Using reasoning from the Age of Enlightenment, he argued that it was natural for people to rule themselves. <sup>30</sup>His writing would become one of the most important political documents in world history.

<sup>31</sup>The first section of the Declaration of Independence explained that mankind deserved an explanation of the intent of the Americans. <sup>32</sup>It declared that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” <sup>33</sup>It said that a government should rule only as long as it had “the consent of the governed” and that citizens had the power to throw off a government that injured them or took away their natural rights. <sup>34</sup>America’s new government would be a democracy.

<sup>35</sup>Most delegates in Congress, like Jefferson, were lawyers. <sup>36</sup>So the next section of the Declaration presented evidence that the British king had indeed injured his citizens by “establishing an absolute tyranny over these states.” <sup>37</sup>The document listed 27 charges against King George III and was meant to justify the American colonists’ decision to break from British control. <sup>38</sup>One



Thomas Jefferson

of the sentences said this about the King: “He has plundered our seas, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.” <sup>39</sup>Jefferson hoped that Americans, after reading this section, would realize that progress would no longer happen for them within the British system of government.

<sup>40</sup>The third section of the Declaration officially dissolved ties with Britain. <sup>41</sup>It appealed to God that Americans have made the right decision and asked for “the protection of Divine Providence.” <sup>42</sup>Also, it acknowledged that the delegates took a bold step. <sup>43</sup>By signing the document they mutually pledged “to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.”

#### D. Imperfections

<sup>44</sup>Jefferson, like many other delegates from the Southern Colonies, owned slaves. <sup>45</sup>In his original draft of the Declaration, Jefferson blamed the King of England for allowing the evil of the slave trade. <sup>46</sup>He actually hoped that the new United States could start fresh without slave labor. <sup>47</sup>However, Southern delegates objected to the idea of abolishing slavery and it was struck from the final document. <sup>48</sup>The Declaration also said nothing about political or social equality for women. <sup>49</sup>Also, it described Native Americans as “merciless Indian savages.” <sup>50</sup>Although it declared “all men are created equal,” the Declaration left out three important groups of Americans.

<sup>51</sup>The work of deciding upon independence was done in secrecy during the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. <sup>52</sup>However, after the delegates unanimously voted to accept the Declaration, they published it, rang the Liberty Bell, and had it read publicly to an enthusiastic crowd in the city on July 4, 1776. <sup>53</sup>Ever since, July 4 has been a day for fireworks and celebration in honor of American independence.

#### Fun Fact Feature

An official handwritten copy of the Declaration of Independence was ready for delegates to sign in August. Who was the chairman of the Continental Congress and why was his signature so famous?