

OVERVIEW OF U.S. HISTORY

Ten Periods of U.S. History

1. Christopher Columbus discovered North America. European explorers and settlers came to the new land for gold, adventure, and freedom. The colonists lived under British laws
1492
1500's
1600's
2. Americans in the thirteen colonies wanted to be free of British rule. General George Washington led the colonists in the Revolutionary War. Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, and the colonies approved it.
1775
1776
3. The American colonists won the war, and the colonies became the United States of America. The Constitution became the highest law of the land, and George Washington became the first President.
1783
1787
1789
4. Millions of Europeans came to America as workers during the Industrial Revolution. The new nation grew and added more states. It expanded to the Pacific Ocean.
1840's
1853
5. Americans fought against one another in the Civil War between the North and the South. President Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves in the Emancipation Proclamation. The northern states won the war, and the period of Reconstruction (rebuilding) began.
1861
1863
1865
6. The United States grew to be one of the great powers in the world. The nation fought in the First World War. After the war women got the right to vote for the first time.
1917
1920
7. The Great Depression began with the stock market crash. Banks, factories, and farms shut down, and many Americans were unemployed. President Franklin Roosevelt helped end the Depression with the New Deal government.
1929
1933
8. The United States entered the Second World War when Japan attacked the Hawaiian Islands. The war ended when the United States dropped the first atomic bombs, and the world entered the Nuclear Age.
1941
1945

9. Because of its distrust of and competition with the Soviet Union and other Communist nations, the United States entered a time of Cold War. Americans fought in the Korean War. The Civil Rights Movement began, and black and white Americans fought against segregation (separation of the races). *1950's*
10. The Space Age began. Americans fought in the Vietnam War. The United States put the first men on the moon in the Apollo Program. The Women's Liberation Movement became strong. Computers began to change the nation faster than ever before. *1960's*
1970's
1980's

• ***Write the dates from the box***

1929 1853 1776 1955 1863 1919 1492 1941 1787 1969

1. Columbus discovered North America in 1492.
2. The colonies approved the Declaration of Independence in _____.
3. The Constitution became the law of the land in _____.
4. The United States expanded to the Pacific Ocean by _____.
5. President Lincoln freed the slaves in _____.
6. The First World War ended in _____.
7. The Great Depression began in _____.
8. The United States entered the Second World War in _____.
9. The Civil Rights Movement began in _____.
10. The United States put the first men on the moon in _____.

Exploration and Colonization

Exploration

1. In 1492 Christopher Columbus was trying to find a way from Europe to the Far East. But he didn't get to China. Instead, he found some islands in the Atlantic Ocean near North America. He thought he was near the Indies, so he called the people Indians. The Indians were native Americans. By accident, this sailor from Spain discovered a new world.
2. Soon other European explorers sailed across the Atlantic to learn about this exciting discovery. The Spanish explored South America in search of adventures and gold. Priests came to teach the native people.

3. The British and the French explored North America. Explorers traveled into the interior and discovered many beautiful forests, valleys and rivers.

- **Match the sentence parts. Write the letters on the lines.**

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. _____ Christopher Columbus | a. were native Americans. |
| 2. _____ The Indians | b. explored South America to find adventure and gold. |
| 3. _____ European explorers | c. wanted to sail to China but discovered North America. |
| 4. _____ The Spanish | d. came to teach the Indians. |
| 5. _____ Priests | e. crossed the Atlantic to learn about the New World. |
| 6. _____ The British and the French | f. explored North America. |

Colonization

1. The Spanish established the first permanent settlement in North America. It was St. Augustine, now in the state of Florida. The British established their first permanent settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607.

2. People from Spain, France, Holland, England, and other countries started other villages on the east coast of North America. Thirteen settlements became colonies of England. They were Virginia, Massachusetts, Maryland, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, North and South Carolina, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Georgia.

3. Some of the native people were friendly to the colonists and taught them about the land. But other Indians attacked them. The settlers killed many Indians and took their land. They pushed the Indians to the west.

- **Write T for true and F for false.**

1. ----- The British established the first permanent settlement in North America at St. Augustine, Florida.
2. ----- The first Spanish settlement was at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607.
3. ----- Thirteen European settlements on the east coast became colonies of Spain and France
4. ----- Some of the settlers were friendly to the native Americans and taught them about the land.
5. ----- The colonists killed many Indians and pushed them to the west.

REVOLUTION

The Cause of the American Revolution

1. The King of England allowed the thirteen American colonies a large amount of self-government. One of the reasons for this freedom was that between 1689 and 1763 England was busy with wars against France. The colonists helped the Mother Country (England) against the French in the French and Indian War.

2. In 1763 the war ended, and England won control over most of the colonies of North America. But by this time the colonists felt they were “Americans.” They often traded with other countries. They felt strong, and they did not need the Mother Country for protection in wars anymore. They were used to freedom and self-government.

3. But the English needed the colonies for economic reasons. They were buying goods from the colonies at low prices and selling back manufactured products at high prices. They were also charging his taxes on American trade with other countries. Then England put new taxes on the colonists, such as the Stamp Act (taxes on printed materials).

4. Other strict laws made life difficult for the colonists. For example, they could send their products only on British ships, and they had to sell some goods only to England at very low prices. British officials could enter homes to search for illegal goods. The colonists were not free to settle west of the Appalachian Mountains, and they had to allow British soldiers to live in their homes.

5. The colonists were especially angry about the “taxation without representation.” They had to pay high taxes but could not send delegates to England to vote on them. In 1773 England passed the Tea Act (taxes on imported tea), so some colonists dressed up like Indians and dumped all the tea from a British ship into Boston harbor. This act was called the Boston Tea Party.

6. To punish the colonies and control them more closely, England passed even stricter laws. To show their unity against England, the colonies sent representatives to the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia. The Congress decided to stop buying British goods and demanded rights for the colonists in a declaration. Americans prepared for war.

(from *About the USA*, Elain Kirn)

- **Match the sentence parts. Write the letters on the lines.**

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. _____ The American colonies had a large amount of self-government because | a. they couldn't get rights from the British. |
| 2. _____ England got control over North America because | b. they wanted to punish the colonies for the Boston Tea Party. |
| | c. the colonists couldn't send |

3. _____ The “Boston Tea Party” occurred because
4. _____ The English passed even d. the Mother Country was busy with stricter laws because wars at that time.
5. _____ The colonies stopped buying e. the English won the French and Indian British goods and prepared for war War. because

• **CLOZE**

Read the following information about the independence of the United States. Try to fill in the blanks with the correct words. After you have filled in as much as you can, listen to the cassette and fill all blanks.

In the 1700s, or the 18th century, there were 13 British colonies on the East coast of North America. They were from north to south, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

The people who lived in the colonies, the1....., were generally happy being part of Great from the time the colonies were first settled in the 17th2..... until the middle of the 18th century. Then, in 1765, Britain decided to collect3..... from the colonist. They called the tax the “.....4..... Act.” It was a tax on5..... and other papers. The colonists did not want to6..... the tax because they were not permitted to vote in British elections. They called it “taxation7..... representation .” They did not want to pay a tax if they did not have a voice in the government. The colonists8..... the tax, and in 1766, the British stopped charging it.

After that, Britain tried to charge other taxes, but the colonists protested until the British removed all of the taxes except a tax on9..... . The tax on tea led to a famous protest in 1773 called the10..... Tea Party. The colonists did not want to pay tax on British tea which was arriving on ships in Boston11..... They went on the12..... and destroyed all of the tea by throwing it into the harbor.

When Britain tried to punish the Massachusetts13..... for the Boston Tea Party, colonists from other colonies came together to support them. They called themselves the14..... Congress. They met for the first time in15..... in 1774. The Continental Congress governed the country throughout the Revolutionary War.

The Revolutionary war16..... with the Battle of Lexington and Concord, in Massachusetts, on April 19, 1775. The Continental Congress chose George17..... to lead the Continental Army.

One year after the war started, the Continental Congress officially declared18..... from Great Britain. Thomas Jefferson wrote the19..... of Independence, and the members of the Continental Congress signed it in Philadelphia on20.....21..... , in 1776.

Revolutionary War battles were fought throughout the colonies and in the territory to the West of the colonies. The war lasted22..... years. It ended with the Battle of Yorktown, in23..... , in 1781.

From 1781 to 1789, the country was governed under the Articles of Confederation. The Articles of Confederation set up a24..... federal government.

In 1789, the25..... of the United States went into effect. That gave the country a26..... federal government. In that year, George Washington was elected as the first27..... .

(from *Talking about the USA*, Janet Giannotti
and Suzanne Mele Szwarcewics)

- ***Complete the time line with dates from the text above. Review the information after you finish writing.***

1765 The Stamp Act, the first British tax in the colonies.

1773 The Boston Tea Party, one of the first major protests against Britain.

_____ The Continental Congress met in Philadelphia.

_____ The Revolutionary War started with the Battle of Lexington and Concord, in Massachusetts.

_____ The Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia by the members of the Continental Congress.

_____ The Revolutionary War ended with the Battle of Yorktown, in Virginia.

_____ The Articles of Confederation made a weak federal government.

_____ The Constitution of the United States made a strong federal government

_____ George Washington became the first president.

- ***Put the events in the history of the United States in the correct order.***

_____ The Revolutionary War started with the battle of Lexington and Concord.

_____ The Constitution of the United States was written and accepted by the people; George Washington became the first president.

_____ The Colonists protested British taxes in the Boston Tea Party.

_____ The Revolutionary War ended with the Battle of Yorktown.

_____ The Continental Congress met in Philadelphia for the first time.

_____ The Declaration of Independence was written and signed.

1 Britain charged the colonists a tax in the Stamp Act.

_____ The Articles of Confederation set up a weak federal government.

- *Draw line to connect the events in [A] with the information in [B]*

A	B
Maryland	A town in Virginia
The Stamp Act	The country's first president, elected in 1789
The Continental Congress	The first battle of the Revolutionary War
Georgia	A tax on newspapers and other papers
The Boston Tea Party	In Philadelphia during the Revolutionary War
Lexington and Concord	One of the thirteen colonies
The Battle of Lexington and Concord	Signed in Philadelphia by the members of Continental Congress on July 4, 1776
The Declaration of Independence	Weak under the Articles of Confederation
Yorktown	One of the thirteen colonies
The Battle of Yorktown	Towns near Boston
The United States government	The last battle in the Revolutionary War
George Washington	A protest against tax on tea

- *Choose the best answer.*

1. How many British colonies were there before the Revolution ?
 - a. 13
 - b. 30
 - c. 33
2. What was the Stamp Act ?
 - a. a battle in the Revolutionary War
 - b. a rebellion
 - c. a tax
3. Why did the colonists refuse to pay British taxes ?
 - a. because they were poor
 - b. because they already had a lot of taxes
 - c. because they didn't have a vote in the British government
4. Where did the Continental Congress meet in 1774 ?
 - a. in Philadelphia
 - b. in Washington, D.C.
 - c. in New York
5. Where did the Revolutionary War start ?
 - a. in Philadelphia
 - b. in Massachusetts
 - c. in Virginia
6. What did Thomas Jefferson write ?
 - a. the Constitution of the United States
 - b. the Articles of Confederation
 - c. the Declaration of Independence

7. Where did the Revolutionary War end ?
 - a. in Philadelphia
 - b. in Massachusetts
 - c. in Virginia
8. When did George Washington become the first U.S. president ?
 - a. in 1776
 - b. in 1789
 - c. in 1781

THE CIVIL WAR

Causes of the war

The American Civil War was fought between the northern and southern states from 1861 to 1865. There were two main causes of the war. The first was the issue of slavery: should Africans who had been brought by force to the US be used as slaves. The second was the issue of states' rights: should the US federal government be more powerful than the governments of individual states.

The North and South were very different in character. The economy of the South was based on agriculture, especially cotton. Picking cotton was hard work, and the South depended on slaves for this. The North was more industrial, with a larger population and greater wealth. Slavery, and opposition to it, had existed since before independence (1776) but, in the 19th century, the abolitionists, people who wanted to make slavery illegal, gradually increased in number. The South's attitude was that each state had the right to make any law it wanted, and if southern states wanted slavery, the US government could not prevent it. Many southerners became secessionists, believing that southern states should secede from the Union (= become independent from the US).

In 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected President. He and his party, the Republicans, were against slavery, but said that they would not end it. The southern states did not believe this, and began to leave the Union. In 1860 there were 34 states in the US. Eleven of them (South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee and North Carolina) left the Union and formed the Confederate States of America, often called the Confederacy. Jefferson Davis became its President, and for most of the war Richmond, Virginia, was the capital.

Four years of fighting

The US government did not want a war but, on 12 April 1861, the Confederate Army attacked Fort Sumter, which was in the Confederate state of South Carolina but still occupied by the Union army. President Lincoln could not ignore the attack and so the Civil War began.

Over the next four years the Union army tried to take control of the South. The battles that followed, Shiloh, Antietam, Bull Run and Chicamauga, have become part of America's national memory. After the battle of Gettysburg in 1863, in a speech known as the Gettysburg Address, President Lincoln said that the North was fighting the war to keep the Union together so that '...government of the people, by the people, for the

people, shall not perish from the earth'. In the same year he issued the Emancipation Proclamation which made slavery illegal, but only in the Confederacy.

Slaves and former slaves played an important part in the war. Some gave information to Union soldiers, because they knew that their best chance of freedom was for the North to win the war. Many former slaves wanted to become Union soldiers, but this was not very popular among white northerners. In spite of this opposition about 185000 former slaves served in the Union army.

Women on both sides worked as spies, taking information, and sometimes even people, across borders by hiding them under their large skirts.

In the South especially, people suffered greatly and had little to eat. On 9 April 1865, when the South could fight no more, General Robert E Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S Grant at Appomattox Court House in Virginia. A total of 620000 people had been killed and many more wounded.

The war was over but feelings of hostility against the North remained strong. John Wilkes Booth, an actor who supported the South, decided to kill President Lincoln. On 14 April 1865 he approached the President in Ford's Theatre in Washington and shot him. Lincoln died the next morning.

The killing of President Lincoln showed how bitter many people felt. The South had been beaten, but its people had not changed their opinions about slavery or about states' rights. During the war, the differences between North and South had become even greater. The North had become richer. In the South, cities had been destroyed and the economy ruined.

Reconstruction

After the war the South became part of the United States again. This long, difficult period was called Reconstruction. The issues that had caused the war, slavery and states' rights, still had to be dealt with. The issue of slavery was difficult, because many people even in the North had prejudices against Blacks. The new state governments in the South wanted to make laws limiting the rights of Blacks, and the US government tried to stop them. Between 1865 and 1870 the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution were passed, giving Blacks freedom, making them citizens of the US and the state where they lived, and giving them, in theory, the same rights as white Americans.

Many northern politicians went to the South where they thought they could get power easily. These northerners were called carpet-baggers. Both carpet-baggers and southern politicians were dishonest and stole money from the new governments, which hurt the South even more.

In 1870 the last three southern states were admitted to the Union again, and in 1877 the northern army finally left the South. The war lasted four years, but efforts to reunite the country took three times as long.

Effects of the Civil War

Differences between North and South are still strong. In the South the Confederate flag is still often used, and the state flags of Georgia and Mississippi were made to look similar to it. The state motto is *Audemus jura nostra defendere*, which is Latin for 'We dare to defend our rights'. The Civil War helped to end slavery, but long afterwards Blacks were still being treated badly, and race relations continue to be a problem. The South was so

angry with the Republicans, the party of Lincoln and Reconstruction, that southerners voted Democratic for a century. The war showed strong differences between parts of the US, but many people believe that the most important thing it did was to prove that the US is one country.

(from **Oxford Guide to British and American Culture**)

Events of the civil war

- *Fill in the chart with missing information*

DATE	FACTS
-----	- Lincoln was elected President - 11 states left the Union
1861
1863
1865

- ***Write T for true and F for false. Correct the false statements***

1.The South depended on agriculture for its economy.
2.Their main crop was cotton.
3.People in the South needed slave to make money.
4.The North lived from industry.
5.Lincoln’s party opposed the abolition of slavery.
6.The South seceded from the Union by creating the Confederate Sates of America.
7.The North opposed the election of Lincoln and chose Jefferson Davis President.
8.Richmond was the capital of America

- ***Questions for discussion***

- 1 What are the main causes of the war?
- 2 Why did the slaves play an important part in the war?
- 3 What did the slaves gain from the war?
- 4 What are the effects of the war?

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