

A. Background: The French and Indian War

Seven Years' War

The French and Indian War in North America was part of the larger global conflict known as the Seven Years' War, in which Great Britain and France fought over colonial territory, and Austria and Prussia fought over supremacy in Germany. In addition to the North American mainland, the British and French fought in India and in the West Indies.

While the French and Indian War had overtones of European rivalry, the immediate cause of combat in North America was the encroachment of British settlers on lands that the French had considered their own. The French had set up a series of trading posts that spread along the St. Lawrence River through the Great Lakes and southward into the Ohio and Mississippi River Valleys as far as

I. The American Revolution

Teaching Idea

Discuss with students how and why the French and Indian War provided several contributing factors to the Revolution. Use a graphic organizer, such as a cause-and-effect table or a concept web, to illustrate the relationship between the outcome of the French and Indian War and colonial unrest. Include short-term and long-term effects. Have students debate which outcome might have had the most long-lasting consequence for Great Britain and for the colonists. The answers may be different for the two groups.

New Orleans. From these outposts, French traders controlled the fur trade with Native Americans. As the population in the British colonies along the coastal plain began to increase, newcomers and first- and second-generation colonists began to move over the Appalachian Mountains into French territory. Most were spurred by speculators' promises of cheap land, and a few by the desire to take over the lucrative fur trade from the French.

As early as 1754, British colonists and the French had fought some minor skirmishes, and the colonists had been forced out of the Ohio River Valley. The French then built a new line of forts as far east as what is today Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The final decision to go to war, however, rested with the government in London, which was being lobbied by rich merchants who saw the French territory as a new market for the sale of their goods and as a new source of raw materials for use in manufacture. In 1756, the British government agreed, and British soldiers worked with colonial militia in the fight against the French. Until this time, British troops were not regularly stationed in the colonies.

Alliances with Native Americans

What the Anglo-Americans lacked in this war were Native American allies. The French had been trading with the Native Americans for decades, whereas the colonial view of Native Americans was generally that they stood in the way of settlement and progress. Native Americans lived on land that the colonists wanted, and the British were determined to remove them one way or another—if not by treaty, then by force. As a result, the Anglo-Americans went into the war with few Native Americans on their side.

Initially, the Anglo-Americans tried to bribe the Iroquois League with vast quantities of trade goods, but the Iroquois decided not to join the war. However, the Iroquois did join the Anglo-American forces when the war turned in the latter's favor.

The French were more successful in winning Native Americans to their side. The Seneca, one of the six nations of the Iroquois League, fought with the French, as did the Delaware, or Lenni Lenape, in Pennsylvania. The Lenni Lenape had been contending with attacks from both British colonists and the Iroquois. In the Ohio Valley, the Miami, who also had been harassed by British settlers, fought on the side of the French. In Virginia and South Carolina, the Cherokee opposed the Anglo-American army.

Battle of Quebec

The turning point in the war on the North American continent was the Battle of Quebec. Quebec sits high above the St. Lawrence River. From the riverbank, the only access was up a rock wall. In the early hours of September 13, 1759, General James Wolfe and 5,000 British troops scaled the cliffs and assembled on the Plains of Abraham at daybreak to fight the city's French garrison. When the smoke of the brief but bloody battle had cleared, both Wolfe and the French general, Louis Joseph de Montcalm, were dead and the Anglo-Americans had taken Quebec.

The fighting ended on the North American continent in 1760 after the fall of Montreal to the Anglo-Americans. However, in other parts of the world, the war lasted another three years. The Treaty of Paris, which finally ended hostilities, was signed in 1763 and brought great changes to North America.



Consequences of Victory for Great Britain

The Treaty of Paris led to a complicated set of exchanges of territory. The French relinquished all of Canada to the British (aside from a couple of islands to be used for fishing), and their holdings east of the Mississippi (except for New Orleans). The Spanish, who had fought against the French in Europe, took possession of New Orleans and French lands west of the Mississippi. In exchange for Havana, Cuba, the Spanish turned over Spanish Florida to the British.

In the same year, Native Americans, united under Pontiac of the Ottawa, attacked settlers and British-held forts along the frontier in a move that was called Pontiac's Rebellion. To provide a buffer between the Native Americans of the interior and the colonists, the British government issued the Proclamation of 1763. According to this law, colonists were to stay east of a line that ran along the crests of the Appalachian Mountains from Maine to Georgia. Any colonists already in the territory west of this line were supposed to leave. This law angered settlers, fur traders, and land speculators who had agitated for war to rid the territory of the French and open it up for settlement. Now they saw their efforts wasted. Some settlers, fur traders, and trappers disregarded the new law and moved beyond the established line.

In addition to the continuing friction on the frontier, the British government faced other problems as a result of the French and Indian War. In an effort to win the war and end French claims in North America and elsewhere, the British government had spent enormous sums of money. The end of the war left Great Britain badly in debt.

There was also another consequence of the war, of which the British were unaware. In order to fight the war, people from different colonies had to work together for the first time. As a result, they began to think of themselves not only as New Yorkers and Virginians, but also as Americans. In addition, the colonial militias had seen the supposedly invincible British fighting machine lose battles. The hard-fighting French and their Native American allies had inflicted serious losses on the British regulars. There was also a great deal of friction between the British and Americans during the war. Many Americans felt that they were treated with contempt by the British officers and were not impressed with what they perceived as arrogance in the British troops. Americans were also expected to support the British by providing food, horses, and shelter, yet they often were not allowed to fight alongside the British. The colonists would not forget this treatment.

Teaching Idea

Focus on the following questions throughout the study of this section:

- **What caused the colonists to break away and become an independent nation?**
- **What significant ideas and values were at the heart of the American Revolution?**

Begin by asking students what they know about the causes of the American Revolution. Correct any misconceptions so that everyone has the same basic information about the relationship between the colonies and the home country, Great Britain, at the end of the French and Indian War. Use these same questions as an essay-response test at the end of the section.

Cross-curricular Teaching Idea