

Virginia Studies VS.5

Virginia and the American Revolution - (new 2023 standards)

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IN VS.5A – WHY DID THE COLONISTS WANT INDEPENDENCE?

a) explain the principles and events that convinced the colonists to declare independence and go to war with Great Britain, as expressed in the Declaration of Independence

At first, the **13 colonies** were ruled by Great Britain, but as the colonies grew, many people began to feel that **British rule was unfair**.

 What made the **colonists** **upset**?

- They were **taxed** without having a say in British laws ("**taxation without representation**").
- **British soldiers** were placed in towns without permission.
- Colonists had to **follow** **rules** they didn't help create.



The Declaration of Independence:

- Written mostly by **Thomas Jefferson**, a Virginian.
- Declared that the colonies were **free and independent states**.
- Explained that all people have rights, like **life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness**.
- Said the government should **protect these rights**, and if it doesn't, the people can change it



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★ These ideas were bold and dangerous—and **not all Virginians agreed** or wanted a war for independence. Some colonists wanted to **remain loyal to King George III**.

VS.5B – HOW DID VIRGINIANS CONTRIBUTE TO THE WAR?

b) examine the important contributions, leadership, and experiences of Virginians during the war including, but not limited to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, George Mason, James Madison, James Armistead Lafayette, Indigenous People, women, and free and enslaved Blacks

 **Not everyone agreed** about independence. Some Virginians wanted freedom, while others remained loyal to the King George III.

Some Virginians were **Patriots** (wanted independence), some were **Loyalists** (sided with British), and some were **neutral** (didn't take sides).

 **Women, Indigenous People, Free and Enslaved Blacks**

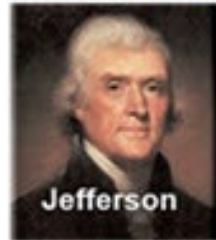
- **Women helped** by managing farms, making clothes, and caring for soldiers
- **Indigenous people** took **different sides** in the war
- Free and **enslaved Black people** fought in battles, carried supplies, or served as messengers

In 1775, Virginia's Royal Governor issued "**Dunmore's Proclamation**" offering freedom to slaves who joined the **British forces**. Thousands fled to do just that!

People from all parts of **Virginia** played important roles in the **Revolutionary War**. Let's meet some of them:

George Washington

- Born in **Virginia**
- Commander of the **Continental Army**
- Known for **bravery, leadership**, and never giving up



Thomas Jefferson

- Wrote the **Declaration of Independence**
- Believed strongly in **freedom** and **self-government**

George Mason

- Wrote the **Virginia Declaration of Rights**
- Inspired the **U.S. Bill of Rights**

James Madison

- Took **detailed notes** during important meetings
- Helped shape the government after the war

James Armistead Lafayette

- An **enslaved African American** from Virginia
- Served as a **spy** for the American army
- While serving under the **Marquis de Lafayette** (from whom he took his name), he gave important information that **helped win** the battle at **Yorktown**
- Was later **granted freedom** for his service.

VS.5c – WHY DID THE CAPITAL MOVE FROM WILLIAMSBURG TO RICHMOND?

c) identify the reasons for the relocation of Virginia's capital from Williamsburg to Richmond

Capitals are the **centers of government**, where leaders make important decisions.



Richmond, the new capital, was farther inland and safer from the British naval attack

In colonial times, Virginia's capital was **Williamsburg**, but it was moved to **Richmond** in **1780**.

Reasons for the move:

- **Williamsburg** was **close to the coast** and easy for the **British Navy** to **attack**.
- **Richmond** was farther inland and **safer**.
- **Richmond** was also **closer to western Virginia settlers**, making it easier for more people to participate in government.

VS.5D – WHY WAS THE BATTLE OF YORKTOWN IMPORTANT?

d) identify the importance of the American victory at Yorktown

The **Battle of Yorktown** was the **last major battle** of the Revolutionary War—and it happened in Virginia.

In 1781:

- In order to weaken its rival, Great Britain, **France** sent troops to **help the Continental Army**. The French navy played a critical role at Yorktown by **blockading the ports** and trapping the British forces.
- British General **Cornwallis** **surrendered**.
- This led to the **end of the war** and **victory** for the colonies.

- The **Treaty of Paris** formally recognized the **United States** as an **independent nation**.

🦋 Thanks to brave Virginians and strong leadership, **Yorktown** became the place where America's freedom was won.

🧠 Summary

- Colonists wanted freedom from British rule and **declared independence** with help from Virginians like Thomas Jefferson.
- **Virginians** like George Washington, James Armistead Lafayette, and many others helped win the war.
- Virginia's capital moved from **Williamsburg to Richmond** for safety and fairness.
- The **Battle of Yorktown**, in Virginia, was the final major battle of the war and led to American victory.



British defeat at Battle of Yorktown



British General Cornwallis surrenders