

The Life of the Marquis de Lafayette

1 Did you know that the French general the Marquis de la Fayette helped the American troops win the Battle of Yorktown? This helped the Americans to win the American Revolutionary War. Many historians say the war couldn't have been won without this young general. So who was this French man? What was he doing in America's war? How else did he help in the war effort?



2 The Marquis de Lafayette was born by the name Gilbert du Motier de Lafayette in France on September 6, 1757. He never knew his father because he was killed in a French battle when he was only two years old. He received all of the titles his father had to include marquis de Lafayette. Marquis is a French title meaning someone who is important. Many of these titles during this time period had to do with land and wealth. Shortly after his father's death, he and his mother moved to Paris, France. It is here where Lafayette went to school and learned about the military. His mother died in 1770 and a few days later joined a group of the king called the Black Musketeers.



3 With the passing away of his mother and grandfather, his great-grandfather became Lafayette's took over caring for him. His great-grandfather helped him to marry a woman named Adrienne Noailles in 1774. They went on to have three children. With Lafayette's rank and status, he was expected to spend a lot of time in French Court. French Court at this time was a group of high ranking men and women who had a lot of power. They often met together at the royal castle where the king and queen lived. Dinners, dancing, and playing different games were common activities at the king and queen's castle. The Marquis de Lafayette didn't really like French Court. He felt out of place.

4 It wasn't until a dinner he had with King George's III (king of England at the time) brother in 1775 that the Marquis de Lafayette felt he had a purpose for his life. King George III's brother told Lafayette about the American colonists wanting freedom from England. Lafayette was very interested in helping the colonists to do well. The Marquis de Lafayette joined the war effort in America. He actually had to sneak out and landed in South Carolina in June of 1777. Lafayette soon met with Virginian General George Washington. Lafayette learned a lot from General Washington. Lafayette was so fond of him that he even named his son after Washington, George Washington Lafayette. Lafayette got permission to fight and fought for a couple of years during the American Revolutionary war. He got shot in the leg at the Battle of Brandywine.

5 The Marquis de Lafayette sailed back to France in 1779. He was able to gather a lot of French support for the colonists. The French king decided to send troops, ships, and money to help the colonists. Lafayette returned to America in 1780 with French ships and troops. With French aid and inside information from spy James Armistead, the Marquis de Lafayette was able to corner British general Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia in 1781. The British surrendered on October 19, 1781. The Americans won and the war was over!



6 Lafayette returned to France a couple of months later and was publicly honored. Unfortunately, things weren't going so well in his own country a few years later. Many Frenchmen were inspired by what the American colonists did and wanted their country to change too. It soon became dangerous to live in France and he left. He did come back to France and continued to fight for freedom in his own country. The Marquis de Lafayette continued to do this until his death on May 20, 1834.

7 Because of the Marquis de Lafayette's efforts in the American Revolutionary War, he has received many honors. Another Virginian by the name of James Armistead eventually changed his name to James Armistead Lafayette after serving under the Marquis de Lafayette. Lafayette helped James to win his freedom from slavery after the war. Additionally, there are many cities, schools, and streets named after Lafayette today. In 2015, the Virginia General Assembly declared March 14th as a Day of Honor for the Marquis de Lafayette. It was on this day in 1781 when he landed in Yorktown, Virginia to begin planning on how to defeat the British general Lord Cornwallis. Who knows how the American Revolutionary war would have ended if the Marquis de Lafayette had not helped the colonists!

1. Which two words best describe how the Marquis de Lafayette probably felt about French Court?

boring	important	minor
thrilling	enjoyable	entertaining

2. Read this sentence from paragraph 4.

Lafayette was so fond of him that he even named his son after Washington, George Washington Lafayette.

Which word has the same meaning as fond in this sentence?

- F caring
- G cold
- H hardhearted
- J selfish

3. Which paragraph answers this question?

What event made the Marquis de Lafayette feel like there was meaning to his life?

- A 1
- B 2
- C 4
- D 7

4. The author most likely wrote this article to –

- F to entertain the reader with a story about the Marquis de Lafayette
- G to inform the reader about how the Marquis de Lafayette received his name
- H to inform the reader about how the Marquis de Lafayette's involvement with the American Revolutionary War
- J to inform the reader about how the Marquis de Lafayette lived his life

5. Which of the following would best be a heading for paragraph 5?

- A How the Marquis de Lafayette Helped France Win Freedom
- B The Moment When the Marquis de Lafayette Became Inspired to Fight
- C Ways the Marquis de Lafayette is Honored Today
- D How the Marquis de Lafayette Contributed the American War Effort

6. Due to the help of the Marquis de Lafayette, how has he been honored according to the article? Shade all that apply.

James Armistead changed his last name after the Marquis de Lafayette.	France crowned him king when he returned from America.	
March 14 th was declared a day to remember the Marquis de Lafayette in Virginia.	George Washington named his son after the Marquis de Lafayette.	There are some schools named after him today.

7. Which sentence is an example of the word play as it is used in paragraph 3?

play (/'pleɪ/)

- v.* 1. to do activities for fun
- 2. to participate in something such as a game or sport
- n.* 3. a piece of writing that explains a story through actions and words
- 4. a time when a musical recording is played on the radio

- A.** The dance song had a lot of radio **play** because I heard it at least five times today on the same station.
- B.** Mr. Johnson did a fantastic job directing the **play** about a soldier in the American Revolutionary War.
- C.** Taboo and Pictionary are creative games to **play** with a large group of people.
- D.** When school is out, I **play** outside with my friends.

8. Which sentence from the passage is an opinion?

- F** Lafayette learned a lot from General Washington.
- G** He never knew his father because he was killed in a French battle when he was only two years old.
- H** Unfortunately, things weren't going so well in his own country a few years later.
- J** French Court at this time was a group of high ranking men and women who had a lot of power.

9. What was the cause of many Frenchmen wanting change in their own country according to the passage?

- A** The king of France gave up this throne so that the citizens could make their own laws.
- B** American attacked France and the Frenchmen wanted revenge for it.
- C** They were encouraged by how the Americans won their freedom from the British.
- D** General George Washington angered the Frenchmen by the way he treated the Marquis de Lafayette.

10. When did the Marquis de Lafayette help to defeat Lord Cornwallis?

- F** March 14, 2015
- G** May 20, 1834
- H** October 19, 1781
- J** September 7, 1757