

The American Revolution refers to a seismic moment in history.

First, because of the fact it led to the _____ 1 of the United States - a country whose economic and military power has been felt across the world. The Massachusetts Minutemen who fired “the shots heard around the world” at Lexington and Concord likely had little idea of the eventual influence that their rebellion against British _____ 2 would have.

Secondly, the causes that the revolution came to represent - liberty, representation, freedom, and independence – laid the foundations for social _____ 3 for the following centuries.

Famous figures such as _____ 4, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams could not have foreseen the almost holy reverence with which their words have been treated since. While the effects of the revolution may not have been immediately revolutionary, it’s clear that the Thirteen Colonies’ struggle for _____ 5 from British rule has had a significant and lasting impact. As with any revolutionary moment, it’s vital to take a step back and examine the causes and progression leading up to the eventual British _____ 6 in 1783.

Most studies of the American Revolution trace its beginnings to the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763), a conflict with the French over _____ 7 that ended with a British victory. The Seven Years’ War solidified Britain’s stance as the most _____ 8 European country in the world as it gained vast tracts of land in the process. However, as Britain tried to increase control of its American colonies in a variety of ways, colonists began rebelling. The expensive conflict had led to new and unpopular _____ 9. The British government attempted to raise revenue by taxing the colonies, first with the _____ 10 of 1765 and then with the Townshend Acts of 1767 and the _____ 11 of 1773.

This led to increasing resentment. The colonists felt that these taxes were unfair since they

were being taxed without any _____ 12 in parliament. The growing protests posed a simple question – why didn't the colonists have the same rights as British subjects? Two events in Boston in the early 1770s fanned the flames of resentment further. First, in 1770, colonial resistance was met with violence at the _____ 13 massacre, in which British soldiers killed five men after opening fire at a protesting mob. Second, in 1773, in response to the Tea Act, a group of Bostonians boarded British ships and dumped 342 _____ 14 into Boston Harbor. These acts were catalysts for more resentment as a vicious circle of retaliatory punitive measures from the British government only served to further enrage the colonists.

Massachusetts and the New England area was now seen as a _____ 15 of rebellion, and the stage was set for an escalation into war. A group of delegates decided to meet in September 1774 to see what could be done about the situation. This _____ 15 included the likes of George Washington from Virginia, as well as John and Samuel Adams from Massachusetts. They did not _____ 16 independence at this first meeting, but they did issue a declaration of the _____ 17 due to every citizen, including life, liberty, property, assembly, and trial by jury – a forerunner for what would come later.

They were frustrated by taxation, but also at the continued British _____ 18 presence in the colonies – an issue that would rear its head very soon. They agreed to meet for a second congress.

In the convening time between congresses, war broke out. On _____ 19, British soldiers marched to Concord to seize an arms cache that had been stockpiled by colonial militiamen. The two sides clashed at the Battle of _____ 20 and _____ 21, marking the first formal battle of the Revolutionary War. It was from this night that we also get one of the great tales and heroic figures of the revolution – that of _____ 22

and the other men riding through the night to sound the alarm and prepare the Massachusetts militia. By the time the Second Congress met in the _____ 23 of 1775 (with new additions such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson), anti-British views were entrenched. They voted to raise a continental _____ 24 with Washington as commander-in-chief.

Thus began a series of battles throughout the fall and winter, starting with the Battle of _____ 25 in Boston. Though it was a victory for the British, these early skirmishes actually supplied encouragement for the lowly colonial forces, giving them inspiration for the fight ahead.

With more trouble brewing – as early battles didn't bring any conclusive victories on either side – the colonists cemented their position on _____ 26, when they voted to adopt the _____ 27. This momentous document was the first time a nation's people formally asserted their right to _____ 28 their own government. It was drafted by a five-man committee, but the primary author was _____ 29.

His famous words in the preamble read:

“We hold these _____ 30 to be self-evident; that all men are created _____ 31; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain _____ 32 rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of _____ 33; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the _____ 34 of the governed.”

Herein lies the essence of the lasting impact of the American Revolution – these words influenced by enlightenment ideas were a far cry from the European model of absolute monarchy. Though, of course, we know that this statement, in fact, referred to a small fraction of the _____ 35 of the colonies; women, men without property, and _____ 36 were all not considered to share those “unalienable rights.” Nevertheless,

this was the revolutionary beginning of what would be a long, imperfect process toward the democratic republic we know today.

As the colonists were declaring independence, the British were sending a _____³⁷ with 34,000 soldiers across the Atlantic to crush the rebellion. After this point, the Revolutionary War settled into a pattern of wins, losses, and stalemates for the next several years.

Military history enthusiasts can enjoy the tales of Washington retreating across the Delaware River before launching a surprise attack on Christmas night in the early stages of the war or can reflect on the turning point through 1777-78 at Saratoga. The American victory at _____³⁸ was crucial as it paved the way for _____³⁹, sensing British weakness, to enter the war on the colonists' side. What had been a civil war now became an _____⁴⁰ conflict.

With the help of the training provided by a professional army, notably from the French _____⁴¹ Marquis de Lafayette, Washington's forces rallied in the north. In the south, the colonists suffered many setbacks, with the famous betrayal of Benedict Arnold's _____⁴² to the British being the most famous of several other mutinies in the Continental Army.

The British occupied Georgia by early 1779 and captured Charleston, South Carolina in May 1780 under General _____⁴³. However, a change of leadership in the American ranks led to _____⁴⁴ coming to the fore. His forces managed to push the British back to the _____⁴⁵ peninsula.

With Washington also converging on the British, they were trapped and forced to _____⁴⁶.

Though contemporaries didn't necessarily see it that way, this surrender effectively marked

the _____ 47 of the Revolutionary War, with no further decisive action taking place before the British signed the _____ 48 in 1783. In signing the Treaty of Paris, Britain formally _____ 49 the independence of the United States, and the colonists were free to go about building their free and independent country. We know that the story of the United States from here is not quite the legendary march of progress towards freedom and liberty. The shortcomings of the founding fathers and the damages done by subsequent US governments are well-known.

Nevertheless, from a weak confederation of thirteen colonies in the 18th century, in less than two hundred years, the US had become the most powerful nation in the world. Some of the reasons for American success can be found in the rights enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the US _____ 50. The American victory was a kind of miracle, not only in the logistical nature of a rag-tag bunch of farmers overcoming an imperial army but also in the triumph of new ideas over entrenched monarchical systems. A new kind of politics, and new ways of thinking, had been born in history's greatest experiment - the United States!