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# American Revolution

Much more than a revolt against British taxes and trade regulations, the American

Revolution was the first modern revolution.

1. It marked the first time in history that a people fought for their independence in the name of certain universal principles such as rule of law, constitutional rights, and popular sovereignty.
2. The American Revolution began in 1775 as open conflict between the united thirteen colonies and Great Britain.
3. By the Treaty of Paris that ended the war in 1783, the colonies had won their independence.
4. While no one event can be pointed to as the actual cause of the revolution, the war began as a disagreement over the way in which Great Britain treated the colonies versus the way the colonies felt they should be treated.
5. Americans felt they deserved all the rights of Englishmen.
6. The British, on the other hand, felt that the colonies were created to be used in the way that best suited the crown and parliament.
7. This conflict is embodied in one of the rallying cries of the American Revolution: No Taxation without Representation.

## Major Events That Led to the American Revolution

1. The road to revolution built slowly over time. Many events fed the growing desire of the thirteen colonies for independence. Following are the major events that led to the Revolution.

### 1.1 1754-1763 - French and Indian War

This war between Britain and France ended with the victorious British deeply in debt and demanding more revenue from the colonies. With the defeat of the French, the colonies became less dependent on Britain for protection.

### 1.2 1763 - Proclamation of 1763

This prohibited settlement beyond the Appalachian Mountains. While Britain did not intend to harm the colonists, many colonists took offense at this order.

### **1.3 1764 - Sugar Act**

This act raised revenue by increasing duties on sugar imported from the West Indies.

### **1.4 1764 - Currency Act**

Parliament argued that colonial currency had caused devaluation harmful to British trade. They banned American assemblies from issuing paper bills or bills of credit.

### **1.5 1764 - Committees of Correspondence**

Organized by Samuel Adams, these helped spread propaganda and information through letters.

### **1.6 1765 - Quartering Act**

Britain ordered that colonists were to house and feed British soldiers if necessary.

### **1.7 1765 - Stamp Act**

This required tax stamps on many items and documents including playing cards, newspapers, and marriage licenses. Prime Minister George Grenville stated that this direct tax was intended for the colonies to pay for defense. Previous taxes imposed by Britain had been indirect, or hidden.

### **1.8 1765 - Stamp Act Congress**

In 1765, 27 delegates from nine colonies met in New York City and drew up a statement of rights and grievances thereby bringing colonies together in opposition to Britain.

### **1.9 1765 - Sons and Daughters of Liberty**

Colonists tried to fight back by imposing non-importation agreements. The Sons of Liberty often took the law into their own hands enforcing these 'agreements' by methods such as tar and feathering.

### **1.10 1767 - Townshend Acts**

These taxes were imposed to help make the colonial officials independent of the colonists and included duties on glass, paper, and tea. Smugglers increased their activities to avoid the tax leading to more troops in Boston.

### **1.11 1770 - Boston Massacre**

The colonists and British soldiers openly clashed in Boston. This event was used as an example of British cruelty despite questions about how it actually occurred.

**1.12 1773 - Tea Act**

To assist the failing British East India Company, the Company was given a monopoly to trade tea in America.

**1.13 1773 - Boston Tea Party**

A group of colonists disguised as Indians dumped tea overboard from three ships in Boston Harbor.

**1.14 1774 - Intolerable Acts**

These were passed in response to the Boston Tea Party and placed restrictions on the colonists including outlawing town meetings and the closing of Boston Harbor.

**1.15 1774 - First Continental Congress**

In response to the Intolerable Acts, 12 of the 13 colonies met in Philadelphia from September-October, 1774. One of the main results of this was the creation of The Association calling for a boycott of British goods.

**1.16 1775 - Lexington and Concord**

In April, British troops were ordered to Lexington and Concord to seize stores of colonial gunpowder and to capture Samuel Adams and John Hancock. At Lexington, open conflict occurred and eight Americans were killed. At Concord, the British troops were forced to retreat with the loss of 70 men. This was the first instance of open warfare.

**1.17 1775 - Second Continental Congress**

All 13 colonies were represented at this meeting in Philadelphia beginning May. The colonists still hoped that their grievances would be met by King George III. George Washington was named head of the Continental Army.

**1.18 1775 - Bunker Hill**

This major victory for the Colonists resulted in George III proclaiming the colonies in rebellion.

**Common Sense**

1. Common Sense was written by Thomas Paine and published in January of 1776.

2. This document was one of many revolutionary pamphlets that were famous during that time.

3. It advocated complete independence of Britain and it followed the natural rights philosophy of John Locke, justifying independence as the will of the people and revolution as a device for bring happiness.
4. These words inspired the colonists and prepared them for the Declaration of Independence, although the thoughts were not original.

### **Olive Branch Petition**

1. The Olive Branch Petition was a document that declared the colonists' loyalty to the British king.
2. This document was one of the last attempts to make peace prior to the revolution.
3. The petition also states that the colonists wanted the Intorable Acts repealed.
4. King George III rejected the petition and the colonists had no other choice but to revolt.

### **The Revolutionary War**

1. The British had many advantages in the war, including a large, well- trained army and navy and many Loyalists who supported the British Empire.
2. But many white colonists were alienated by Lord Dunmore's promise of freedom to slaves who joined the royal army, and were inspired by Thomas Paine's Common Sense.
3. Excellent leadership by George Washington; the aid of such European nations as France; and tactical errors by British commanders contributed to the American victory.
4. British strategy called for crushing the rebellion in the North. Several times the British nearly defeated the Continental Army. But victories at Trenton and Princeton, N.J., in late 1776 and early 1777 restored patriot hopes, and victory at Saratoga, N.Y., which halted a British advance from Canada, led France to intervene on behalf of the rebels.
5. In 1778, fighting shifted to the South. Britain succeeded in capturing Georgia and Charleston, S.C. and defeating an American army at Camden, S.C. But bands of patriots harassed loyalists and disrupted supply lines, and Britain failed to

achieve control over the southern countryside before advancing northward to Yorktown, Va.

6. In 1781, an American and French force defeated the British at Yorktown in the war's last major battle.

### **Consequences:**

1. About 7,200 Americans died in battle during the Revolution. Another 10,000 died from disease or exposure and about 8,500 died in British prisons.

2. A quarter of the slaves in South Carolina and Georgia escaped from bondage during the Revolution. The Northern states outlawed slavery or adopted gradual emancipation plans.

3. The states adopted written constitutions that guaranteed religious freedom increased the legislature's size and powers, made taxation more progressive, and reformed inheritance laws.

### **DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE:**

1. In 1776, the second Continental Congress chose Thomas Jefferson to draft the Declaration of Independence.

2. When Jefferson was done with a rough copy, he gave it to his subcommittee, which included Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, for their approval.

3. It only took seventeen days before the copy was presented to Congress with the entire subcommittee's approval.

4. One by one, the representatives signed the document, and on July 4th, made it official. Even though independence was declared on July 4th, it took several days for the news to reach all the colonists.

5. Although the revolution would last until 1783, the United States was free from British rule.

6. The Declaration of Independence is a document made up of three parts; Introduction and opening statements, wrongs done by the king, and colonists declare independence. The introduction and opening statements features this famous saying: "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." This sentence was the topic for debate during the early and mid 1800s surrounding the slavery

issue. The second part lists actions by the king that the colonists considered wrong.

7. It is a long list that takes up most of the space in the Declaration of Independence. Part three is a small paragraph where the colonists actually declare independence. Next to the Constitution, Thomas Jefferson's document was and still is the most influential document in American history.

## **Major Battles**

### **BATTLE OF LEXINGTON**

1. This battle was fought at a village near Boston, Massachusetts on the morning of April 19, 1775.
2. The reason for this battle was the British wanted to investigate accounts that the colonists were stockpiling weapons in Concord.
3. As the British began to investigate, firing began in Lexington and 8 colonists were killed before the British marched on to Concord.
4. The American men fighting were regular townsmen, many owned property, but others were working men.
5. The Battle of Lexington was important because it signaled the start of the American Revolution.

### **BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL:**

1. The battle of Bunkerhill was the first major battle where the British defeated the Americans.
2. It was an exciting and important battle in the Revolutionary War. Many people and events contributed to the outcome of this battle.

### **BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND:**

1. The Battle of Long Island was an engagement of the American Revolution. The battle was waged on August 27, 1776 and ended on August 30, 1776.
2. This was the first large-scaled battle of the war and had two commanding officers, George Washington and William Howe.

3. The whole ideal of the war was a British campaign to seize New York City during the American Revolution.

4. The Americans retreated to their Brooklyn Entrenchments, and during the night of August 29-30th, Washington took his demoralized army back to their headquarters on Manhattan Island.

### **BATTLE OF YORKTOWN:**

1. Yorktown was the area where the last major battle of the American Revolution War took place.

2. The U.S. forces and the forces from France worked together to give the British forces under Cornwallis a massive defeat.

3. In July 1780, about 5,500 French soldiers led by Lieutenant General Jean Rochambeau, arrived in America. George Washington still hoped to force the troops from Britain out of New York City in an operation combined with France.

4. Washington learned that an enormous fleet from France headed toward Virginia in August 1781.

5. The fleet was under Admiral Francois Grasse. He planned to prevent Cornwallis from escaping by ocean, by obstructing Chesapeake Bay.

6. The French forces, led by Rochambeau, and the American forces under Washington hurried southward to capture Cornwallis on land.

7. Admiral Grasse battled a naval force from Britain that sailed from New York to Chesapeake Bay's mouth in the beginning of September. The British then returned to New York to repair after several days of battle.

8. An allied French and American force of approximately 18,000 sailors and soldiers encircled Cornwallis at Yorktown by the end of September 1781. On the night of October 16th, Cornwallis tried to bring his forces over the York River to safety.

9. A storm had driven them back which caused Cornwallis to capitulate the next day. On October 19, 1781, Cornwallis surrendered.

### **AFTER THE REVOLUTION**

1. Treaty of Paris: under the Treaty of Paris, Britain recognized the United States as an independent nation.



2. The borders of the new nation extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River.
3. The southern border stopped at Florida, which belonged to Spain again.
4. The Americans agreed to ask state legislatures to pay loyalists for their property they had lost in the war.
5. In the end, however, most state legislatures ignored loyalists' claims.
6. On April 15, 1783, Congress ratified the Treaty of Paris.
7. It was eight years to the month since the opening shots were fired at Lexington and Concord.

### **Articles of Confederation:**

1. The United States Constitution consists of basic laws that define the rights of American citizens and limits the power of the government.
2. The Articles of Confederation gave each state more power than the federal government.
3. The main reason for the Articles was to form some type of national government in order to defend against foreign countries.
4. The Articles gave Congress the right to raise an army and navy, but the states had to approve it.
5. Congress could pass laws, but could not force the states to follow them. People began to protest against their state governments and the national government could not do anything about it.
6. Therefore, the leaders of the country decided to meet again to solve these and other problems of the Articles of Confederation.
7. They met and came up with a new national government, which is set up in the Constitution of the United States.



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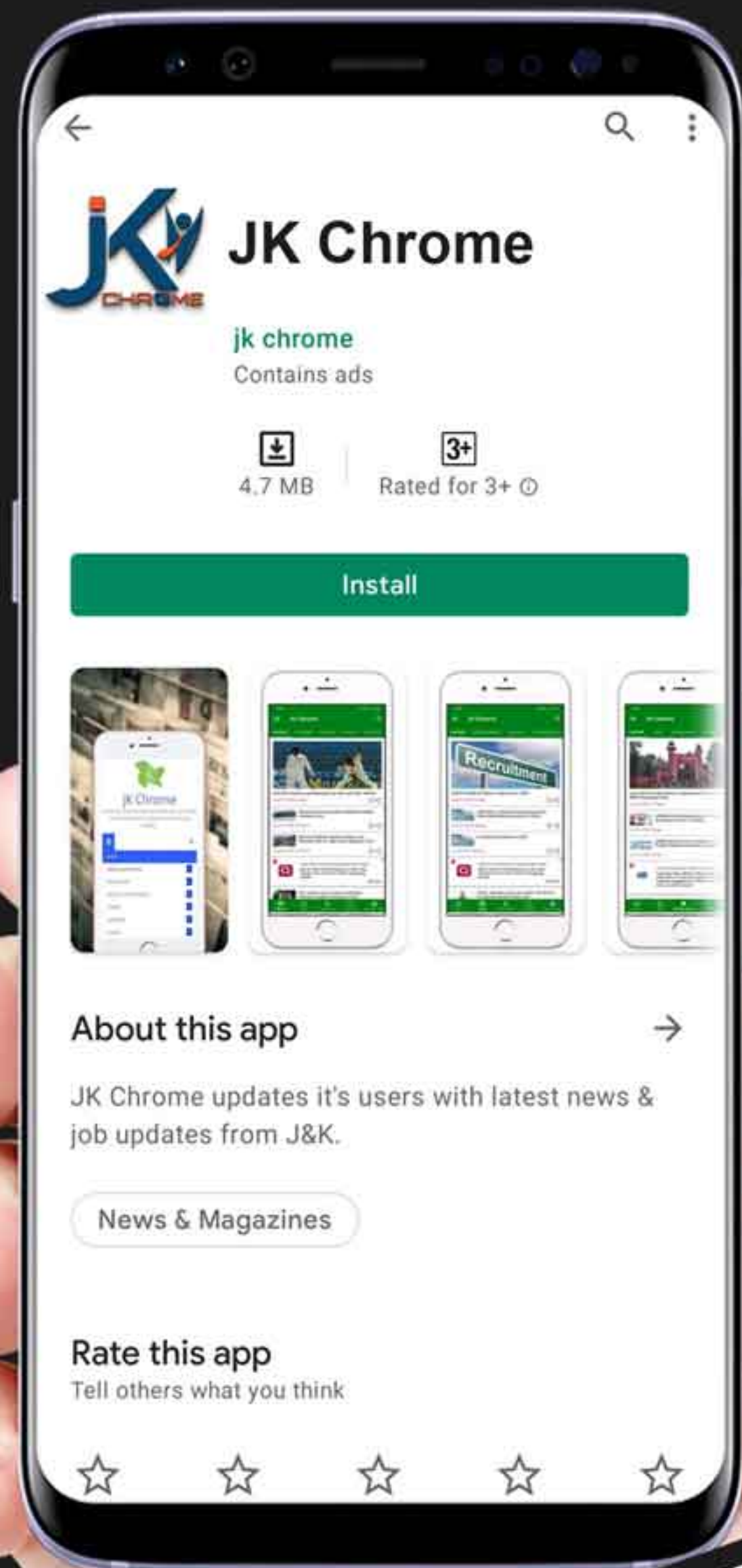
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