**American Revolutionary War**

Since their foundation, the thirteen colonies had enjoyed a period of good relations with the mother country; however, that period came to an end when, following the Seven Years’ War , the English Parliament started to impose on the colonists a series of taxes. The main cause behind the American revolution was the [French and Indian War](https://www.history.com/topics/native-american-history/french-and-indian-war), also known as the Seven Years’ War(1756-1763) which marked another chapter in the long imperial struggle between Britain and France in the New World. It started when, by the middle of the 18 th century, a new wave of American colonists started to cross the Appalachians and move into the Ohio valley. They were looking for more fertile lands.The French, who had previously moved there, saw this as a threat to their fur trade with the Indians. They sent an expedition to reinforce their claim to the valley and subsequently established a string of forts there. The British and colonists were forced to respond to the move or suffer the loss of vast interior, long claimed by both British and French . The result was a war fought between Great Britain and France in which Grain Britain triumphed over France.

The financial difficulties incurred by the war and the consequences of victory led the British Parliament to think it fair to make the American colonists pay its expenses and costs. In February 10, 1763, the French- Indian War ended, leaving the British with a massive war debt. The British looked to raise revenue by imposing new taxes in the colonies and reversing its policy of Salutary Neglect. On October 7, 1763 the British imposed the Proclamation Line that introduced a massive boundary to separate white settlements from Indian territories and the Americans believed the British were siding with the Native Indians against them. In fact, the British passed first the Sugar Act of 1764 and then the Stamp Act of 1765; while the former imposed a tax on sugar and molasses imported into the colonies, the latter required a tax on all public documents, newspapers, and every other printed-paper. The measure angered the settlers whose leaders organized a Stamp Act Congress in 1764 in New York in which they expressed their opposition to the tax on the basis of “no taxation without representation”. In August 1764, the Boston Boycotts were imposed by the merchants, and the women of Boston refused to buy British finished goods, especially clothing such as satins, lace and ruffles. This was soon followed by violent opposition, and the reaction to the Stamp Act resulted in the British Parliament repealing the act in 1766. In March 24, 1765,Quartering Act was passed and it was the first of a series of Laws requiring the provision of housing, food and drink to British troops in the American colonies. Then in 1767 the Townshend Acts levied tariffs on many articles imported into the colonies. Colonial resistance led to violence in 1770, when British soldiers fired on a mob of colonists, killing five men. News of the Boston Massacre spread through the colonies. The massacre compelled the British government to repeal all the Townshend duties, and a period of relative calmness followed. However, hostilities were soon revived when Parliament passed Tea Act in 1773 in a move to relieve the financial stresses of the East-India Company. Protests were organized and revolutionary sentiment mounted. In December 1773, some colonists disguised as Indians boarded tea ships in Boston harbor and unloaded the tea into the water. The furious royal government responded to this Boston Tea Party by passing the Coercive Acts in 1774, known as the Intolerable Acts in the colonies.

Virginia moved to support Massachusetts by calling for a meeting of all colonies. The result was the first Continental Congress in Philadelphia in the fall of 1774.It drew up declarations of rights and grievances to be sent to the king George III asking him to redress the situation and to instruct the organization of non-importation of British goods. Despite the beginning of hostilities, leaders in the Continental Congress still hoped to avoid total war and expressed their willingness to remain part of the British Empire. While they prepared for the fighting, they sent the Olive Branch Petition to the king pledging their loyalty and asking him to resolve colonial grievances. In November, they received the answer: the king refused to read the petition and declared the colonies in a state of rebellion; he also closed the colonies to all trade and commanded the American ships be seized. The king’s attitude, together with Thomas Paine’s writings, convinced the delegates that their wellbeing could only be achieved away from the British control. The [American Revolutionary War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolutionary_War) broke out against [British](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) rule in April 1775 with the [Battles of Lexington and Concord](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battles_of_Lexington_and_Concord). The [Second Continental Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Continental_Congress) met in May 1775, and established an army funded by Congress and under the leadership of the Virginian [George Washington](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Washington). On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress issued the Declaration of Independence. At the beginning of the fighting, the British army achieved some success, defeating Washington and captured both New York and Philadelphia. But on both occasions, he failed to crush the Continental Army preferring to spend the winter in his quarters, giving Washington time to reorganize his troops and even win a significant victory at Trenton and Princeton (New Jersey). Washington’s victory boosted the morale of the Americans who won a major victory at the Battle of Saratoga (New York).This victory was a turning point in the war;it brought the French armies who wanted to take revenge on the British for the defeat at the Seven Years’ War. On October 19, 1781, British troops surrendered to an allied French-American army at Yorktown (Virginia). Peace talks resulted in the Treaty of Paris signed on September 3, 1783, which gave the colonies independence and boundaries that stretched to the Mississippi River. At exactly the same time that Congress declared independence, it also created a committee to draft a new [constitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution) for the new nation. The resulting constitution, which came to be known as the [Articles of Confederation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Articles_of_Confederation) and Perpetual Union. The first article of the new constitution established a name for the new confederacy – the United States of America.

**The Confederation Era (1781-1789)**

The Confederation Period was the era of [United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) history, which began after the American Revolution in 1781 and ended in 1789 following the ratification of the United States Constitution with a new and more powerful national government.

**1-Congress Creates the Articles of Confederation: the** first draft of the Articles of Confederation, written by [John Dickinson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Dickinson), was presented to the Second Continental Congress on July 12, 1776, but it did not send the complete and final proposed constitution to the states until November 15, 1777. [Virginia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia) was the first state to ratify the Articles on December 16, 1777; 12 other states had ratified them by February 1779, 14 months into the process. However,   Maryland, refused to go along until the landed states, especially [Virginia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia), had to [cede their claims](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_cession) west of the [Ohio River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ohio_River) to the American Union. It would be two years before the [Maryland General Assembly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maryland_General_Assembly) became satisfied that the different states would vote to ratify. With Maryland’s ratification of the Articles on February 2, 1781, Congress officially declared the Articles of Confederation to be the law of the land. The Articles of confederation were a league or alliance of states that agreed to work together. Under the leadership of John Dickinson of Pennsylvania, the Congress set a loose and unicameral confederation of 13 states, rather than a strong and centralized nation. The Articles interpreted the principles of the Declaration of Independence and rejected the centralized power of Britain as a threat to liberties. The Articles constituted a war-time confederation of states, with an extremely limited central government. Though the document made official some of the procedures used by the Congress to conduct business, but most the delegates realized the Articles had limitations.

**2-New National Government’s Structure:** the new national government is composed of a congress of delegates, chosen by state legislatures rather than by voters. Although states had the right choose as many as seven delegates, each state—no matter how large or small—had a just one vote. Vast Virginia had no more power than tiny Rhode Island. The powers to make, implement, and enforce the laws were all placed with the Congress. The new national government had neither a President nor executive branch. Instead, executive power was dispersed among many committees of congressional representatives.

**3-National Congress’ Powers:** the Articles conferred certain limited powers to Congress. These powers were predominantly external: to declare and command war and to negotiate peace, to regulate foreign affairs and to run relations with Indian tribes. The Congress had no power to raise money through taxes. Therefore, it relied on states’ contribution, which were insufficient and unreliable. Between 1781 and 1786, the Congress got only one sixth of what it requested from all states. By 1786, it needed $2.5 million to pay its debts ‘interest but had only the amount $400,000 on hand. In fact, the states had bankrupted the nation. On some minor issues, a majority of seven states could issue a law. However, on the major issues, including declaring war and treaties, two thirds of the states (nine) had to ratify. Amending the Articles was almost impossible because all 13 states had to approve any change.

**4-Strengths & Weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation**

**4-1-Strengths & Accomplishments :**government signed a treaty of alliance with France in 1778 and successfully waged a war for independence against the British. It also negotiated an end to the American Revolution in the Treaty of Paris, signed in 1783 and granted the free inhabitants of each state “all the privileges and immunities of free citizens in the several states.” Moreover, it provided for the eventual admission of Canada into the Confederation. Perhaps the most significant accomplishment of the Articles of Confederation was the passage of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which allowed the Northwest Territories to organize their own governments. Therefore, it allowed the eventual admission to the Union of no more than five states, and no fewer than three, “on an equal footing with the original states.” The Ordinance also banned slavery from the region. Government established the Departments of Foreign Affairs, War, Marine, and Treasury.

**4-2-Weaknesses:** Congress had no power to coin money, therefore each state developed its own currency (a serious hodgepodge of coins and a bewildering variety of state and national papers, all fast depreciating in value). It was unable to regulate interstate and foreign commerce; some states refused to pay for products they bought from abroad. It lacked sole control of international relations; a number of states had begun their own negotiations with foreign countries. Nine states had organized their own armies and navies. It was also unable to impose taxes (tariffs); it could only borrow money on credit. National court system was not established to protect the rights of U.S. citizens. No executive branch was set to implement laws. Amendments could be added only with the approval of all 13 states. Consent of 9 of 13 states was required to pass a law in Congress. One vote was granted for each state, despite the size of its population. Thus the proposed confederations were little more that what Dickinson called it a “firm league of friendship.”

**5-Foreign Affairs during the Confederation Period**

In the decade after the end of revolution, the United States benefited from a long period of peace in Europe, as no European country presented an immediate threat to the United States. Nevertheless, the weaknesses of the Confederation government extremely hindered diplomacy. During the mid-1780s, the Spanish and British did not take the new United States seriously. To them, the republican Confederation seemed weak to the point of anarchy, or lawlessness.

**5-1-Spain-United States relations:** the Spanish were always against American independence, and they hindered American expansion westward because it posed a real threat to their colonies of Louisiana and Mexico. Perhaps no other problem triggered such sectional division during the Confederation Period than the navigation right of the Mississippi River. The Treaty of Paris (1783) had asserted that the Mississippi would be the western boundary of the United States and that it would be opened to Americans free navigation. To curb settlements west of the Appalachian Mountains, Spain closed the Mississippi river to Americans in 1784, and forbade American trade with New Orleans. American settlers desired to ship their products down the Mississippi River to market in Spanish-held New Orleans. The Congress lost assistance from western settlers when it almost agreed to close New Orleans in exchange of commercial contracts to benefit northeastern merchants.

**5-2-Britain-United States relations:** national problems continued as American merchants were blocked from the British West Indies and the British army persisted to hold posts in the Old Northwest, which was in fact an American territory after the signature the [Treaty of Paris](https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/treaty-of-paris). A year later, the British renounced the treaty in order to make the Americans pay for their independence. Refusing the new doctrine of free trade championed by Adam Smith, the British restored their traditional mercantilism as defined by the Navigation Acts. Accordingly, Americans could only trade with the Britain under rules that suited the British interests. They could only import all the British goods, but they could no longer freely send their ships to trade with the British West Indies—the most important market for American fish, lumber, and grains. This restriction greatly affected Massachusetts, which had more ships than any other state and a greater need for the West Indian market for its fish and lumber. As a revenge, Massachusetts barred the British ships from transporting its exports. But, this retaliation failed because the other states did not backup Massachusetts. In addition, the Congress was too vulnerable to orchestrate a strong front against Britain’s mercantile policy. The Britain also disturbed the Confederation by maintaining frontier forts on the American side of the boundaries set by the peace treaty of Paris. To satisfy the Indians, the British kept their forts at Niagara, Detroit, and Michilimackinac. American merchants began to call for a stronger national government.

**6-Shays’ Rebellion and the end the Confederation era**

It was a tax protest by western Massachusetts and Worcester farmers who broke an armed uprising in response to debt crisis and in objection to the state’s governments mounting efforts to collect taxes on both farmers and merchants in 1786 and 1787. Farmers took up arms to shut down the courts to block any foreclosure hearings. As farmers could not pay the higher taxes imposed by the Massachusetts government, they were obliged to lose their property or go to prison. Consequently, [American revolutionary war](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolutionary_War) veteran [Daniel Shays](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Shays) responded these economic and civil rights injustices through leading four thousand rebels (called Shaysites). Farmers realized that the central government was too weak to suppress an internal rebellion, and; thus, to protect the perpetual union. With a lack of money ,it had to rely on a state militia sponsored by Boston businessmen. These incidents alarmed the American Founders like George Washington, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton to an extent that delegates from five states met at Annapolis, Maryland in September 1786 to change the Articles of Confederation. The assembly of delegates included Madison, Hamilton and John Dickinson, and it recommended that a meeting of all 13 states be held the next May in Philadelphia. The Confederation Congress agreed and the Constitutional Convention of 1787 effectively ended the era of the Articles of Confederation.

**The Anti-Federalist /Democratic Republican Era 1800-1824**

1**-Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions**

The two main Democratic- Republican leaders, Jefferson and James Madison, viewed the Alien and Sedition Acts as a tyranny and a serious misuse of the Federalist power. They determined to organize opposition to the Alien and Sedition Acts by looking to the states to respond and protect people liberties. Both wrote statements of protest that the Virginia and Kentucky legislatures passed as resolutions. Madison wrote a set of resolutions that were adopted by the Virginia legislature, while Jefferson drew up resolutions that were approved in Kentucky. The Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions of 1798 and 1799 claimed that the Alien and Sedition Acts violated the Constitution and declared that the states should not put them into effect . Accordingly, the states emphasized the principle of nullification—that states had the right to nullify and legally overrun , or consider void and invalid, any Congress laws they thought were unconstitutional. Virginia and Kentucky saw the Alien and Sedition Acts as unconstitutional violations of First Amendment citizens rights, and warned of the threats that the Alien and Sedition Acts posed to a government of checks and balances guaranteed by the Constitution.

**2-The Election of 1800**

The Federalist and Republican parties fought a bitter Presidential election campaign in 1800. Federalists supported President Adams for a second term and Charles Pinckney of South Carolina for vice president. Republicans nominated Thomas Jefferson for president and Aaron Burr of New York as his running mate. The election campaign of 1800 was totally different from nowadays campaigns as both Adams nor Jefferson didn’t travel around the U.S.A. delivering speeches about their electoral agenda. Instead the candidates and their allies wrote hundreds of letters to leading citizens and friendly newspapers to present their views. The letter-writing campaign, however, was harsh and derogatory. Each party pelted wild charges at the other. Federalists charged the Republican Jefferson, who believed in freedom of religion, as a dangerous supporter of revolutionary France and an atheist “godless” bent on destroying organized religion. Republicans warned that the Federalist Adams was a tool of the wealthy people who wanted to turn the executive branch into a British-style monarchy.

**2-1-Electoral Deadlock**

In the balloting, Jefferson defeated Adams by eight electoral votes. However, Jefferson and his running mate Aaron Burr received the same numbers of 73 votes when members of the Electoral College voted. Because of this tie, the House of Representatives had to decide the election. At the time, the electors voted for each presidential and vice-presidential candidate individually instead of voting for a party’s candidates as a team. In the House, Federalists seized the opportunity to prevent the election of Jefferson by supporting Burr. For six feverish days, the House took one ballot after another—35 ballots and the election remained tied. Finally, at Alexander Hamilton’s urging and despite his opposition to Jefferson’s philosophy of government, one Federalist decided not to vote for Burr because Jefferson was regarded as much more qualified for the presidency than Burr. Jefferson became president, and Burr became vice president. To prevent another showdown between a presidential and a vice-presidential candidate, Congress passed the Twelfth Amendment to the Constitution in 1803, which required electors to vote for the president and vice president on separate ballots. This system is still in effect today.

**3-Thomas Jefferson’s Democratis-Republicanism and cabinet**

Thomas Jefferson ‘s election was considred as the “Revolution of 1800.” When Jefferson became president , he had chosen men who shared his Republican principles. His secretary of state was his friend and fellow Virginian, James Madison. For secretary of the treasury, he appointed the Pennsylvanian Albert Gallatin who had a grasp of financial matters that emulated Alexander Hamilton’s. He believed that Federals had governed too much like monarcks ;thus, he tried to create a less formal style for presidency with less powers of the government. His philosophy, often Know as Jeffersonian republicanism, held that the people should control the government and that a simple government best suited people’s needs He was quite simple to a further extent that he rode horseback rather than traveling in carriages. During formal receptions, he enjoyed more intimate dinners around a circular table so that, as he said, “When brought together in society, all are perfectly equal.” Although Jefferson adopted new style for the presidency, he did not overtake all of the Federalists’ policies. Rather he endeavored to integrate Republican ideas into the Federalists ‘ achievements . As strong believer in small government, Jefferson limited the federalists’ powers and sought to end their programs. He repealed the Alien and Sedition Acts and released prisoners convicted under them. Congress began paying off the federal debt, cut government spending whenever possible, and ended many taxes, such as the unpopular and hated whiskey tax. It also shrunk the size of the army by one third, curbed a planned expansion of the navy and reduced it from 25 to 7 ships. Many Federalists were afraid that Jefferson would dismantle the national bank. However, Jefferson’s good choice of the skillful financier Albert Gallatin, as secretary of the treasury , helped to bolster Hamilton’s system.

**4-Marshall and the Judiciary (Supreme Court)**

Although Jefferson canceled many Federalist programs, he had little power over the courts as they continued to exert considerable impact in the judicial branch. Before Jefferson took office, the Federalists passed the Judiciary Act of 1801. Under this act, Adams set up regional courts for the United States with 16 Ferderal judges and appointed as many judicial officials as he could between the election of 1800 and Jefferson’s inauguration in 1801. In his final days as president, John Adams made hundreds of appointments to these positions, and the Federalist-controlled Congress.These last-minute appointments, called midnight judges, meant that the new Democratic-Republican president would confront a firm Federalist judiciary. Because judges were appointed for life, Jefferson often felt frustrated as could do little about Federalist control of the courts. Before he left office in 1801, President Adams also designated a 45-year-old Federalist, John Marshall as new Chief Justice of the Supreme Court with the intention to strengthen the federal courts. By these actions Adams and Marshal ensured that the Fedralist would check the power of the Democratic-Republicans through shutting President-elect Jefferson out of the appointment process. One of the most significant decisions of the Marshall Court was *Marbury* v. *Madison,* (1803), which asserted the principle of judicial review with the final authority of the Supreme Court on the meaning of the Constitution.In fact, As Adams’s last-minute or midnight appointment, William Marbury was refused his position as justice of the peace for the District of Columbia by Adams. Marbury sued to enforce this provision and his case went to the Supreme Court, which ruled that the law under which Marbury sued was unconstitutional. Justice Marshall decided that this provision of the act was unconstitutional because the Constitution did not empower the Supreme Court to issue such orders.Although the Court denied Marbury’s claim, it did establish the principle of judicial review through which the Supreme Court has the final say in interpreting the Constitution in case of unconstitutional acts . Jefferson and Madison were extremely enraged when Marshall took advantage of this new power for the Supreme Court, but they could hardly fight his decision. After all, he had decided *Marbury* v. *Madison* in their favor.

**5-The United States Expands West**

One of Jefferson’s strongest beliefs was that the success of the republic could only be achieved through expanding the country farther west.

**5-1-The Louisiana Purchase**

It was called the sale of Louisiana through, which a territory of 828 thousand square miles, including Canadian promises and some American states, were acquired by the U.S. from France in 1803. It was considered as the most significant Republicans’ achievement during Jefferson’s presidency. In 1800, French leader Napoleon Bonaparte persuaded Spain to return back Louisiana, a French territory ceded previously to Spanish in 1762, to France in exchange for helping Spain dominate part of Italy. When news of the secret transfer leaked out Americans responded with fear. Napoleon’s deal with the Spanish worried Jefferson , because it gave France a strong presence and control of the lower Mississippi and the midcontinent. Jefferson believed that France return back in North America would threaten the security of America and force the United States into an alliance with the British, whom Jefferson detested. At the beginning, Jefferson sought to resolve the problem by purchasing New Orleans and western Florida from the French. To do so, he sent James Monroe to join American ambassador Robert Livingston in Paris to prevent the deal or gain concessions for the United States. Before Monroe’s arrival, however, Napoleon had abandoned his hopes for an American empire, particularly when he failed to reconquer France’s most important island colony, Saint Domingue (now known as Haiti).Livingston arrived in Paris in the spring of 1801, but his negotiations ended little until 1803. By 1803, Napoleon had turned his interests to conquer Europe. If France continued its war against Britain, the last thing the French really hated was an alliance between the United States and Great Britain. Furthermore, France’s government lacked money and was short on funds due to wars. All these circumstances, therefore, pushed Napoleon to sell all of the Louisiana Territory, as well as New Orleans, to the United States.Suprised by the offer and with no time to consult their government, Monroe and Livingston immediately accepted and closed the deal for $15 million. Though Jefferson was not certain that the purchase was constitutional, he unexpectedly made negotiations and signed the Louisiana purchase on April 13, 1803. The purchase doubled the size of the American territory, blocked French and British imperial expansion in North America; thus, it facilitated both their Westward expansion as well as free navigation in the Mississippi river.

**5-2-Lewis and Clark Expedition**

Jefferson was eager to explore the mysterious lands west of the Mississippi. Even before the Louisiana Purchase was accomplished In 1803, he convinced Congress to finance an expedition to know more about the new territory as a scientific venture. He appointed his private secretary Meriwether Lewis and his co-leader William Clark to lead a two years and four months expedition, known as the Corps of Discovery from St. Louis to the Pacific coast. Jefferson asked the Corps to collect scientific information about unknown plants and animals in their way to the Pacific and to learn about the Native American tribes encountered along the route. Thanks to the Native American guide Sacajawea, both Lewis and Clark were knowledgeable amateur scientists who had proceeded business with Native Americans and gathered invaluable information about the American western territories.

**6-The war of 1812**

Following Washington’s precedent, Jefferson made it clear in mid-1808 that he would not be a candidate for a third term. With Jefferson’s approval the Republicans chose James Madison as their candidate for president. With Jefferson’s approval, the Republicans chose James Madison as their candidate for president. The Federalists nominated Charles Pinckney .In the presidential election of 1808, Madison won with 122 electoral votes to Pinckney’s 47 votes. James Madison did not take office as president under the most favorable conditions. At home and abroad, the nation was mired in the embargo crisis. Meanwhile Britain continued to claim the right to halt American ships, and cries for war with Britain grew louder.

America declared war on Great Britain because it had violated American sovereignty by refusing to surrender western ports as promised in the Treaty of Paris of 1783. It began stopping American sea vessels and forcing American sailors on those vessels to enter the British Navy. Besides, it imposed trade embargoes (prohibits trades between countries) , resulting in the seizing of American ships. President Madison also wanted to prevent Native Americans tribes from creating alliance with Great Britain against the U.S. on the American frontiers. Americans in the West and South, who hoped to increase the size of the United States by seizing control of both Canada and Florida and to expel the British from North America , influenced his decision .

This was propelled by a new spirit of nationalism and the influence of a powerful new group of Republican leaders, known as “War Hawks”, who demanded war.Critics called the War of 1812 "Mr. Madison's War," but others saw it as a "second war of independence," an opportunity for Americans to protect their freedom and honor in the face of European disrespect. Neither Britain nor the United States was particularly well prepared to fight this war, and the conflict eventually ended in a stalemate.

England and America had tried to start peace negotiations as early as 1813, but without much success. In August 1814, the British selected commissioners to meet with the American negotiators at Ghent. Both countries signed the peace treaty, known as the Treaty of Ghent, on December 24, 1814. The Battle of New Orleans, fought after the two sides had already signed the peace treaty, ironically became the war's most famous incident. Almost overnight the War of 1812 became a glorious success. Because America had managed to bring the world’s greatest super power to a standstill (again), it gained international respect. It also gave a greater sense of nationalism among its citizens. The period of U.S. immediately following the war was known as the “The Era of Good Feeling”, with James Madison as a president.