"It Ain't Over Till It's Over"
(Was the final battle at Yorktown the end of the Revolutionary War?)

A Three Day American History Lesson Plan for Grade 5

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HISTORICAL CONTENT & BACKGROUND

The students already use Joy Hakim's, From Colonies to Country: 1710-1791. Chapter 31, "When It's Over, Shout Hooray", reports The Battle of Yorktown as the end of the Revolutionary War. However, some of the quotes and highlighted "boxed information" suggest there is more to the story:

The American Revolutionary War lasted almost nine years and was longer than any war in American history until the Vietnam War in the 20th century. It actually went on for two years after the battle of Yorktown, but mostly just in small skirmishes. The battle of Yorktown convinced most people—but not King George III—that Great Britain had lost. (p. 142)

The American war is over, but this is far from being the case with the American Revolution. Nothing but the first act of the drama is closed. – Benjamin Rush (p. 143)

The official end of the war came on January 14, 1784, when Congress ratified a treaty signed in Paris the year before. (p. 146)

Use the above information to get students thinking about "the rest of the story", and introduce them to Founding Myths: Stories that Hide our Patriotic Past, by Ray Raphael. Use portions of his introduction to explain his premise that many historical facts are obscured by popular myths:

These stories, invented long ago, persist in our textbooks and popular histories despite advances in recent scholarship that disprove their authenticity. One popular schoolbook includes all but two of the tales exposed in this book, and several of the stories still taken as gospel, are featured in all modern texts. (p. 5)
Read aloud from *Founding Myths*, Chapter 12, “The Final Battle at Yorktown”, pp 211-217 and pp 222-225. Have these parts of the chapter available on an overhead projector or several copies of the book, as well. Challenge the students to look for the evidence hinted at in Chapter 31 of *From Colonies to Country* in this chapter. Emphasize Raphael’s three major reasons for “this hushing-up of the historical record” (p 217).

1. A story with a tidy beginning and end was desired.

2. We wished to portray the war as a struggle between Americans and the British tyrants, instead of granting that the civil war in the South and fighting against the Indians continued after Yorktown.

3. We ignored the international make-up of the war.

Post the following web addresses for various Primary Source documents that students can use to learn more about how Washington felt about Cornwallis’ surrender at Yorktown and how he continued to feel that the war was far from over:

http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/amrev/peace/yorktown.html

http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/amrev/peace/nelson.html

http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/amrev/peace/nathan.html

http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/amrev/peace/benjamin.html

These web addresses provide Primary Source information about The Treaty of Paris and Benjamin Rush’s views on the end of the war:

http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/amrev/peace/paris.html

http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/amrev/peace/assemble.html

http://caho-test.cc.c.lumbia.edu/ps/10100.html
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What words and actions of the Patriots and the British suggest that the Revolutionary War went beyond the battle of Yorktown?

2. Do you think that the British were the only enemy?

3. Do you agree that Britain was Goliath and the American Patriots, David? Why or why not?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

1. find evidence and articulate it to support their views.

2. understand that when different people construct meaning from the available facts and symbols, it changes which facts and symbols stand out and which are covered up (perception).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Day One

Introduce the Historical Content & Background as suggested in that section, with the whole class. Make sure the students know how to access the information presented from texts and how to find the Primary Source documents. Show the students where the materials will be stored and where the web addresses are posted. Explain that they will be trying to uncover the myths around the final battle at Yorktown, using these materials.

At this time, model the way they will be exploring historical myths, using Paul Revere’s ride as an example. Do a read-aloud of the Jeffrey Thompson illustrated version of Longfellow’s, The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere. Read the factual material at the end of this book, which begins to separate fact from fiction. Then move to the first
chapter, "Paul Revere’s Ride", in Raphael’s **Founding Myths**. Focus particularly on pages 18-23, which points out “Poetic License”. Use a journal to model making notes, recording impressions and powerful phrases or complete quotes. The group also should participate with the teacher to make a T-Chart in the journal to record the myths and realities of Paul Revere’s ride. Think aloud about some pictorial symbols to use to represent this historical event drawing or sketching some with markers in the journal. Explain that these same types of journal entries will be done by them around the facts and myths of the Battle of Yorktown. Explain that they will work in groups of 4 students, with each student keeping a journal. They will not break into groups or begin this work until Day Two. Instead the teacher will also model the project that will become the final assessment.

**Day Two**

The teacher will have helped the students to form groups and the groups will do the research on Yorktown as modeled on Day One. Students will record their notes, impressions, phrases, etc. in their journals. The group can create one T-Chart together. They can take time to sketch possible symbols to go with their writing. They will work on their strips and responses. The teacher will circulate, assisting groups and individuals, as needed.

**Day Three**

The students will meet to discuss their reflections and do their final weaving. The group will plan how they will share their responses and their weaving with the class. The class will meet as a whole for group presentations of the final projects. The class can plan how to display their projects and reflections.
AN 'AUTHENTIC' ASSESSMENT

The assessment will be a "Historical Weaving", an adaptation of Nancy J. Johnson's "Literary Weavings". Each student will be responsible for creating several sections or strips of a group-created historical weaving from the information known and discovered about Yorktown. The ideas, impressions, phrases, and quotes in the journal, as well as the symbols, will be the materials used on the weaving strips. Direct the students' attention to words, phrases, images, even colors that seem especially significant to the Yorktown event. They will create 4 paper strips that could serve as a means of prompting discussion about the event. Eventually they'll weave the paper strips together to create a group historical weaving reflective of the facts and myths around Yorktown and the final years of the Revolution. Each paper strip must include both a written and visual response to the historical event. The written response will include either a significant "snippet" from the research or a key word(s) or phrase repeated on the strip. If a quote or phrase is included, the source and page number should be on the back of the strip. Color(s), images, shapes, symbols, and designs that seem representative of or significant to ideas, issues, themes, people, mood, and tone of the event should be considered. The students should leave very little white space (unless white is especially significant), and design a paper strip related to something they feel is important. Symbols can be repeated. It is not recommended to create an entire scene, since weaving the strips together will cause aspects of the design to be lost underneath other woven pieces. (The teacher will have made or model making a few strips based on the notes made after the whole class look at Paul Revere). After the strips are completed, each student will respond in his/her journal to the following:
Based on your completed paper strips, explain your decisions (or design, symbol, color, words/quote) regarding both visual and written choices. What were you hoping to represent? What new thinking about this event resulted from the creation of this project? What are your responses to the Essential Questions?

Groups will come together to discuss their strips and responses. Two group members will have loose strips and two members will work together on strips that are still attached to a "frame" (see example). After sharing their responses, they will weave their strips together to form a group historical weaving that they will present and explain to the whole class at another time. Once the paper strips are woven together, it will be evident what symbols will stand out on top and which ones will be covered up. Similarly, that same uneven sense is what happens in the process of reading and responding to the uncovered facts and myths.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Title.


Primary Source document showing length of time beyond the Battle of Yorktown and the end of the Revolution.


Primary Source document showing length of time beyond Yorktown and the end of the Revolution.


Texts used by fifth grade students studying the American Revolution.


Literary response strategy adapted for assessment project.


Literary response strategy adapted for assessment project.


Picture book used to model researching myth and fact.


Primary Source document showing opinion about the Revolution’s end.


Primary source correspondence showing G. Washington’s opinion about the state of the war.


Primary source correspondence showing G. Washington’s opinion about the state of the war.


Primary source correspondence showing G. Washington’s opinion about the state of the war.


Primary source correspondence showing G. Washington’s opinion about the state of the war.
George Washington on General Cornwallis' Surrender at Yorktown

General Lord Charles Cornwallis sent Washington a letter asking for terms of surrender on October 17, 1781, which Washington acknowledged the same day (document one below). The next day, Washington sent Washington his terms (document two). On October 19, Washington informed the Continental Congress of "this Important Event." How would you characterize the terms of surrender Washington offered Cornwallis? What does Washington emphasize when he conveys the news of the surrender to the Continental Congress?

View the original documents by clicking on the links below. All these documents are from the George Washington Papers. Use your browser's Back Button to return to this point.

Camp before York, October 17, 1781.

My Lord: I have had the Honor of receiving Your Lordship's Letter of this Date.

An Ardent Desire to spare the further Effusion of Blood, will readily incline me to listen to such Terms for the Surrender of your Posts and Garrisons of York and Gloucester, as are admissible.

I wish previously to the Meeting of Commissioners, that your Lordship's proposals in writing, may be sent to the American Lines: for which Purpose, a Suspension of Hostilities during two Hours from the Delivery of this Letter will be granted. I have the Honor etc.

Head Quarters before York, October 18, 1781.

My Lord: To avoid unnecessary Discussions and Delays, I shall at Once, in Answer to your Lordships Letter of Yesterday, declare the general Basis upon which a Definitive Treaty and Capitulation must take place. The Garrisons of York and Gloucester, including the Seamen, as you propose, will be received Prisoners of War. The Condition annexed, of sending the British and German Troops to the parts of Europe to which they respectively belong, is inadmissible. Instead of this, they will be marched to such parts of the Country as can most conveniently provide for their Subsistence; and the Benevolent Treatment of Prisoners, which is invariably observed by the Americans, will be extended to them. The same Honors will be granted to the Surrendering Army as were granted to the Garrison of Charles Town. The Shipping and Boats
in the two Harbours with all their Guns, Stores, Tackling, Furniture and Apparel, shall be
delivered in their present State to an Officer of the Navy, appointed to take possession of
them.

The Artillery, Arms, Accoutrements, Military Chest and Public Stores of every
Denomination, shall be delivered unimpaired to the Heads of Departments, to which they
respectively belong.

The Officers will be indulged in retaining their Side Arms, and the Officers and Soldiers may
preserve their Baggage and Effects, with this Reserve, that Property taken in the Country, will
be reclaimed.

With Regard to the Individuals in civil Capacities, whose Interests Your Lordship wishes may
be attended to, until they are more particularly described, nothing definitive can be settled.

I have to add, that I expect the Sick and Wounded will be supplied with their own Hospital
Stores, and be attended by British Surgeons, particularly charged with the Care of them.

Your Lordship will be pleased to signify your Determination either to accept or reject the
Proposals now offered, in the Course of Two Hours from the Delivery of this Letter, that
Commissioners may be appointed to digest the Articles of Capitulation, or a Renewal of
Hostilities may take place. I have the Honor etc.

Head Quarters near York, October 19, 1781.

Sir: I have the Honor to inform Congress, that a Reduction of the British Army under the
Command of Lord Cornwallis, is most happily effected. The unremitting Ardor which
actuated every Officer and Soldier in the combined Army on this Occasion, has principally
led to this Important Event, at an earlier period than my most sanguine Hopes had induced me
to expect.

The singular Spirit of Emulation, which animated the whole Army from the first
Commencement of our Operations, has filled my Mind with the highest pleasure and
Satisfaction, and had given me the happiest presages of Success.

On the 17th instant, a Letter was received from Lord Cornwallis, proposing a Meeting of
Commissioners, to consult on Terms for the Surrender of the Posts of York and Gloucester.
This Letter (the first which had passed between us) opened a Correspondence, a Copy of
which I do myself the Honor to inclose; that Correspondence was followed by the Definitive
Capitulation, which was agreed to, and Signed on the 19th. Copy of which is also herewith
transmitted, and which I hope, will meet the Approbation of Congress.

I should be wanting in the feelings of Gratitude, did I not mention on this Occasion, with the
warmest Sense of Acknowledgements, the very cheerfull and able Assistance, which I have
received in the Course of our Operations, from, his Excellency the Count de Rochambeau,
and all his Officers of every Rank, in their respective Capacities. Nothing could equal this
Zeal of our Allies, but the emulating Spirit of the American Officers, whose Ardor would not
suffer their Exertions to be exceeded.

The very uncommon Degree of Duty and Fatigue which the Nature of the Service required
from the Officers of Engineers and Artillery of both Armies, obliges me particularly to mention the Obligations I am under to the Commanding and other Officers of those Corps.

I wish it was in my Power to express to Congress, how much I feel myself indebted to The Count de Grasse and the Officers of the Fleet under his Command for the distinguished Aid and Support which have been afforded by them; between whom, and the Army, the most happy Concurrence of Sentiments and Views have subsisted, and from whom, every possible Cooperation has been experienced, which the most harmonious Intercourse could afford.

Returns of the Prisoners, Military Stores, Ordnance Shipping and other Matters, I shall do myself the Honor to transmit to Congress as soon as they can be collected by the Heads of Departments, to which they belong.

Colo. Laurens and the Viscount de Noailles, on the Part of the combined Army, were the Gentlemen who acted as Commissioners for formg and settg the Terms of Capitulation and Surrender herewith transmitted, to whom I am particularly obliged for their Readiness and Attention exhibited on the Occasion.

Your Excellency and Congress will be pleased to accept my Congratulations on this happy Event, and believe me to be With the highest Respect etc.

View the original documents by clicking on the links above. All these documents are from the George Washington Papers. Use your browser's Back Button to return to this point.

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Head Quarters near York, Virginia, October 27, 1781.

Dear Sir. As the Assembly of Your State are now sitting, I cannot omit so favorable an occasion to suggest to your Excellency some measures, which I conceive our present circumstances and prospects require should be immediately adopted.

To recruit the Regiments assigned as the quota of this State, to their full establishment, and put them on a respectable footing, is in my opinion, the first great object, which demands the attention of your Legislature. The Arguments, which have formerly been so frequently urged to enforce the expediency of this Measure, must I presume, have carried conviction with them; but unhappily for us, the situation of affairs, especially in the States which were the immediate seat of War, was so perplexed; and the embarrassments of Government so numerous and great, that there could be hitherto but a partial compliance with the Requisitions of Congress on this subject. Many of these difficulties are now removed, and the present moment, which is certainly very favorable to the recruiting service, ought to be eagerly embraced for the purpose.

I will candidly confess to Your Excellency, that my only apprehension (which I wish may be groundless) is, lest the late important success, instead of exciting our exertions, as it ought to do, should produce such a relaxation in the prosecution of the War, as will prolong the calamities of it. While on the other hand, it appears to me to be our only sound policy (let that of the Enemy be what it will) to keep a well-appointed, formidable Army in the field, as long as the War shall continue. For should, the British Cabinet still persevere in their hostile designs [and the powers of Europe interpose in their behalf] this is a measure of absolute necessity; or should a negociation soon take place, the small expence which will be incurred by raising and keeping up a respectable force, for a short time, will be more than compensated.
by the advantages to be derived from it, at the pacification.

Since this State, is at present, entirely liberated from the ravages of War, I must take the liberty of recommending, in the most earnest manner, that every possible aid and assistance may be given by it, to the Southern States which are yet invaded, and that General Greene may meet, with that effectual support, from its resources, which he will now have a right to expect.

Had I not considered the present period, too precious to be suffered to pass unimproved for the public good; and that vigorous and decisive efforts ought to be made without a moment's loss of time, for augmenting our force and reducing the power of the Enemy in the Southern States, I should rather have delayed this address, until the sentiments of Congress could have been communicated to you; but the importance of the occasion, will I flatter myself be a sufficient apology to them and your Excellency, for the liberty I am now taking. I have the honor etc.

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http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/amrev/peace/nelson.html
George Washington to Nathaneal Greene, March 18, 1782

In many respects, the Revolutionary War continued after Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown. The following letter from Washington to General Nathaneal Greene, still commander of Continental Army troops in the south, is a small bit of evidence of that continuation. What difficulties seem still to be plaguing Greene's army? How does Washington describe the nature of the continuing war?

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Philadelphia, March 18, 1782.

My Dear Sir: I have your favr. of the 24th. of January and your public and private letter of the 7th. of February. It gives me the more pain to hear of your distresses for want of Cloathing or other necessaries, as you are at so great a distance that you cannot be suddenly relieved, even if we had the means. I am not however without hopes, that should the War be continued to the southward (of which I have my doubts for reasons which I shall presently give) matters will be put into much better train than they have hitherto been. The arrangements made already by the superintendent of Finance have been attended with infinite public advantages, and he is extending those arrangements as fast as circumstances will possibly admit. I am sorry to see a jealousy arising from a supposition that there has been a partiality of conduct. I am certain there has been no such intention, and that instead of a charge of having done too little, it will soon be a matter of wonder how Mr. Morris has done so much with so small means. As I know he corresponds with you on the affairs of his department, I shall content myself with saying, that before Colo Cartington leaves town, measures will be taken to enable him to make provision in future, for the ready transportation of Stores, and for the accommodation of Troops moving to the southward. It is agreed that the Elaboratory shall be removed from Richmond to New London.

In my former letters upon the subject, I acquainted you with the reasons which operated against Count de Rochambeau's detaching more than the Legion of Lauzun towards South Carolina, upon your requisition for a reinforcement. Altho' my instructions to you did not mention a power to call upon the Count for assistance, yet I look upon it as implied in my desire to you to correspond with him. The circumstances of the moment must determine
whether any or what can be spared by him.

By late advices from Europe and from the declarations of the British Ministers themselves, it appears, that they have done with all thoughts of an excursive War, and that they mean to send small if any further reinforcements to America. It may be also tolerably plainly seen, that they do not mean to hold all their present posts, and that New York will be occupied in preference to any other. Hence, and from other indications, I am induced to believe that an evacuation of the southern States will take place. Should this happen, we must concentrate our force as the enemy do theirs: You will therefore, upon the appearance of such an event, immediately make preparations for the march of the Army under your command to the Northward. What troops shall in that case be left in the southern States will be a matter of future discussion.

No other reinforcement went from New York to south Carolina than that of the 400 which had arrived. Letters, which you had not received when you last wrote, will have informed you, that our first intelligences respecting the number of Men embarked were false. With the highest sentiments etc.

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History textbooks often suggest that the British surrender at Yorktown, for all intents and purposes, ended the Revolutionary War. By October of 1782, however, negotiations for peace between Britain and the United States had only just begun. Washington, as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, had to assume that the war was far from over. In the following letter from George Washington to Secretary of War Benjamin Lincoln, what issues does Washington bring to Lincoln’s attention? What was Lincoln’s response?

George Washington to Benjamin Lincoln, October 2, 1782; Lincoln to Washington, October 14, 1782

Head Quarters, October 2, 1782.

My dear Sir: Painful as the task is to describe the dark side of our affairs, it some times becomes a matter of indispensable necessity. Without disguize or palliation, I will inform you candidly of the discontents which, at this moment, prevail universally throughout the Army.

The Complaint of Evils which they suppose almost remedies less are, the total want of Money, or the means of existing from One day to another, the heavy debts they have already incurred, the loss of Credit, the distress of their Families (i.e. such as are Married) at home, and the prospect of Poverty and Misery before them. [It is vain Sir, to suppose that Military Men will acquiesce contently with bare rations, when those in the Civil walk of life (unacquainted with half the hardships they endure) are regularly paid the emoluments of Office; while the human Mind is influenced by the same passions, and have the same inclinations to endure it cannt. be. A Military Man has the same turn to sociability as a person in Civil life; he conceives himself equally called upon to live up to his rank; and his pride is hurt when circumstances restrain him. Only conceive then, the mortification they (even the Genl. Officers) must suffer when they cannot invite a French Officer, a visiting friend, or travelling acquaintance to a better repast than stinking Whiskey (and not always that) and a bit of Beef without Vegetables, will afford them.]

The Officers also complain of other hardships which they think might and ought to be remedied without delay, viz, the stopping Promotions where there have been vacancy’s open.

http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/amrev/peace/benjamin.html
for a long time, the withholding Commissions from those who are justly entitled to them and have Warrants or Certificates of their Appointments from the Executive of their States, and particularly the leaving the compensation for their services, in a loose equivocal state, without ascertaining their claims upon the public, or making provision for the future payment of them.

While I premise, that tho' no one that I have seen or heard of, appears opposed to the principle of reducing the Army as circumstances may require; Yet I cannot help fearing the Result of the measure in contemplation, under present circumstances when I see such a Number of Men goaded by a thousand stings of reflexion on the past, and of anticipation on the future, about to be turned into the World, soured by penury and what they call the ingratitude of the Public, involved in debts, without one farthing of Money to carry them home, after having spent the flower of their days [and many of them their patrimonies] in establishing the freedom and Independence of their Country, and suffered every thing human Nature is capable of enduring on this side of death; I repeat it, these irritable circumstances, without one thing to soothe their feelings, or frighten the gloomy prospects, I cannot avoid apprehending that a train of Evils will follow, of a very serious and distressing Nature. On the other hand could the Officers be placed in as good a situation as when they came into service, the contention, I am persuaded, would be not who should continue in the field, but who should retire to private life.

I wish not to heighten the shades of the picture, so far as the real life would justify me in doing, or I would give Anecdotes of patriotism and distress which have scarcely ever been paralleled, never surpassed in the history of Mankind; but you may rely upon it, the patience and long sufferance of this Army are almost exhausted, and that there never was so great a spirit of Discontent as at this instant: While in the field, I think it may be kept from breaking out into Acts of Outrage, but when we retire into Winter Quarters (unless the Storm is previously dissipated) I cannot be at ease, respecting the consequences. It is high time for a Peace.

To you, my dear Sir, I need not be more particular in describing my Anxiety and the grounds of it. You are too well acquainted, from your own service, with the real sufferings of the Army to require a longer detail; I will therefore only add that exclusive of the common hardships of a Military life, Our Troops have been, and still are obliged to perform more services foreign to their proper duty, without gratuity or reward, than the Soldiers of any other Army; for example, the immense labours expended [in doing the duties of Artificers] in erecting Fortifications and Military Works; the fatigue of building themselves Barracks or Huts annually; And of cutting and transporting Wood for the use of all our Posts and Garrisons, without any expence whatever to the Public.

Of this Letter, (which from the tenor of it must be considered in some degree of a private nature) you may make such use as you shall think proper. Since the principal objects of it were, by displaying the Merits, the hardships, the disposition and critical state of the Army, to give information that might eventually be useful, and to convince you with what entire confidence and esteem. I am etc.

Secretary Lincoln answered this (October 14) in a private letter, which is in part as follows:

"You mention as a ground of complaint that the compensation to the Army for their services is left in a loose, equivocal state etc. Of this I am fully convinced and from the knowledge I have of the temper of Congress I have little expectation that the matter of half pay, to which I suppose you allude, will be in a better situation than it now is until it shall be recommended
by Congress to the several States to provide for their own Officers which I am apprehensive will not be done unless Congress know, in some way or other, that it is the wish of the officers that they would do it.

"You know sir that no money can be appropriated but by the voice of nine States. There were not that number in favor of half pay when the vote to grant it passed in Congress which was a vote before the confederation was signed and practiced upon but is not now. I see little probability that a sum equal to the half pay will be appropriated to that purpose and apportioned on the several States. Massachusetts is one of those States who have always been opposed to the measure indeed there is but one State east of this which agreed to it in the first place there is too great a part of the Union opposed to the half pay to think of carrying it through, the States in the oposition cannot be coerced. They say they are willing to make a handsome compensation by compromised; that they will give a sum which shall be just and honorable from this it will be difficult if not impossible to persuade them to depart. I am my self fully in opinion that it will be much the best for the army to be referred to their several States and that their expectations will end in Chagrin and disappointment if they look for half pay from Congress. Let us for a moment reflect how Congress will avail themselves of money to discharge this debt they cannot appropriate any part of the sum, to this use, which shall be annually apportioned on the several States, for the reasons I mentioned before there are not nine States in favor of it. Should it be said that it may be paid out of the revenue of some general tax it will not remove the objection the money arising from these general taxes must be appropriated also if such taxes were passed no one of those proposed has yet passed and I see little probability that any of them will soon if ever."

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Definitive Articles of the Peace of Paris, January 14, 1784

The Definitive Articles of Peace were signed by British and American representatives on September 3, 1783. The Continental Congress received the document on January 14 of the following year. What were the major provisions of the Peace of Paris? What other provisions might the American diplomats in Paris have asked for? How well do you think John Jay, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams, the American representatives to the peace talks, did for their country?

View the original document from the Journals of the Continental Congress in A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation. Use your browser's Back Button to return to this point.

THE UNITED STATES IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED,

To all persons to whom these presents shall come greeting:

Whereas definitive articles of peace and friendship between the United States of America and his Britannic majesty, were concluded and signed at Paris on the 3d day of September, 1783, by the plenipotentiaries of the said United States, and of his said Britannic Majesty, duly and respectively authorized for that purpose; which definitive articles are in the words following:

In the name of the most holy and undivided Trinity.

It having pleased the Divine Providence to dispose the hearts of the most serene and most potent prince, George the third, by the grace of God, king of Great Britain, France and Ireland, defender of the faith, duke of Brunswick and Lunenburg, arch-treasurer and prince elector of the holy Roman empire, &c. and of the United States of America, to forget all past misunderstandings and differences that have unhappily interrupted the good correspondance and friendship which they mutually wish to restore, and to establish such a beneficial and satisfactory intercourse between the two countries, upon the ground of reciprocal advantages and mutual convenience, as may promote and secure to both perpetual peace and harmony; and having for this desirable end, already laid the foundation of peace and reconciliation, by the provisional articles, signed at Paris on the 30th of November, 1782, by the commissioners empowered on each part, which articles were agreed to be inserted in and to constitute the treaty of peace proposed to be concluded between the crown of Great Britain and the said
United States, but which treaty was not to be concluded until terms of peace should be agreed upon between Great Britain and France, and his Britannic majesty should be ready to conclude such treaty accordingly; and the treaty between Great Britain and France having since been concluded, his Britannic majesty and the United States of America, in order to carry into full effect the provisional articles above mentioned, according to the tenor thereof, have constituted and appointed, that is to say, his Britannic majesty on his part, David Hartley, Esquire, member of the parliament of Great Britain; and the said United States on their part, John Adams, Esquire, late a commissioner of the United States of America, at the court of Versailles, late delegate in Congress from the state of Massachusetts, and chief justice of the said state, and minister plenipotentiary of the said United States to their high mightinesses the states general of the United Netherlands; Benjamin Franklin, Esquire, late delegate in Congress from the state of Pennsylvania, president of the convention of the said state, and minister plenipotentiary from the United States of America at the court of Versailles; John Jay, Esquire, late president of Congress, and chief justice of the state of New York, and minister plenipotentiary from the said United States, at the court of Madrid, to be the plenipotentiaries for the concluding and signing the present definitive treaty: who, after having reciprocally communicated their respective full powers, have agreed upon and confirmed the following articles:

- Article 1st. His Britannic majesty acknowledges the said United States, viz. New-Hampshire, Massachusetts-Bay, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, South-Carolina and Georgia, to be free, sovereign and independent states: that he treats with them as such, and for himself, his heirs and successors, relinquishes all claims to the government, propriety and territorial rights of the same, and every part thereof.

- Article 2d. And that all disputes which might arise in future on the subject of the boundaries of the said United States may be prevented, it is hereby agreed and declared, that the following are and shall be their boundaries, viz. from the north-west angle of Nova Scotia, viz. that angle which is formed by a line drawn due north from the source of Saint Croix river to the Highands; along the said Highlands which divide those rivers that empty themselves into the river Saint Lawrence from those which fall into the Atlantic Ocean, to the north-westernmost head of Connecticut river, thence down along the middle of that river to the forty fifth degree of north latitude; from thence by a line due west on said latitude, until it strikes the river Iroquois or Cataquay, thence along the middle of said river into lake Ontario, through the middle of said lake until it strikes the communication by water between that lake and lake Erie; thence along the middle of said communication into lake Erie, through the middle of said [lake,] until it arrives at the water communication between that lake and lake Huron; thence along the middle of said water communication into the lake Huron, thence through the middle of said lake to the water communication between that lake and lake Superior; thence through lake Superior northward of the isles Royal and Philippeaux, to the long lake; thence through the middle of said long lake and the water communication between it and the lake of the Woods, to the said lake of the Woods, thence through the said lake to the most north-western point thereof; and from thence on a due west course to the river Mississippi, thence by a line to be drawn along the middle of the said river Mississippi, until it shall intersect the northernmost part of the thirty first degree of north latitude. South by a line to be drawn due east from the determination of the line last mentioned, in the latitude of thirty one degrees north of the equator, to the middle of the river Apalachicola or Catahouche; thence along the middle thereof to its junction with the Flint river; thence straight to the head of Saint Mary's river, and thence down along the middle of Saint Mary's river to the Atlantic ocean. East by a line to be drawn
along the middle of the river Saint Croix, from its mouth in the bay of Fundy to its source, and from its source directly north to the aforesaid Highlands which divide the rivers that fall into the Atlantic ocean from those which fall into the river Saint Lawrence: comprehending all islands within twenty leagues of any part of the shores of the United States, and lying between lines to be drawn due east from the points where the aforesaid boundaries between Nova-Scotia on the one part, and East Florida on the other, shall respectively touch the Bay of Fundy and the Atlantic ocean, excepting such islands as now are or heretofore have been within the limits of the said province of Nova-Scotia.

- Artical 3d. It is agreed, that the people of the United States shall continue to enjoy unmolested the right to take fish of every kind on the Grand Bank and on all the other banks of Newfoundland; also in the gulph of Saint Lawrence, and at all other places in the sea, where the inhabitants of both countries used at any time heretofore to fish; and also, that the inhabitants of the United States shall have liberty to take fish of every kind on such part of the coast of Newfoundland as British fishermen shall use, (but not to dry or cure the same on that island) and also on the coasts, bays and creeks of all other of his Britannic majesty's dominions in America; and that the American fishermen have liberty to dry and cure fish in any of the unsettled bays, harbours and creeks of Nova Scotia, Magdalen islands, and Labrador, so long as the same shall remain unsettled, but so soon as the same or either of them shall be settled, it shall not be lawful for the said fishermen to dry or cure fish at such settlement, without a previous agreement for that purpose with the inhabitants, proprietors or possessors of the ground.

- Artical 4th. It is agreed that creditors on either side shall meet with no lawful impediment to the recovery of the full value in sterling money, of all bona fide debts heretofore contracted.

- Artical 5th. It is agreed that the Congress shall earnestly recommend it to the legislatures of the respective states, to provide for the restitution of all estates, rights and properties, which have been confiscated, belonging to real British subjects, and also of the estates, rights and properties of persons resident in districts in the possession of his majesty's arms, and who have not borne arms against the said United States. And that persons of any other description shall have free liberty to go to any part or parts of any of the thirteen United States, and therein to remain twelve months unmolested in their endeavours to obtain the restitution of such of their estates, rights and properties, as may have been confiscated; and that Congress shall also earnestly recommend to the several states a reconsideration and revision of all acts or laws regarding the premises, so as to render the said laws or acts perfectly consistent, not only with justice and equity, but with that spirit of conciliation, which on the return of the blessings of peace should universally prevail. And that Congress shall also earnestly recommend to the several states, that the estates, rights and properties of such last mentioned persons shall be restored to them, they refunding to any persons who may be now in possession of the bona fide price (where any has been given) which such persons may have paid on purchasing any of the said lands, rights or properties since the confiscation. And it is agreed that all persons who have any interest in confiscated lands, either by debts, marriage settlements, or otherwise, shall meet with no lawful impediment in the prosecution of their just rights.

- Artical 6th. That there shall be no future confiscations made, nor any prosecutions commenced against any person or persons for or by reason of the part which he or they may have taken in the present war; and that no person shall on that account, suffer any future loss or damage, either in his person, liberty or property, and that those who may be in confinement on such charges, at the time of the ratification of the treaty in America, shall be immediately set at liberty, and the prosecutions so commenced be
discontinued.

- Artical 7th. There shall be a firm and perpetual peace between his Britannic majesty and the said states, and between the subjects of the one, and the citizens of the other, wherefore all hostilities both by sea and land, shall from henceforth cease; all prisoners on both sides shall be set at liberty, and his Britannic majesty shall with all convenient speed, and without causing any destruction, or carrying away any negroes or other property of the American inhabitants, withdraw all his armies, garrisons and fleets from the said United States, and from every post, place and harbour within the same; leaving in all fortifications the American artillery that may be therein, and shall also order and cause all archives, records, deeds and papers, belonging to any of the said states, or their citizens, which in the course of the war may have fallen into the hands of his officers, to be forthwith restored and delivered to the proper states and persons to whom they belong.

- Artical 8th. The navigation of the river Mississippi, from its source to the ocean, shall forever remain free and open to the subjects of Great Britain, and the citizens of the United States.

- Artical 9th. In case it should so happen, that any place or territory belonging to Great Britain or to the United States, should have been conquered by the arms of either from the other, before the arrival of the said provisional articles in America, it is agreed, that the same shall be restored without difficulty, and without requiring any compensation.

- Artical 10th. The solemn ratification of the present treaty, expedited in good and due form, shall be exchanged between the contracting parties in the space of six months, or sooner if possible, to be computed from the day of the signature of the present treaty. In witness whereof, we, the undersigned their ministers plenipotentiary, have in their name, and in virtue of full powers, signed with our hands the present definitive treaty, and caused the seals of our arms to be affixed thereto.

Done at Paris, this third day of September, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three.

"(L. S.) D. Hartley,
(L. S.) John Adams,
(L. S.) B. Franklin,
(L. S.) John Jay."

Now know ye that we the United States in Congress assembled having seen and considered the definitive articles aforesaid have approved, ratified and confirmed and by these presents do approve, ratify and confirm the said articles and every part and clause thereof, engaging and promising, that we will sincerely and faithfully perform and observe the same, and never suffer them to be violated by any one or transgressed in any manner as far as lies in our power.

In testimony whereof, we have caused the seal of the United States to be hereunto affixed.

Witness his Excellency Thomas Mifflin, president, this fourteenth day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty four and in the eighth year of the sovereignty and independence of the United States of America.
By the United States in Congress Assembled, A Proclamation, January 14, 1784

Achieving peace with and independence from Great Britain was one thing. Achieving peace within the United States was quite another, especially since the American Revolution was in many respects a civil war. Upon ratifying the Definitive Articles of Peace with Great Britain, the Congress issued the following proclamation [first and second paragraphs] and attached a recommendation [third paragraph]. What was the purpose of the proclamation? What was the purpose of the recommendation Congress made to the states?

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Whereas definitive articles of peace and friendship between the United States of America and his Britannic Majesty, were concluded and signed at Paris, on the third day of September, 1783, by the plenipotentiaries of the said United States and of his said Britannic Majesty, duly and respectively authorized for that purpose: which definitive articles are in the words following: [Here insert the treaty as above.]

And we, the United States in Congress assembled, having seen and duly considered the definitive articles aforesaid, did, by a certain act under the seal of the United States, bearing date this 14 day of January, 1784, approve, ratify and confirm the same, and every part and clause thereof, engaging and promising, that we would sincerely and faithfully perform and observe the same, and never suffer them to be violated by any one, or transgressed in any manner, as far as should be in our power; and being sincerely disposed to carry the said articles into execution, truly, honestly and with good faith, according to the intent and meaning thereof, we have thought proper by these presents, to notify the premises to all the good citizens of these United States, hereby requiring and enjoining all bodies of magistracy, legislative, executive and judiciary, all persons bearing office, civil or military, of whatever rank, degree or power, and all others the good citizens of these states, of every vocation and condition, that reverencing those stipulations entered into on their behalf, under the authority of that federal bond, by which their existence as an independent people is bound up together, and is known and acknowledged by the nations of the world, and with that good faith which is every man's surest guide, within their several offices, jurisdictions and vocations, they carry into effect the said definitive articles, and every clause and sentence thereof, sincerely, strictly
and completely.

Given under the seal of the United States. Witness his Excellency Thomas Mifflin, our president, at Annapolis, this 14 day of January, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four, and of the sovereignty and independence of the United States of America the eighth.

Resolved, unanimously, nine states being present, That it be, and it is hereby earnestly recommended to the legislatures of the respective states, to provide for the restitution of all estates, rights and properties, which have been confiscated, belonging to real British subjects, and also of the estates, rights and properties of persons resident in districts, which were in the possession of his Britannic Majesty's arms, at any tune between the 30 day of November, 1782, and the 14 day of January, 1784, and who have not borne arms against the said United States, and that persons of any other description, shall have free liberty to go to any part or parts of any of the thirteen United States, and therein to remain twelve months unmolested in their endeavours to obtain the restitution of such of their estates, rights and properties, as may have been confiscated: And it is also hereby earnestly recommended to the several states, to reconsider and revise all their acts or laws regarding the premises, so as to render the said laws or acts perfectly consistent, not only with justice and equity, but with that spirit of conciliation, which, on the return of the blessings of peace, should universally prevail: and it is hereby also earnestly recommended to the several states, that the estates, rights and properties of such last mentioned persons should be restored to them, they refunding to any persons who may be now in possession, the bona fide price, (where any has been given) which such persons may have paid on purchasing any of the said lands, rights or properties since the confiscation.

Ordered, That a copy of the proclamation of this date, together with the recommendation, be transmitted to the several states by the secretary.
Benjamin Rush on the Confederation

**Primary source:** Benjamin Rush, "On the Defects of the Confederation," 1786.

**Caption:** Benjamin Rush (c. 1745–1813) was an American physician and signer of the Declaration of Independence. He served as a member of the Continental Congress (1776–77) and for a time in the Continental army; he was also a member of the Pennsylvania convention that ratified the U.S. Constitution.

There is nothing more common, than to confound the terms of American Revolution with those of the late American war. The American war is over: but this is far from being the case with the American Revolution. On the contrary, nothing but the first act of the great drama is closed. It remains yet to establish and perfect our new forms of government; and to prepare the principles, morals, and manners of our citizens, for these forms of government, after they are established and brought to perfection.