# 1. Physical Geography of the USA

The U.S. is divided into 50 states and 1 district. Most of the States in central North America, The total area is more than 9 and a half million sq. km. The world’s 3rd largest country. Three land borders: 2 with Canada and 1 with Mexico. The United States shares land borders with Canada (to the north) and Mexico (to the south), and a territorial water border with Russia in the northwest. The contiguous forty-eight states are otherwise bounded by the Pacific Ocean on the west, the Atlantic Ocean on the east, and the Gulf of Mexico to the southeast. Alaska borders the Pacific Ocean to the south, the Bering Strait to the west, and the Arctic Ocean to the north, while Hawaii lies far to the southwest of the mainland in the Pacific Ocean.

Forty-eight of the states are in the single region between Canada and Mexico; this group is referred to, with varying precision and formality, as the continental or contiguous United States, and as the Lower 48. Alaska, which is not included in the term contiguous United States, is at the northwestern end of North America, separated from the Lower 48 by Canada. The State of Hawaii is an archipelago in the Pacific Ocean. The capital city, Washington, District of Columbia, is a federal district located on land donated by the state of Maryland. (Virginia had also donated land, but it was returned in 1847.) The United States also has overseas territories with varying levels of independence and organization.

United States landscape varies greatly: temperate forestland on the East cast, the Mississippi-Missouri river system, the Great Lakes shared with Canada, Rocky Mountains west of the plains, deserts and temperate coastal zones west of Rocky Mountains and temperate rainforests in the Pacific Northwest, volcanic islands of Hawaii and Alaska.

# 2. Regions

united states geography war holiday

The geography of the United States varies across their immense area. Within the continental U.S., eight distinct physiographic divisions exist, though each is composed of several smaller physiographic subdivisions. These major divisions are:

**Laurentian Upland** - part of the Canadian Shield that extends into the northern United States Great Lakes area.

**Atlantic Plain** - the coastal regions of the eastern and southern parts includes the continental shelf, the Atlantic Coast and the Gulf Coast.

**Appalachian Highlands** - lying on the eastern side of the United States, it includes the Appalachian Mountains, the Watchung Mountains, the Adirondacks and New England province originally containing the Great Eastern Forest.

**Interior Plains** - part of the interior contentintal United States, it includes much of what is called the Great Plains.

**Interior Highlands** - also part of the interior contentintal United States, this division includes the Ozark Plateau.

**Rocky Mountain System** - one branch of the Cordilleran system lying far inland in the western states.

**Intermontane Plateaus** - also divided into the Columbia Plateau, the Colorado Plateau and the Basin and Range Province, it is a system of plateaus, basins, ranges and gorges between the Rocky and Pacific Mountain Systems. It is the setting for the Grand Canyon, the Great Basin and Death Valley.

**Pacific Mountain System** - the coastal mountain ranges and features in the west coast of the United States.

Highest Point:

Mt. McKinley, (Alaska) 20,320 ft. (6,194 m).

Highest Point: (continental 48 states)

Mount Whitney, (California) is the highest point at 14,495ft (4,418 m)

Lowest Point:

Death Valley, (California)(-282 ft.) (-86 m)

Mean Elevation: (average) 2,512 feet

Land Borders:

Alaska, USA - Canada 1,538 miles (2,475 km)

Canada - USA 3,145 miles (5,061 km)

Mexico - USA 1,951 miles (3,141 km)

Bordering Countries (2) Canada and Mexico

Coastlines:

Coastlines: 12,383 miles (19,928 km)

Atlantic coastline: 2,069 miles (3,330 km)

Pacific coastline:+ Hawaii: 7,623 miles (12,268 km)

Gulf of Mexico coastline: 1,631 miles (2,625 km)

Alaska coastline: 1,060 miles (1,706 km)

# 3. Main Rivers

Colorado River

Beginning in the Rocky Mountains of northern Colorado, it moves southwest ending in the Gulf of California. It is (1,450 miles) (2,333 km) in length, and has formed numerous canyons along its winding path. The most famous of these is the Grand Canyon in northern Arizona.

The river has more than 30 electric power plants along its run and dozens of dams and reservoirs.

Columbia River

This wide, fast-flowing river begins in the Canadian Rockies of southeast British Columbia, Canada, flowing south through the State of Washington, then forming the natural border between Washington and Oregon. It ends in the Pacific Ocean and it is (1,152 miles) (1,857 km) in length.

Hydroelectric power development in the river basin brought inexpensive electricity to the Pacific Northwest, but it severely affected salmon spawning and local fish migration.

Mississippi River

It is the major river of North America and the United States (2,339 miles) (3,765 km). It flows from northwestern Minnesota south to the Gulf of Mexico, just below the city of New Orleans. It is a significant transportation artery and when combined with its major tributaries (the Missouri and Ohio rivers) it becomes the third largest river system in the world.

Missouri River

It begins in southern Montana in the Rocky Mountains, first flowing north then generally southeast across the heart of the United States, ending at the Mississippi River, just to the north of St. Louis, Missouri. It is the longest river in the United States (2,500 miles) (4,023 km).

Ohio River

Beginning at the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers nesr Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, it runs southwest, ending at the Mississippi River on the Illinois and Missouri borders. It is (980 miles) (1,557 km) in length.

Rio Grande River

It is one of the longest rivers in North America. (1,885 miles) (3,034km). It begins in the San Juan Mountains of southern Colorado, then flows south through New Mexico. It forms the natural border between Texas and the country of Mexico as it flows southeast to the Gulf of Mexico. In Mexico it is known as Rio Bravo del Norte.

Used for drinking water by both countries, the river is becoming more poluted as population centers that dot the river grow in size, and then dump sewage and pesticides into the water.

Sacramento & San Joaquin Rivers

The Sacramento (380 miles) (610 km) in length, begins in the Klamath Mountains of northern California, flowing southwest, then south to join the San Joaquin River, before entering San Francisco Bay. The San Joaquin comes out of the Sierra Nevada near Yosemite National Park. It flows north to meet the Sacramento River, east of San Francisco. It's namesake valley is one of the most fertile agricultural regions in the USA. (350 miles) (563 km) in length.

Snake River

This branch of the Columbia River begins near the Wyoming border and winds west and then north through the Pacific Northwest, ending near the southeast corner of Washington where it drains into the Columbia River. It plays a significant role in hydroelectric power generation, and its many tributaries are the life-blood of regional agricultural. (1,160 miles) (1,965 km) in length.

Yellowstone River

Beginning in the Rocky Mountains of northwest Wyoming, this beautiful river flows through Yellowstone Lake, then northeast through Montana ending near the North Dakota border. It is (671 miles) (1,080 km) in length.

**Greatest Lakes:**

Lake Superior-Ontario , Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie-Ontario, Lake Ontario-Ontario , Great Salt Lake-Utah, Lake of the Woods, Iliamna Lake-Alaska, Lake Oahe, Lake Okeechobee-Florida, Lake Pontchartrain-Louisiana, Lake Sakakawea-North Dakota, Lake Champlain- Quebec, Becharof Lake-Alaska, Lake St. Clair-Ontario.

**Waterfalls:**

10. GRAND FALLS (OF THE LITTLE COLORADO RIVER)

Despite this waterfall's short season, when it's on, it's one of the most spectacular waterfalls in the US. The muddy Little Colorado River spills over Grand Canyon-like cliffs as the stream meanders its way towards its bigger brother further to the west. Add to this the terraced layers leading to the three-step 181ft cumulative drop and you have one of the most unique waterfalls found anywhere and hence earns a spot on the list.

9. MCWAY FALLS

I have to believe that this maybe one of the most beautifully situated waterfalls in the country. It almost seems too good to be true that you have a year-round waterfall gracing the picturesque coastline that have made Big Sur, California legendary. Who cares if this waterfall isn't powerful? It's still some 80ft tall, it spills almost directly into the Pacific Ocean, and it's one of the best places to witness where the ocean meets the sky. That's enough to make me biased towards this diminutive attraction and put it amongst America's Top 10.

8. ILLILOUETTE FALL

Plunging some 370ft with a wide flow and unique shape, this maybe the best little-known waterfall (at least relative to the rest of the neighboring waterfalls) in California's prime nature retreat - Yosemite National Park. The reason why it's a bit lesser-known is because you have to hike to get views of it. Moreover, you'll have to brave your fear of heights to get a good view of it. Nonetheless, it's easily deserving of a spot on our list and should not be missed in a visit to the park.

7. HAVASU FALLS

Nestled deep in the remote Havasupai Indian Reservation (a side canyon of the world famous Grand Canyon in Northern Arizona), this special year-round waterfall is one of the most beautifully situated waterfalls in the country. Adding to its scenic allure are the blue-green waters of Havasu Creek, the travertine stalactites and dams surrounding the falls, and the red-rock scenery that makes the Grand Canyon possibly the nation's most visited National Park. Putting this unique waterfall on the list was a no-brainer.

6. MULTNOMAH FALLS

One of the most iconic waterfalls in the US, this is the star attraction of the famous Columbia River Gorge, which itself boasts numerous waterfalls - many of which are serious waterfalls themselves. But this 620ft year-round waterfall with a concrete arched bridge over its lower drop as well as a historic lodge fronting it always draws millions of visitors each year. And after our visit to this waterfall, we don't blame them!

5. VERNAL FALL AND NEVADA FALLS

Collectively comprising the lowest steps of the Giant Stairway, this pair of giant waterfalls in Yosemite National Park, California could've easily stood on this Top 10 List separately. But we figured you ought to see both falls in one go so we put them together here. Vernal Fall has a classic rectangular shape and is said to plunge some 307ft. Nevada Falls has an unusual trapezoidal horsetail shape as the Merced River plunges then slides (some 594ft in total) its way down towards Vernal Fall.

4.BRIDALVEIL FALL

While there are other similarly-sized waterfalls (or bigger) in the country, I'm partial to this 620ft year-rounder because its position frames Yosemite Valley (arguably the most beautiful valley in the world) opposite the imposing El Capitan. Ever heard of "The Gates of Yosemite Valley"? Indeed, this waterfall is part of the landscape imagery made famous by Ansel Adams and seen by just about every visitor thereafter (perhaps making it cliche to some). But on its own merits (ignoring the cliche aspect), there's no question it's one of the most beautifully situated waterfalls ever. Heck, the sight of the incomparable valley when we leave the Wawona Tunnel and head into the valley during spring still leaves a lump in my throat every time.

3.LOWER FALLS (OF THE YELLOWSTONE RIVER)

Including this over 300ft waterfall amongst America's Top 10 was compulsory. After all, its impossibly-scenic location at the head of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River makes this the must-see attraction of Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming. That's saying something considering the park is more famous for predictable geysers and an abundance of wildlife that some consider America's version of the Serengeti.

2. YOSEMITE FALLS

This 2425ft waterfall is one of the tallest in the world and widely considered the crown jewel of Yosemite National Park's plethora of cliff-diving waterfalls. The falls is enjoyable from numerous spots where you can drive to as well as hike to. The only catch with this beauty is that it dries up by mid to late Summer as it runs through its massive winter snowpack very quickly thanks to its relatively bare, unforgiving granite drainage. Nonetheless, if it can induce superlatives from the likes of Ansel Adams, John Muir, Thomas Ayres, Francois Matthes, James Hutchings, and more, there's a good chance it can do the same to you, too!

1. NIAGARA FALLS

The Granddaddy of the waterfalls in the United States, it easily surpasses all others in the country in terms of sheer power, size, popularity, and more. Shared between Western New York in the USA and Southeastern Ontario in Canada, bring your passport and experience this world famous attraction from both sides as well as the plethora of activities on offer here. We consider this waterfall to be one of the World's Big Three so it easily occupies the top spot amongst America's Top 10. If you could only see one waterfall in the country, besides crying, make sure not to miss this one!

# 4. Climate

Climate: mostly temperate, but tropical in Hawaii and Florida, arctic in Alaska, semiarid in the great plains west of the Mississippi River, and arid in the Great Basin of the southwest; low winter temperatures in the northwest are ameliorated occasionally in January and February by warm chinook winds from the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. USA can be divided into six climate regions, excluding Alaska, Hawaii and outlying territories. The climate varies considerably between different regions.

*Northwest Pacific:*

(Includes states like Oregon and Washington to the crest of the Cascade Mountains)

This is the perhaps the wettest part of the country. There are scattered rain showers all year round. Temperatures are mild averaging around 40 degree F. (32.2 degree C). The summer months are pleasantly warmer but never too hot. You can see fogs along the coast during the warmer weather but the fog is less dense during mid-day.

Warm clothes: You will need extra warm clothes for winters like leather jackets, thermal jackets, warm inners, leather gloves etc.

*Mid/South Pacific Rockies:*

(Includes states like California, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and Nevada)

These states have generally dry and delightful summers.

California has excellent weather all the year round, with the northern part of the state somewhat cooler (quiet chilly in the winter but seldom freezing). There are very few places in California that experience snow, and the state is known for its nice weather. Mostly all the cities have tolerable winters.

The winter months in the other states like Montana, Idaho and Wyoming can be very cold, with temperatures dropping well below 0 degree F. Colorado, Utah and Nevada are known for their excellent skiing.

Warm clothes: For California you will need warm clothes for winters. For the rest of the Mid-South Pacific region you will need warmer apparel.

*Midwest*

(Includes states like Dakotas, Kansas, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana)

This region is moderately dry. Precipitation occurs mainly in late spring and early summer. Summers are pleasant but winter time can be harsh, with lots of snow and heavy chilly winds. Extremes within the Midwest can drop down to -50 degree F.

Warm clothes: You will need extra warm clothes for winters like leather jackets, thermal jackets, warm inners, leather gloves etc.

*Northeast*

(Includes states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington DC, Maryland).

This entire area is moderately rainy. In winter, the region experiences heavy snow and freezing rain. Summers are usually pleasant, sunny and warm. The fall is especially beautiful in wooded areas.

Warm clothes: You will need extra warm clothes for leather jackets, thermal jackets, warm inners, leather gloves etc.

*Southeast*

(Includes states like portions of Arkansas and Louisiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia)

Like the Northeast, this entire area experiences moderate rains fairly evenly throughout the year. The Spring, Summer and Fall seasons are all very pleasant. Some snow and freezing rain falls in winter but for the most part, the winters are quite mild and short lived.

Southern Florida, like California, usually has excellent weather all the year round.

Warm clothes: You will need moderate warm clothes for winters, but may need the extra warm ones for the cold weather that lasts for a very short duration of time.

*Southwest*

(Includes states like Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma and western portions of Arkansas and Louisiana)

This is the hottest and high rainfall region of the US. You must be prepared to face heavy rains accompanied with thunder storms, dangerous lightening and occasional tornadoes. The winters are generally short but some freezing rains do occur. The spring and fall seasons are quite long and temperatures are generally excellent. The summers are very hot with temperatures approaching and exceeding 100 degree F on many days.

Warm clothes: You will need moderate warm clothes for winters. Raincoats are a must.

**Natural resources**: coal, copper, lead, molybdenum, phosphates, uranium, bauxite, gold, iron, mercury, nickel, potash, silver, tungsten, zinc, petroleum, natural gas, timber

**Environmental Problems:**

Habitat loss represents a major environmental issue which affects not only the biodiversity of ecosystems, but humans as well. A report by the U.S. Geological Survey identified grasslands, savannas, and barrens as the most critically endangered habitats in the United States, with losses up to 98 percent of the original habitat at European settlement. As a result, the Nature Conservancy estimates that 217 plant species and 71 animals special became extinct. With this loss of habitat, there is an increased risk of human-wildlife conflicts as populations struggle to meet their ecological needs.

Air pollution impacts every aspect of life in the United States and on the planet. Air pollution is so deadly because of its mobility. It can cause environmental issues far from its source, not unlike NSP. It can pollute the soil and aquatic resources through acid rain formation. It affects plants by negatively impacting their physiology, causing low crop yields and a reduction in plant vitality.Air pollution also affects humans. Pollutants in industrial emissions cause anything from minor throat irritation to aggravation of existing respiratory conditions, to an increased risk of cancer.

What are some of the environmental issues in the United States? The problems with the most widespread impacts represent some of the greatest threats. These environmental issues show that national as well as local solutions are necessary to reduce the impacts on the environment. It is only through recognition of the existing problems and scrutiny of current practices can solutions be developed. Acid rain is a serious environmental problem that affects large parts of the United States and Canada. Acid rain is particularly damaging to lakes, streams, and forests and the plants and animals that live in these ecosystems.

# 5. War for Independence

Causes of the War.

The first of a series of wars of independence that ended European control of both North and South America. The conflict between Britain and her American colonists was triggered by the financial costs of the Anglo-French wars of the previous thirty years, in particular the Seven Years War (1756-63). A principal theatre of conflict had been in North America, where it was felt that the colonials had failed to play their part either financially or in the fighting. In the years immediately after the war, the army in North America consumed 4% of British government spending. This cost, combined with the victories over the French had increased British interest in their colonies. Ironically, those victories had also removed one element tying the Americans to Britain - fear of French strangulation. In 1756, the French held Canada, the Ohio Valley and the Mississippi, isolating the British colonies on the eastern seaboard. By 1763 that threat had been removed.

At the heart of the division between the colonists and Britain was a fundamentally different concept of the purpose of the colonies. To the British, their American lands were there largely to provide raw materials to Britain and be consumers of British manufactured goods. This feeling expressed itself in an increasing control and restriction of American trade and industry that helped to build up resentment, especially in New England, where manufacturing goods for export to the southern colonies was already an important part of the local economy. In contrast, many of the colonists saw themselves as carving a new society from the wilderness, unrestricted by decisions made 3,000 miles away across the Atlantic.

These pressures were tolerable as long as British regulation of the rules was fairly lax. However, in the decade before the colonies rebelled there was a new level of interest in exploiting the American colonies. The first move was an attempt to limit further expansion by the colonies. In 1763 it was decided to draw a border behind the existing colonies, along the line of the Alleghenies. The land to the west was to be left to the Indians, who were to be encouraged to become consumers of British goods. New colonists were to be encouraged to go north to Nova Scotia, where they could produce much needed timber for the navy, or south to Florida. This limit on their expansion caused much discontent amongst the colonies, costing many, including George Washington, a good deal of money.

The next increase in the tension came in 1765 with the Stamp Act and a trade act know as the Sugar Act. It was the Stamp Act that caused the most protest. This was a direct tax, levied on the paper required for legal transactions and on newspapers. It had been proposed in 1764, and the Americans had been given the year to suggest alternative methods of raising the money needed to administer and defend the colonies. Instead, this year was used to organise opposition to the act.

The Stamp Act caused hostility for a variety of reasons. First, the policy of limiting westward expansion that it was intended to help fund was not popular in the colonies. Second, it was the first direct taxation to be imposed on the colonies from London. All previous taxation had been in the form of trade duties. Finally, the act brought to the fore an issue that was bound to eventually emerge - the status of the legislative assemblies that existed in several of the colonies. In Britain they were considered to be subordinate to Westminster on all issues, in the colonies a new theory emerged that the Westminster Parliament had control over imperial issues, but not over colonial taxation. Combined with a boycott of British goods, the riots caused by the Stamp Act caused the fall of the government of Lord Grenville. The new government of Lord Rockingham repealed the Stamp Act in 1766, but at the same time passed a Declaratory Act confirming Parliamentary authority over the colonies.

The next government attempt to raise money was the Revenue Act of 1767. Put forward by Charles Townshend, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, this was a scheme based on indirect taxes on trade, organised across all of the colonies by a board of commissioners. Townshend suggested that the proceeds could fund both the armed forces needed on the borders, and a civil list that could free royal governors from any need to rely on colonial assemblies for funding. The government had reasonable grounds to expect that this new approach would be acceptable - during the controversy over the Stamp Acts the colonists had accepted the validity of indirect taxation - but instead it was to face protest on both sides of the Atlantic.

In Britain the protest came from those merchants whose exports were being taxed and then boycotted. In America the Revenue Act aroused deep suspicion. The talk of a civil list convinced many that the Act was designed to impose absolute authority from Britain. With an expected yield of only £40,000, it was unlikely that any money would be left after the army had been paid for, so these fears were unjustified, but the more radical voices amongst the colonists were able to link the Declaratory Act and the Revenue Act and create a British plot to destroy all colonial liberties. The Revenue Act was commonly held to have overstepped the natural laws that limited the authority of Parliament. From Massachusetts Samuel Adams issued a circular letter calling for common action against the Act. At first this letter appeared to have had little impact, until Lord Hillsborough issued a counter-circular to the colonial governors instructing them to ignore Adams' letter, while the Massachusetts assembly was suspended. The Massachusetts protest now became a focus of discontent, convincing many, including George Washington that the British government was intent on gaining total control of the colonies. A campaign of non-importation was launched, although the smuggling of English goods did not stop.

Non-importation hit the American ports hard, especially Boston, where lawless conditions eventually forced the British to post troops in the city. Meanwhile, a change of government in Britain brought Lord North to power (1770). By 1769 the British government had decided to abolish all but the duties on Tea, and in 1770 Lord North removed all the other duties. Tea was retained in part as a symbol of sovereignty and in part because it raised just over £11,000 each year.

At the same time non-importation collapsed in the colonies as the spread of lawlessness convinced colonial opinion that resistance to the Revenue Act was threatening the stability of society. On 5 March 1770 a Boston mob attacked a company of soldiers guarding the customs house. The soldiers stood firm until one was knocked down by the rioters at which point the soldiers were ordered to fire, killing five of the rioters ('Boston Massacre'). While some radical campaigners saw this as a sign of what they saw as the brutality of British rule, much colonial opinion was repulsed by the actions of the mob. This was especially true in New York, where a radical leader, Alexander McDougall, had used the economic crisis in the port to threaten the authority of the New York Assembly. A conservative reaction set in in New York and at the end of the summer of 1770 New York abandoned non-importation, which soon collapsed across the colonies, leaving only an unwillingness to drink taxed tea.

For the next three years it looked as if the danger of a colonial revolt had been averted. Lord North made little or no effort to interfere in the colonies, while in America inter-colony rivalry revived, as typified by the activities of the Green Mountain boys. However, this image was false. The return to even grudging loyalty only lasted for as long as the British didn't act. Expectations and attitudes on the two sides of the Atlantic were too far apart for any permanent understanding to be established within the Empire.

It was this gulf that gave the issue that finally led to war its potency. The crisis was caused by the financial losses suffered by the British East India Company as it moved from trading concern to political authority. Part of Lord North's plan for restoring the fortunes of the company, seen as vital for reducing the national debt, was a scheme for disposing of the Company's Tea surplus. Previously, East India Company tea had to imported into England, where it paid 1s tax before being exported to American by English middlemen, who paid a further 3d. North gave the Company permission to sell direct to the American colonies, paying only the 3d duty. If implemented this would have halved the cost of tea in the colonies, from 20s. per pound to only 10s.

This new policy worried the radicals in the colonies. The boycott on Tea was the only protest against British rule that was still effective, and there was a great fear amongst radical opinion that this new cheap tea would end that boycott. In New York and Philadelphia, where smuggling was rife, the boycott of taxed tea was secure, but Boston was seen as a weak point. Too well policed for smuggling, the radicals were afraid that if tea was landed in the port, it would be drunk across the colonies, breaking the boycott. Their reaction was to prevent the tea from being landed. On 16 December 1773 a group of Boston radicals, dressed as Indian braves, dumped thousands of pounds worth of tea into the harbour, a protest immortalised as the Boston Tea Party.

The British reaction was critical. A low-key response could have defused the situation, but instead Lord North decided on confrontation. The reaction to events in Boston in 1770 led the government to expect that the other colonies would once again repudiate radical action in Massachusetts. However, the actions taken by Lord North's ministry could not have been more offensive to colonial sensibilities. Early in 1774 a series of acts, called the 'coercive' or 'intolerable' acts in the colonies, were passed in an attempt to restore order in Boston and Massachusetts. The port was closed until the lost tea had been paid for. The governor was given the power to transfer trials to Britain. Boston was made to provide barracks for troops inside the town. Finally, the constitution of the colony was changed. Massachusetts had a two chamber system, with an elected house of representatives who had the power to appoint the upper house, or councillors. This was now changed so that the Crown could appoint the councillors.

Rather than isolating Massachusetts, these acts united the colonies in protest. In particular, British interference with the constitution of one of the colonies was felt to threaten all. At the same time news of the Quebec Act reached the colonies. This was a sensible response to the problem facing in Canada of ruling a largely French population, only recently conquered. It allowed for tolerance of French Catholicism, even giving the Catholic majority a place on the new Canadian council. Canada's borders were also expanded to include the areas of Illinois and Detroit, where there was already a French population. In the thirteen colonies this act caused great hostility. Once again westward expansion had been blocked. Worse, at least as far as New England was concerned, was the tolerant attitude to Catholicism. The colonial response was the first Continental Congress, which met in Philadelphia in September 1774.

When this Congress met it demanded the repeal of all colonial legislation passed since 1763. Until this demand was agreed to, Congress agreed to block all imports and exports to and from Britain other than those crops which the southern states depended on, to refuse to pay any taxes to Britain and to prepare to resist any British troops. However, the Congress did not at this stage want independence. Despite this, conflict was now inevitable. In British eyes Congress was an illegal body, not to be dealt with. Even so, opinion was split on how to respond to American discontent. In November George III was already certain that there would be fighting, but there were still conciliatory voices in Parliament. In America, General Gage, now Governor of Massachusetts as well as commander in chief of the British forces in North America, warned that the discontent was widespread and requested large-scale reinforcements, but back in Britain the scale of the trouble was not yet appreciated. Lord North was not alone in seeing Massachusetts as the heart of the problem, and in April 1775 that idea was reinforced by the first fighting.

1775

The War begins

The first shots of the war were fired in Massachusetts. Here the most rebellious of the colonies was faced by General Thomas Gage, Governor of Massachusetts and commander-in-chief of all British troops in North America. Lord North had considered the colony to be in revolt from February, but failed to appreciate either the scale of the discontent in Massachusetts or that it was also present across the other colonies.

The fighting began with a relatively minor skirmish. On 19 April 1775 Gage despatched a column to seize an arms cache thought to be at the town of Concord, only 16 miles from Boston. Unluckily news of the expedition leaked, and at Lexington the British encountered a small force of American militia. It is not known which side fired the first shots of the war, but the militia withdrew and the British continued to Concord. However, it was the return to Boston that revealed the scale of the revolt and the weakness of the British position. Outnumbered by hostile forces, the British column was being slowly destroyed by sniping until it met up with a relief force at Lexington and was able to return relatively safely to Boston.

News of the fighting spread quickly, and Gage soon found himself besieged in Boston by an irregular but large force, which quickly dug itself in. Meanwhile, Gage was waiting for reinforcements. On 26 May they arrived, led by three major-generals who were to play an important part in the war - William Howe, Henry Clinton and John Burgoyne.

Encouraged by his reinforcements, Gage decided to strengthen his position by capturing key hills that overlooked Boston on its island, and threatened the harbour. The Americans learnt of this plan, and fortified Breed's Hill on the Charlestown peninsular north of the harbour. The resulting battle of Bunker Hill (17 June 1775) was a disaster for the British. Although they did manage to capture the American positions, it was at the cost of half of their force killed or wounded.

Bunker Hill effectively knocked the main British army out of the war for the next year. For nine months it remained in Boston, now commanded by Howe, who failed to appreciate the weakness of the American forces facing him.

Washington and the Continental Army

The dominating figure of the war now entered the scene. On 15 June 1775 George Washington was appointed commander of the new Continental army, created in the same month out of the forces besieging Boston. Washington was to face formidable problems in his task. First amongst them was the persistent belief in the ability of the militia to win the war without a permanent professional army. This belief in the militia system had been one of the problems faced by the British in their attempts to raise taxes in America. His second problem was that troops from the different colonies were often unwilling to serve away from their colony, or in mixed units with men from other colonies. A third problem was that the army was not properly supplied, a problem that remained for most of the war. Fourth, many of his men were serving for short periods of time and several operations, such as the 1775 invasion of Canada, were adversely effected by enlistments ending. Finally, the rebellious attitude that had prompted many to join the army also made them resistant to taking orders from officers they had not selected. Washington was to have frequent problems getting men to accept the principle that the best man should have a post, not simply the one who had served for longest. Washington's most important contribute to the war was the patience with which he turned the forces he found outside Boston into an army that was eventually able to take on regular British troops on the battlefield. The Revolt Spreads

Away from Boston there were very few resources that could be used to maintain Royal authority. Over the summer of 1775 news of the fighting around Boston inflamed revolutionary activity across the colonies. A series of Royal governors were forced to flee to the safety of Royal Navy ships. All across the colonies, sizable militias were formed, leaving the small British garrisons vulnerable. A lack of appreciation of the scale of unrest meant that little or no aid could be expected until the following year, if at all. This allowed the American cause to gain vital momentum.

Invasion of Canada

The only American setback of 1775 came in their invasion of Canada. Their invasion was based on the expectation that the recently conquered French of Quebec would rush to the aid of the invasion. If that had happened, then the weak British garrison of Canada, already used to reinforce Boston, could have been overwhelmed. As it was, the French population was relatively happy under British rule, and the Americans found themselves operating without popular support.

The campaign began slowly, with one advance along Lake Champlain starting in May and continuing until the surrender of St. Johns on 2 November. Another force further north was defeated outside Montreal on 25 September. Finally, a third force of 1050, under Benedict Arnold, was sent through Maine to the St. Lawrence. This force, reduced to 600 on the march, arrived outside Quebec on 9 November. Facing them was a hastily formed force commanded by Major-General Guy Carleton, the British commander in Canada. Most of his regular troops had been captured, so the defence was based on Loyalists, French militia, sailors and marines, with a small core of regulars.

Despite their apparent strength, the American force in front of Quebec, one thousand strong by early December, suffered from one major handicap - their soldiers period of service was due to end on 31 December. Faced with this, the Americans attempted to take the city by assault early on 31 December (battle of Quebec). The failure of this assault ended the best chance the Americans had for victory in Canada.

1776

The British Respond

The British response to the revolt was to be directed by the new Secretary of State for the American colonies, Lord George Germain, who held the post from November 1775 until he was replaced in February 1782. Germain had been disgraced after his role in the battle of Minden (1759). He had spent the intervening years attempting to rebuild his reputation, which may help explain his aggressive stance as Secretary of State. Despite his distance from the fighting, Germain was to control most British strategy during the war.

By the start of 1776 it was clear even in Britain that the colonial revolt was not the work of a small number of malcontents. The British response was to plan what was then the biggest transatlantic expedition ever carried out. Troops sent from Britain were to be sent to three separate theatres of war, there to reinforce the troops already present. The first campaign was to be in Canada, where the American invasion was to be repulsed, followed by a march down to the Hudson. The second was to be sent to reinforce the forces in Boston, to be used to capture New York and perhaps meet up with the army marching down from Canada. Finally, a third force was to be sent to the south, where it was confidently expected that the loyalists would rise against the rebels as soon as a British army arrived. Two of these three expeditions would achieve at least partial success, but the year ended with the British no nearer to ending the revolt.

Independence!

The main event of 1776 was not to come on the battlefields. On 4 July 1776 the Declaration of Independence was signed. The desire for independence had not been amongst the causes of the war, but at the start of 1776 Tom Paine published Common Sense. This challenged the idea that reconciliation with Britain was possible and instead spoke out strongly for the idea of independence. This work sold over 100,000 copies, and made public a debate that had been happening in private. Over the first half of 1776 the mood shifted towards independence, with several states making it clear that they would support the idea. Finally, on 7 June a motion to declare independence came before Congress. After a series of debates, Congress postponed their final decision until 1 July, but also appointed a committee to draft a declaration in case one was needed. This committee, dominated by Thomas Jefferson, finished the draft on 28 June, just in time for Congress. By this point all the states apart from New York had approved independence although Pennsylvania was also unconvinced. Congress finally approved a slightly modified declaration on 2 July. On 4 July the Declaration of Independence was approved by Congress, although New York did not sign until 15 July.

The Declaration of Independence was a momentous event. It gave a clarity to the American cause that it had previously lacked, and that the British were never to gain. It played a part in convincing foreign powers to help the rebels, overcoming a fear that a reconciliation between Britain and the colonies could cause any intervention to backfire. It also made any hopes of a peaceful settlement much less likely - Independence once declared could not easily be surrendered.

Clearance of Canada

Despite the failure of their assault (see battle of Quebec), and a manpower shortage caused by expiring periods of enlistment, the Americans attempted to maintain their siege of Quebec. Already hampered by their lack of proper siege equipment, the Americans were also short of money, and on 4 March declared anyone who would not take their paper money to be an enemy. What little local support they had enjoyed now evaporated. Their position in Canada was only secure while the ice prevented the British from sending relief forces in. When the ice broke, the American garrison at Montreal departed, while the army besieging Quebec withdrew when a British relief force arrived on 6 May. The Americans withdrew nearly one hundred miles up the St. Lawrence to Sorel at the junction with the Richelieu River. Reinforced, the American force advanced back up the St. Lawrence and attempted a surprise attack on the British camp. The resulting battle of Trois Rivieres (Three Rivers, 8 June 1776) resulted in an heavy American defeat, rapidly followed by the abandonment of the Canadian adventure, not to be repeated until the War of 1812.

Failure In The South

The southern expedition went wrong almost from the beginning. The naval expedition under Sir Peter Parker was meant to leave Cork on 1 December 1775, arriving off Cape Fear in early February, allowing time for a campaign in the south before moving on to New York. It was confidently expected that General Henry Clinton, commanding the land forces already in the area, would find many loyalists ready to join the British. However, the loyalists had been defeated at Widow Moore's Creek on 27 February, two weeks before Clinton arrived (12 March), while the fleet didn't leave Cork until mid February 1776. The first ships reached America on 18 April, but the rest of the fleet trailed in, Cornwallis (commanding the reinforcements) only arriving on 3 May. The British troops were in a poor condition, especially the reinforcements, who had spent three months at sea, and Clinton would have preferred to abandon any plans in the south.

Parker on the other hand was keen for action. There were reports that the defences of Charleston were in poor condition and so it was decided to attack Sullivan's Island, whose fortifications guarded the southern approaches to Charleston Harbour. The British plan was to launch a two pronged attack - Clinton with 2,000 men would wade across shallows linking Sullivan's Island to Long Island, while Parker bombarded the fortifications from the sea. However, on the day of the attack, 28 June, the weather and the seas were not as the British had expected them to be. The water between Long Island and Sullivan's Island was far too deep to wade, while Parker was unable to get his ships as close as he had expected and came under a devastating fire from the American guns. When night fell the British ships were forced to withdraw, having suffered serious damage. With the failure of the attack on Charleston British activity in the south ended for two years.

Attack on New York

The main British army began the year blockaded in Boston. Outside the city Washington had managed to put together a formidable army of over 17,000 men by February. He had also built up his stocks of artillery and powder to the level where he could carry out a proper siege. In Boston the British army had endured months of boredom punctuated by occasional alarms, and discipline in the army was poor. General Gage had now been replaced by General William Howe, who was had been given permission to evacuate Boston if the situation justified it. Howe was convinced that he should leave, but did not have enough ships for a proper evacuation and was waiting for more transports when, on 2 March, the Americans began their artillery bombardment. They then captured the Dorchester Heights, overlooking Boston Harbour. The British position was now untenable, and Howe decided to withdraw in the ships he already had. After destroying the military supplies in the city, Howe and his army departed for Halifax on 17 March. The Americans let him go in peace in return for an agreement not to burn the city before he left.

Halifax was itself a poor location for an army. Supplies were still limited and the weather appalling, but Howe settled down for months while he planned his attack on New York. Now Boston was secure, the Americans were concentrating their forces around New York and building up the defences. Howe decided to wait until Clinton and the army in the south could join him.

Howe finally decided to move in June. The British fleet was sighted on 29 June and the British army landed on Staten Island on 3 July. After Clinton arrived in mid-August Howe had 32,000 men under his command. Washington was faced by a serious problem. He was outnumbered, had limited supplies and no naval support. He had two main islands to defend - Long Island and Manhattan Island. If he split his forced between the two islands, Washington was well aware that they could be split in two and defeated in detail, but he had little or no choice. The Brooklyn Heights on Long Island overlooked New York. If they fell to the British then the city would be fatally exposed. Washington posted troops around Brooklyn village and fortified the hills surrounding the area.

Howe made his move on 22 August. 15,000 men were landed on Long Island. Facing them the Americans were defending the Heights of Guan, a line of hills breached by four passes. Three were strongly held, but the furthest out was only guarded by five men. The British started to move on 26 August and early on the 27th they surprised the five guards and were able to march behind the American positions. The resulting battle of Long Island was a resounding British victory. The Americans were forced back into Brooklyn. Howe did not attack the American positions, recognising that it would have to be evacuated. Sure enough on 29-30 August Washington evacuated his position at Brooklyn.

Howe now decided to try and trap Washington in New York. Congress now made it clear that Washington was not to risk being trapped in the city. He decided to withdraw to Harlem at the north end of Manhattan Island. While the Americans were engaged in this, Howe moved again. On 15 September he landed at Kip's Bay, overwhelming the militia defending the bay, and almost capturing Washington, who had ridden from Harlem on hearing of the British landings. The British had a chance to capture a large part of Washington's army but the forces still in New York managed to slip away along the west side of the army. The next day saw the 'battle' of Harlem Heights, a skirmish brought on by British carelessness and the last American victory for some time. The British were now free to occupy New York, where they were greeted by cheering crowds of loyalists.

Howe now had a chance to inflict a crushing defeat on Washington's demoralised and outnumbered army. The Americans were digging in on the Harlem Heights, but again Howe outflanked them on the water, landing on Throg's Neck on 12 October. Washington was forced to withdraw, this time to White Plains. Once again Howe delayed. Finally on 28 October the British attacked again (battle of White Plains) and again inflicted a defeat on Washington. Again Washington withdrew, this time to North Castle. This time Howe did not follow, turning instead to Fort Washington, which with Fort Lee guarded the Hudson. By this point it was already clear that the Royal Navy was able to get past the forts without serious danger, and Washington considered abandoning the forts before being persuaded by the local commander, Nathanael Greene, and the commander of Fort Washington Robert Magaw that they could hold the fort. This was soon to be proved false. On 16 November Howe launched his attack on the badly planned American lines around the Fort. The American lines collapsed on three sides, and when the retreated troops reached Fort Washington, Magaw quickly decided to surrender. A few days later Fort Lee was also captured by the British.

The American position was now perilous. 2000 militiamen had departed at the end of their period of service. Washington with 3000 men retreated as fast as he could towards Pennsylvania with Cornwallis in pursuit. The British were also tired, and the roads increasingly muddy, but Cornwallis still came close to catching Washington at New Brunswick on 1 December, but was under orders to proceed no further until Howe joined him. Once Howe arrived the chase began again, and again the British came close to catching Washington, but the Americans were able slip across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania. For a week Howe searched for boats to cross after the Americans, but with the weather turning cold he decided to send his army into winter quarters on 14 December.

This decision has been criticised ever since, but at the time it made sense. Washington had suffered defeat after defeat and had been forced out of New York and now New Jersey. The weather was now bitterly cold, and it was clear that the winter had settled in. The Hessians left to guard the line of the Delaware still outnumbered Washington's remaining men.

What has made Howe's decision the subject of such debate ever since is the extraordinary decision Washington now made. The Hessian line was spread thinly along the Delaware, and Washington decided to launch a counter attack. The first target was Trenton, to be followed by Princeton and perhaps New Brunswick if possible. With a force of 2,400 men Washington crossed the Delaware late on Christmas day. The next day he attacked the Hessian position. The Battle of Trenton is one of the most famous of the war. The Hessians were never able to form a proper line of battle. Although casualties were relatively light on both sides, over 1,000 Hessians were captured. Washington then withdrew back over the river in the expectation that the Hessians would react to retake their post. However instead they withdrew from all of their positions on the Delaware. Washington was able to cross back into Trenton, where by the start of 1777 he had 5000 men.

Howe responded by sending Cornwallis with 5,500 men on a rapid march to Trenton. He arrived on 2 January to find Washington drawn up in a strong position. Cornwallis decided to wait overnight and attack the next day, but overnight Washington was able to slip away on a newly constructed road towards Princeton, while a small force remained at Trenton to fool Cornwallis.

The next day Washington reached Princeton, where there were two regiments under Colonel Charles Mawhood. The battle of Princeton was a second American victory in just over a week. Mawhood managed to break through the initial American attack but his force was almost destroyed on the road to Trenton. Cornwallis, still at Trenton, decided to withdraw to New Brunswick.

These two victories began to establish Washington's reputation, left looking threadbare after the disasters around New York. In a brief campaign he had prevented the disintegration of his army, thrown the British out of New Jersey and given the entire American cause a boost.

1777

1777 was the last year in which the British were able to concentrate on defeating their rebellious colonials. Instead, American success during the year encouraged the French to intervene on their side, virtually ensuring American success. The year began with much British optimism. During the year, the Americans were forced to react to British actions, without any clear idea of the British plans. The British were determined to force a decisive battle, but when one did happen the Americans were to win.

The British operated two main armies in 1777. One, commanded by General Burgoyne, was to capture Ticonderoga and then march to the Hudson, from where it could split the Colonies in two. The second army, under Howe, had originally been committed to sending forces up the Hudson from New York to aid this advance, but before Burgoyne's force had begun its' march, Howe had already changed his plans to an invasion of Pennsylvania, with the capture of Philadelphia, then the American capital, as its main aim. This only left a token force to clear the Highlands upriver from New York. Lord Germain, commanding the war from London, approved both of these plans, and must take much of the blame for the disaster to follow.

Howe's Campaign

At the start of the year the main action involved Howe's army. He was faced by Washington, whose army in March only numbered 3,000. However, his numbers soon mounted, and he was able to take up a strong defensive position blocking the land route to Philadelphia. Howe missed his chance to try and force a decisive battle, and by April had decided to move his army by sea to Pennsylvania. A brief foray in late June was made in an unsuccessful attempt to lure Washington into battle.

However, Howe's main failing was the slowness of his preparations. The soldiers only embarked between 9-11 July, and didn't sail until 23 July. Faulty intelligence convinced Howe that Washington had already moved towards the Delaware River to block him, so Howe decided to sail to the Chesapeake, a much longer voyage, and didn't make landfall until 25 August (at Elkton, Maryland).While Howe delayed, Washington had been able to sent troops to help face Burgoyne, the first serious consequence of the slow start to the campaign. The second was that Howe was denied the time to take advantage of any victories he gained.

Howe was soon to have the chance to win his victories. Washington now moved to protect Philadelphia, determined to do better than in the previous year before New York. He was certainly in a better position than in 1776, with a more experienced, better equipped army, fighting over country that offered more chances for a successful defence of the rivers between Howe and the city.

Washington first attempted to hold the line of the Brandywine River, but was dislodged by Howe (Battle of Brandywine, 11 September 1777). British tiredness and a lack of cavalry reduced the impact of the defeat, and Washington was again ready to fight five days later (Battle of the Clouds, 16 September 1777), but this time heavy rain intervened. Washington was forced to withdraw to re-supply, leaving a detachment under General Wayne to delay Howe. However, on the night of 20-21 September the British managed to catch Wayne's troops unaware (Paoli Massacre). A final attempt by Washington to hold the Schuylkill River was outflanked, and on 26th September 1777 Howe entered Philadelphia.

Howe was now faced with a new problem. American forts blocked the Delaware, preventing him getting new supplies. Accordingly, he send sizable forces down river to clear the route to the sea. Underestimating the Americans, Howe with the remaining force, now under 9,000 strong, made camp at Germantown, just north of Philadelphia. The camp was not well defended, and Washington decided to attack. The resulting battle of Germantown (4 October 1777) saw Washington attempt an ambitious plan involving four separate columns attacking simultaneously. Although the attack failed, the battle was closely run and demonstrated that Pennsylvania would not be easily overrun. Even the Delaware was not cleared until mid-November.

Howe's campaign thus ended without any decisive advantage to either side. The capture of Philadelphia had little practical value without the destruction of Washington's army - Congress simply moved to another location, and the British found themselves with another position to garrison for little practical benefit. Howe's achievement came a year too late, and was overshadowed by the fate of Burgoyne's army.

Burgoyne's Campaign

It is to that campaign that we will now turn. Burgoyne's campaign (The Saratoga Campaign) suffered from the start from the fractured command structure of the British forces. Having been in London over the winter, he arrived at Quebec on 6 May 1777 to find Carleton, the commander in Canada, unhappy at the loss of troops. His displeasure expressed itself in a lack of Canadian and Indian troops to accompany Burgoyne, a key element in the original plan.

Burgoyne's plan was to march from Canada along the Richelieu River, then Lake Champlain before crossing the twenty mile gap to the Hudson River, from where they would march down-river to meet up with another force marching up from New York. The aim was to isolate New England from the remaining colonies, seen as the key to regaining control outside New England. However, even if Burgoyne's march had succeeded it is hard to see how the troops at his disposal could have achieved this aim. Only a line of forts along the river, well garrisoned and maintained by a fleet on the river could have had the desired effect. Even so, with Howe having achieved his aims, even a moderate success by Burgoyne could have had a significant impact on American morale.

Burgoyne was expecting support from two directions. Least effective during the summer was General Clinton at New York, who refused to move unless reinforced. However, a second expedition did at least leave Canada. A force commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Barry St. Leger reached Oswego on the south side of Lake Ontario on 25 July, intending to march down the Mohawk River to the Hudson. However, at Fort Stanwix, guarding the route to the Mohawk, St. Leger found a force nearly equal in size to his own, where he had been expecting little or no opposition. Despite the defeat of a militia column at the battle of Oriskany (6 August), St. Leger was forced to withdraw in the face of a relief column under Benedict Arnold. Burgoyne was on his own.

Burgoyne's army had assembled at St. Johns on the Richelieu by mid-June. On 1 July they reached Ticonderoga, which Carleton had failed to take in the previous year. The stronghold was overlooked by Mount Defiance, unfortified because the Americans felt it was impossible to get artillery to the top. While Carleton had agreed with them, Burgoyne did not and was able to get his guns into a commanding position. On 5 July the American garrison withdrew from Ticonderoga.

Burgoyne now made the first of a series of unfortunate decisions. Rather than follow Lake George, which led to a wagon trail that crossed a ten mile gape to the Hudson, he continued down Lake Champlain. The result of this was that his army had to cut its' own route through the wilderness. This territory was ideal for the Americans, as proved at the battle of Hubbardton (7 July 1777) where the Americans were able to use the cover of the woods to inflict serious damage on the British before being outflanked and driven off. Nevertheless, Burgoyne was able to cross the wilderness and reached Fort Edward, on the Hudson River.

Burgoyne now made a second mistake. Instead of pressing on, he delayed in an attempt to re-supply. Attempts to open up the route up Lake George and get supplies from Ticonderoga failed, and led to the first serious defeat of the campaign. Hearing of a rebel magazine at the town of Bennington, Burgoyne sent a detachment of Germans to seize it, expecting Loyalist support. While 300 Loyalists did join this force they made little contribution, and on 16 August (battle of Bennington) the British force of 900 was destroyed. Due to his poor relations with Carleton, Burgoyne was also forced to provide garrisons along his route, and was now increasingly short of men.

The forces facing him were steadily increasing. From August the American forces were commanded by General Gates. The defeat of St. Leger's advance down the Mohawk River had released a sizable force under Benedict Arnold and Gates now commanded some 6,000 men. Burgoyne was now faced with a simple choice. Staying put at Fort Edward was not an option, so he could either retire north toward Ticonderoga, or continue his advance. Despite the increasing strength of the American forces in front of him, it was the latter option that Burgoyne made. In perhaps his greatest mistake, on 13 and 14 September 1777 Burgoyne crossed over the Hudson, cutting himself off from Canada, and began his march south.

He was not to get far. Gates had moved his forces north, fortifying Bemis Heights, a wooded area near Saratoga, with a force marginally larger than the British. Burgoyne decided to attack. The first battle of Saratoga, (or Freeman's Farm, 19 September 1777), saw the British advance in the teeth of sniping fire from the American advance guard, eventually forcing the American riflemen from the field, but failing to even reach the positions on Bemis Heights. Burgoyne was forced to withdraw to Saratoga, where he was to remain for the next three weeks while the American forces surrounding him rapidly increased in number.

Even this late, Clinton was still not planning to move. Five days later, on 24 September, reinforcements arrived at New York, and Clinton decided to launch a limited attack on American positions in the New York Highlands, forty miles up the Hudson from New York. At this late date Burgoyne was still able to get messages through to Clinton. A letter written on 28 September informing Clinton of his position arrived within a couple of days, forcing Clinton, against his better judgement, to launch a dash up the Hudson. On 3 October he led 3,000 men in a rapid march up the river, taking a series of forts, culminating in the capture of Fort Constitution, near West Point on 7 October.

The same day saw Burgoyne suffer a second defeat at the battle of Bemis Heights, or Second Saratoga. This developed out of an attempt at reconnaissance in prelude to a full attack and although it was not a major defeat, it ended any hope of a successful advance. Burgoyne now attempted to retreat, but found the route back to Canada blocked. For a week Burgoyne sat and waited for Clinton, before on 14 October beginning surrender negotiations with Gates. The following day Clinton's troops were as near as they came to Albany, the original aim of Burgoyne's march, but got no closer. On 17 October the British army under Burgoyne marched into captivity.

As well as the immediate impact of the surrender and loss of troops, the fate of Burgoyne and his army demonstrated the inaccuracy of the British idea that Washington's army was the only significant American force. Any chance of taking or isolating New England was lost. Even the Highlands, taken by Clinton and an important link between New England and the rest of the colonies, were abandoned soon afterwards.

The most important impact of Saratoga was not in America, but in Europe. In early December news of the surrender reached France, where interest in an American alliance was renewed. On 6 February 1778, France and America signed treaties of alliance and of amity and commerce. The Americans no longer fought alone. Ironically, this alliance with France nipped in the bud a growing peace movement amongst opposition politicians in Britain. News of the defeat had encouraged a belief that victory in America was neither possible nor worthwhile, but once it was clear France was becoming involved this attitude was no longer tenable.

1778

The most important event of 1778 was the entry of France into the war. The French had been providing aid to the Americans since 1776, although at the start of the war there were still mixed feeling in American about forming alliances with Britain's enemies. France was also a source of volunteers, such as Lafayette, while Paris was the base of the American agents in Europe. Negotiations for a full alliance proceeded slowly through 1777, affected by the progress of the war in America. News of the capture of Philadelphia reached France before that of Saratoga, briefly making an alliance look unlikely, but when news of the British defeat reached Paris the French indicated that they were ready to sign an alliance. Benjamin Franklin drafted the treaty, and on 6 February 1778 American and France signed a treaty of friendship and commerce and another of alliance. The treaty of alliance was only to come into effect if Britain and France were at war, giving the French control over when the alliance would come into effect. France agreed to recognise the independence of the United States and provide military assistance. The French agreed not to make peace until American independence was achieved, and both sides agreed not to make peace without the approval of the other. France also agreed to surrender all territorial claims on the continent of North America and thus that all conquests made in North America would be given to the United States (This referred to East and West Florida and to Canada, neither of which was in fact to be conquered by the Americans).

The alliance between America and France was not immediately made public, although it was suspected and feared in Britain. Even without French intervention, the events of 1777 had forced the British to change their plans. The Hudson strategy, with one force marching down the Hudson from Canada to meet another marching up the Hudson from New York, was considered to have been a failure, although in reality it had not been tried - in 1776 the attack from Canada had stalled and in 1777 there was not attack from New York. Meanwhile, the British were hamstrung by an upcoming change of command. Howe had offered to resign on 22 October 1777, and on 4 February was told that his offer had been accepted. General Henry Clinton was to replace him, but he did not reach Philadelphia until 8 May, by which time he had received two sets of orders.

The first set, issued on 8 March, ordered him to suspend major actions in the central and northern colonies and instead adopt a naval strategy, using New York as a base for attacks on the New England coastline. At the same time an expedition to Georgia and the Carolinas was to be planned, the first signs of the southern strategy that was to dominate the rest of the war. However, on 13 March the French acknowledged their American alliance, and although war between Britain and France did not start until 16 June, it was now inevitable and the British plan was changed accordingly.

A second set of instructions was issued on 21 March. The war in the colonies was now to take a back seat. Clinton was to abandon Philadelphia, and return to New York, from where he was to send 5,000 men to attack St. Lucia, another 3,000 to reinforce the Floridas, now of sudden importance, and to detach yet more men to defend Halifax. The British aim was now to go on the offensive in the West Indies, while fighting a purely defensive war in America.

Retreat From Philadelphia

Luckily for the British, Washington also had his problems over the winter of 1777-8. On 21 December 1777 Washington and his 11,000 men had marched to Valley Forge, where they had made camp for the winter. Washington had picked Valley Forge for several convincing reasons. First, it was well positioned to watch the British, eighteen miles to the southeast at Philadelphia. Second, it was an easily defensible location on high ground. Third, it was in a largely unpopulated area and Washington did not want to alienate the population of Pennsylvania by inflicting a wintering army on them. Finally, there was some hope that supplies would be easier to find in Pennsylvania than had been the case in previous winters. However, the location also had its problems. There was little or no food present when the army arrived (the British had already searched the area earlier in the year), the remoteness of the location made it hard for supplies to reach the army, and when the army arrived there were no building for them to use. Across January and February the army faced near starvation, boredom and poor discipline.

This began to change towards the end of February. First, the supply situation was improved by Nathanael Greene, head of the quartermasters department. He despatched foragers into neighbouring states and food finally reached the camp in decent quantities. Second, the discipline problem was relieved by the arrival of Frederick von Steuben, a Prussian volunteer, who reached Valley Forge towards the end of February. Although not the experienced soldier he claimed to be, Steuben turned out to be a highly proficient trainer of soldiers. When Washington and his army emerged from Valley Forge it was a much more proficient force than when it had entered it.

Clinton finally prepared to leave Philadelphia in June. His main problem was the sheer size of his column. As well as 10,000 soldiers there were 1500 wagons and all of the support services that the army required. When fully stretched out on the march this supply train would cover twelve miles. Clinton finally moved out of Philadelphia at 3 in the morning on 18 June. His army crawled towards New York, covering only thirty-five miles in the next six days. Over the same days Washington managed to move his army, of a similar size but relatively unencumbered, fifty-seven miles. Despite this rapid march, there was no consensus in the American camp on what to do once they had caught up with the British. Advice ranged from leaving the British alone through to forcing a general engagement. Washington decided in favour of a limited engagement, and soon had his chance. On 26 June the British reached Monmouth Court House after two days of intense heat. The next day they paused to rest, and Washington decided to attack the British rearguard soon after it again began to march.

Command of the force that would carry out this plan was given to Charles Lee, who had previously made clear his opposition to any such attack. His conduct on the next day was to effectively end his military career. The battle of Monmouth (28 June) developed from the original plan to attack the British rear. This attack went badly wrong, and the Americans were retreating in some chaos when Washington arrived and restored a temporary line, only minutes before Clinton with the main British force arrived on the scene. The battle now continued for the rest of the afternoon, with the British launching a series of poorly coordinated attacks, and the Americans standing up to them surprisingly well. Eventually the British were exhausted and stopped their attacks. Washington then ordered a general attack, but his army was too tired to carry it out. Overnight Clinton left the battlefield and continued his march. The British reached Sandy Point on 1 July from where they were transported by sea to New York. Both sides were able to see Monmouth as a victory. The British had been able to continue their march to New York, while the American regulars had stood up to British attacks, even recovering from an early retreat.

The French Enter The War

At the same time as Clinton's army was being shipped to New York, the first French force arrived in American waters. A French fleet under the Comte d'Estaing had been able to sail from Toulon and make its way to America after the British decided to keep their fleet in home waters to defend against a French invasion. The French fleet was larger than that commanded by Admiral Lord Richard Howe but the British fleet was safe in New York harbour, made safe by a shallow bar across the entrance. Frustrated at New York, Washington and Estaing then decided to attack Newport, Rhode Island, a superb harbour that had been in British hands since December 1776.

The siege of Newport, the first combined Franco-American campaign was not encouraging. Estaing did not get on well with General John Sullivan, the American commander in the area, but they did come up with an attack for a joint attack on 10 August. This was not to be carried out. Sullivan crossed onto Rhode Island early on the ninth, one day early, alienating Estaing. Later in the day Admiral Howe appeared with a reinforced fleet. Estaing decided against risking a landing, and sailed out to face Howe, but the weather prevented any battle and the fleets were scattered by a storm. Sullivan attempted an attack on 14 August, which failed. He then waited for the French to return, but when they did Sullivan was to be disappointed. Estaing was not interested in continuing the siege and sailed away, first for Boston and repairs and then for the West Indies.

Savannah

In November Clinton finally sent the detachments to St. Lucia and the south that had been ordered in March. The expedition to St. Lucia captured the island but it was the expedition sent to Georgia that was to have the greatest impact on the rest of the war. A force of 3,500 men under Lt. Colonel Archibald Campbell was despatched on 27 November, arriving at the mouth of the Savannah River on 23 December. Richard Howe, the American commander in Georgia, made an attempt to defend Savannah, but he was badly outnumbered and was defeated on 29 December. The fall of Savannah was soon followed by the British conquest of Georgia, and the potential for a campaign into the Carolinas was soon recognised.

1779

By 1779 it was clear that the focus of the war for the British had moved away from America and on to the struggle against France. The main British aim was to reduce the assistance the Americans were able to give to their new allies. As a result the year lacked any major campaigns, although it did show the first signs of the southern strategy that was to emerge in 1780. There was a persistent belief amongst the British that the loyalists were most numerous in the south, and indeed many did appear as the campaigns went on, but the years of British neglect while the war centred on the north had given the Americans time to organise in the south, and the British were to find themselves facing much more opposition than they had expected. The year also saw the Spanish enter the war on the American side, and begin the epic siege of Gibraltar (24 June 1779 to 7 February 1783).

The British planned operations in two main areas in this year. Both has a similar objective - the restoration of civil government in limited areas as a first step to the restoration of British control across the colonies. This was to be attempted in the New York area, where the British already controlled a sizable area and in Georgia, where it was expected that a sizable number of loyalists could be found.

The action around New York was to be largely insignificant. Washington felt his army to be too weak to attempt any major moves without French assistance, which was not forthcoming, while Clinton was waiting for reinforcements who did not arrive until late in the year. However, over the summer the British did make a push into the New York Highlands, where they were able to capture several American positions, including Stony Point, surrendered without a fight. This position was considered to be too strong for anything other than a full siege, but on 15 July Wayne's brigade of light infantry managed to capture Stony Point in a surprise attack. Despite this success, Washington was still unwilling to risk defending fixed positions and it was once again abandoned.

There was more activity in the south. At the end of 1778 the British had captured Savannah, from where they hoped to restore British rule in Georgia. On 3 January the British issued a proclamation calling on the loyalists to rise against the rebels. However, the British were not strong enough to protect those loyalists who did appear. A force of 800 loyalists was defeated at Kettle Creek (14 February), while travelling to Augusta, briefly occupied by the British. Here too the loyalists were to suffer when an American force appeared and the British withdrew to Savannah.

The British had now been reinforced by General Prevost, who had marched up from East Florida and was keen for action, wanting to raid north into the Carolinas to relief the pressure on Georgia. Early campaigning saw a British raid on Beaufort defeated, but Prevost did defeat a North Carolina force at Briar Creek (3 March). Despite this the forces available to the American commander, Benjamin Lincoln, still outnumbered the British, and on 23 April Lincoln crossed the Savannah River and invaded Georgia.

Prevost made a bold reply. On 29 April he marched north into South Carolina. By 9 May he had reached Charleston, where the Governor of South Carolina offered to surrender the city in return for a guarantee that Charleston Harbour and the rest of South Carolina would remain neutral for the rest of the war. Although this offer was refused, it did not escape the attention of Congress, who began to worry about the dedication of the south. Prevost prepared for a siege but before he could launch his attack news reached him that Lincoln was returning from Georgia to relief Charleston. Not wishing to be trapped himself, and having achieved his aim of saving Georgia, Prevost withdrew. Soon the summer heat arrived and the campaigning stopped until cooler weather arrived.

When the fighting in the south did resume it demonstrated the potential vulnerability of the British if the French managed to gain control of the seas. The French fleet under Admiral d'Estaing had spent the summer in the West Indies where the French hoped to make gains at British expense. Earlier in the year d'Estaing had suggested a joint attack on Newfoundland and rejected Washington's plan for an attack on New York or Rhode Island. Now he was again planning to move against Newfoundland, but agreed to stop at Savannah to harass the British on his way north. Accordingly he set off with a fleet of 20 ships of the line and with 5,000 soldiers.

D'Estaing's fleet landed at Tybee Island at the mouth of the Savannah River on 1 September. Originally he had intended to stay for ten days at most, but a storm on 2 September persuaded him to stay longer. News of this landing reached Lincoln on 3 September and he ordered his army to move south. Allied planning was severely limited by the distance between them, but a joint plan was developed. The French would land south of Savannah and prevent the British leaving, while Lincoln would get across the Savannah River by 11 September and march down river to Savannah. The French were also to prevent British reinforcements reaching Savannah from the garrison on Port Royal Island.

The allied forces came together at Savannah on 16 September. D'Estaing summoned the British under Prevost to surrender, and to gain time Prevost asked for a one-day truce to consider their terms. He was able to use this time to improve the defences of Savannah, while on 16 September the garrison had been reinforced. Prevost refused to surrender and the allies made preparation for a siege. However, D'Estaing was unwilling to commit to a long siege, and after a five-day bombardment the allies reluctantly decided to risk an assault.

The attack went in on 9 October, but the British were already aware of the allied plan and were ready for the attack. The Franco-American force suffered 250 killed and 600 wounded, compared to 100 British casualties. D'Estaing now departed, and Lincoln was forced to withdraw into South Carolina where he now prepared for an attack on Charleston.

1780

1780 saw the emphasis of the war continue to shift to the south. While other plans were made for the year, none of them came to anything. On 26 December 1779 7,600 troops under General Clinton had set sail from New York for South Carolina. The British plan for South Carolina was to combine military strength with a policy of conciliation that would allow the Loyalists in the state to take control and help restore British control. Storms delayed the fleet, and it did not arrive at Savannah until 30 January, but the British were still ahead of American reinforcements. The American commander in the area, Benjamin Lincoln, was under great pressure from Congress not to lose Charleston, the first British target, and based much of his policy for the year on the belief that promised reinforcements would soon arrive.

The result of this was that Lincoln allowed himself to become trapped in Charleston. On 11 February the British landed near Charleston, and advanced steadily until on 13 April the siege of Charleston began with a British artillery bombardment. The city was soon cut off, and by late April Lincoln was already aware that the cause was lost, but the townspeople refused to let him surrender, still hoping for relief from Washington. However, on 9 May the British positions had moved close enough to the city for the bombardment to set houses alight, and with the town burning around them the citizens finally gave way. After some negotiations over the terms of their surrender, the American garrison in Charleston surrendered on 12 May 1780. Clinton had captured 2571 members of the Continental Army, as well as 800 militia, who were paroled, as well as much of the Continental Navy, trapped at Charleston when the siege began. The only big city in the southern colonies was now in British hands.

The task that now remained was to gain control over the Carolinas and Virginia. The British plan had been to do this with a combination of reconciliation backed by military victories. Under the suggested terms of peace, the American colonists would be granted the freedom from Parliamentary interference they had desired, in return for remaining within the Empire. On 1 June Clinton and Admiral Arbuthnot issued a proclamation granting a full pardon to all prisoners and rebels who would take an oath of allegiance. While this annoyed many Loyalists, who wanted to see the rebels punished, it could have been the basis for a return to British control in the south, if on 3 June Clinton had not issued another proclamation requiring all those on parole to take an oath that they would actively support British activities. While many in the south were been willing to take a neutral attitude to the war, few were willing to turn on their former comrades in the struggle. This second proclamation was widely regarded as having broken the terms of the original paroles, and many men returned to the fight. Clinton however now left the scene - on 10 June he departed for New York, taking with him 4,000 men as well as most of the army's horses, leaving Cornwallis in charge in the south.

The difficulty of the task facing Cornwallis was soon made clear in the bitter fighting that erupted between loyalists and rebels across South Carolina. Much of this fighting was on a small scale - raids and skirmishes, but even this was significant, as several American commanders who had withdrawn from the war were forced back into it after loyalist raids. Several encounters were sizable enough to be considered battles - loyalists were defeated at Ramsour's Mill (20 June) and Williamson's Plantation (12 July), and held their own at Rocky Mount (1 August). This upsurge in fighting confirmed the British view that the loyalists in the south had only needed British support to encourage them, but Cornwallis seems not to have realised that it also demonstrated the strength of the American cause in South Carolina. Instead, he was to blame many of his problems in South Carolina on support the rebels were receiving from North Carolina, where he was later to blame support from Virginia for his failures. For the moment, British control spread across much of South Carolina. Cornwallis established bases at Ninety-Six, Camden and Cheraw, while many members of the local elites made their peace with the British.

The siege of Charleston had caused much concern in Congress, and in April Johann DeKalb was ordered to take 1,400 Delaware & Maryland Continentals to the relief of Charleston. DeKalb found this force in a poor condition, and his march south had been slow and careful. Once it was clear the city had fallen, DeKalb stopped in North Carolina to allow his troops to rest and prepare them a move south. However, in the aftermath of the fall of Charleston, Congress appointed Horatio Gates to command their southern forces, and on 25 July he found DeKalb's men and took command.

Ignoring the advice of his officers, Gates decided to attack the British post at Camden. The supply situation in North Carolina was poor, and the army would benefit from a victory, so Gates decision to move was not as poor as its' results make it look. As he moved south, Gates was joined by more troops - 2,000 North Carolina militia under Richard Caswell joined him on 7 August and a week later a force of Virginian militia under Edward Stevens arrived. Gates now though he had a force of 7,000 men, and outnumbered the British at Camden at least four to one.

Unknown to Gates, Cornwallis had also noticed the vulnerability of Camden, and had led a force there in person. The British at Camden now had 2043 effective solders, while there were 800 sick in the town. Cornwallis learnt late of Gates' advance, and decided that he would have to fight. At ten in the evening on 15 August, both Gates and Cornwallis ordered their men to march. At this late date, a head count was taken of the American army, and much to Gates' shock his force only contain 3,052 men - 4,000 men would appear to have disappeared. Still unaware of Cornwallis, Gates still decided to move.

At 2.30 in the morning of 16 August, the two armies blundered into each other. The armies formed up and then waited for dawn. The resulting battle of Camden was a disaster for the Americans. The American left collapsed, exposing the rest of the line, which was quickly rolled up. The Americans suffered 800 dead and wounded and 1000 captured. Amongst the dead was DeKalb, who died of his wounds three days after the battle. However, Gates demonstrated a good turn of speed - by nightfall he was 60 miles away from the battlefield, and had reached Hillsboro, 180 miles distant, by 19 August. His military career was effectively over. Most of the survivors of his army followed his example and returned to their homes.

Both sides were worried by aspects of Camden. The Americans were shocked by the relative ease of the British victory and the poor performance of the militia. Cornwallis was worried that no news of Gates' advance had reached him from North Carolina, where he had believed there were many loyalists. However, it is fair to point out that Gates was just as in ignorance of the location of Cornwallis.

Despite his concerns, Cornwallis decided on a quick invasion of North Carolina, with his ultimate aim the American magazines at Hillsboro. His army marched north on 8 September and on 26 September reached Charlotte (North Carolina). Things now started to go wrong. Very few loyalists appeared at Charlotte, while worrying news of partisan activity reached him from South Carolina. The last straw came on 7 October. Guarding Cornwallis' left flank was a force under Patrick Ferguson that had achieved much success against partisans in South Carolina. However, on 7 October his force was surrounded and destroyed at King's Mountain. Cornwallis now decided to retreat to South Carolina. On 14 October he left Charlotte, and his now very ragged army reached Winnsboro on 29 October.

The final act of the war in the south in 1780 was the appointment of yet another new American commander. Having appointed a series of unsuccessful commanders, Congress now turned to Washington, who appointed Nathanael Greene, his quartermaster, to command the southern armies. Greene received news of his appointment on 15 October, and immediately headed south, only stopping at Philadelphia where he begged for supplies from Congress. On 2 December he reached his army, now camped at Charlotte and began the daunting task of restoring an army that had suffered a series of defeats.

1781

At the start of 1781 both the British and the Americans faced a potential crisis. American resources were now very thinly stretched, and their French alliance had provided very little benefit, with the French often more concerned with other areas of conflict, in particular in the Caribbean. January saw mutinies amongst the America troops, and by April even Washington thought the Americans had come to the end of their tether. Rochambeau was of the same opinion. This was crucial. Rochambeau and his troops had remained where they first landed for nearly a year, but now he decided that it was time to move. If a strong French fleet could gain control of the seas for long enough, a joint operation would be mounted in an attempt to inflict a defeat on the British that might save the American cause.

The British too were worried. The French navy had eluded British blockades, and every commander in America knew that a French fleet could appear off the coast and cut them off. Moreover, the successes won in the south in 1780 were already starting to look hollow. British control of South Carolina and Georgia faded away from the coast as small bands of partisans harassed loyalists and any isolated British post. The British commanders were aware that they were no longer the highest priority in London, and reinforcements would be hard to find. The British were also cursed by the poor relationships between the senior commanders. Clinton and Cornwallis were both aware that many in London considered Cornwallis to be the better commander, not without reason, and he had been receiving instructions directly from London. Clinton was also on poor terms with Admiral Arbuthnot. These poor relations were to play a crucial part in the disaster at Yorktown. Clinton was also deeply worried about the prospect of a combined American-French attack on New York, and as a result his army, much larger than the forces involved in the active campaign in the south, sat inactive in New York.

Raids in the South

The year started with both sides having some success in the south. Spain had also entered the war on the American side, and from Louisiana launched an attack on West Florida (now mostly part of Mississippi and Alabama), and in May 1781 captured Pensacola. However, this area was then isolated from the American colonies, and the Spanish intervention there had little impact. British raids in the south were more effective. An expedition commanded by Benedict Arnold had been sent to raid Virginia where he was able to capture Richmond on 5th January, which was largely destroyed, before he withdrew to Portsmouth on the coast, where he established a base from where he was able to harass Virginia to the extent that Washington sent a force under Lafayette to try and defeat him.

Cornwallis in the Carolinas

Arnold will reappear, but we will now turn to Cornwallis, whose army had retired to Winnsboro (South Carolina) on 29 October 1780 after an abortive invasion of North Carolina. At the start of 1781 he was ready to try again. The campaign that was eventually to decide the war began with on a very small scale. Cornwallis left Winnsboro in early January with 1,300 men, having had to leave 5,000 men to secure his rear in South Carolina, while Nathanael Greene, the newly appointed American commander in North Carolina, then had only 800 men with him at Charlotte (North Carolina). Cornwallis was expecting to gain men - 2,000 under General Leslie sent by Clinton, Tarleton's British Legion, and more importantly for any long term hope of success thousands of North Carolina loyalists were expected to rush to join him, an idea that persisted amongst British commanders long after experience should have killed it off. Greene's army meanwhile was in a dreadful state, still shocked after its' defeat at Camden. His main hope of reinforcement was that new militia detachments could be found, and as the campaign in North Carolina continued several contingents were sent to join him.

While Cornwallis began his march north, Greene was attempting to restore the morale of his army. With supplies very short, he decided to split his force. The main army would move east to Cheraw on the Pee Dee River, just inside South Carolina, while a large detachment commanded by Daniel Morgan would head west in part to threaten British positions in the interior of South Carolina, and in part to find supplies. This move left Cornwallis in a difficult position. While the British could operate safely as armies, smaller detachments had proved vulnerable before. However, Morgan could not be left alone without exposing the left flank of Cornwallis' advance to attack. When Tarleton suggested that his British Legion should catch Morgan, Cornwallis agreed. Sending Tarleton west, supported by detachments of regular infantry, Cornwallis himself headed towards his meeting with Leslie.

This plan soon went badly wrong. Tarleton managed to catch Morgan at Hannah's Cowpens on 17 January 1781, but Morgan was ready for him and in the resulting battle Tarleton's unit was destroyed, with nearly 800 taken prisoner. Tarleton himself managed to escape with 40 men, but the days of his successes were largely over. Morgan himself did not linger on the battlefield. The fighting was over by ten in the morning, and Morgan and his men were on the march by noon. News reached Cornwallis on the next day, and he set out in pursuit. However, Morgan was heading north east back towards Greene, but Cornwallis expected him to march south to threaten British posts in South Carolina, and wasted day marched north west to intercept him. News of the battle and of Cornwallis' pursuit reached Greene on 25 January and he immediately realised that Cornwallis would be vulnerable on the chase, having lost much of his cavalry. He immediately set about reassembling his army, and by the end of the first week of February the two armies faced each other across a twenty five mile gap. A pursuit across North Carolina now followed. On 13 February the American forces crossed the River Dan and entered Virginia.

Cornwallis now decided to return south. It was already becoming clear that the Loyalists were not going to rise in massive numbers, while in Virginia Continent Units were being created and the rebels could only get stronger. Rather than risking destruction, Cornwallis instead headed south to Hillsboro (North Carolina). On 20 February he made another attempt to gain Loyalist support, issuing a proclamation asking for Loyalist to join him. This gained him little, but Greene believed reports that the proclamation had been a great success, and believing that North Carolina was about to change allegiance Greene decided to march south again. As he moved, his army gained in strength. 600 militia from Virginia, 400 Continental Infantry and 1693 militia sent for six weeks by Steuben, and 1060 militia from North Carolina joined him. Greene now outnumbered Cornwallis.

Greene crossed back into North Carolina on 23 February. There then followed two weeks of manoeuvre and skirmish, with Cornwallis failing to gain the battle he so desired. Finally, Greene decided he was ready to fight and on 14 March he arrayed his army for battle at Guilford Court House. By now he had close to 4,500 men, compared to Cornwallis with under 2,000. Moreover, Greene had been able to select the site of the battle and plan his deployment. Despite this, the battle of Guilford Court House (15 March 1781) was a British victory. Greene copied Morgan's plan from Cowpens, but placed his three lines too far apart. Cornwallis was thus able to tackle them one by one. Greene was forced to retreat, abandoning his artillery.

Although the battle had been won, in the aftermath it was clear that Cornwallis had suffered most. He had lost a quarter of his men, and his belief in the loyalists of the Carolinas. His plan to pacify North Carolina had clearly failed, and he now decided to march for Wilmington, on the North Carolinian coast. On 7 April he reached the coast with only 1,400 men fit for combat. His problem now was to decide what to try next. In South Carolina Lord Rawdon still had control of much of the countryside, but was now threatened by Greene. However, Cornwallis preferred to move the focus of the war to Virginia where there was still a large British army. He also hoped that Clinton could be persuaded to move his troops to Virginia, allowing a major effort to be made. He thus decided to march north and on 25 April he left Wilmington to march to Petersburg (Virginia), where he arrived on 20 May.

South Carolina

We will briefly return to South Carolina. Greene, with his army reduced by militia desertions and expired terms of service, was still able to gain some easy successes, capturing a series of British strongholds. Only Fort Ninety-Six and Camden held out. In both cases the defences were strong, and at Camden Lord Francis Rawdon was an able commander, with five years of experience in America. When Greene arrived at Camden he found it too strongly fortified to risk an assault, but judged that Rawdon could be persuaded to risk an attack, despite inferior numbers. Greene thus set up camp on Hobkirk's Hill about a mile and a half outside Camden. Greene had judged correctly. On 25 April, the same day Cornwallis left Wilmington, Rawdon launched his attack. Like Guilford Court House, the battle of Hobkirk's Hill (25 April 1781) was to be a British victory, but once again their losses were too high. Rawdon lost 270 wounded and killed from a force of only 800, and despite his victory was forced by mid May to abandon Camden. The same was occur at Fort Ninety-Six, where a force of 550 men was besieged after the messages ordering their retreat failed to reach them. Although Rawdon was able to break the siege, the position still had to be abandoned. Even Rawdon soon had to abandon the area, forced by sickness to hand command over to Lt. Colonel Alexander Stuart in July.

Stuart inherited a much-weakened position. From a strong position at the start of the year, the British in the south now only held Charleston, Savannah and a few remaining minor posts. Greene was determined to attempt to defeat Stuart, who he held to be a much inferior commander to Rawdon. Support for the British was so weakened that Stuart was unaware of the presence of Greene and his army until 8 September, when an American deserter informed him that Greene's army of 2,200 men was about to attack him. The resulting battle of Eutaw Springs was as close as Greene came to a battlefield victory. It was only when his men, on the brink of victory, stopped to loot the British camp that a British counterattack managed to turn the tide of battle. Both sides lost a similar number of men, but the British held the field. Once again, a British victory in battle was a defeat in disguise. Greene had lost all of his battles, but had achieved success in his main aim - North and South Carolina had been cleared of the British.

Yorktown

If a British victory in battle could leave their position weakened, a major defeat would be catastrophic, and it was to that major defeat that Cornwallis was now marching. On 15 May, General William Phillips, an old comrade of Cornwallis and commander of British troops on the Chesapeake, died. He was replaced by Benedict Arnold, much to the annoyance of many British officers, but five days later Cornwallis arrived and took command. He now had a combined command of 6,000 men, but his plans for a campaign in Virginia were only to last until late June, when orders reached him from Clinton. Clinton was worried about the prospect of a combined American and French attack on New York, while he was advised by the navy that they did not have a good winter anchorage near to New York, and so he ordered Cornwallis to fortify a naval base on the Chesapeake, while warning that he may soon need some troops from Cornwallis. During July Cornwallis examined potential sites at Yorktown and Portsmouth. This period was one in which the British commanders were at odds. Cornwallis was not convinced that a base on the Chesapeake had any value unless for a full scale invasion of Virginia, while Clinton did not see the value of such a campaign, and was still concerned about an attack on New York, even though his own forces still outnumbered the combined American and French forces. While warning that the position was not suitable for defence and that he had not enough men to build the defences, on 2 August Cornwallis landed his troops at Yorktown, having decided not to send any to Clinton, and began to fortify his position.

Washington now began the campaign that was to seal his reputation and effectively end the war. He had hoped to launch an attack on New York, and in May Rochambeau had agreed to move his troops from Newport to aid this attack. However, although some activity took place around New York in July, the British position was too strong and little came of the plans. Since June Washington had know that Admiral Grasse was heading for America from Brest in France, but his actual destination, and the effect he would have, was unknown. On 14 August, news arrived that Grasse was sailing for the Chesapeake, with twenty-nine ships and three thousand men. Combined with Washington's own army, and Rochambeau's army and fleet, it would be possible for the allies to gain a decisive advantage in the Chesapeake for long enough to defeat Cornwallis.

The British made an attempt to defeat the French fleet. De Grasse sailed from Saint Domingue with twenty-eight ships on the line on 5 August, reaching the Chesapeake on 30 August. The next day Admiral Graves in command of the combined British fleet sailed from New York. The two fleets came together on 5 September (battle of the Capes). In a two hour battle neither side lost a ship, but both suffered serious damage, and the British were forced from the area, leaving Cornwallis isolated by sea. Clinton had also failed to warn him that Washington may be marching south, still convinced an attack on New York was imminent. Cornwallis thus decided against an attempt to fight his way out. However, Washington had started to move his men south in mid-August, and by the middle of September Washington, Rochambeau, Lafayette and de Grasse were all concentrated against Cornwallis. Cut off by the French fleet, he now found himself surrounded by 16,000 American and French troops. Starting on the evening of 28 September and all day on 29 September the allies moved into position around Cornwallis.

Overnight on 29 September Cornwallis abandoned his outer positions, and moved his force into the inner defences. This move has since been criticised, but Cornwallis had good reasons to make it. His force was massively outnumbered, and the inner defences would be much easier to defend. Clinton had assured him that relief was on the way. Finally, the American and French siege guns did not arrive until 6 October. For the first week of the siege the British guns were able to cause the allies some discomfort, but there were not enough of them. Once the allied guns arrived the situation changed. On 9 October Washington himself fired the first shot of a massive artillery bombardment, which soon reduced the British defenders to a wretched state. After nearly two weeks of constant bombardment and with no sign of relief from Clinton Cornwallis finally gave up. On 17 October Cornwallis offered to surrender, and after two days of negotiation the surrender agreement was signed on 19 October. At two in the afternoon, to the sound of mournful music, the British marched into captivity.

Although the fighting was not entirely over, Yorktown marked the end of any serious British hopes. What followed was a series of withdrawals from the remaining British posts. British troops left Savannah on 11 July 1782, Charleston on 18 December 1782 and finally New York on 25 November 1783. The remaining Loyalists were left with two choices - come to terms with the new conditions in America or leave, with most who did leave going to Canada or the Caribbean. British military efforts turned to resisting the French and Spanish.

The End of the War

When news of the surrender at Yorktown reached London, it struck a final blow to British willingness to fight their rebellious colonials. Substantial British forces still existed in America, while the war against France and Spain continued. However, the war was lost in Parliament. On hearing of the defeat for the first time Lord North declared 'O God! It is all over' and although both George III and Lord Germain wanted to fight on, the mood of the country was against them. A series of votes against the war were held, at first with comfortable government majorities. However, on 22 February 1782 the government survived by only one vote, and finally on 27 February the government was defeated by nineteen votes. The next day Lord North offered to resign, but George III refused to let him. Despite the king's best efforts, Lord North finally resigned on 20 March, pre-empting an attempt to remove him in Parliament. The new government of Lord Rockingham was determined to make peace. Informal talks began in Paris in April. Initially, the American negotiators were meant to consult their French allies, and even follow their advice. The British aim was to retain their colonial territories outside the thirteen colonies, and if possible split the Americans from their French allies.

The same month saw the French fleet defeated at the battle of the Saints (12 April 1782). This secured British naval superiority in the Caribbean and weakened the French position. Meanwhile in England Rockingham was succeeded by Shelburne, who saw a chance to gain some advantage out of the defeat in America. His plan was to give the Americans just about everything they wanted, in return for a trade agreement that would be to the advantage of both sides. The Anglo-American treaty was announced on 30 November 1782. The French were only informed of it by their American allies hours before the public announcement. The treaty acknowledged American independence, and gave them both of their main territorial desires - a western border on the Mississippi, and control of the old North West, an area south of the Great Lakes that Canada also had a good claim to. The Americans were also given fishing rights off Newfoundland and the right to land on the coast to process the catch. The only concession to their French allies was that the treaty was not to come into force until peace had been made between Britain and France. The treaty made possible a friendly relationship between Great Britain and the new United States, but ironically it was unpopular in Britain, where it was seen as a surrender, and Shelburne soon lost power.

In many ways the French were the main losers in the war. Effectively abandoned by their American allies, the French made peace on 20 January 1783. The French had hoped to gain a new client state in America, as well as to make gains in the Caribbean and regain lands lost in India. Instead, France had to be content with Senegal, Tobago and a small area around Pondicherry in India. Peace with Spain was agreed on the same day with Britain keeping Gibraltar while Spain gained East and West Florida. While Anglo-American trade revived after the war, the French were to be disappointed in their hopes of a prosperous relationship with America. Instead the cost of the war helped bankrupt the French government and contributed to the crisis of 1787-9 and to the French Revolution after that. Many of the Frenchmen who had fought for American liberty were to find the struggle for French liberty to be a very uncomfortable experience. By a final irony, the improvements to the navy forced on the British by French aid to the Americans left the Royal Navy in a far better position to defend Britain at the start of the revolutionary wars.

# 6. The Civil War in the USA

The Blockage

One of the great ironies of the American Civil War was the Union blockade of Southern ports. In previous conflicts, the United States had stood firmly against the right of belligerent parties to impose a blockade on neutral shipping. The issue had even played a part in the outbreak of the War of 1812.

Now it was the United States that wanted to impose a blockade. President Lincoln very quickly declared a blockade against the main Confederate ports. To be a legal blockade (under the terms of an international treaty that the United States had not signed!), this blockade simply had to present a risk to shipping trying to enter those ports. This was fortunate for the Union, as when war broke out the United States navy was just as small as the army, and its ships were scattered around the world. Of those ships in American waters, ten were destroyed (or partially destroyed) to prevent them falling into Confederate hands when Virginian seceded, taking the Norfolk naval base with it.

Confederate diplomats spent much of their time attempting to convince European powers, especially Great Britain, to declare the blockade illegal. Their hope was that British industries dependence on Southern cotton would force the hands of the British government. In 1861 they were so convinced of the power of ‘King Cotton’ that the south imposed a cotton embargo, voluntarily cutting off its own best supply of money!

Ironically, the determined Confederate attempts to get Britain to declare against the blockade played a part in convincing her that the blockade was indeed effective. If it had been as leaky as the Confederates were claiming, then why make so much fuss? Great Britain was perfectly happy to declare the Union blockade legal – the inconvenience to British trade was more than balanced by the invaluable precedent thus created.

The blockade of 1861 was indeed very leaky. Estimates suggest that only one in ten ships attempting to trade with the South was captured in the first year of the war. However, as the war progressed and the Union navy increased in size, the blockade became increasingly effective. By 1864 one in three ships were being captured, although even that ratio still left a good chance of profit for the owner of a blockade runner.

Despite claims to the contrary then and since, the blockade was effective. The number of ships entering southern ports was reduced by two thirds. Many of those ships were custom built blockade runners, capable of carrying much smaller cargos that their pre-war equivalents, so the actual amount of cargo carried must have been even smaller. The outgoing figures for cotton exports support this idea. In the three years before the war, ten million bales of cotton were exported from the south. In the three wartime years after the South lifted its own cotton embargo only half a million bales got out. While some of this was probably due to the disruption of the South’s poor transport network and the capture by the Union of ports such as New Orleans, it does demonstrate the effectiveness of the blockade.

Of course the best way to close a Southern port was to capture it. The United States Navy retained command of the seas around the Confederacy, despite repeated Confederate efforts to break that control (see below for the battle of the Ironclads). This meant that the Union could launch attacks on any Southern port that was not protected by a major Confederate army.

At the start of the war, the Confederate states contained eight major ports capable of conducting a significant amount of trade. On the east coast were Norfolk, Wilmington, Charleston and Savannah and on the Gulf coast Pensacola, Mobile, New Orleans and Galveston.

Battle of the Ironclads

The most famous naval clash of the war was the Battle of Hampton Roads. Steam power was already in the process of revolutionizing war at sea. Exploding shells were replacing solid shot. The world’s main navies had been experimenting with iron armour. The Crimean War had seen the French navy use armoured floating gun batteries and exploding shells to devastating effect against the wooden Russian ships.

The first ironclad warship was the French Gloire of 1859, followed quickly by the British H.M.S. Warrior. The United States navy had been watching these developments, but had not yet moved towards building their own ironclads when the civil war broke out. In the first few months of the war experiment warships naturally moved to the bottom of the U.S Navy’s list of priorities.

In contrast, the newly formed Confederate navy needed some way to overcome the vastly superior Union numbers. They looked to the new ironclads for their answer. If the south could build a functioning ironclad warship before the Union, they hoped that they could smash the Union blockade and impose their own blockade in turn.

When the Union navy abandoned Norfolk, Virginia, they attempted to destroy the ships stationed there. One of those ships was the frigate U.S.S. Merrimac. In the summer of 1861, the Confederates raised the sunken frigate, and began work converting it into an ironclad warship, the C.S.S. Virginia. Their plans were dramatic. The 264-foot long frigate was cut down to the berth-deck. This deck would be just under water in normal circumstances, with armour plating covering the top three feet of the hull. On top of this was built a 170 foot long pent-house, with sloped armoured sides, containing 7-inch pivot guns to front and rear as well as four guns in each broadside.

Unfortunately for their plans, news of their work reached the north. Two conventional designs were initially approved, but they would not have been ready in time to counter the Confederate ship. A third plan, designed by the inventor John Ericsson, was adopted in October 1861. His design was revolutionary. The U.S.S. Monitor resembled an armoured raft, 172 feet long, with a deck only just above water level. What made the Monitor so revolutionary was that all of her firepower came from two eleven inch guns in a revolving turret.

The two ships would turn out to be very well matched. The C.S.S Virginia got her chance first. On 8 March 1862 she steamed out of Norfolk to attack the Union blockading fleet. Her ten guns were opposed to 219 Union guns on five ships, but the Union ships didn’t stand a chance. First to go was the U.S.S. Cumberland (24 guns), rammed and sunk. The only serious damage inflicted to the Virginiawas that her ram broke off and remained stuck in the Cumberland.

Next, the Virginia turned on the U.S.S. Congress, a fifty gun sail frigate. Her wooden sides were of no use against modern guns. She caught fire and sank. The Virginia returned to harbour, expecting to finish the job the next day. The U.S.S. Minnesota, a new steam frigate, ran aground during the encounter and unless help came quickly would certainly be sunk on the following day.

That help did arrive. Overnight the U.S.S. Monitor had arrived from New York. The next day the two ships engaged in the first duel between ironclad warships. The fighting on 9 March was a tactical draw. Neither ironclad could inflict significant damage on the other. Eventually, the Monitor pulled back into shallower water than the Virginia could enter. While the Monitor was unable to sink the Virginia, the Confederate ship could not damage the remaining Union ships. The Union navy would be able to maintain her blockade.

The battle of the ironclads sent shockwaves around the world’s navies. The Times of London announced that the Royal Navy had been reduced from one hundred and forty nine to only two first class warships. Britain and France were both forced to almost totally rebuild their navies. Every wooden warship in the world became obsolete overnight.

The area west of the Mississippi fell into three broad categories in 1861. On the west coast were the states of California and Oregon, isolated enclaves of American life. California had only recently been added to the Union, as a result of the Mexican War of the 1840s. Along the western bank of the Mississippi were a series of border states, from Minnesota in the north to Louisiana in the south, which with Texas contained the bulk of the trans-Mississippi population. Between them was a vast third area of unsettled land, stretching from the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains, which included vast areas conquered from Mexico and large areas of ‘Indian Country’, where the original inhabitants of North America still maintained a precarious independence. Dotted across the map were tiny areas of American settlement, most famous of which was the Mormon settlement of Salt Lake City.

The Civil War in this vast area also falls into three rough categories. The most important of these concerns the Union campaigns along the Mississippi herself. When these campaigns ended in success, the western Confederacy was cut off, and forced to survive on its own resources. These campaigns have been dealt with already. The second category contains Union attempts to invade the three Confederate states west of the Mississippi – Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas. These campaigns were to have limited success. The western Confederacy was the last area to surrender in 1865. Finally, in the first years of the war the Confederacy cast its eyes west, into New Mexico, Arizona, southern California and northern Mexico.

The Union won the American Civil War in the west. While successive Union generals attempted to capture Richmond, the western Confederacy was dismantled, state by state, city by city, until Sherman’s army was able to march through the heart of the Confederacy and threaten Richmond from the south.

In some ways the Virginia front of 1864 foreshadowed the Western Front. However, while the battle between Grant’s Army of the Potomac and Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia saw prolonged periods of fighting, often against well entrenched positions and with heavy casualties on both sides, Grant’s attacks were concentrated against relatively small sections of the thirty miles of fortifications around Richmond and Petersburg. The deadlock came because Lee was able to move his troops around within the defences to deal with Grant’s attacks. Only when Lee’s army was exhausted at the start of 1865 was Grant willing to launch an attack on a wide front.

More Americans died in the Civil War than in all other American wars combined. Combined casualties came to at least 620,000 dead, with over a million casualties in all. In the Second World War, a similar number of casualties included 407,316 deaths (due largely to a massive increase in the ability of battlefield medicine to save the wounded).

These high casualty figures are in part due to the nature of a civil war – all the casualties are suffered by the same country (although even taken separately the 360,000 Union dead come close to the Second World War figure) – and partly due to the particularly lethal nature of the Civil War battlefield. The rifled musket had greatly increased the killing power of the infantryman, especially on the defensive, making it much harder to achieve a decisive victory. An incredibly high percentage of all available men of military age served during the civil war – some three and a quarter million men in all, representing about one in four of all white men in the south, and not a much lower population of the male population of the north (not to mention a good many men from the black and white populations of the south who fought for the Union).

Perhaps most importantly, the Civil War freed around four million slaves across the United States. Just how long an independent Confederacy would have been able to maintain slavery against near universal international condemnation is impossible to say, but it is hard to imagine any post-war Confederate leader being willing to voluntarily dismantle the institution that the south had gone to war for. The American Civil War is thus one of the few wars that can clearly be seen to having achieved something worthwhile. The 360,000 Union dead died for a good cause.

# 7. Great Depression in the USA

The Great Depression took place from 1930 to 1939. During this time the prices of stock fell 40%. 9,000 banks went out of business and 9 million savings accounts were wiped out. 86,00 businesses failed, and wages were decreased by an average of 60%. The unemployment rate went from 9% all the way to 25%, about 15 million jobless people.

Causes of The Great depression of USA. 1930

\* Unequal distribution of wealth

\* High Tariffs and war debts

\* Over production in industry and agriculture

\* Stock market crash and financial panic

Effects of The Great depression

\* Widespread hunger, poverty, and unemployment

\* Worldwide economic crisis

\* Democratic victory in 1232 election

\* FDR's New Deal

It was appropriate that the terrible economic slump of the 1930s started in the United States, to which Europe seemed to have surrendered economic leadership during the Great War and on which she had been dependent ever since.

Stock Market Crash of 1929

The stock market crash that began on a black Friday in October 1929 and deepened in the ensuing months had immediate repercussion in Europe. Indeed, even before this, the superheated boom in stock prices that marked the bull market of 1928 siphoned money from Europe. The pricking of the bubble sent shock waves throughout the world.

Large exports of American capital had helped sustain Europe, besides providing an outlet for American surpluses of capital, during the 1920s. Investment in European bonds now contracted sharply and swiftly, as banks that were "caught short" with too many of their assets invested in securities desperately tried to raise money. By June 1930, the price of securities on Wall Street was about 20 percent, on average, of what it had been prior to the crash; between 1929 and 1932 the Dow-Jones average of industrial stock prices fell from a high of 381 to a low of 41!

The American market for European imports also dropped sharply as the entire American economy went into shock; and, to compound trouble, congress insisted on passing a high tariff law in 1930, against the advice of almost all economists. Effective operation of the international economy required that the United States import goods to allow foreign governments to pay for American loans. Moreover, the raising of tariffs set off a chain reaction as every government tried to protect itself against an adverse trade balance leading to currency deterioration. The result was a drying up of world trade that further fueled the economic downturn.

These exceptions may seem more numerous than the rule, but the United States and most parts of Europe did enjoy relatively favorable economic conditions between 1924 and 1930. But it turned out that this prosperity rested on American loans and American markets, which now almost vanished. A European economy still recovering from the trauma of the war and its aftermath was too frail to weather this storm.

One of the most punishing features of the depression had been the drastic fall in agricultural prices, together with other primary products. The years from 1925 to 1928 brought good harvests all over the world, the latter a record in wheat. The price of grain tumbled just as the industrial and financial slump hit, compounding the crisis. Loss of urban and international markets afflicted farmers already in trouble from overproduction and, frequently, from a burden of debt incurred in expanding production and buying agricultural machinery. With unemployed workers suffering from hunger, the sight of farmers refusing to harvest crops because the price was too low to make it worthwhile drove home the bitter lesson of poverty in the midst of plenty, the curse of Midas fallen on man. But by 1936 agricultural prices had risen somewhat.

# 8. Industrial revolution in the USA:

Its affects and consequences.

In the last part of the 18th century, a new revolution gripped the world that we were not ready for. This revolution was not a political one, but it would lead to many implications later in its existance. Neither was this a social or cultural revolution. This revolution was an economic one.

The Industrial Revolution, as it know called by historians, changed the ways by how the world produced its goods. It also changed our societies from a mainly agricultural society to one that in which industry and manufacturing was in control.

The industrial revolution first got its start in Great Britian, during the 18th century, which at the time was the most powerful empire on the planet. So, it ws inevitable that the country with the most wealth would led in this revolution. After it adoption in England, other countries such as Germany, the United States and France joined in this revolution.

During this time there were also many new technological advancements, socioeconomic and cultural problems that arised.

On the technology front, the biggest advancements were in steam power. New fuels such as coal and petroleum, were incorporated into new steam engines. This revolutionized many industries including textiles and manufacturing. Also, a new communication medium was invented called the telegraph. This made communicating across the ocean much faster.

But, along with this great leap in technology, there was an overall downfall in the socioeconomic and cultural situation of the people. Growth of cities were one of the major consequences of the Industrial Revolution. Many people were driven to the cities to look for work, in turn the ended living in the cities that could not support them. With the new industrial age, a new qauntitative and materialistic view of the world took place. This caused the need for people to consume as much as they could. This still happens today. Living on small wages that required small children to work in factories for long days.

Also, during this time much international strife was occuring at this time. The American Revolution was occuring in the beginning part of the Industrial Revolution. The French Revolution was in the process at the turn of the 19th century. This was a great time, but resulted in newly found democratic rights that spread through Europe and North America.

The Industrial Revolution, was not a good revolution for the planet. From the time of its start, the factories and industry has increased the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by two-folds. Also in our drive for consumerism, our planets natural resources are being depleted at an alarming rate. Pollution by nuclear waste, pesticides and other chemicals are also the result of the Industrial Revolution.

# 9. The Cold War in USA

For more than 40 years – 1945-1989 – the USSR was in conflict with the West. But that conflict never came to open warfare (‘hot war’). Why? It was mainly because the existence of nuclear weapons made hot war MAD (‘mutually assured destruction’). That was why the conflict stayed a ‘cold war’; both sides tried to undermine and destroy each other, but they dared not let it go to actual fighting – that would have destroyed them.

What was the Cold War

Why did the USA and USSR become rivals in the period 1945 to 1949?

When you are thinking about the causes of the Cold War, the most important thing is to separate in your mind the long term underlying factors from the series of clashes and misunderstandings which actually triggered the breakdown in relations.

The USSR and the USA were separated by a huge ideological gulf. So the only thing that held the allies together was the need to destroy Hitler’s Nazis. Given their underlying differences – when Hitler was finally defeated in 1945 – a Cold War was perhaps inevitable. The USA was a capitalist democracy; the USSR was a communist dictatorship. Both sides believed that they held the key to the future happiness of the human race. Neither was conflict new to the two sides. Stalin could not forgive Britain and America for helping the Whites against the Bolsheviks in the Civil Wars (1918-1921), and he believed that they had delayed D-Day in the hope that the Nazis would destroy Russia. In the meantime, Britain and America blamed the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 for starting the Second World War. Also, the two sides’ aims for Germany were different – Stalin wanted Germany to be ruined by reparations, and he wanted a buffer of friendly states round Russia to prevent a repeat of the Nazi invasion of 1941. Britain and America wanted a democratic and capitalist Germany as a world trading partner, strong enough to stop the spread of Communism westwards.

It is impossible to identify a time when the Cold War ‘broke out’. After 1945, a series of clashes and misunderstandings meant that the ideological differences widened more and more into open hostility.

Why did the USA and USSR become rivals

Yalta and Potsdam

Even at the Yalta Conference of February 1945 there were signs of conflict. The war was still going on, but it was clear that Hitler was going to be defeated, so the allies met to decide how they would organise Europe after the war. It was easy to agree to bring Nazi war-criminals to trial, admit Russia into the United Nations, and divide Germany into four ‘zones’, occupied by Britain, France, the USA and the USSR. But there was tension about two things: firstly, the kind of governments that would be set up in eastern Europe, particularly Poland (in the end the allies published a Declaration of Liberated Europe agreeing to set up ‘democratic and self-governing countries’ and to ‘the holding of free elections as soon as possible’; the fact that ‘democracy’ and ‘free elections’ meant different things to the two sides was passed over). The second source of conflict – reparations – was postponed by agreeing to set up a commission to look into the matter.

When the three met at Potsdam (July 1945), Hitler had been defeated. Also Roosevelt (who had liked Stalin) had died and been replaced as US President by Truman, who was aggressively anti-Communist, and who had the atomic bomb (when Russia did not). Most of all, Stalin had recently ordered the non-communist leaders in Poland arrested. So at Potsdam, the tensions below the surface at Yalta – about eastern Europe and reparations – came out into open disagreement. The Protocols agreed at Potsdam merely repeated the agreements at Yalta, except that Russia was allowed to take reparations from the Soviet Zone, and also 10% of the industrial equipment of the western zones as reparations.

Yalta and Potsdam

Salami tactics and the Fulton Speech

During the war, Stalin had trained eastern European Communists in Russia, and after Potsdam they returned to their own countries and began to take over. They took part in elections, and became government ministers, but then packed the army and police with communists, got non-communists discredited and arrested, and so took total control bit by bit – as Rakosi said in Hungary, ‘like slicing salami’.

By 1946, observers in the west were becoming alarmed. George Kennan, an American embassy official in Moscow, sent a ‘Long Telegram’ saying that the Soviets had to be stopped. On 5 March 1946, Winston Churchill gave a speech in Fulton in America in which he said that eastern Europe was cut off from the free world by ‘an iron curtain’, and was ‘subject to Soviet influence . . . totalitarian control [and] police governments’. The message was so clear that Stalin claimed that Churchill’s speech was a declaration of war.

Salami tactics and the Fulton speech

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan

Stalin had promised not to try to take over Greece, and he kept his word, but that did no stop Greek Communists trying to take over the government by force. A unit of British soldiers was stopping them, but in February 1947, the British informed Truman that they were pulling out. Truman acted. He sent American soldiers to Greece, and on 12 March 1947 he told Congress that it was America’s duty to preserve freedom and democracy in Europe. The key basis to what became known as the ‘Truman Doctrine’ was ‘containment’ – the decision to stop any further expansion of communism.

In June 1947, the American General George Marshall went to Europe to see what was needed to stop the expansion of Communism. He returned with the impression that people were was so poor that all Europe was about to turn Communist. Rather than a military option to stop Russia, Marshall recommended an injection of $17 billion cash for aid, and to get the European economy going again. Prosperous, free people, he argued, would not turn Communist. At first, Congress hesitated to agree to send the money, but then – in February 1948 – Czechoslovakia turned Communist. The Czech Prime Minister, Masaryk, mysteriously ‘fell’ out of a window and hard-line Stalinists took over. In March 1948, Congress voted Marshall Aid to Europe.

In the west, the Cold War is often represented as America moving to defend freedom against Stalin’s aggression. This is only partly true, and you will need to understand that Russian historians saw things very differently. Stalin did want a ‘buffer’ of states around Russia, but this had been tacitly agreed at Yalta, and it was Truman, at Potsdam, who adopted a new aggressive stance against Stalin. Russia did not send her army once into ANY eastern European state to turn it Communist – they all turned Communist of their own accord. Indeed, Stalin had promised to leave Greece alone, and he did so – it was America who intervened militarily in Greece. And Russia saw the Fulton speech as a declaration of war, and Marshall Aid as an act of war. All Russia did during this time was to set up Comintern (1947), a meeting of Communist eastern European states.

By 1948, the USA and the USSR were involved in the ‘Cold War’.

Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan

The Berlin Blockade

If the opening conflicts in the Cold War were about eastern Europe, the first direct confrontation of the Cold War arose out the other source of disagreement between the allies – the treatment of Germany. During 1945-1948, Britain and the USA were trying to restore Germany. In January 1947, they joined their two zones together (called Bi-zonia: ‘two zones’). On 1 June 1948, they announced that they wanted to create the new country of West Germany. And on 23 June 1948 they introduced a new currency into ‘Bizonia’ and west Berlin.

By contrast, during 1945-1948 Russia had been stripping the factories of east Germany of machinery to take as reparations. Western efforts to restore Germany were seen by Stalin as a direct attack. Berlin (like Germany) was divided into four sectors, but it was deep in the Russian sector of eastern Germany. On 24 June the Russians stopped all road and rail traffic into Berlin. Stalin said he was defending the east German economy against the new currency, which was ruining it. The western powers said he was trying to starve west Berlin into surrender.

Truman ignored General Clay, who wanted to invade east Germany (Truman did not want a ‘hot war’). Instead, for 318 days, the Americans supplied West Berlin by air. More than a quarter of million flights carried 1.5 million tons of supplies. Stalin could have shot down the American planes, but he did not want to cause a hot war either. On 12 May 1949, he admitted defeat and reopened the borders.

In April 1949, the western Allies set up NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) as a defensive alliance against Russia, and in May 1949, America, Britain and France united their zones into the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). In October 1949, Stalin set up the German Democratic Republic (East Germany).

Berlin Blockade

How did the Cold War develop in the period 1949 to 1963?

After the Berlin Blockade, the pattern of foreign relations as a ‘Cold War’ was set: the USA and the USSR acted as rivals in a competition for world domination.

1949-1963

The Korean War

The Korean War was another conflict which was part of the Cold War, and which – although very different in nature from the Berlin Blockade – was still ‘war without war’. In the Korean War, Russia and America fought through other people – ‘at arms length’ – and thus avoided direct armed conflict.

Communism was growing in the far east, as well as in Europe, and after the Second World War both Korea and Vietnam were divided between Communists and non-Communists. The peacemakers solved both problems by simply drawing a line across both countries, giving the northern area to the Communists, and the southern part to the non-Communists. Korean was thus split at the 38th parallel.

In 1949, Kim Il Sung – the leader of north Korea, approached Stalin and Mao Zedong (the leader of China, which had turned Communist in 1949), and persuaded them to allow him to attack South Korea. When Syngman Rhee (the leader of South Korea) boasted that he would attack North Korea, the North Koreans attacked (25 June 1950). They easily defeated the South Korean army and by September 1950 had conquered all South Korea apart from a small area around Pusan in the south.

Truman was not prepared to see South Korea fall to Communism. Americans at this time held to the ‘domino theory’ – the idea that if one country fell to communism the rest would follow. In addition, in April 1950, American foreign policy had changed and become more aggressive – the American National Security Council had issued a report (NSC 68) recommending that America abandon ‘containment’ and start ‘rolling back’ Communism. But Truman did not attack directly; on 27 June he went to the United Nations and persuaded them to oppose the North Korean invasion. The UN forces, led by the American General MacArthur, landed in Pusan and Inchon in September 1950 and by October 1950 had pushed back the North Koreans almost to the Chinese border.

At this point, the Chinese got involved, and drove back the Americans. A front line was eventually established around the 38th parallel (where it had all began), although the war went on for another three years. Truman refused MacArthur’s advice to use the atomic bomb. Russian troops went to help the communists, but they went as ‘advisers’ and dressed like North Koreans. In this way, Russia and America avoided direct war.

Korean War

Eisenhower and Khrushchev

In 1953 Ike Eisenhower became President of America. He was well-known for saying that ‘jaw-jaw [ie talking] is better than war, war’. He brought the Korean War to an end by threatening to use the atomic bomb if China did not stop fighting. The Chinese agree to a truce, which was signed on 27 July 1953.

In 1953 also, Stalin died. After a power struggle in Russia, he was replaced by Nikita Khrushchev. Khrushchev declared that the Cold War had to end, and be replaced by ‘peaceful co-existence’, and in 1956 he shocked the world by declaring that he wanted to destalinise the communist bloc, because Stalin had been a murderer and a tyrant.

Surely these two men, people hoped, could bring in a period of peace? In fact, the Cold War got worse. Khrushchev was still an ardent communist, and by ‘peaceful co-existence’ it soon became clear that he meant ‘peaceful competition’. Khrushchev visited countries like Afghanistan and Burma and gave them economic aid if they supported Russia, and in 1955 he set up the Warsaw Pact (a military alliance of Communist countries) to rival NATO. Russia began an ‘arms race’ (in 1953, Russia developed the hydrogen bomb) and a ‘space race’ with America (in 1957 Russia launched Sputnik, the first satellite, and in 1961 Yuri Gagarin became the first astronaut to orbit the earth).

America too were becoming more aggressive. America joined the ‘arms race’ with Russia – in 1955, NATO set up a West German Army of ½ million men (this led to the formation of the Warsaw Pact). The Americans used U2 planes to spy on Russia. Inside America, Senator McCarthy led a ‘witch-hunt’ for ‘Communists’ (e.g. Charlie Chaplin was accused of being a Communist).

Eisenhower and Khrushchev

Poland and Hungary, 1956

Khrushchev worsened the Cold War in another way, too. By criticising Stalin, he destabilised the Soviet-bloc governments Stalin had set up in eastern Europe. There were riots in Poland in 1956, and Khrushchev had to send in Russian troops to help the Polish government put them down.

Worse was to follow in Hungary. There, in October 1956, students rioted and smashed statues of Stalin, and Imre Nagy became Prime Minister. From 29 October to 3 November 1956, the new government brought in democracy, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion. The Hungarians were encouraged by words of support from America. Finally, Nagy announced that Hungary was going to leave the Warsaw Pact. Khrushchev may have believed in peaceful co-existence, but he was not prepared to allow freedom to the Soviet bloc countries. At dawn on 4 November 1956, 1000 Russian tanks rolled into Budapest and re-established Soviet rule. At the time, it was thought that the Russian had killed 30,000 Hungarians, though it seems that a figure of 4000 is nearer the truth. Nevertheless, western Europe was horrified, and western leaders became even more determined to stop Communism.

As a result, 1955-1963 was the time of GREATEST tension in the Cold War.

Poland and Hungary

The U2 Crisis and the Berlin Wall

Tension remained high throughout the late 1950s. The America and British presence in West Berlin was a huge problem for the Russians – particularly because hundreds of thousands of eastern Berliners were fleeing every month into West Berlin (this was an embarrassment for the Communists, never mind the large numbers of skilled workers they were losing). A Summit Meeting was arranged in Paris for 14 May 1960 to discuss Berlin and the arms race.

Nine days before the meeting, however, the Soviets shot down an American U2 spy plane. Although they claimed at first it was an off-course weather plane, the Americans had to admit it was a spy plane when the Russians produced the pilot, Gary Powers. As a result, the first thing Khrushchev did at the summit was to demand an apology from President Eisenhower. When Eisenhower refused, Khrushchev went home, and the summit collapsed. It was a very frightening time. If the two sides resorted to all-out nuclear war, their stockpiles of nuclear weapons guaranteed that all life on earth would be wiped out.

By 1961, nearly 2,000 East Germans were fleeing into West Berlin every day. At the Vienna summit of June 1961, Khrushchev again demanded that the Americans leave West Berlin. Kennedy refused – and on 25 July he increased America’s spending on weapons. On 13 August, Khrushchev closed the border between East and West Berlin – and built a wall. The Berlin Wall became a symbol of the Cold War.

U2 Crisis and the Berlin Wall

How close to war did the world come over Cuba in 1962?

Meanwhile, the Americans were becoming more aggressive. In 1959, the Communist leader Fidel Castro took power in Cuba. Since Cuba was only 100 miles away from Florida, this was as much a problem for them as West Berlin was for the Russians. In 1961, the Americans elected a new President, John F Kennedy, who promised to get tough on Communism.

Initially, Kennedy’s attempts to get tough went wrong. His actions at the Vienna summit had merely caused the Berlin Wall. When Castro made a trade agreement with Russia, the Americans stopped trading with Cuba; in retaliation, Cuba nationalised all American-owned companies. Then in April 1961 the CIA supported an attempted invasion of Cuba by anti-Castro Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs; it failed miserably, greatly embarrassing Kennedy. Even worse, as a result, in September 1961, Castro asked Russia for – and was publicly promised – weapons to defend Cuba against America. On 14 October 1962 an American U2 spy-plane took pictures of a nuclear missile base being built on Cuba.

Kennedy’s advisers told him he had 10 days before Cuba could fire the missiles at targets in America. For the next fortnight, the world stood on the brink of global nuclear war. Fearing a military strike would lead to hot war, Kennedy decided to blockade Cuba. The Russian ships thought to be carrying missiles only turned back at the last minute. Most people in the West thought the end of the world was nigh.

Then (in the words of one US adviser) ‘the other guy blinked’: Khrushchev sent two telegrams – the first (26 October) offering to dismantle the sites if Kennedy would agree not to invade Cuba, and a second (27 October) demanding that American missile sites in Turkey be dismantled. Just at this moment, a U2 plane was shot down in Cuba, but Kennedy decided to ignore the incident.

Kennedy publicly agreed not to invade Cuba (and secretly agreed to dismantle the sites in Turkey). Later, because of this, Khrushchev claimed that he won the crisis. At the time, however, Kennedy appeared to be the victor, because the Russians had dismantled the Cuba sites. Soon after, Khrushchev fell from power.

Both leaders had had a fright. Kennedy and Khrushchev set up a telephone ‘hotline’ to talk directly in a crisis. In 1963, they agreed a Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Although it took another 27 years, the Cuba crisis marked the beginning of the end of the Cold War.

Cuba Crisis

# 10. Population of USA. Migration

At the time of the first federal census, in 1790, the population of the United States was 3,929,214. Between 1800 and 1850, the population almost quadrupled; between 1850 and 1900, it tripled; and between 1900 and 1950, it almost doubled. During the 1960s and 1970s, however, the growth rate slowed steadily, declining from 2.9% annually in 1960 to 2% in 1969 and to less than 1% in the 1980s. The population was estimated at 263,064,000 in mid-1995. The median age of the population increased from 16.7 years in 1820 to 22.9 years in 1900 and to 34.3 years in 1995.

The population of United States in 2003 was estimated by the United Nations at 294,043,000, which placed it as number 3 in population among the 193 nations of the world. In that year approximately 13% of the population was over 65 years of age, with another 21% of the population under 15 years of age. There were 97 males for every 100 females in the country in 2003. According to the UN, the annual population growth rate for 2000–2005 is 1.03%, with the projected population for the year 2015 at 329,669,000. The population density in 2002 was 30 per sq km (77 per sq mi). The major population concentrations are along the northeast Atlantic coast and the southwest Pacific coast. The population is most dense between New York City and Washington, D.C.

It was estimated by the Population Reference Bureau that 77% of the population lived in urban areas in 2001. Suburbs have absorbed most of the shift in population distribution since 1950. The capital city, Washington, D.C., had a population of 3,888,000 in that year. Other major metropolitan areas include the following: New York, 16,626,000; Los Angeles, 13,129,000; Chicago, 6,945,000; Dallas, 3,912,000; Houston, 3,365,000; Philadelphia, 2,607,000; San Diego, 2,983,000; and Phoenix, 2,607,000. Major cities can be found throughout the United States. According to the United Nations, the urban population growth rate for 2000–2005 was 1.0%.

# 11. Public Holidays in the USA

Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2011-December 2012 period.

January 01 New Year's Day,

January 17 Martin Luther King Day

February 21 Presidents' Day

May 30 Memorial Day

July 04 Independence Day

September 05 Labor Day

October 10 Columbus Day

November 11 Veterans' Day

November 24 Thanksgiving Day

December 25 Christmas Day

# 12. Duties of the President and Vice President

The President is the head of the executive branch and plays a large role in making America's laws.

His job is to approve the laws that Congress creates. When the Senate and the House approve a bill, they send it to the President. If he agrees with the law, he signs it and the law goes into effect. If the President does not like a bill, he can refuse to sign it. When he does this, it is called a veto.

If the President vetoes a bill, it will most likely never become a law. Congress can override a veto, but to do so two-thirds of the Members of Congress must vote against the President.

Despite all of his power, the President cannot write bills. He can propose a bill, but a member of Congress must submit it for him. In addition to playing a key role in the lawmaking process, the President has several duties. He serves as the American Head of State, meaning that he meets with the leaders of other countries and can make treaties with them. However, the Senate must approve any treaty before it becomes official.

The President is also the Chief of the Government. That means that he is technically the boss of every government worker. Also, the President is the official head of the U.S. military. He can authorize the use of troops overseas without declaring war. To officially declare war, though, he must get the approval of the Congress.

The President and the Vice-President are the only officials chosen by the entire country. Not just anyone can be President, though. In order to be elected, one must be at least 35 years old. Also, each candidate must be a natural-born U.S. citizen and have lived in the U.S. for at least 14 years. When elected, the President serves a term of four years. The most one President can serve is two terms, for a total of eight years.

Before 1951, the President could serve for as many terms as he wanted. However, no one had tried. After two terms as President, George Washington chose not to run again. All other Presidents followed his example until Franklin D. Roosevelt. Roosevelt successfully ran for office four times. Early in his fourth term, he died, in 1945.

Six years later, Congress passed the 22nd Amendment, which limits Presidents to two terms.

George Washington was the first president under the US constitution of 1789. However, the US was an independent nation for 13 years before the Constitution was signed. For one year during this time John Hanson served as “President of the US in Congress assembled.” Technically, he was the first president of the United States. Washington’s vice president was John Adams, the first Vice President of the United States.

The Vice President of the United States has only two primary official duties: 1) to preside over the Senate and to cast tie-breaking votes there, 2) and to preside over and certify the official vote count of the United States Electoral College. The Vice President’s salary is $400,000 per year.

In order of succession, the Vice President is followed by the Speaker of the House, then the President pro tempor (highest ranking senator), follow by the Secretary of State.

# 13. Congress of the USA

Legislature of the U.S., separated structurally from the executive and judicial (see judiciary) branches of government. Established by the Constitution of the United States, it succeeded the unicameral congress created by the Articles of Confederation (1781). It consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Representation in the Senate is fixed at two senators per state. Until passage of the 17th Amendment (1913), senators were appointed by the state legislatures; since then they have been elected directly. In the House, representation is proportional to each state's population; total membership is restricted (since 1912) to 435 members (the total rose temporarily to 437 following the admission of Hawaii and Alaska as states in 1959). Congressional business is processed by committees: bills are debated in committees in both houses, and reconciliation of the two resulting versions takes place in a conference committee. A presidential veto can be overridden by a two-thirds majority in each house. Congress's constitutional powers include the setting and collecting of taxes, borrowing money on credit, regulating commerce, coining money, declaring war, raising and supporting armies, and making all laws necessary for the execution of its powers. All finance-related legislation must originate in the House; powers exclusive to the Senate include approval of presidential nominations, ratification of treaties, and adjudication of impeachments. See also bicameral system.

Constitutional Qualifications for Members of Congress

Members of the House must be at least 25 years of age and a citizen of the US for a minimum of 7 years.

Members of the Senate must be at least 30 years of age and a citizen of the US for a minimum of 9 years.

All representatives must reside in the state from which they are elected, although House members do not need to live in their congressional district.

Powers of Congress (Article 1)

Power to tax

Congress has the power to "lay and collect taxes"

Power to regulate commerce

Congress can make laws regarding trade and commerce amongst the states and with other countries

Power to coin money

the individual states are forbidden to have their own currencies

Power to borrow money

Congress can "borrow money on the credit of the United States"

War Power

the Constitution gives Congress the sole power to declare war. In 1973 it passed the War Powers Act which limited the President's power to send US troops overseas

Elastic Clause

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution states that the Congress is able "to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers." This has allowed the Congress to pass laws on matters not specifically mentioned in the Constitution, leading to a great expansion of Federal power.

Choosing a President

if no candidate receives a majority of Electoral College votes in a presidential election, the House of Representatives is able to choose a president. Congress also has the power to approve the selection of a vice-president if that office becomes vacant (as happened in 1973 following the resignation of Spiro Agnew, or 1974 following Vice-President Ford's accession to the presidency after President Nixon resigned).

Impeachment

the House may bring charges against an official, such as a judge, or the president. The Senate then acts as the jury and can convict by a two-thirds vote. No president has ever been convicted, although President Andrew Johnson survived by one vote in the 1860s and there is not much doubt that President Nixon would have been removed in 1974 if he had not resigned.

Presidential Appointments and Treaty Ratification

This power is given to the Senate alone. In the 1980s the Senate rejected the nomination by President Reagan of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court. A number of Cabinet nominations by various presidents have also been rejected.

Oversight Function

the investigatory role of Congress is an important responsibility. Through committee hearings, the congress is able to investigate government departments and agencies and inquire into issues of concern at any time.

# 14. Arts

Support for the Arts. The level of public support for the arts is much lower than it is in other wealthy nations. Patronage for unknown individual artists, writers, and performers is scarce. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has a very small operating budget with which it funds everything from public broadcasting to individual artists. In recent years, the NEA has been under attack from Congress, whose conservative members question the value and often the morality of the art produced with NEA grants.

Support also comes from private donations. These donations are tax-deductible and are a popular hedge among the wealthy against income and estate taxes. Generous gifts to prestigious museums, galleries, symphonies, and operas that often name halls and galleries after their donors are essential means of subsidizing the arts.

Literature. Much of American literature revolves around questions of the nature or defining characteristics of the nation and attempts to discern or describe the national identity. American literature found its own voice in the nineteenth century. In the early decades of that century, the essayists Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson set out the enduring themes of personal simplicity, the continuity between man and nature, individualism, and self-reliance. Walt Whitman celebrated democracy in his free verse poems.

Other nineteenth-century writers, such as Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Mark Twain, articulated moral and ethical questions about the new country and were particularly influential for their critique of American puritanism.

Turn-of-the-century writers such as Edith Wharton, Henry James, and Theodore Dreiser picked up on those themes but were particularly concerned with social class and class mobility. They explored the nature of American culture and the tensions between ideals of freedom and the realities of social conditions.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, writers such as F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway began to question the values earlier writers had represented. Fitzgerald questioned the reality of the American dream by highlighting the corrupting influence of wealth and casting doubt on the value of mobility and success. Hemingway, like other modernists, addressed the issue of how one ought to live once one has lost faith in religious values and other social guidelines. Other early twentieth-century writers, such as Zora Neil Hurston, Nella Larsen, and William Faulkner, introduced race and racism as central themes in American literature.

In the 1930s, the Great Depression inspired authors such as John Steinbeck and Willa Cather to write about rural America. Their novels romanticized the hard work of poor rural whites. Implicit in these novels is a critique of the wealth and excess of the urban metropolis and the industrial system that supported it. Although these novels are permeated with multiethnic characters and themes, Anglos are generally the focal point.

Issues of identity and race were explored by earlier American black writers. A generation of black authors after World War II made these permanent themes in American literature, illustrating the poverty, inequality and racism experienced by American blacks. Many black writers explored the meaning of living inside a black skin in a white nation with a legacy of slavery. These writers included James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, and Richard Wright. Perhaps the most influential contemporary writer who deals with these themes is Toni Morrison.

An important literary school known as Southern Gothic discussed the nature of rural southern

A tractor harvesting crops in the western United States. The U.S. is the world's leading food exporter.

life from the perspective of poor and middle-class whites. Writers such as Truman Capote, Tennessee Williams, Carson McCullers, and Shirley Jackson explored the contradictions between privileged whiteness and a culturally deficient southernness. These novels feature lonely, grotesque, and underprivileged white characters who are the superiors of their black playmates, servants, and neighbors but cultural inferiors in America as a whole.

Beginning in the late 1950s and 1960s, a generation known as the Beats challenged the dominant norms of white American masculinity. They rejected conventions of family and sexuality, corporate success, and money. Among the Beats were William Burroughs, Lawrence Ferlingetti, Allan Ginsberg, and Jack Kerouac.

Starting in the 1960s, women writers began to challenge the notion that women's place was in the home. Early feminist writers who critiqued the paternalism of marriage include the nonfiction writer Betty Friedan, the novelist Marge Piercy, and the poets Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath.

Feminist themes, along with issues of ethnicity and otherness, continue to be important in American literature. Gloria Anzuldúa and Ana Castillo show how female and Latina identities intersect. Novels by Louise Erdrich and Leslie Marmon Silko illustrate how Native American families attempt to survive and reclaim their traditions amid poverty and discrimination.

Other contemporary novels try to deconstruct the experience of the "norm" in American culture. Ann Tyler's characters are often empty and unhappy but cannot locate the sources of those feelings. Don Delillo writes about the amoral corporate world, the American obsession with consumer goods, and the chaos and anxiety that underlie the quietness of suburban life. Joyce Carol Oates is attracted to the sinister aspects of social conformity.

These novels are not the most widely read looks in the United States. Much more popular are genres such as crime and adventure, romance, horror, and science fiction. These genres tend to repeat valued cultural narratives. For example, the novels of Tom Clancy feature the United States as the moral victor in cold war and post–Cold War terrorist scenarios. Harlequin romances idealize traditional male and female gender roles and always have a happy ending. In horror novels, violence allows for catharsis among readers. Much science fiction revolves around technical-scientific solutions to human problems.

Graphic Arts. The most influential visual artists are from the modern period. Much early art was imitative of European styles. Important artists include Jackson Pollack and Andy Warhol. Warhol's art documented icons of American life such as Cambell's soup cans and Marilyn Monroe. His work was deliberately amusing and commercial. Most graphic art is produced for the advertising industry.

Performance Arts. Performance arts include many original genres of modern dancing that have influenced by classical forms as well as American traditions, such as jazz. Important innovators in dance include Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, and Alvin Ailey. Theaters in every town that once hosted plays, vaudeville, and musicals now show movies or have closed. In general, performance arts are available only in metropolitan areas.

The United States has produced several popular music genres that are known for blending regional, European, and African influences. The best known of these genres are the African-American inventions blues and jazz. Among the most important jazz composers and musicians are Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and Thelonius Monk. Although now considered classics, blues and jazz standards were the popular music of their day.

Music fits into "black" and "white" categories. Popular swing jazz tunes were standardized by band leaders such as Glenn Miller, whose white band made swing music hugely popular with young white people.

Rock 'n' roll, now a major cultural export, has its roots in these earlier popular forms. Major influences in rock and roll include Elvis Presley, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Bruce Springstein. Although rock 'n' roll is primarily white, soul and Motown, with singers such as Aretha Franklin, the Supremes, and the Temptations, produced a popular black music.

Country music, another popular genre, has its roots in the early American folk music of the Southeast now termed country or bluegrass. This genre reworked traditional gospel songs and hymns to produce songs about the everyday life of poor whites in the rural Southeast.

Popular music in the United States has always embodied a division between its commercial and entertainment value and its intellectual or political values. Country and folk, blues, rock 'n' roll, rap, and hip-hop have all carried powerful social and political messages. As old forms become standard and commercialized, their political edge tends to give way to more generic content, such as love songs.