*This article is about political and social developments, and the origins and aftermath of the war. For military actions, see*[*American Revolutionary War*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolutionary_War)*. For other uses, see*[*American Revolution (disambiguation)*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolution_(disambiguation))*.*

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*In this article, inhabitants of the*[*Thirteen Colonies*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirteen_Colonies)*of*[*British America*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_America)*that supported the American Revolution are primarily referred to as "Americans," with occasional references to "*[*Patriots*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriot_(American_Revolution))*", "Whigs," "Rebels" or "Revolutionaries". Colonists who supported the British in opposing the Revolution are usually referred to as "*[*Loyalists*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loyalist_(American_Revolution))*" or "Tories". The geographical area of the thirteen colonies is often referred to simply as "America".*

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Declaration_independence.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.20wmf4/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Declaration_independence.jpg)

[John Trumbull](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Trumbull)'s [*Declaration of Independence*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trumbull%27s_Declaration_of_Independence), showing the [five-man committee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Committee_of_Five) in charge of drafting the [United States Declaration of Independence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence) in 1776 as it presents its work to the [Second Continental Congress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Continental_Congress) in [Philadelphia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia)

The **American Revolution** was the political upheaval during the last half of the 18th century in which [thirteen colonies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thirteen_Colonies) in [North America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_America) joined together to break free from the [British Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire), combining to become the [United States of America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States). They first rejected the authority of the [Parliament of Great Britain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_Great_Britain) to govern them from overseas without representation, and then expelled all royal officials. By 1774, each colony had established a [Provincial Congress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provincial_Congress), or an equivalent governmental institution, to govern itself, but still within the empire. The British responded by sending combat troops to re-impose direct rule. Through representatives sent in 1775 to the [Second Continental Congress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Continental_Congress), the states joined together at first to defend their respective [self-governance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-governance) and manage the armed conflict against the British known as the [American Revolutionary War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolutionary_War) (also: *American War of Independence*, 1775–83). Ultimately, the states collectively determined that the British monarchy, by acts of [tyranny](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyrant), could no longer [legitimately](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legitimacy_(political)) claim their [allegiance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allegiance). They then severed ties with the British Empire in July 1776, when the Congress issued the [United States Declaration of Independence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence), rejecting the monarchy on behalf of the new [sovereign](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereignty) nation separate and external to the British Empire. The war ended with effective American victory in October 1781, followed by formal British abandonment of any claims to the United States with the [Treaty of Paris](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Paris_(1783)) in 1783.

The American Revolution was the result of a series of social, political, and intellectual transformations in early American society and government, collectively referred to as the [*American Enlightenment*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Enlightenment). Americans rejected the [oligarchies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oligarchy) and [aristocracies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristocracy) common in Europe at the time, championing instead the development of [republicanism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republicanism) based on the [Enlightenment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment) understanding of [liberalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberalism_in_the_United_States). Among the significant results of the revolution was the creation of a democratically-elected representative government [responsible to the will of the people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consent_of_the_governed). However, sharp political debates erupted over the appropriate level of [democracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy) desirable in the new government, with a number of [Founders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Founding_Fathers_of_the_United_States) fearing [mob rule](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ochlocracy).

Many fundamental issues of national governance were settled with the ratification of the [United States Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Constitution) in 1788, which replaced the relatively weaker first attempt at a national government adopted in 1781, the [*Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Articles_of_Confederation). In contrast to the loose [confederation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confederation), the Constitution established a strong [federated](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federation) government. The [United States Bill of Rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Bill_of_Rights)(1791), comprising the first 10 constitutional amendments, quickly followed. It guaranteed many "[natural rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_and_legal_rights)" that were influential in justifying the revolution, and attempted to balance a strong national government with relatively broad [personal liberties](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberty). The American shift to liberal republicanism, and the gradually increasing democracy, caused an upheaval of traditional social hierarchy and gave birth to the ethic that has formed a core of political values in the United States.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolution#cite_note-Wood.2C_1992-0)[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolution#cite_note-1)