

Great Battles for Boys: The American Revolution

Study Guide Questions and Answers

INTRODUCTION

1. What is a colony?

A country or area controlled by another country, usually one far away.

2. What was the meaning of the phrase “no taxation without representation”?

The colonists were saying that England’s politicians shouldn’t just make rules for the Americans without also listening to their wants and needs.

3. Who were the Sons of Liberty?

A group of colonial men who helped create rebellions, such as the Boston Tea Party, in order to fight against the British King and his government.

BATTLES OF LEXINGTON AND CONCORD

1. What is a stockpile? A large number of supplies stored for an emergency. For instance, a build-up of weapons and ammunition in preparation for armed conflict.

2. Who alerted the American colonial militia that the British were coming? Paul Revere, William Dawes, and Samuel Prescott.

3. What were the normal “rules of warfare” at this time in history? Columns of soldiers would line up in strict formation and shoot at each other.

4. What is irregular warfare, or guerrilla tactics?

When armed civilians use ambushes, raids, and hit-and-run strikes to combat a larger and less mobile military force.

BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL

1. What is siege warfare?

When a military force denies an enemy access to an area or supplies. Eventually, the enemy is forced to leave or surrender due to general misery and the lack of supplies.

2. Who led the Continental Army?

General George Washington

3. Why would someone say this battle has the wrong name?

Because most of the fighting took place on Breed's Hill.

4. Who was leading the patriots through the dark of night to Bunker Hill?

Israel Putnam

THE OTHER FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

- 1. Before the American Revolution, the world was structured like a staircase. What did that structure mean for different people?**

Rich and powerful people stood on the upper stairs. Poor and powerless people stood on the lower stairs. It was very rare—almost impossible—for poor people to climb the stairs and become powerful. Wealthy people often looked down on the poor, and some of them even felt entitled to treat the poor very badly.

- 2. What was a powder boy?**

When the fighting broke out, the powder boy was tasked with running up and down a ship's ladders to retrieve gunpowder.

- 3. When was the Boston Massacre?**

March 5, 1770

- 4. Who was William "Billy" Lee? Was he on the sidelines during battle?**

George Washington's slave and closest personal assistant. He stayed on the battlefield with Washington.

BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND

- 1. When did the British government declare war on the American colonies?**

October 1775

2. When was the Declaration of Independence signed?

July 4, 1776

3. Who were the military commanders on each side in this battle?

George Washington was leading the Americans and William Howe led the British.

4. Before the battle, General Howe offered to pardon — or forgive— the Continental Army soldiers. What was George Washington’s reply?

Washington quickly replied to Howe’s offer. He said, “Those who have committed no fault want no pardon.”

5. In this battle, how did General Howe outsmart Washington?

Howe outsmarted Washington by finding a little-used road, and by attacking the divided Americans on land.

6. Can you name an important military lesson that Washington learned from this battle?

(Several possible answers.)

Know the terrain.

Inspired leadership matters.

No two battles are the same.

BATTLE OF TRENTON

1. Who wrote “Common Sense”? Thomas Paine

- 2. When did Washington launch his surprise attack on the British?** Christmas day
- 3. Who was sent to spy on the British Army?** John Honeyman
- 4. What was the nickname for the men who rowed Washington across the Delaware River?** The Marbleheaders. They were from Marblehead, Massachusetts.
- 5. What kind of boats did they use?** They rowed Durham boats.

BATTLE OF PRINCETON

- 1. Who did General Howe put in command of the British forces in New Jersey?** Lieutenant General Charles Cornwallis
- 2. Who was leading the American Militiamen?** General Hugh Mercer.
- 3. After the battle's first day, what mistake did Cornwallis make?**

Cornwallis decided to hold back the full attack until the next day. He thought his men could trap Washington's army by holding their position at the bridge overnight, getting some rest, and attacking the Patriots the following morning.

Cornwallis was wrong — the delay gave Washington time to change his battle plan.

- 4. Who won the Battle of Princeton?** The Patriots.
- 5. Who was Henry Knox?**

(Several possible answers) Henry Knox was a bookbinder, a member of the Sons of Liberty, a military leader in the Continental Army, and an artillery expert, among other accomplishments.

6. Before the war, how did Henry Knox learn about military tactics and strategies? Before the war, Knox was a bookbinder. He learned about military tactics and strategies from reading books.

GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON

1. What is the name of the Virginia Plantation that Washington inherited? Mount Vernon

2. What was George Washington's first job? Land surveyor.

3. What was the name of the war Washington served in —for the British—before the American Revolution? The French and Indian War.

4. Name some character traits that made Washington an excellent leader.

Humility. Sacrifice. Respect. Teachable. Wise. Self-aware.

5. After the Revolutionary War, did Washington want to become King?

No. Washington did not want the United States to have a monarchy, with a king and queen. He wanted a representative democracy.

6. After George Washington died, his will included a request regarding his slaves. What was that request, and how was it handled?

Washington left orders for the emancipation—freedom—of all Mount Vernon’s slaves after the death of his wife, Martha.

But Martha didn’t wait for her death. She freed the family’s slaves after Washington died.

Washington’s will also set aside money for his slaves’ education—to the third generation, so that even their grandchildren could pay for schooling.

THE BATTLE OF BRANDYWINE CREEK

1. What was the capital of the colonies in 1777? Philadelphia

2. When did General Howe and his troops arrive at Kennett Square?

September 10, 1777

3. What was the name of the French nobleman who fought with the Americans?

Marquis de Lafayette

4. What were some features of the area where Washington chose to make his defensive stand?

The Brandywine Creek area was about twenty-five miles outside Philadelphia — making it difficult for the British to launch a surprise attack. It provided high ground with rolling hills

covered with trees that could offer cover for his riflemen and other artillery. The creek was also difficult to forge, or cross, except at a few select locations.

5. Who won the battle?

The British. It was a humiliating defeat for Washington.

THE BATTLE OF SARATOGA

1. Who was nicknamed “Gentleman Johnny”?

British General John Burgoyne

2. Was the Battle of Saratoga one battle?

No. It was a series of conflicts that added up to one epic battle.

3. Can you describe some of Benedict Arnold’s actions in this battle?

(Several possible answers). Benedict Arnold was ordered to stay at headquarters. But when Gates was so slow to retaliate against Burgoyne, Benedict Arnold jumped on his horse and lead a charge straight into the British center.

Also, Benedict Arnold led the Americans on the right wing of the British forces. Arnold was shot in the leg, but the Americans forced the British into a retreat.

4. Later, in 1799, what did Benedict Arnold secretly try to do?

In 1779, Arnold requested command of West Point, a strongly fortified American fort along the Hudson River in New York.

(Today, it's home to the United States Military Academy.) In secret, Arnold wanted command of West Point because he was going to hand it over to the British.

5. When his secret plan was uncovered, what did Benedict Arnold do?

Benedict Arnold switched sides—he became a Redcoat!

VALLEY FORGE

1. What is mutiny?

When soldiers refuse to obey their commander's orders, or when they try to overthrow authority.

2. When did Washington lead his men to Valley Forge?

December, 1777

3. Why did Washington lead his men to Valley Forge?

The Continental Army was in shambles. His men were starving and lacked clothing. Morale was terrible. His men needed rest and to learn how to become trained soldiers, not just guerrilla fighters.

4. Why did Washington choose that location of Valley Forge?

Logistics and defenses.

Logistics: Located about 20 miles outside Philadelphia, Valley Forge was close enough to the city to keep watch over its British occupiers but far enough away that the Redcoats couldn't spring a sudden attack.

Defenses: Valley Forge provided several natural protective barriers, including two hills—Mount Joy and Mount Misery—and the Schuylkill River (pronounced “SKOO-kill”). The Continentals could keep watch and spot an approaching enemy on the high ground.

5. Who did Washington appoint to train his disorganized fighters? Major General Baron von Steuben

THE BATTLE OF MONMOUTH

1. What is an alliance?

A union that benefits both sides.

2. Who became the British commander after General Howe left North America?

General Sir Henry Clinton

3. Why was Washington “boiling mad” during this battle?

Major General Charles Lee showed terrible leadership. He created chaos and confusion among the American force — and ruined the entire battle plan.

When Washington’s main force approached the battle, Lee’s last dispatch had said that his men were encircling Clinton’s army. Washington assumed that was happening—until he was met by Lee’s own retreating troops running for their lives!

4. Who won the Battle of Monmouth?

Neither side — it was a draw.

THE BATTLE OF CAMDEN

1. Why did British General Clinton turn his attention to the southern colonies?

Several reasons.

The war had reached a stalemate up north—neither side was winning decisively. Clinton kept trying to lure Washington into an all-out battle to destroy the Continental Army, but Washington continued to foil Clinton's objective.

Clinton also learned that England wouldn't send him any more reinforcements.

But the southern colonies were home to a large population of British Loyalists. Clinton believed these southerners who still supported the King would also help his army by providing food, shelter, and spies—and perhaps men to join his military force.

2. Who was the new commander of the American forces in the South?

Major General Horatio Gates

3. How did that commander behave in this battle?

Very badly. Gates was a weak leader. He also abandoned his men during the battle.

4. How many generals served the entire eight years of the Revolutionary War? Can you name them?

Three. George Washington, Henry Knox, and Nathanael Greene.

WOMEN OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

1. Who disguised herself as “Timothy Thayer” and “Robert Shirtliff” so she could join the army?

Deborah Sampson

2. Who warned Lafayette that his life was in danger?

Susanna Bolling

3. What object did Ana Smith Strong use to let fellow spies know a message was ready?

She would hang her laundry out to dry in full view of the British soldiers, but she would add a black petticoat to the clothesline with a certain number of handkerchiefs. The black petticoat meant, *Go pick up a message*. The handkerchiefs described where the message was hidden along the Long Island shoreline.

THE BATTLE OF KINGS MOUNTAIN

1. Who did the Patriots choose as their overall leader for this battle?

William Campbell

2. What were the rugged colonists who lived in the Carolinas called?

The Overmountain Men.

3. What kind of gun did these rugged men use? Was it often used in battle?

Rifles.

No. Generally, rifles were not used in battles. But the Overmountain Men—as unofficial soldiers—only had the weapons they kept for hunting and feeding their families.

5. What kind of guns were the Loyalists using?

The Loyalists were firing muskets.

6. Who won the Battle of Kings Mountain?

The Patriots/Americans/Overmountain Men

THE BATTLE OF COWPENS

1. What is a “double envelopment”?

When an army closes around the enemy from all sides, leaving no way out.

2. Can you describe Daniel Morgan’s brilliant military maneuver in this battle?

He fooled the British into thinking the Americans were retreating.

The American militiamen who weren’t properly trained usually did break and run once the British opened fire. But Morgan decided to use that problem to his advantage.

He set up three lines. In the front line were his best marksmen. Morgan hoped these men could fire off three shots. Then that first line would then drop back and join the second line, which was populated with more militiamen, who would then fire on the oncoming British. Then those men would fall back.

By the time the British fired on the third line, it was stocked with all those “retreating” men and fresh Continental Army soldiers.

The British charged straight ahead. They were confident the American militiamen were retreating.

3. Who won the Battle of Cowpens? The Patriots.

THE BATTLE OF GUILFORD COURTHOUSE

1. What is a pyrrhic victory?

A pyrrhic victory means any win that creates bigger losses than gains.

It refers to an ancient battle where King Pyrrhus triumphed over the Romans. But the battle destroyed so much of his army that Pyrrhus was forced to end the war.

2. What tactical mistake did Nathanael Greene make in this battle?

Unlike Daniel Morgan, who kept the lines close, Greene separated his first two lines by 350 yards. His third line was about 500 yards back—the length of five football fields! That

was a long way for those men to run while under fire. Greene also held no units in reserve.

3. Which side technically won the Battle of Guilford Courthouse?

The British.

4. Who was nicknamed the Swamp Fox? And why?

Francis Marion. Because nobody could catch him.

THE BATTLE OF YORKTOWN

1. The long years of fighting had affected both sides for the worse. Can you name some of those problems?

For the British, riots were breaking out in London. English citizens protested this expensive war that was happening far across the ocean—a war that the British citizens were paying for through higher taxes.

For the Americans, the thirteen colonies were politically and emotionally divided between Patriots and Loyalists.

Economically, the new money printed by the Continental Congress had become worthless. And Washington's army was still suffering from illnesses, malnutrition, and supply shortages.

2. How did “deliverance” arrive for Washington and his men?

About 5,500 French soldiers landed in Rhode Island and headed south with Washington's men. Other French ships later came to battle the British navy at Yorktown.

3. How did Washington move his men closer to the British camp?

He ordered his men to dig really long trenches — up to 2,000 yards long!

4. Which side won the Battle of Yorktown— and the war?

The Americans with help from the French.

5. Did Cornwallis attend the formal surrender ceremony?

No. When the formal surrender ceremony began, Cornwallis claimed he was too sick to attend.

THE AFTERMATH OF VICTORY

1. Who reignited the war between England and France?

Napoleon Bonaparte

2. Who signed a second declaration of war against Great Britain? President James Madison

3. Who wrote the poem “The Star-Spangled Banner”?

Francis Scott Key. He was describing a battle during the War of 1812.

4. When did the United States and Great Britain sign a second peace treaty? December 24, 1814