

The fundamental causes of the american revolution

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



The Fundamental Causes of the American Revolution The American Revolution was preceded by a number of events and ideas which, coupled together, led to the separation of the colonies from Britain. This revolution refers to the political upheaval during the latter half of the eighteenth century, which ultimately led to war. Although there were a series of events that led to the revolution, here I will address the main causes. On the surface, the thirteen American colonies were rejecting the tyranny of the British monarchy. Collectively, the colonies decided that because of such acts of tyranny, they could no longer legitimately claim their allegiance to Britain. In essence, Americans rejected the oligarchies common in aristocratic Europe at the time, upholding instead the development of republicanism based on the Enlightenment principles. After French military threat to British colonies ended, Britain imposed a series of taxes on the colonies and imposed other laws, which were intended to show British authority. Americans hated this, especially when, they lacked representation in British parliament. Since they had no representation whatsoever, many Americans felt the laws were illegitimate, when at the time, many still considered themselves Englishmen. An example of these supposed unjust laws and taxes were: The Navigation Acts, The Proclamation of 1763, The Stamp Act, The Townsend Act, The Tea Act, and the Intolerable Acts. Because the Stamp Act, in 1765, was the first direct tax Parliament levied on all the colonies-- all newspapers, almanacs, pamphlets, and official documents--even decks of playing cards--were required to have the stamps, all 13 colonies protested vehemently. Resolution of the Town of Braintree, Massachusetts, 1765, opposing the Stamp Act read: We have called this a

burthensome tax, because the duties are so numerous and high... that it would be totally impossible for the people to subsist under it.... We further apprehend this tax to be unconstitutional. We have always understood it to be a grand and fundamental principle of the constitution, that no freeman should be subject to any tax to which he has not given his own consent, in person or by proxy.... We take it clearly, therefore, to be inconsistent with the spirit of the common law, and of the essential fundamental principle of the British constitution, that we should be represented in that assembly in any sense, unless it be by a fiction of law.... " Furthermore, popular leaders such as Patrick Henry in Virginia and James Otis in Massachusetts rallied the people in against it. The " Sons of Liberty" formed in many towns and threatened violence if anyone sold the stamps; ultimately no one sold them. Benjamin Franklin made the case for the boycotters of the Stamp Act, explaining the colonies had spent heavily in ' manpower, money, and blood in defense of the empire in a series of wars against the French and Native Americans', and that further taxes to pay for those wars were unjust and might bring about a rebellion. Not only did certain acts by the British Government, and political opposition towards those acts trigger the revolution, but also the mindset of the people. Enlightenment principles, free-thinkers, philosophers, and theorists began to arise. Even ministers were having a say in American thought processes, during this time, which was also the period of the Great Awakening. Early on in the Revolutionary period, Reverend Andrew Bunaby said, " For fire and water are not more heterogeneous than the different colonies in North America. Nothing can exceed the jealousy and emulation which they possess in regard to each

other.... In short... were they left to themselves there would soon be a civil war from one end of the continent to the other, while the Indians and Negroes would... impatiently watch the opportunity of exterminating them all together. " He illustrated his desire for Americans to become more unified, especially, since they were under the control of another. As far as ideology as being one of the fundamental causes of the Revolution, enlightenment principles and the idea of republicanism were at the root. John Locke's ideas on liberty greatly influenced the political thinking behind the revolution; for instance, his theory of the " social contract" implied that among humanity's natural rights was the right of the people to overthrow their leaders, should those leaders betray the historic rights of Englishmen. A motivating force behind the revolution was the American embrace of a political ideology called " republicanism, " which was dominant in the colonies by 1775. The Founding Fathers, such as Samuel Adams, Patrick Henry, George Washington, Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton were strong advocates of republican values; they required men to put civic duty ahead of their personal desires. In republicanism, men had a civic duty to be prepared and willing to fight for the rights and liberties of their countrymen. The laws and taxes, which were presumed as tyranny, together with the principles arising at the time, led to unrest. Reverend Ebenezer Baldwin, in 1774, wrote: If we view the whole of the conduct of the ministry and parliament, I do not see how any one can doubt but that there is a settled fix'd plan for enslaving the colonies, or bringing them under arbitrary government.... If the ministry can secure a majority in parliament... they may rule as absolutely as they do in

France or Spain, yea as in Turkey or India.... View now the situation of America: loaded with taxes from the British parliament, as heavy as she can possibly support under,--our lands charged with the most exorbitant quit rent,--these taxes collected by foreigners, steeled against any impressions from our groans or complaints... our charters taken away--our assemblies annihilated,--governors and councils, appointed by royal authority without any concurrence of the people, enacting such laws as their sovereign pleasure shall dictate... the lives and property of Americans entirely at the disposal of officers more than three thousand miles removed from any power to control them--armies of the soldiers quartered among the inhabitants, who know the horrid purpose for which they are stationed, in the colonies--to subjugate and beat down the inhabitants.... " With sentiments such as these, it was only natural that when the British began their military hostilities against the colonies, that a war would commence. When the British sent a force of roughly 1000 troops to confiscate arms and arrest revolutionaries in Concord on April 19, 1775, The Battle of Lexington and Concord took place. They clashed with the local militia, marking, and this began the first fighting of the American Revolutionary War. The news incited the 13 colonies to call out their militias and send troops to besiege Boston. Although the Revolution culminated in war, John Adams said, " The revolution was effected before the war commenced. The revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people. "