

Unit 3

Period 3, 1754–1800

From loyal British subjects to an independent republic

Britain won the Seven Years' War but ended deep in debt, and its taxes, troops, and western limits pushed colonists from protest to independence in 1776. With French help they won by 1783, and their talk of liberty led some Americans to challenge slavery. A stronger Constitution and a Bill of Rights replaced the weak Articles, and in the 1790s Hamilton's program and Europe's wars produced the first parties.

10–17% of the AP Exam

What the exam asks most

- 1** Colonists said only their own assemblies could tax them
Britain taxed to pay its war debt; colonists boycotted and sought English rights inside the empire until 1775.
- 2** The Revolution's ideals reached only some Americans
The North began gradual emancipation and poorer men won seats, but slavery spread south and almost no women voted.
- 3** Europe's wars and Hamilton's plan created the first parties
Federalists backed the bank and Britain, Democratic-Republicans backed France and states' rights, and Washington warned against parties and permanent alliances.
- 4** Fear of central power shaped the Constitution and the Bill of Rights
The Articles' Congress could not tax, Shays's Rebellion spurred reform, and Anti-Federalist fears won the Bill of Rights.
- 5** Cheap land drew settlers into conflict with Native nations
Settlers defied the Proclamation Line, backcountry farmers resented coastal elites, and Ohio nations resisted until 1795.
- 6** Enlightenment ideas turned resistance into a case for independence
Paine attacked monarchy itself, and the Declaration rested government on natural rights and consent.

How it unfolded

1754–1763

Britain drove France from North America

In 1754 Britain and France, each with Native allies, began fighting over the Ohio Valley. Britain took Quebec in 1759 and pushed France off the mainland in 1763, but the war nearly doubled its debt. With France gone, Pontiac's War struck British forts, so London barred settlement past the Appalachians and kept troops in America.

1776–1789

Americans won independence and wrote a constitution

Saratoga brought the French alliance, and in 1783 Britain recognized independence. Liberty talk led northern states to begin ending slavery and justified schooling girls. Fearing tyranny, the states kept their governors weak, and the Articles gave Congress no power to tax. The Annapolis call and Shays's Rebellion led delegates to write a stronger Constitution, and Federalists won ratification by promising a bill of rights.

1763–1776

Colonists resisted taxes they never approved

To pay for the war and those troops, Britain ended salutary neglect and taxed the colonies with the Sugar, Stamp, and Townshend Acts. Colonists insisted that only their own assemblies could tax them, and boycotts forced two repeals. The Tea Party brought the Coercive Acts, Lexington began the war, and *Common Sense* turned a fight for English rights into a case for independence.

1789–1800

Leaders split into the first parties

Washington set precedents, and the states added the Bill of Rights in 1791. Fights over Hamilton's debt plan and bank split leaders into Federalists and Jefferson's Democratic-Republicans, and the French Revolution's war with Britain, then Jay's Treaty, widened the gap. In the West, Fallen Timbers forced the Greenville cession. After the XYZ Affair, Federalists turned the Sedition Act on critics, and the backlash helped elect Jefferson in 1800.

Timeline

Bold: know these cold.

1754	The French and Indian War began; colonies rejected Franklin's Albany Plan	1777	Victory at Saratoga brought a French alliance in 1778
1763 Feb. 10	Treaty of Paris pushed France off the mainland; Britain gained Canada and Florida	1781	Cornwallis surrendered to American and French forces at Yorktown
Oct. 7	During Pontiac's War, the Proclamation barred settlement west of the Appalachians	1783	In the Treaty of Paris, Britain recognized independence and a Mississippi border
1764	Sugar Act cut the molasses duty but enforced it to raise revenue	1785	The Land Ordinance laid out western townships and set aside a section in each for schools
1765	Stamp Act taxed printed paper; Quartering Act made colonies supply troops Stamp Act Congress denied Parliament's right to tax the colonies	1786	In Shays's Rebellion, indebted Massachusetts farmers shut down courts
1766	Parliament repealed the Stamp Act; the Declaratory Act claimed power "in all cases whatsoever"	1787	Delegates in Philadelphia wrote the Constitution; nine states ratified it by 1788 Northwest Ordinance set steps to statehood and banned slavery north of the Ohio
1767	Townshend Acts taxed glass, lead, paint, paper, and tea to pay royal officials	1790	Hamilton funded the debt, assumed state debts, and won a national bank
1770	Soldiers killed five colonists in the Boston Massacre	1791	The states ratified the Bill of Rights
1772	Samuel Adams organized Boston's committee of correspondence	1793	With revolutionary France and Britain at war, Washington declared neutrality
1773 Dec. 16	At the Boston Tea Party, protesters dumped East India Company tea	1794	Western farmers resisted a whiskey tax until Washington sent about 13,000 militia After Fallen Timbers, the Western Confederacy ceded most of Ohio at Greenville (1795) Jay's Treaty cleared British forts from the Northwest but did not end impressment
1774	Coercive (Intolerable) Acts punished Boston and the Quebec Act reached the Ohio; Congress answered with a boycott	1796	Washington's Farewell Address warned against parties and permanent alliances
1775 Apr. 19	Militia fought British regulars at Lexington and Concord Congress sent the Olive Branch Petition; George III proclaimed a rebellion Dunmore's Proclamation offered freedom to rebels' enslaved men who joined British forces	1798	After the XYZ Affair and during the Quasi-War, Federalists passed the Alien and Sedition Acts Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions said a state could judge the acts unconstitutional
1776 July 4	Paine's <i>Common Sense</i> attacked monarchy and urged independence Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence	1800	The House broke a Jefferson–Burr tie, and Federalists handed power to Jefferson peacefully

People

Benjamin Franklin 1706–1790 Proposed the Albany Plan (1754) and negotiated the French alliance after Saratoga (1778).

John Dickinson 1732–1808 His *Letters from a Farmer* accepted trade laws but rejected taxes for revenue.

George Washington 1732–1799 Led the Continental Army; as president set precedents and declared neutrality.

Thomas Jefferson 1743–1826 Wrote the Declaration; feared Hamilton's plan favored merchants over farmers.

John Adams 1735–1826 Signed the Sedition Act; in 1815 wrote that the Revolution was "in the minds of the people" before Lexington.

Abigail Adams 1744–1818 Asked her husband to "Remember the Ladies"; he replied, "I cannot but laugh."

Joseph Brant (Thayendanegea) 1743–1807 Mohawk leader who fought for Britain to save Mohawk land; most Oneidas backed the Patriots.

Elizabeth Freeman (Mum Bett) c. 1744–1829 Sued her Massachusetts enslaver and won her freedom in 1781.

Judith Sargent Murray 1751–1820 Argued in "On the Equality of the Sexes" (1790) that women's minds equal men's.

Benjamin Banneker 1731–1806 Free Black mathematician who reminded Jefferson in 1791 that he had declared all men equal.

James Madison 1751–1836 Drafted the Virginia Plan and the Bill of Rights; opposed Hamilton's bank.

Alexander Hamilton c. 1755–1804 Treasury secretary whose plan favored creditors and merchants; he led the Federalists.

Documents

Proclamation of 1763 Reserved western land for Native nations; settlers resented and ignored it.

| “for the use of the said Indians”

Common Sense (Paine) 1776 Attacked monarchy in plain words and said an island should not rule a continent.

| “in America THE LAW IS KING”

Declaration of Independence 1776 Based independence on natural rights and listed grievances against George III.

| “deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed”

Prince Hall petition 1777 Used the Patriots’ own natural-rights arguments against slavery; Massachusetts passed no law.

| “a Natural and Unaliable Right to that freedom” Original spelling.

Articles of Confederation 1777; in force 1781 Fear of tyranny kept it weak, yet its Congress made peace and organized the Northwest.

| “Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence”

Northwest Ordinance 1787 Set steps to equal statehood, supported public schools, and promised Indians “utmost good faith,” a promise the nation soon broke.

| “There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory”

U.S. Constitution 1787 Created a stronger federal republic and protected slavery without naming it.

| “necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers”

The Federalist 1787–1788 Argued for ratification: a large republic tames faction (No. 10); branches check each other (No. 51).

| “Ambition must be made to counteract ambition”

Anti-Federalist essays 1787–1788 Feared a distant, powerful Congress and demanded a bill of rights.

| “There is no Declaration of Rights”

Washington’s Farewell Address 1796 Warned against parties; isolationists later cited it to reject the League of Nations.

| “’Tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent Alliances”

Terms

Salutary neglect Before 1763 Britain loosely enforced its mercantilist trade laws and let colonial assemblies govern themselves.

Virtual representation Britain’s claim that Parliament spoke for all colonists; “no taxation without representation” rejected it.

Sons and Daughters of Liberty Sons forced stamp agents to quit; Daughters spun homespun to replace British cloth.

Loyalists An estimated 15 to 20 percent of white colonists sided with Britain; many later left.

Great Awakening vs. Enlightenment Revivals of the 1730s–1740s stirred emotion and split churches; the Enlightenment and Deism prized reason and natural law.

Natural rights Locke’s idea that government exists to protect life, liberty, and property.

Republicanism Rule by elected representatives of a virtuous people, with no king.

Republican motherhood Women served the republic by raising virtuous sons, which justified schooling girls.

Gradual emancipation Pennsylvania, New York, and other northern states freed enslaved people’s future children at set ages; Massachusetts courts ended slavery.

Western Confederacy Shawnee, Miami, and allied nations, led by Little Turtle, who defended the Ohio Country, c. 1785–1795.

Spanish missions From 1769 Spanish friars built California missions on coerced Native labor, and Spanish and Native ways mixed.

Backcountry vs. coast Frontier farmers resented eastern elites: the Regulators, Shays’s rebels, and the Whiskey rebels.

Great Compromise Gave states equal Senate seats and House seats by population.

Three-Fifths Clause Counted three-fifths of enslaved people toward House seats and direct taxes, adding to southern power.

Loose vs. strict construction Hamilton read “necessary and proper” broadly to allow a bank; Jefferson read it narrowly.

Alien and Sedition Acts Federalists’ 1798 laws against immigrants and “false, scandalous and malicious” criticism.

Writing the essays

Contextualization

- For 1754–1776, start with salutary neglect, when colonial assemblies governed themselves, and the war that left Britain in debt.
- For the Articles and Constitution, start with colonial fights against royal governors, which left Americans fearing strong executives.

Moves that score

- Explain each piece of evidence in a full sentence and keep it inside the prompt’s dates; a bare name earns nothing.
- In a DBQ, show how purpose, audience, or point of view shapes at least two documents.
- For causation, rank the causes and defend the order; for change over time, pair each change with a continuity.
- For complexity, show who won and who lost, or link periods: nullifiers in 1832 cited the Kentucky Resolutions.

Theses that earn the point

Evaluate the extent to which the Seven Years’ War marked a turning point in American relations with Britain.

The war was a turning point: Britain’s debt and new land ended salutary neglect and brought taxes, troops, and the Proclamation Line. Yet colonists still sought English rights inside the empire until 1775.

Explain the issues that divided Americans during ratification (1787–1788) and how they continued to divide the nation from 1789 to 1809. Ratification turned on how much power the national government should hold, and Anti-Federalists won a bill of rights to limit it. The same question split the parties over the bank, Jay’s Treaty, and the Sedition Act.

Compare

Articles vs. Constitution

	Articles	Constitution
Legislature	One house, one vote per state	Senate by state, House by population
Executive	None	President with veto and treaty power
Courts	No national courts	Supreme Court and lower federal courts
Taxes	Could only ask states for money	Congress levies its own taxes
Trade	Could not regulate trade between states or abroad	Congress regulates trade between states and abroad
Amending	Every state had to agree	Two-thirds of each house, three-fourths of the states

First Party System, 1790s

	Federalists (Hamilton)	Democratic-Republicans (Jefferson)
Constitution	Loose construction; strong central government	Strict construction; states' rights
Economy	Commerce, manufacturing, and a national bank	Farmers; distrust of banks and debt
Abroad	Pro-British; backed Jay's Treaty	Pro-French; opposed Jay's Treaty
Base	Northern merchants and creditors	Southern planters, western farmers, and immigrants

The ratification fight, 1787–1788

	Federalists	Anti-Federalists
Leaders	Madison, Hamilton, and Jay	Patrick Henry, George Mason, "Brutus"
Wanted	A strong national government	Power kept in the states
Rights	At first called a bill of rights unnecessary	Demanded a bill of rights
Support	Merchants, creditors, cities	Small farmers, the backcountry, and debtors

Continuity and change, 1754–1800

	What stayed the same	What changed
Slavery	Slavery stayed legal in the South, shielded by the three-fifths, 1808, and fugitive slave clauses.	Northern states began abolition; Congress barred slavery north of the Ohio; the cotton gin (1793) began a cotton boom.
Women's roles	Coverture still denied wives property, and almost no women voted.	Boycotts and war work raised women's civic role; female academies opened.
Native land	Settlers kept pushing west; Native nations shifted alliances to survive.	With France gone and Britain refusing aid after Fallen Timbers, Ohio nations ceded land at Greenville.
Who could vote	Most voters were still white men with property.	States lowered property tests, and men of modest means won office.
Ties to Europe	Trade still ran mostly through Britain.	The republic made its own treaties and declared neutrality.

Don't mix these up

- ✗ "The Proclamation of 1763 opened the West or sold land for revenue." It barred settlement west of the Appalachians to stop frontier wars like Pontiac's, and it raised no money.
- ✗ "Colonists wanted independence from the Stamp Act crisis on." Until 1775 most wanted English rights inside the empire, as the Olive Branch Petition shows.
- ✗ "The Tea Act raised the price of tea." It made East India Company tea cheaper, tax included; colonists objected to the tax and the monopoly.
- ✗ "The Treaty of Paris (1763) ended the Revolution." The 1763 treaty ended the Seven Years' War; the 1783 treaty ended the Revolution.
- ✗ "Revolutionary ideals quickly ended slavery or the slave trade." Northern states freed people gradually, the South kept slavery, and Congress could not ban slave imports before 1808.
- ✗ "Women won the vote after the Revolution." Only propertied New Jersey women voted, and only until 1807; republican motherhood offered schooling instead.
- ✗ "Federalists, or Loyalists, opposed the Constitution." Federalists backed it and Anti-Federalists opposed it; Loyalists had sided with Britain in the war.
- ✗ "Washington's Farewell Address banned all foreign alliances." He warned against permanent alliances and allowed temporary ones for extraordinary emergencies.
- ✗ "Manifest Destiny and the market revolution shaped the 1790s." Both belong to later periods, after 1800, as do the Whigs; in the 1790s settlers wanted cheap land.