



Lexile Measure
1020L

The 10 Most Decisive Moments of the American Revolution

Summary

“The 10” is a type of Content Reader that uses the popular top-10 countdown format to rank a variety of high-interest topics, including intriguing people, places, and events both past and present. *The 10 Most Decisive Moments of the American Revolution* ranks what might be considered the ten most decisive moments of the American Revolution. Each moment played a significant role in the war for American independence. The events do not appear in the order in which they occurred but, rather, in the order of their perceived significance. Each moment led to, altered, or resolved the conflict between the colonies and Great Britain.

Vocabulary

commemorate, consequence, defiance, oppressive, provoke

Building Background

- Ask students what the word “revolution” means to them. (Possible responses: resistance, defiance, overthrow, rebellion) Tell students that to “revolve” also means to turn around a center or an axis. A revolution, therefore, can signify not only a sudden, extreme, or complete social or historical change but also a turning away from one way of living or set of circumstances toward another.
- Tell students that in the 1760s, many Americans were proud to think of themselves as British subjects rather than as Americans. The story of the American Revolution is the gradual transformation in colonists’ pride as subjects of the British Empire to pride in a new identity — that of being American citizens.

BEFORE READING

Differentiated Support

ELL Support

You may wish to scaffold the text for students by providing a version in which difficult passages or key terms are highlighted. You may also wish to pair ELL students with English-proficient students. Encourage students to focus on the visual elements of the book (the chart, timeline, map, and illustrations) to aid their retention and comprehension.

DURING READING

Literacy Skill: Cause and Effect

Point out that in a complex historical event such as the American Revolution, the causes and effects are often interconnected, because no single event persuaded Americans to rebel against British rule. Instead, a series of interlinked causes and effects occurred over the course of many years.

DURING READING

Differentiated Support

Visual Learners

Direct students' attention to the timeline on pages 4 and 5. Ask them to note the number of years between the major events of the American Revolution. Ask them why they think there were such significant time lapses between one major event and another. Help students to connect these time lapses with the fact that many Americans were reluctant to leave the British Empire, and it took many years and many decisive moments to persuade them to break free from British rule.

Below Level Support Give students a copy of the **Cause and Effect graphic organizer**. Help them to select and read about one decisive moment in the American Revolution, for example, France's decision to join the war. Work with them to fill in three different causes and effects related to this significant moment in history. (Possible response: Cause — France lost the French and Indian War to Great Britain in 1763. Effect — France saw a chance to have its revenge on Britain by secretly supplying the rebels with supplies and money. Cause — In 1778, France signed two treaties with the colonies. Effect — France recognized the United States as its own nation and became an official ally of the United States in the war against Britain. Cause — Supporting the United States left France with financial problems. Effect — These problems contributed to a violent revolution in France just a few years later.)

A graphic organizer titled "Cause and Effect" with a grid of three rows and two columns. The left column is labeled "Causes" and the right column is labeled "Effects". Each row contains a box with the prompt "Why did it happen?" followed by an arrow pointing to a box with the prompt "What happened?".

On Level Support Give students a copy of the **Cause and Effect graphic organizer** and help them to select one decisive moment in the American Revolution and then fill in the graphic organizer with a partner as they read. Provide guidance as necessary.

Advanced Support Give students a copy of the **Cause and Effect graphic organizer**. Have them fill in the graphic organizer as outlined above, independently or with a partner as they read.

Discuss the Book

In collaborative conversations, have students share their thoughts about the book. Use the following guided reading questions as possible prompts to generate meaningful discussion.

Pages 4–11

What were one cause and one effect of the act of open rebellion known as the Boston Tea Party in 1773? (Possible response: Cause — The colonists were unhappy with the Tea Act of 1773, which was a tax on imported tea. Effect — The British punished the colonies by passing the Coercive Acts, which closed the port of Boston and put the city under military rule.) **Identify DOK 1**

Even though the colonists lost the Battle of Bunker Hill in 1775, how did this battle advance the revolutionary cause? (After the battle, the Americans felt more confident in their ability to face the British on the battlefield. Britain suffered about 1,000 casualties, but the less experienced colonists lost only about 450 soldiers.) **Cause/Effect DOK 2**

How did the British view the Boston Massacre? How did the colonists view this event? (Possible responses: The British believed that the British soldiers who killed five colonists were acting only to protect themselves when provoked by an angry crowd. The colonists believed the shooting was an attack on peaceful protesters.) **Differentiate DOK 3**

DURING READING

In what ways was the Boston Massacre a decisive moment in the colonists' struggle for independence? (Possible responses: It marked the first deaths in the American Revolution. It heightened the colonists' anger toward the British government. It made British forces withdraw from Boston. It united Boston and placed the city at the head of the Patriot cause.) **Cause/Effect DOK 2**

Pages 11–17

What was the main purpose of the Declaration of Independence? (Possible response: It announced to Britain and to the rest of the world that the 13 colonies were determined to become a free nation.) **Apprise DOK 3**

What were some consequences of the Treaty of Paris of 1783? (Possible responses: The American Revolutionary War came to an end. Great Britain officially recognized the United States as an independent nation. It set the western boundary of the United States all the way to the Mississippi River. The United States agreed to pay its debts to British citizens and to stop mistreating Loyalists.) **Cause/Effect DOK 2**

Why are the Battles of Lexington and Concord considered so important? (They are considered to be the first battles of the American Revolutionary War.) **Recall DOK 1**

Pages 18–28

What were two important consequences of the Battle of Saratoga in 1777? (Possible response: Having lost the battle, the British shifted their attention from the northern colonies to the south. The battle helped convince France to join the war as an American ally.) **Cause/Effect DOK 2**

Do you think the colonists would have won the war without help from France? (Possible responses: No, because France supported the United States with weapons, supplies, and both land and naval forces, which helped to tip power in favor of the colonies. Yes, because the colonists were fiercely dedicated to their fight for independence despite losses and setbacks.) **Draw Conclusions DOK 3**

Why were General George Washington's two small victories in New Jersey in late 1776 and early 1777 so significant? (Possible response: These two victories reenergized the spirits of the revolutionaries, who had lost a chain of major battles and feared that they had lost the war.) **Interpret DOK 2**

What was the main consequence of the Battle of Yorktown in 1781? (Possible response: The British government realized that it could not win the war and the American Revolution came to an end.) **Cause/Effect DOK 2**

Collaborative Conversation

During discussion, encourage students to ask one another questions when they need clarification or when they need to build on one another's ideas. Provide these prompts to foster collaborative conversations among students.

Conversation Strategy	Prompt	Response
Support Ideas With Examples	Why do you think that? What in the book shows that?	For example, _____.
Synthesize Ideas	How do these ideas come together?	We can say that _____.

AFTER READING

Think About It

1. Be sure that students understand the incremental nature of the American Revolution; it did not result from a few isolated events with isolated causes, but involved multiple causes and effects that unfolded over decades. (Possible response: Cause — In 1773, Britain imposed a tax called the Tea Act on the colonists. Effect — The colonists threw 342 chests of imported British tea into Boston Harbor, which became known as the Boston Tea Party. Cause — General George Washington led his troops across the Delaware River and into two small but victorious battles against the British in 1776 and 1777. Effect — The Americans were reenergized to continue to fight the Revolutionary War. Cause — In September 1781, American and French soldiers defeated the British army at Yorktown, Virginia. Effect — The British government realized it could not win the war and the American Revolution came to an end.)
2. Encourage students to find evidence in the text to support their choice.

Citizenship in Action

Point out that the colonists did try to avoid violence at first. Direct them to John Dickinson's Olive Branch Petition, which was supported by the Continental Congress as a way to settle the issues between the colonists and Great Britain without violence (accessible at <https://www.learner.org/workshops/primarysources/revolution/docs/olive.html>). The British king rejected the petition, however, and shortly thereafter the Congress approved the Declaration of Independence. In addition to petitions, students may identify peaceful discussions between nations' representatives and mediation by a representative of another country as nonviolent ways to resolve disagreements between countries.

Writing: Narrative

Invite students to write their own brief narrative piece about one of the decisive moments in the American Revolution described in the book or about another decisive moment of their own choosing. They may wish to write their piece from the viewpoint of one of the participants, for example, a young person living in Boston at the time of the Boston Tea Party.

Curriculum Connections

Music

Music played an important role in the American Revolutionary War. Songs were written for many different reasons. Invite students to do some Internet research into music from this period, for example, fife and drum music. Ask them to write a brief report on the purpose of a song or songs they discover online; for example, to stir up excitement and feelings of patriotism, to distract people from the grim realities of war, or even to poke fun at the enemy.

