

## Timeline to the Declaration of Independence

1754-1763 - British government and the American colonies fight France and their Indian allies across North America for control of the frontier. The British win and take control of the land west of the Appalachian Mountains and all of Canada.

1764 - The British Government begins taxing the colonies to help pay off its debts from the war. They thought that the colonies would benefit from the additional land and should foot the bill for the war. The colonists thought they'd already sacrificed supplies and men to fight the war and with the French gone no longer needed the British army to defend the frontier. Parliament passed the following acts:

1764 - Currency Act - restricts the use of paper money to pay British merchants. Colonists had used the money to evade debts

1764 - Sugar Act - imposed customs duties on a number of imports, including molasses.

1765 - Stamp Act - Direct tax on printed material. All official documents, newspapers, almanacs and pamphlets—even decks of playing cards—have to have the stamps.

1765 - Sons of Liberty, a secret society, form to organize demonstrations, boycotts, and violent resistance to British tax laws. Their motto is "No taxation without representation."

1766 - Parliament repeals the Stamp Act but asserts its right to pass and enforce laws pertaining to the colonies

1767 - Parliament passes the Townsend Act that imposes customs duties on many common goods such as paper, tea, and glass.

1768 - The Massachusetts Assembly drafts a letter urging resistance. The governor, appointed by the King, disbands the Assembly.

1768 - A riot breaks out in Boston in response to British seizure of a smuggling ship called *The Liberty*, owned by John Hancock (who would later preside over the signing of the Declaration of Independence). The British deploy troops to Boston.

1770 - A mob threatens a small group of British soldiers who fire into the crowd, killing eleven people. This is known as The Boston Massacre. John Adams defends the soldiers in court and wins an acquittal

1770 - A new government comes to power in Britain and repeals all colonial taxes except tea.

1772 - A British ship patrolling for smugglers runs aground in shallow waters in Rhode Island. Colonists loot and burn the ship.

1772 - Samuel Adams organizes the Committees of Correspondence, a network of resistance throughout the colonies that grows to almost 10,000 people. The committees become the foundation for the rebel government.

1773 - Ben Franklin leaks letters of the Massachusetts governor saying that colonists would never enjoy full rights of British subjects, outraging many.

1773 - Parliament seeks to give the British East Indian company a monopoly on all tea entering the colonies

1773 - Sam Adams directs the dumping of tea from British trading vessels into Boston Harbor. This is the Boston Tea Party.

1774 - Parliament passes the Coercive Acts:

- Alters the Massachusetts colony's charter and restrict town meetings
- All British soldiers accused of crimes are to be tried in Britain, not in the colonies.
- Closes the port of Boston until the colonist pay for the lost tea
- Allows governors to house British troops in private homes without consent

1774 - First Continental Congress convenes in Philadelphia and organizes a boycott of all British goods

April 1775 - Battle of Lexington and Concord

June 1775 - Battle of Bunker Hill

June 1775 - Rebels overthrow the governments in all thirteen colonies, take control, and begin writing state constitutions. In those states where the wealthy control the process, voting is restricted to white men who own a certain amount of property

August 1775 - King George rejects the Olive Branch Petition from Congress. He declares the colonies in open rebellion and members of Congress traitors that will suffer death if they do not pledge loyalty to the crown

March 1776 - George Washington the first Continental Army force the British out of Boston

July 1776 - The Continental Congress approves the Declaration of Independence