

American History

Independence from England

1. Introduction

Before America was known as the "United States of America," it was a colony of England. The king of England was the ruler. The people who lived here were called colonists. They were British subjects. King George the Third was the English king at that time.

The colonists had few rights. The American colonists were not treated with equality. King George made all the laws for the colonists. A British governor ruled each city. The colonists did not like this type of government.

VOCABULARY VOCABULARIO

Before	Antes	few	poco
king	rey	rights	derechos
ruler	gobernador	treated	tratado
subjects	sujetos	equality	igualdad
at that time	en ese tiempo	each	cada
		city	ciudad

En Español:

2. The Stamp Act

In 1765, King George decided to put a tax on the colonists. It was called the Stamp Act. All the colonists had to buy stamps to put on newspapers, almanacs, and legal documents. The colonists decided to protest this new law.

Some colonists formed an organization called "The Sons of Liberty." Members of this organization asked people not to buy British merchandise.

Because the British merchants lost money, they asked the king to repeal the Stamp Act. So the king repealed the Stamp Act in 1766.

VOCABULARY VOCABULARIO

Stamp	estampilla	called	llamado
Act	acta	Sons	hijos
decided	decidido	Liberty	libertad
put	poner	asked	pidieron
tax	impuesto	merchandise	mercancía
newspapers	periodicos	lost	perdieron
almanacs	almanaques	repeal	revocar
law	ley	so	por eso

En Español:

3. The Boston Tea Party

In 1773, the British put a tax on tea. The Sons of Liberty who lived in Boston, Massachusetts decided to organize another protest.

Members of the Sons of Liberty dressed up in Indian disguises. Early one morning they went on board a British ship. They threw all the boxes of British tea into Boston Harbor.

The British decided to close Boston Harbor until the colonists paid for the tea. Plus, King George passed laws called the "Intolerable Acts" in retaliation.

The situation was getting worse for the colonists.

VOCABULARY VOCABULARIO

tea	te	boxes	cajas
another	otro/a	close	cerrar
dressed up	atusarse	until	hasta
disguises	embozos	paid	pagaron
early	temprano	passed	pasadó
went on board-	fueron a bordo	intolerable	insufrible
threw	tiraron	worse	peor

En Español:

4. No Taxation Without Representation

In 1774, a group of Americans met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. These Americans represented the colonists. They met to decide what to do about the injustices of the British.

One of the slogans was "No Taxation Without Representation."

This meeting was called The First Continental Congress. It was the first step by the colonists to form their own government. They formed a citizens' army.

We can say that the First Continental Congress represented the beginning of independence from England.

VOCABULARY VOCABULARIO

Without	sin
step	paso
met	encontró
own	propio
about	sobre
army	ejercito
injustices	injusticias
say	decir
slogans	dichos
beginning	principio

En Español:

5. Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death

Patrick Henry was a famous patriotic leader. He wanted to convince the people of the need for independence from England. At the Virginia Convention in March of 1775, he made a great speech:

"I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death."

VOCABULARY

Give
death
wanted
to convince
need
speech
take

VOCABULARIO

dar
muerto
quería
convencer
necesidad
oración
tomar

En Español:

6. The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere

In April of 1775, the British decided to send troops to Boston. They were going to take control of the city.

But the members of the Sons of Liberty were watching. They used a lantern to send a signal to Paul Revere in the middle of the night.

Paul Revere rode through all the cities in the Boston area yelling "The British are coming! The British are coming!"

By morning, the Americans were waiting for the British, with their muskets loaded. The first battle of the war was in Lexington.

VOCABULARY VOCABULARIO

Midnight-ride	media noche paseo a caballo	middle rode	mitad montó
send	enviar	yelling	gritando
troops	soldados	waiting	esperando
watching	mirando	muskets	rifles
lantern	linterna	loaded	cargado
signal	signo	battle	batalla

En Español:

7. The Minutemen

The colonial troops were called Minutemen. They were ordinary people who lived and worked in the Boston area. But they were also volunteers who formed their army "in a minute's notice" when called.

The British troops were called the "Redcoats" because they wore red uniforms.

VOCABULARY

Minutemen
notice
wore

VOCABULARIO

hombres del minuto
noticia
usaron

En Español:

8. The Shot Heard 'Round the World

The British troops marched to Lexington. The Minutemen were waiting for them, guns loaded.

The British general ordered the Minutemen to disperse. The Minutemen refused.

Then the British general ordered his men to shoot. The first shot was called "the shot heard 'round the world."

VOCABULARY	VOCABULARIO
'Round	alrededor (contracción de "Around")
disperse	dispersar
refused	renunciaron
to shoot	disparar
heard	escuchado

En Español:

9. The Green Mountain Men

Another hero was Ethan Allen of Vermont. Vermont is known for its green hills and mountains.

Ethan Allen formed a troop of Minutemen in Vermont. They were called "The Green Mountain Men."

The Green Mountain Men marched all the way from Vermont to eastern New York. they captured Fort Ticonderoga from the British.

The Green Mountain Men served as an inspiration to all Americans.

VOCABULARY VOCABULARIO

mountain	montaña
another	otro
is known	está conocido
hills	colinas

En Español:

10. Don't Fire Till You See the Whites of Their Eyes

In June of 1775, the British army attempted to take control of Bunker Hill. Bunker Hill served as an observation point for the Minutemen.

As the British approached, the Minutemen met them at Breed's Hill, just next to Bunker Hill.

The British outnumbered the Minutemen. To save ammunition, General Putnam yelled: "Don't fire till you see the whites of their eyes!"

The British eventually won the battle. But the Minutemen proved they were able to win.

VOCABULARY VOCABULARIO

Fire	descargar	outnumbered	tenían más
till	hasta	save	salvar
attempted	probado	won	ganó
approached	acercado	were able	podieron

En Español:

11. Peace or War?

Some British and American leaders tried to resolve the conflict. They presented a petition to King George, asking him to stop the war.

King George refused to consider the petition. Instead he and the British Parliament prohibited trade between Britain and America. Furthermore, he said that the "rebels" must be brought to justice.

These acts proved to Americans that they must become independent of Britain.

VOCABULARY

VOCABULARIO

Peace	paz	Instead	en vez de
War	Guerra	trade	comercio
Some	Algunos	between	entre
resolve	resolver	Furthermore	además
asking	pidiendo	rebels	rebeldes
stop	parar	brought	

En Español:

12. The Declaration of Independence

By July of 1776, most Americans were for independence. Representatives from each of the thirteen colonies met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Thomas Jefferson presented his document entitled "The Declaration of Independence." The representatives unanimously voted approval of the document.

The Declaration says: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

VOCABULARY

self-evident
endowed
unalienable
pursuit
happiness

VOCABULARIO

evidente
dotado
natural
busca
felicidad

En Español:

13. George Washington

George Washington was selected to be the Commander in Chief. He commanded the new American army. This army was now called the Continental Army. Many Americans joined the army to fight with General Washington.

However, this army did not have much money. In the beginning, Washington even used his own money to help feed and clothe the troops. All the soldiers admired General Washington.

VOCABULARY

Commander
joined
fight
with

comendador
juntaron
luchar
con

VOCABULARIO

However
even
feed
clothe

pero
aún
alimentar
vestir

En Español:

14. Nathan Hale

Nathan Hale was a schoolteacher. He taught in Boston, Massachusetts. He wanted to participate in the struggle for independence, so he joined the Continental Army. He served under General Washington and became a captain.

General Washington needed a volunteer to go behind the British line, to get information. Nathan Hale volunteered.

But he was caught and sentenced to die. Just before his execution, he said these famous words: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

VOCABULARY VOCABULARIO

struggle	lucha
line	linea
caught	atrapado
sentenced	sentenciado
just	precisamente
regret	lamento
lose	perdir

En Español:

15. John Paul Jones

To fight the British on the sea, America needed a navy. John Paul Jones became a captain in the new American navy. His ship was called the Bonhomme Richard.

The Bonhomme Richard was badly damaged. The British captain signaled to Jones: "Do you surrender?" But John Paul Jones signaled back: "I have not begun to fight."

The men of the Bonhomme Richard decided to fight even harder, until they won the battle. The British captain was the one who surrendered.

VOCABULARY VOCABULARIO

navy	nave
ship	barco
damaged	dañado
signaled	dí un signo
surrender	arriar la bandera

En Español:

16. Washington Crosses the Delaware

King George hired German soldiers to fight against the Americans. These soldiers were called Hessians. On Christmas Eve, 1776, the Germans were celebrating in Trenton, New Jersey. Their camp was just near the Delaware River.

Washington decided to make a surprise attack on the Germans. He led his troops, in the middle of the night, across the Delaware. The river was filled with chunks of ice. It was stormy. But General Washington and his men were successful. They captured the Germans and all their supplies.

VOCABULARY VOCABULARIO

Crosses	Cruza
chunks	piezas grandes
Delaware	nombre de un río
hired	contrató
stormy	tormentoso
German	alemán
successful	tenían éxito
led	fue a la cabeza
across	a través
captured	capturaron
filled	llenado
supplies	provisiones

En Español:

17. Betsy Ross

One day Washington and his friend George Ross went to visit the niece of George Ross. Betsy Ross was a skilled seamstress. General Washington asked her to sew together the first American flag. She agreed, and began to work immediately.

Betsy Ross made the first American flag. It was red, white and blue. It was like the flag of today, but thirteen stars formed a circle. These thirteen stars represented the united thirteen colonies.

VOCABULARY VOCABULARIO

niece	sobrina
skilled	experta
seamstress	costurera
sew	coser
agreed	dio razón a
like	como

En Español:

18. Washington at Valley Forge

During the winter of 1777, there was little money or supplies for the Continental Army. General Washington and his army had to remain in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.

There was little food. The men wore rags. Some had no shoes. Many became sick and died. Washington used his own money to buy supplies.

Because of this, Thomas Paine wrote: "These are the times that try men's souls."

When spring came, Washington received good news. The French were going to send money, supplies and troops to help the Americans.

VOCABULARY VOCABULARIO

During	Durante	souls	almas
remain	quedarse	received	recibió
rags	trapos	French	francés
sick	enfermo	help	ayudar
try	tratar y fatigar		

En Español:

19. Benedict Arnold

Benedict Arnold was a general in the Continental Army. He was very popular and led many successful battles. But he thought that the British were going to win. He decided to become a spy and give secrets to the British.

Arnold sold the plans to the fort at West Point. He gave them to Major John Andre of the British army. Andre was caught with the plans.

Andre confessed that Benedict Arnold gave him the plans. Arnold was a traitor! Arnold escaped and joined the British.

Many years later, he deeply regretted what he had done. His last wish was to be buried in his American uniform.

VOCABULARY VOCABULARIO

spy	espía
confessed	confesó
deeply	profundamente
wish	deseo
buried	sepultado

En Español:

20. Victory

In October, 1781, the last great battle took place in Yorktown, Virginia. Lord Cornwallis was the British commander. Washington was the leader of the American army. The French sent an army to help surround Cornwallis.

The battle lasted for eighteen days. Cornwallis decided to surrender. The War for Independence was finally over. America was now the United States of America, free and independent!

VOCABULARY VOCABULARIO

Victory	Victoria
took place	ocurrió
surround	circundar
lasted	duró
over	sobre
now	ahorra

En Español:

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