

HTAV Student Lectures

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American Revolution

Revolutionary Ideas, Leaders, Movements and Events

1763 (End of French and Indian War) –
1776 (Declaration of Independence)



Section A, Part 1 of the Exam

- 2 extended questions
- Answer both
- 20 lines per response
- 10 marks each response
- Total 20 marks
- Spend 30 minutes maximum



Section B, Part 1 of the Exam

- Document, commentary, visual representation or interpretation
- 4 scaffolded questions
- 2 comprehension style questions
- 1 on context – “using your knowledge”
- 1 on reliability
- Total 20 marks
- Spend 30 minutes maximum



Background information...



Mercantilism

- Late 1600s *mercantilist laws*
- Mercantilism was based on the belief that colonies existed purely to benefit the mother country
- Laws enforced by Admiralty Courts in colonies
- Designed to prevent smuggling, piracy and ensure payment of duties to England



Mercantilism in Practice

- Created internal problems in the colonies
- Colonial merchants felt trade restrictions denied them profit
- Smuggling and illegal trade was common



Acts of Trade and Navigation

- The Navigation Acts (1650-1689)
- Encouraged colonial shipbuilding
- Provided colonists with a certain market for their products
- Colonies produced some goods the British didn't want, therefore no market
- Colonists could often get better prices through illegal trade with Dutch, French or Spanish



Trade

- Restrictions on trade, Americans restricted to trading with Britain
- Goods made in America to be sold to Britain
- Manufactured goods for the colonies to be purchased from Britain



Relationship with Britain

- *Salutary neglect* (up to 1763)
- Britain's policy of colonial government
- Therefore, the colonies had a fair degree of autonomy and freedom
- Other 'matters of empire' took priority



Governing the Colonies

- Difficult to closely govern
- Distance from Britain the largest problem
- Royal governor in each colony
- King's representative and highest authority
- Implemented and enforced British policy
- Managed day-to-day affairs of colonies



Self Government in Colonies

- Colonists very involved in self government
- More so than in Britain
- State assemblies - elected by property-owning men over 21
- Assemblies could raise taxes, militias, pass laws and regulations on local matters



Self Government in Colonies

- Often conflict between colonial assemblies and royal governors
- Assemblies able to coerce or influence governors
- Assemblies were responsible for governor's salary



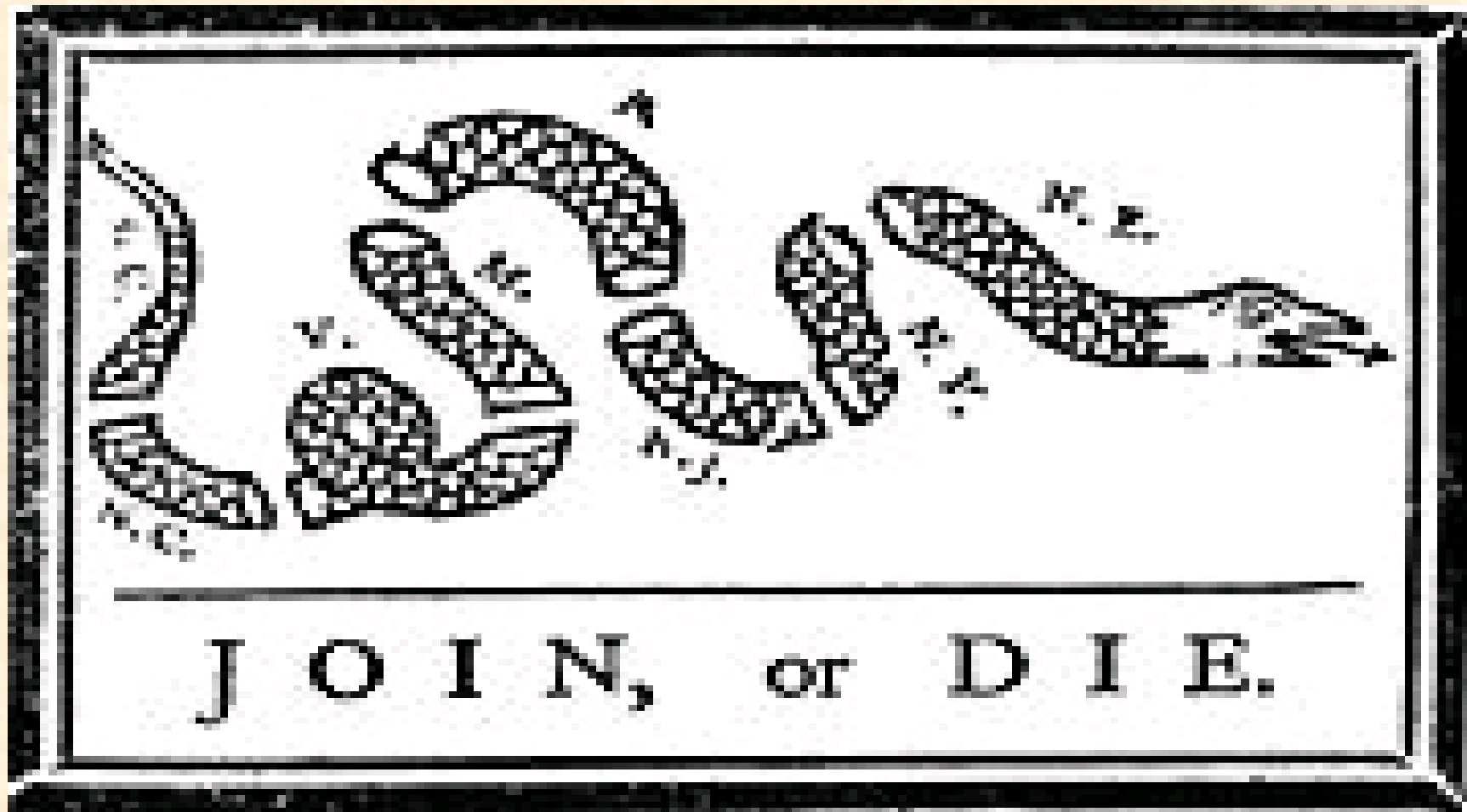
Early Acts

- The Molasses, or Sugar Act (1733) levied a large duty on foreign sugar, molasses and rum
- Merchants felt they were being unfairly treated, had been dealing profitably with the West Indies
- The Iron Act (1750), designed to have colonies rely on Britain for manufactured goods, restricted the growth of the iron industry in colonies



French and Indian War (1757-63)

- Some colonists joined the British military
- Purpose: to eject French from America
- Some saw conflict as an 'imperial matter'
- Reluctant to fight or support it
- Franklin, 'Join or Die'





Key Legislation and responses...



The Proclamation Act (1763)

- Intended to avoid conflict with native Americans
- Also to prevent rapid settlement in colonial territory that could not be controlled or closely governed
- All who had settled west of the proclamation line, which ran through the Appalachians, were ordered to return



Colonial Response: The Proclamation Act (1763)

- Some, particularly new settlers and land speculators, were angered as they wanted to expand further into the West (the Ohio valley)
- Colonists believed it was their right to expand further now the French were gone
- Despite anger, only temporary
- Difficult to enforce, no government control or police on the frontier
- Some colonists ignored the act and crossed the line



The Sugar Act (1764)

- Existed since 1733
- Part of Acts of Trade and Navigation
- Renewed every 5 years
- Renewed in 1763, for 1 year only
- Reviewed and found to be inefficient and corrupt



The Sugar Act (1764)

- Revenue Act (1764) – known as the Sugar Act
- Reduced duty on foreign molasses to three pence a gallon (previously sixpence)
- Sweeping powers to customs officials
- Increased patrols to prevent smuggling
- Revenue to defend colonies



Colonial Response: The Sugar Act (1764)

- Merchants and distillers were angered in New England
- Official protests lodged
- Otis and Adams – come to the forefront in protest, later discussed in ‘ideas’ section
- No genuine unity in protest between colonies



The Stamp Act (1765)

- First tabled in 1764
- Revenue raising act
- Intended to finance defending the colonies and also to enforce mercantilist policies
- A tax on legal documents: titles, bills of sale, wills, contracts, diplomas, playing cards and dice
- Stamp indicated the tax had been paid
- Paid for in coin (specie)
- All revenue raised would be returned to England



Colonial Response: The Stamp Act (1765)

- Wide-reaching act, all classes of society impacted
- Virtually no stamps sold
- Otis, 'The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved' (July 1764)
- Boycott of British goods in protest



Results: The Stamp Act (1765)

- Trade slumped and British merchants pressured British parliament to repeal the act
- Henry 'Virginia Resolves' (May 1765)
- Sons of Liberty and the Stamp Act Riots (August 1765)
- The Stamp Act Congress (October 1765)
- Repealed March 1766



The Declaratory Act (1766)

- Passed at the same time the Stamp Act was repealed
- Stated that Britain had the right to pass laws relating to her colonies in 'all cases whatsoever'



Colonial Response: The Declaratory Act (1766)

- Many colonists did not recognise the significance
- Thought of it as a 'face-saving' measure after the Stamp Act was repealed
- Many colonists ignored it
- In reality it was a clear signal that the British government intended to take further steps to tax the colonies to recover the cost of colonial expenditure



The Townshend Acts (1767)

- Chancellor of the Exchequer, Charles Townshend exerted powers in William Pitt's absence
- Government accused by opposition as being 'soft' on colonials
- A series of revenue-raising acts
- Duties (import taxes) on a variety of items: glass, lead, paints, paper and tea



Colonial Response: The Townshend Acts (1767)

- Again, the colonists were angered
- Boycott of British goods again
- Non-importation agreements
- Strong protest to parliament
- Felt confident after repeal of the Stamp Act
- Boston Massacre 5 March 1770



Results: The Townshend Acts (1767)

- Duties removed in 1770
- British merchants pressured the parliament to remove it
- Trade was badly affected
- Duty on tea remained
- Three years of relative peace followed



The Tea Act (1773)

- Intended to force the colonies to buy tea from the East India Company
- British company, struggling, surplus of tea
- British parliament attempt to give company a virtual monopoly on tea sales in American colonies



Colonial Response: The Tea Act (1773)

- Colonists outraged
- Didn't feel parliament had the right to restrict trade
- Boycott of British tea
- Smuggling of foreign tea
- Boston Tea Party December 1773
- Tea tipped overboard in symbolic act of protest (Boston Port)





Results: The Tea Act (1773)

- The Boston Tea Party had an immediate impact in Britain
- Colonists were forced to repay the East India Company for the cost of the tea
- Strengthening of control over the colonies by British parliament (especially Massachusetts)



The Coercive Acts (1774)

- British response to the Tea Party
- Four acts
- Tightened British control on the colonies
- Boston Port Act
- Massachusetts Government Act
- Administration of Justice Act
- Quartering Act
- Quebec Act – passed in conjunction, but not actually part of the Coercive Acts



The Coercive Acts (1774)

- The port of Boston was closed
- A military governor was appointed in Massachusetts, the Upper House was now to only comprise of members appointed by him
- Trial of British for offences in Massachusetts could now be tried in England or another colony
- Colonists were ordered to quarter (house) British troops



Colonial Response: The Coercive Acts (1774)

- Colonists called them the ‘Intolerable Acts’
- Protests and petitions to the King
- Virginian support leads to dissolution of House of Burgesses and meeting at Raleigh Tavern
- Massachusetts House of Representatives call for a continental congress to discuss the crisis
- The first unified meeting of the 13 colonies was destined to take place



The First Continental Congress (1774)

- Commenced September 1774
- Philadelphia
- 45 representatives
- 12 colonies (Georgia not represented)
- Petitioned the King, pledging loyalty
- Number of resolves



The First Continental Congress (1774)

- Enforced boycotting all British imports and trade until the acts had been lifted
- Henry, “I am not a Virginian but an American”
- Suffolk Resolves adopted
- Galloway Plan (Plan of Union)
- End October 1774
- Resolved to meet again May 1775



British Response:

The First Continental Congress (1774)

- King and British Parliament held their position
- Believed it was better to defeat the colonists in a short, swift war rather than face greater problems later
- British raised military ready to suppress the rebels in the American colonies



Second Continental Congress (1775)

- Commenced May 1775
- 48 members
- Georgia represented
- Plan of Union not likely
- War had already broken out
- Washington attends in militia uniform



Second Continental Congress (1775)

- Adopt army made up of colonial militia
- Washington appointed commander
- Declaration of the 'Causes and Necessities of Taking up Arms'
- Justified why war was necessary
- Olive Branch Petition to King – arrived after the King had already rejected conciliation with the colonies



During the Congress

- Paine's 'Common Sense' 1776
- Challenged the authority of the British government and the royal monarchy
- Used plain language to appeal to the common people of the colonies
- Change in ideological thought – openly asked for Independence
- Push towards separation



Declaring Independence (1776)

- Second Continental Congress
- Drafted by Jefferson
- Approved July 4th 1776
- Declaration of Independence signed during the Congress and the separation of Britain and America was final



Declaration of Independence (1776)

Key ideas:

- All men had the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness
- It was the duty of governments to protect these rights
- Reflected the liberal Enlightenment ideas prevalent at the time



Leaders

- For excellent biographies of all key leaders see www.vcehistory.info



George Washington



- The most prominent figure of the revolution
- French and Indian War
- Virginian landowner and planter
- Member of Virginian House of Burgesses
- Commander-in-chief of the Continental Army
- First President of USA
- An outspoken critic of England's colonial policies in the 1760s



Thomas Jefferson



- Member of the Virginian House of Burgesses
- Author of the *Declaration of Independence*
- Many other important laws and documents
- *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*, 1774
- Not a prominent speaker or happy in the spotlight
- Contributions to the success of the revolution were more in the background and behind-the-scenes



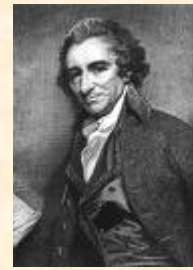
Benjamin Franklin



- The most famous American of his time
- Mainly for his scientific discoveries
- Pennsylvania Assembly delegate
- Agent in England for the colonies – intercepted personal letters of Hutchinson and Oliver
- Though slow to support independence he was a strong believer in unity
- Suggested that the 13 colonies unite as far back as 1754 – ‘Albany Plan’ – ‘Join or Die’



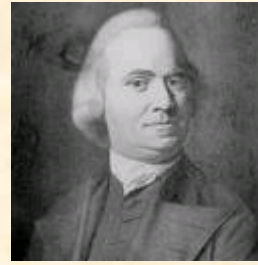
Thomas Paine



- A prominent pamphleteer who wrote two of the most important documents of the revolution
- *Common Sense*, in early 1776
- A clearly expressed and argued explanation of why the colonies must become independent
- *The American Crisis*, late 1776
- Strengthened the war weary colonies in the difficult weeks of late 1776



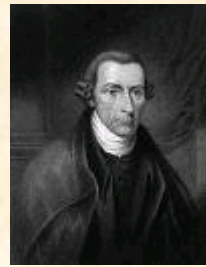
Samuel Adams



- A prominent activist in Boston
- Leader of the Sons of Liberty
- Organizer of the Boston Massacre and Tea Party
- Prolific speaker and journalist
- Contribution was 'grass-roots'
- He was able to recruit, organise and communicate with common people



Patrick Henry



- Impact on the revolution is legendary but questionable
- Member of Virginian House of Burgesses
- “Give me liberty, or give me death” (1775)
- Made two radical and inflammatory speeches in the Virginia House of Burgesses, however, the content of these speeches were actually reconstructed by a biographer



Other Leaders

- John Adams
- Paul Revere
- James Otis
- John Dickenson
- John Hancock



Movements

- For excellent summaries of key revolutionary movements see www.vcehistory.info



Sons of Liberty

- Best-known movement
- Based in large cities such as Boston
- Created and spread propaganda
- Organised acts such as the Boston Tea Party (1773) and harassment of the British and Loyalist Americans



Committees of Correspondence

- Sometimes intertwined with the Sons of Liberty
- Various and existed in many colonies
- Purpose was to spread the word about events, ideas and British 'tyranny'
- Usually spread their message through letters and pamphlets but sometimes by meetings



Continental Congress

- Can be considered a revolutionary movement
- It formed illegally and passed laws that were revolutionary
- It comprised nominated representatives from the 13 colonies
- They were not democratically elected
- Can this body be considered as a revolutionary government?



Continental Army

- The military arm of the revolution
- Not ideologically based
- Many of its members and officers were certainly attracted to the cause
- Many Americans first encountered members from colonies other than their own in the army
- This was difficult at first
- But then it helped to unite them in a national sense



Ideas

- For an excellent summary of key revolutionary ideas see www.vcehistory.info



The Enlightenment

- A period during the 1600s and 1700s where men became more willing to question the world and the fields of science, medicine, philosophy, politics and art
- Traditional ideas about the order of the world were under scrutiny
- Greatly influenced revolutionary thought



Natural Rights

- ‘Natural rights of man’
- Emerged and was expressed by John Locke
- People suggested that the purpose of government was to serve the people, rather than vice versa
- The role of governments was to protect our natural rights, not control or limit them
- Otis developed this idea into his theory of Natural Law



Popular Sovereignty

- Challenges divine right
- That the right of governments to rule came from the people, not from the birthright of a monarch
- Widely expressed through the idea of ‘taxation without representation’ – the first key grievance of the revolutionaries



Actual and Virtual Representation

- Actual representation required that each person in an electorate was directly represented in the assembly by an elected figure

In opposition

- Virtual representation claimed that parliamentarians represented the best interests of constituents, whether they had elected them or not



Nationalism

- The Americans were also starting to develop a sense of nationalism that separated them from England
- Lived thousands of miles away in a vastly different kind of land
- Although they shared many values with the British, they represented the 'New World', not the old nations of Europe



Republicanism and Constitutionalism

- Republicanism – a system of government without a monarch
- Constitutionalism – having a written framework for government
- Both radical ideas in the 18th century but became a feature of the new society – this is central to AOS 2



Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or comments:

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Best of luck for your study of Revolutions this year!