

Dissent and Independence

Guide to Reading

Connection

In the previous section, you learned about the colonial development of North America. In this section, you will discover why American colonists became dissatisfied with Britain's rule and fought to gain independence.

Main Idea

- The colonists learned about the ideas of natural rights and justified revolutions, while British mercantilist policies limited their freedom. (p. 110)
- The ideas of the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening made the colonists question their role as subjects of the English monarch. (p. 111)
- Unpopular British laws and taxes led to colonial protests and violence. (p. 113)

- When Britain introduced new laws to assert its authority, the colonists decided to declare their independence. (p. 114)
- With the help of their allies, the Americans defeated the British in the Revolutionary War. (p. 117)

Content Vocabulary

mercantilism, Enlightenment, Great Awakening, customs duty, committee of correspondence, minuteman

Academic Vocabulary

logic, exports, communicate

People and Terms to Identify

John Locke, Stamp Act, Townshend Acts, Intolerable Acts, George Washington, Declaration of Independence

Places to Locate

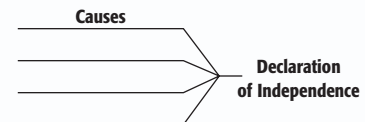
Lexington, Concord, Yorktown

Reading Objectives

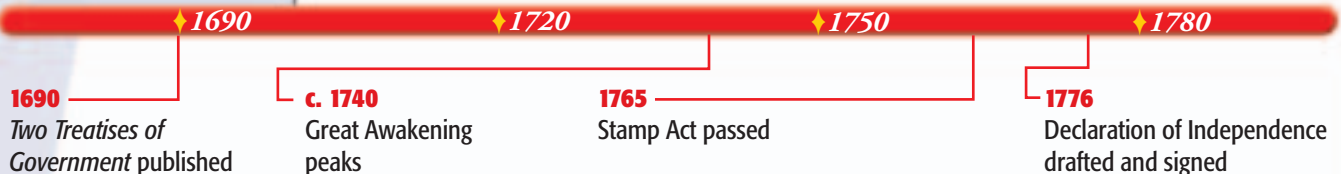
- **Explain** how the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening influenced American thinking.
- **Discuss** how the growing tensions between England and the colonies led to a revolution and independence.

Reading Strategy

Organizing Complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below to describe the causes that led the colonies to declare their independence.



Preview of Events



The following are the main History–Social Science Standards covered in this section.

11.1.1 Describe the Enlightenment and the rise of democratic ideas as the context in which the nation was founded.

11.1.2 Analyze the ideological origins of the American Revolution, the Founding Fathers' philosophy of divinely bestowed unalienable natural rights, the debates on the drafting and ratification of the Constitution, and the addition of the Bill of Rights.

11.3.2 Analyze the great religious revivals and the leaders involved in them, including the First Great Awakening, the Second Great Awakening, the Civil War revivals, the Social Gospel Movement, the rise of Christian liberal theology in the nineteenth century, the impact

of the Second Vatican Council, and the rise of Christian fundamentalism in current times.

The Big Idea

The quest for equality is eternal. Frustrated by British policies and limited rights, American colonists began demanding greater freedom. Fueled by the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening, many colonists protested the English monarch's policies. Angered by the protests, Britain increased its control over the colonies. Many colonists responded by declaring independence, while others remained loyal to Britain. The Americans won the Revolutionary War, and Britain recognized the United States of America as an independent nation.

Mercantilism and the Glorious Revolution

Main Idea The colonists learned about the ideas of natural rights and justified revolutions, while British mercantilist policies limited their freedom.

Reading Connection What rights do you have under the Bill of Rights? Read on to learn about the English Bill of Rights.

The triangular trade had allowed colonists to expand their trade and their colonies. Soon, however, the English Parliament enacted laws that limited the colonies while furthering England's economic interests.

★ An American Story ★

In the second half of the 1600s and the early 1700s, the British Parliament passed a series of laws that restricted and controlled colonial manufacturing. One of these laws affected the hat industry and another affected the iron industry. These laws annoyed many colonists, including Benjamin Franklin, who argued:

“The hatters of England have prevailed to obtain an act in their own favor restraining that manufacture in America. . . . In the same manner have a few nail makers and a still smaller body of steelmakers (perhaps there are not half a dozen of these in England) prevailed totally to forbid by an act of Parliament the erecting of slitting mills or steel furnaces in America; that Americans may be obliged to take all their nails for their buildings and steel for their tools from these artificers [craft workers].”

—quoted in *The Rise of American Civilization*



◀ Benjamin Franklin

England's policies were based on the idea that the purpose of colonies was to help the country increase its wealth. The colonists soon grew frustrated with such limits, but at the same time were encouraged by events in England that granted the colonies more freedoms.


Mercantilism Mercantilism is a set of ideas about the world economy, which were popular in the 1600s and 1700s. Mercantilists believed that to become wealthy and powerful, a country had to accumulate gold and silver by selling more goods to other countries than it bought from them. Mercantilists also argued that a country should be self-sufficient in raw materials. It would buy raw materials from its colonies and sell them manufactured goods in return.

Mercantilism gave colonies a reliable market for some of their raw materials and was an eager supplier of manufactured goods. At the same time, it prevented colonies from selling goods to other nations, even if they could get a better price. Furthermore, if a colony produced nothing the home country needed, it could not acquire gold or silver to buy manufactured goods.


When Charles II assumed the throne in 1660, he and his advisers were determined to use the colonies to generate wealth for England. Charles asked Parliament to pass the Navigation Acts of 1660, requiring that all goods shipped to and from the colonies be carried on English ships. Specific products, including the major products that earned money for the colonies, could be sold only to England or other English colonies. Three years later, in 1663, Parliament passed another navigation act, the Staple Act. It required all colonial imports to come through England. Merchants bringing foreign goods to the colonies had to stop in England, pay taxes, and then ship the goods out again on English ships. This increased the price of the goods in the colonies.


Frustration with the Navigation Acts encouraged colonial merchants to break the laws. New England merchants routinely smuggled goods to Europe, the Caribbean, and Africa. To control the colonies, in 1684 Charles II deprived Massachusetts of its charter and declared it a royal colony. James II, who succeeded his brother Charles on the English throne in 1685, went even further by creating a new royal province called the Dominion of New England. At first it included Massachusetts, Plymouth, and Rhode Island, but later Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York were added. Sir Edmund Andros, the Dominion's first governor-general, quickly made himself unpopular by levying new taxes, rigorously enforcing the Navigation Acts, and attempting to undermine the authority of the Puritan Church.

The Glorious Revolution of 1688 While Andros was angering New England colonists, King James II was offending many in England by disregarding Parliament, revoking the charters of many English towns, and converting to Catholicism. The birth of James's son in 1688 triggered protests against a Catholic heir. To prevent a Catholic dynasty, Parliament invited James's Protestant daughter Mary and her Dutch husband, William of Orange, to claim the throne. James fled, and William and Mary became the new rulers. This bloodless change of power is known as the Glorious Revolution.

Before assuming the throne, William and Mary had to swear their acceptance of the English Bill of Rights. This document, written in 1689, said monarchs could not suspend Parliament's laws or create their own courts, nor could they impose taxes or raise an army without Parliament's consent. The Bill of Rights also guaranteed freedom of speech within Parliament, banned excessive bail and cruel and unusual punishments, and guaranteed every English subject the right to an impartial jury in legal cases.  (See page 987 for an excerpt from the English Bill of Rights.)

The English Bill of Rights later influenced American government. Almost immediately Boston colonists ousted Governor-General Andros. William and Mary then permitted Rhode Island and Connecticut to resume their previous forms of government, and they issued a new charter for Massachusetts in 1691. The new charter combined Massachusetts Bay Colony, Plymouth Colony, and Maine into the royal colony of Massachusetts. The king retained the power to appoint a governor, but he restored the colonists' right to elect an assembly. Voters no longer had to belong to a Puritan congregation, and Anglicans there were granted freedom of worship.

John Locke's Political Theories The Glorious Revolution had another important legacy. It suggested there were times when revolution was justified. In 1690 **John Locke's** *Two Treatises of Government* was published on this subject.  (See page 988 for an excerpt from the *Two Treatises*.) Locke argued that a monarch's right to rule came from the people. All people, he said, were born with certain natural rights, including the right to life, liberty, and property. Because their rights were not safe in the state of nature in which people originally lived, people had come together to create a government. In effect, they had made a contract—they agreed to obey the government's laws, and the government agreed to uphold their rights. If a ruler violated those rights, the people were justified in rebelling. Locke's ideas struck

a chord with American colonists. When Thomas Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence in 1776, he relied upon the words and ideas of John Locke. The colonists understood Locke's "natural rights" to be the specific rights English people had developed over the centuries and that were referred to in documents such as the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights.  (See page 984 for an excerpt from the Magna Carta.)

 **Reading Check** **Examining** In what ways did the Navigation Acts affect trade in the colonies?

The Enlightenment and the Great Awakening

Main Idea The ideas of the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening made the colonists question their role as subjects of the English monarch.

Reading Connection Have you ever read a book that changed the way you think about a subject? Read on to learn how two cultural movements influenced the colonists.

The English Bill of Rights was not the only set of ideas that influenced the colonists. During the 1700s, America saw the emergence of two great cultural movements. One championed human reason and science as a means of learning truth, while the other stressed an intense, personal relationship with God. Both challenged traditional authorities.

 *John Locke*



History Through Art

The Great Awakening George Whitefield, pictured here standing, was one of the most famous ministers of the colonial religious revival. [What effect did the Great Awakening have on Americans?](#)

branches would provide checks and balances against each other and would prevent the government from abusing its authority. Montesquieu's ideas influenced many of the leaders who wrote the American Constitution.

The Great Awakening While some Americans turned away from a religious worldview in the 1700s, others renewed their Christian faith. Throughout the colonies, ministers held revivals—large public meetings for preaching and prayer—where they stressed piety and being “born again,” or emotionally uniting with God. This widespread resurgence of religious fervor is known as the **Great Awakening**.

The Great Awakening reached its height around 1740 with the fiery preaching of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield. Churches soon split into factions over a movement called pietism, which stressed an individual's devoutness. Those who embraced the new ideas—including Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists—won many converts, while older, more traditional churches lost members.

In the South, the Baptists gained a strong following among poor farmers. Baptists also welcomed enslaved Africans at their revivals and condemned the brutality of slavery. Hundreds of Africans joined Baptist congregations and listened to sermons that taught that all people were equal before God. Despite violent attempts by planters to break up Baptist meetings, about 20 percent of Virginia's whites and thousands of enslaved Africans had become Baptists by 1775.

A Powerful Legacy The Enlightenment and the Great Awakening had different origins and directions. Both movements, though, emphasized an individualism that inclined American colonists toward political independence. The Enlightenment provided the supporting arguments against British rule. The Great Awakening undermined allegiance to traditional authority.

Reading Check **Determining Cause and Effect**

How did the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening affect the established order?



The Enlightenment During the late 1600s and 1700s in Europe, a period known as the age of **Enlightenment**, philosophers put forth the theory that both the physical world and human nature operated in an orderly way according to natural laws. Furthermore, they believed anyone could figure out these laws by using reason and **logic**.

One of the leading Enlightenment writers was John Locke. His contract theory of government is an example of Enlightenment thinking. Locke's views of human nature also appealed to many Americans. In his *Essay on Human Understanding*, Locke argued that contrary to what the Church taught, people were not born sinful. Instead their minds were blank slates that society and education could shape for the better. These ideas that all people have rights and that society can be improved became core beliefs in American society.

French thinker Jean Jacques Rousseau carried these ideas further. In *The Social Contract*, he argued that a government should be formed by the consent of the people, who would then make their own laws. Another influential Enlightenment writer was Baron Montesquieu. In his work *Spirit of the Laws*, published in 1748, Montesquieu suggested that there were three types of political power—executive, legislative, and judicial. These powers should be separated into different branches of the government to protect the liberty of the people. The different