



HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **11th Grade** | Unit 2

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY 1102

DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

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Development of Constitutional Government

Introduction

Although the colonists began the 1760s celebrating the accession of George III, they soon became disillusioned. Within a dozen years following the introduction of imperial reforms, the British colonists were in open rebellion against Great Britain. The sudden vehemence with which Americans moved into rebellion astonished their contemporaries as it has astonished historians ever since. A series of trade acts and tax levies did not seem to justify revolution. Yet by 1776 many Americans agreed with John Adams that the colonists were “in the very midst of a revolution, the most complete, unexpected and remarkable, of any in the history of nations.” What could account for it? How was it to be justified?

The colonists admitted that it was not the particular acts of the British government that explained the Revolution; it was the meaning of those acts. Americans strove to understand the intentions of the British government and to determine their rights and liberties.

A military victory over Great Britain may have been a prerequisite for the success of the Revolution, but for Americans the Revolution meant more than simply eliminating a king and instituting an elective system of government. The Revolution was a moral upheaval that promised a fundamental shift in values and a change in the very character of American society. Originally designed to counter and reverse the modernizing tendencies of American life, republicanism ultimately quickened and magnified these trends.

In this unit you will look at the events that finally led to the Revolutionary War and at the kind of government that evolved in America. You will see the lives and events that molded the tenets of American government.

After establishing the English colonies in the New World, England left them alone for a time to do as they pleased. With the passage of the Navigation Acts in 1660, however, England's attitude toward the colonies changed, and she began to exploit the colonies by levying a variety of taxes to help fill her coffers. Another motive behind these taxes was the desire to bring the colonies under subjection.

The trade regulations England placed on the colonies led to colonial resistance in the New World. The greatest single reason for the tax increase was to finance the French and Indian War. The English thought that the colonies should pay for the war since the fighting had taken place in America, a sentiment that increased hard feelings among the colonies and led to still stronger resistance.

1. RELATIONS WITH ENGLAND

Section Objectives

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Name the various British actions regulating American trade.
2. Describe the events of the French and Indian War and its effect on colonial attitudes toward Britain.
3. Describe Britain's new policy restricting colonial freedoms and how it led to colonial resistance.

Vocabulary

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

boycott To join together against and have nothing to do with (a person, business, nation, employer, or any other person or thing) in order to coerce or punish. If people are boycotting someone, they do not associate with him, or buy from or sell to him, and they try to keep others from doing so.

mercantile theory The economic system prevailing in Europe in the 1500s and 1600s which favored a balance of exports over imports, national wealth being measured by the amount of gold and silver possessed.

treaty An agreement, especially one between nations, signed and approved by each nation.

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAAC appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are not sure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.



TRADE REGULATIONS

Trade is an important aspect of any country's economy. For England, the sea was a natural avenue of trade with other countries and with the colonies. Like other European nations, England at this time subscribed to the **mercantile theory**, which said that a country's power was measured by the amount of gold and silver it owned.

To strengthen her position as a world power, England passed the Navigation Acts in 1660, although the acts were not strictly enforced until the reign of George III. Later government regulations designed to take American merchants out of competition with the English included the Wool Act, the Hat Act, the Molasses Act, and the Sugar Act. Restrictions were placed on manufacture and the issuance of currency. Shortly before the French and Indian War, the writs of assistance were passed which allowed British officials to search colonists' homes.

Mercantilism. During the sixteenth century, England, France, Spain, Portugal, and Holland were engaged in a struggle for riches and power. Because the theory of mercantilism declared that the amount of gold and silver a country owned was more important than its military strength, each country wanted as large a supply of these metals as possible.

One method of securing gold was to have a colony trade only with the mother country. A colony would ship raw materials not available in the mother country, such as tobacco, naval stores, furs, and timber to the mother country. Manufacturers would then sell the goods they made from the raw materials back to the colonies. The colonies were prohibited from buying these goods from any other country. In this way the mother country was enriched, since the cost of the exported manufactured articles was higher than that of the imported raw materials. The difference in costs was paid in the important precious metals.

Mercantilism benefited the mother country, but not its colonies. As England passed more and stricter regulations to increase her own profit, the American colonists grew more and more disturbed.

Trade restrictions. English merchants did not want the Americans to compete with them in any way. When the colonists began to increase their production of wool to the point where the English wool raisers feared competition, the English Parliament

passed the Wool Act of 1699. By this act, all exports of wool products from any American colony to any other colony or to Europe were banned.

Bans were placed on other commodities as well. The growth in popularity of beaver hats and the existence of large numbers of these hats in America led to the Hat Act of 1732, which halted the export of beaver hats to Europe or to other colonies.

The Molasses Acts of 1733 and the Sugar Act of 1764 were passed to protect British West Indies planters from competition with the foreign West Indies islands. American shippers were forced to accept these measures because they had built up a profitable trade with the French and the Dutch, paying lower prices to them than those charged by the English.

Manufacturing restrictions. Trade was not the only aspect of the American economy restricted by the English. Industry and manufacturing in the colonies were also limited. The Hat Act of 1732 affected the American hat industry. To prevent further growth of the iron industry in the colonies, the Iron Act of 1759 prohibited the building of iron mills and steel furnaces, at the same time encouraged the production of raw iron by allowing it to enter England duty-free.

Currency control. Another method the English used to hold back economic growth was to control currency. The amount of money in the colonies was never enough to meet the needs of the colonies. The shortage of actual currency led many colonists to adopt a system of barter. Under this system a raw material such as wool could be exchanged for shoes, rice, or wheat.

Navigation Acts. Beginning in 1660, England passed a series of laws called the Navigation Acts. These acts controlled all colonial trade. The first Navigation Act required that all ships carrying goods between England and America be English-built or owned. Certain articles which included tobacco, sugar, indigo, and naval stores, could be sold only to England.

The Navigation Acts were later extended to include molasses, beaver skins, and other furs. The English government intended that these laws reduce the growing strength of the colonies. However, they did not cause friction with the colonists because they were loosely enforced.

The reason for lax enforcement was that the English were busy with affairs of the empire between 1685 and 1763, when they were fighting a series of wars with France. The English hoped to keep the colonies loyal to her by not enforcing these laws too strictly, in case the French in the New World declared war.

Another reason was the conflict between the king and the Parliament. The Puritan Revolution of 1689 forced the English government to neglect the colonies. Officials, too, were not eager to carry out the laws because growing trade and commerce between England and the colonies provided more profits to British merchants.

Also, because of geographical considerations, strict enforcement would have required many more ships than England had available. There was a great distance between England and the colonies, and the American coastline was long and irregular. The many harbors encouraged smuggling by the colonists to evade the laws and import or export goods illegally.

England decided to enforce the Navigation Acts after 1763. England's troubles at home were settled when a new king, George III, came to the throne. Since France had been pushed from the North American

continent as a result of the French and Indian War, England could now pay more attention to the colonies. The English government had spent large sums of money in this war and, since the colonies had benefited from it, the English felt that the colonists should pay part of the cost.

Writs of assistance. Before the French and Indian War ended, the government had decided on a new policy toward the colonies. In 1761 the British officials were ordered to enforce the Navigation Acts more strictly and to seize all goods smuggled into the colonies. The officials were given the power to use legal papers called *writs of assistance* to enter the warehouses, shops, and homes of the colonists to look for smuggled goods.

These *writs of assistance* created a great deal of concern in the colonies since they gave British officials the right to enter at will and confiscate anything that the owner was unable to prove was not smuggled. A Boston lawyer, James Otis, protested that the *writs of assistance* violated one of the basic liberties of Englishmen, freedom from unreasonable search. Otis charged that the writs did not specify any particular place to search but were so general in nature that no colonial home was safe. However, Otis lost the case and the writs continued to be used.

Match these items with correct descriptions.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------|----------------------|----|--|
| 1.1 | _____ | first Navigation Act | a. | allowed raw iron to enter England duty free |
| 1.2 | _____ | Iron Act | b. | allowed the British to search homes |
| 1.3 | _____ | writs of assistance | c. | prevented competition with foreign West Indies islands |
| 1.4 | _____ | Molasses Act | d. | only English ships could be used |
| 1.5 | _____ | Hat Act | e. | used by the colonists because of a currency shortage |
| 1.6 | _____ | barter | f. | prevented manufacturing and competition in 1732 |

Answer true or false.

- 1.7 _____ The Navigation Acts were intended to strengthen the shaky economy of the colonies.
- 1.8 _____ The Navigation Acts began to be strictly enforced during the time of George III.

Fill in the blanks.

1.9 The _____ theory stated that a country's power was measured by the amount of gold and silver it owned.

1.10 The Boston lawyer who unsuccessfully tried to have the writs of assistance removed was

_____.

1.11 Name four articles that could be sold only to England because of the Navigation Acts.

1.12 Name three additional acts that placed government regulations on trade.

Answer the question.

1.13 How did the economic system of the colonies benefit England?

FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR

Although Spain had claimed a large part of the North American continent, control in the north was largely divided between the English and the French. The French had explored and colonized Canada, the Ohio Valley, and the Mississippi Valley before the English had arrived; but their colonies had never grown very large.

Because of the differences in government, economy, population, and Indian relations, war seemed inevitable. England and France had fought three wars in Europe over a period of seventy-five years; now it was time to fight a colonial war in America. Each country wanted to control the new land. Central to that control was power over the rich Ohio Valley Territory, where the war would begin.

Because of the increasing French presence in America, the English colonists called the Albany Congress to encourage the colonies to band together as one unit to resist the French. War began in 1755 with the defeat of General Braddock in the Ohio Valley and then moved on to New York. Finally, the Battle of Quebec in 1759 resulted in the defeat of the French in North America.

In 1763 the **Treaty** of Paris was signed, bringing an end to the war and permitting the English to gain control of North America.

English and French colonial differences. The French and the English held prominent positions among world powers. The involvement of both countries in the colonies led to many conflicts. Each country wanted to dominate the colonies; neither would tolerate the other's presence there. The extreme differences between the two countries in their approaches and in their positions in the colonies, created friction.

The French colonies sprawled over a vast area of North America—from the Mississippi River Valley in the heart of the continent, along the Great Lakes to eastern Canada and the St. Lawrence River, and westward through the countryside to the Allegheny and Appalachian mountain ranges.

The English colonies spanned most of the coast of North America. In 1760 the French empire had a population of about 80,000 colonists spread out among sparsely populated settlements. Only three major towns were in the French empire in North America: New Orleans, Quebec, and Montreal.

About 15 percent of the French people lived in these towns. The rest were trappers, traders, missionaries, and settlers living in small outposts or traveling around the vast French empire.

In contrast, the English colonists numbered a little more than 1.5 million in 1760. The majority of the colonists lived in towns of fair size or in fine cities. The largest city was Boston, with 42,000 inhabitants.

The French did not try to develop the resources of their empire. For them, the chief value of the colonies was the fur trade. Many Frenchmen trapped animals for furs or traded with the Indians. Some farming was carried on in the St. Lawrence Valley, but it was not very important economically.

Most English colonists, however, became permanent settlers. They built houses, farmed the land, and used the available resources of the country. Building ships, growing wheat, lumbering, cultivating tobacco, rice, indigo, and trapping for fur were only some of the occupations found in the English colonies.

The French never developed a system of representative government. All power was in the hands of the royal governor. The people had no particular voice in the laws drawn up by the king or his representatives, nor was there any religious freedom for non-Catholics in New France.

The English colonists developed representative government early through their charters and elected assemblies. Such bodies had the right to make laws and to levy taxes. More religious liberty was to be found in the English colonies than in the French. When the French Protestants left France, they did not settle in Canada, but in the English colonies where they were allowed the religious freedom denied to them in France.

One advantage the French had over the English was that their government was in the hands of one person and decisions could be made more quickly than in the thirteen English colonies.

A second advantage held by the French was the friendly relationship they had established with most of the Indian tribes living in the rival empire. Friendly relations with the Indians were an economic necessity for the French, since they depended upon the Indians for furs. The Indians were less friendly with



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