

Section 4

Winning Independence

Section 4 Focus Question

How did the Americans win the war and make peace? To begin answering this question,

- Read about the battles in the southern states and the final victory by the Americans in Virginia.
- Learn about the terms for peace in the Treaty of Paris.
- Find out why Americans won the war.
- Understand the lasting effects of the American Revolution.

Section 4 Summary

The British shifted their battle plans to southern states in what they thought would be a sure way to achieve victory. The strategy did not work. American troops took bold actions that resulted in a final American victory.

Fighting Moves South

In late 1778, the British began to focus their efforts on the South. Taking key cities, they moved from Florida all the way into North Carolina under Commander **Charles Cornwallis**. To slow the British advance, the Americans used **guerrilla** tactics, working in small groups to perform surprise hit-and-run attacks against the British. **Francis Marion**, also called the Swamp Fox, was the most famous leader of these attacks. Meanwhile, Loyalist bands burned, plundered, and killed men, women, and children throughout the South. In addition, a high-ranking American named Benedict Arnold, perhaps the most infamous **traitor** in American history, switched to the British side and led other Loyalists in successful attacks.

Things seemed very grim for the Patriots. By the fall of 1780, however, American fortunes began to improve. Patriots won key victories in South Carolina. General **Nathanael Greene** led American troops well. They began to push the British out of the Deep South. At this point, Cornwallis made a strategic blunder. He moved his troops to the Yorktown peninsula in Virginia, where he hoped to get help from the British fleet. However, French ships soon pushed out the British navy, and Washington's American and

Key Events

1776

The Continental Congress issues the Declaration of Independence.

1777

The American victory at Saratoga marks the turning point in the war.

1781

British troops surrender to the Americans at the Battle of Yorktown.

Vocabulary Builder

The underlined word *strategic* is a form of the word *strategy*, which refers to moving troops into the best position for fighting.

✓ Checkpoint

Describe the key strategic blunder made by the British near the end of the war.

✓ Checkpoint

Name the treaty that ended the Revolutionary War.

✓ Checkpoint

List four factors that helped the Americans win the Revolutionary War.

✓ Checkpoint

List two important ideas for which Americans fought.

French troops surrounded Cornwallis on land. Cornwallis was forced to surrender. Yorktown was the last major battle of the war. ✓

Making Peace With Britain

Following the surrender at Yorktown, the British Parliament decided it was time to make peace. The process began in Paris in 1782. Britain recognized the United States as independent. Borders were established for the new country—Canada to the north, the Atlantic Ocean on the east, Florida to the south, and the Mississippi River on the west. On April 15, 1783, Congress approved the Treaty of Paris, officially ending the war. General Washington bade farewell to his officers and returned to his plantation life. ✓

Why Did the Americans Win?

Four things worked in favor of the Americans during the Revolutionary War. First, the Americans knew the geography of the country and had local supply lines. Second, patriotism kept the troops fighting hard. Third, help from allies was a major part of American success. French military and naval assistance as well as money and privateers from Spain and the Netherlands were extremely important. Finally, the Americans had great leaders. George Washington's courage and knowledge made him the nation's most admired hero. ✓

Impact of the Revolution

After winning the war, the United States was finally an independent nation with 13 states. Equality and liberty were ideas that appealed to the rest of the world, too. Over the next few decades, independence movements occurred in France and Latin America. They modeled many of their efforts after the successful American Revolution. ✓

Check Your Progress

1. Describe the British plan of attack and its successes during late 1778 and early 1779.

2. What effect did the American Revolution have on the rest of the world?
