

THE COMING OF INDEPENDENCE

TEXT SUMMARY

Great Britain became more involved in ruling its colonies in the 1760s. It created new taxes and laws that caused the colonists to object to “taxation without representation.”

The colonists reacted to the changes in British policy by taking small steps toward unity. The New England States had already formed a **confederation**, or union for a common purpose, in the 1600s. In 1754, Benjamin Franklin’s **Albany Plan of Union** proposed a congress of **delegates** from all colonies, but both the colonies and the king rejected it.

Twelve of the thirteen colonies joined at the First Continental Congress in 1774. They met to plan opposition to harsh British policies and punishment of colonists who resisted. One form of opposition was to **boycott**, or refuse to buy,

British goods. The colonists hoped to force the British to **repeal**, or recall, their hated policies.

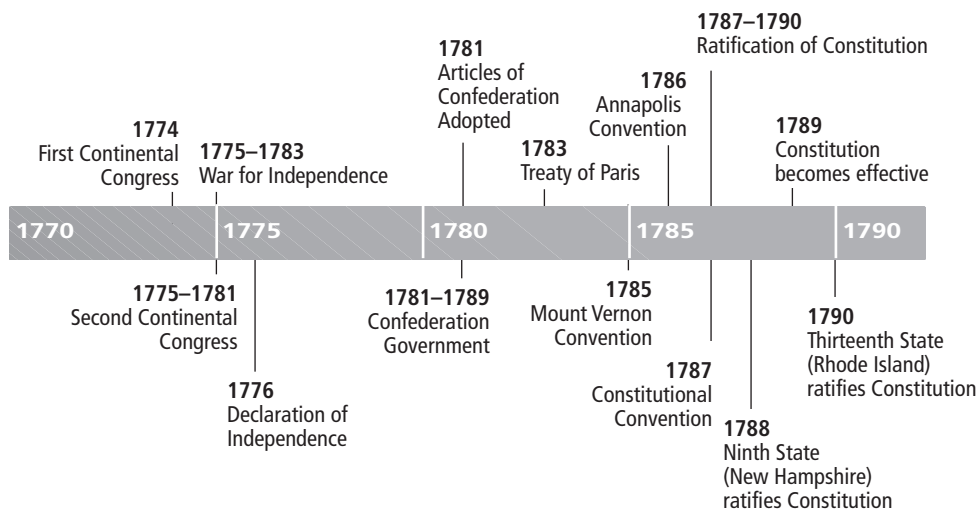
Finally, the colonists were ready to fight. The American Revolution began on April 19, 1775. On May 10, 1775, the Second Continental Congress began. It became the first government of the new United States and produced the Declaration of Independence.

The newly formed States wrote constitutions. A constitution is the basic set of laws that creates a government. The State constitutions all shared the principle of **popular sovereignty**, meaning that government can exist only with the consent of the people governed.

THE BIG IDEA

As British policies led them toward independence, the colonies developed new forms of government.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: Creating the United States, 1770–1790



With the start of the American Revolution in 1775, the colonies needed to replace their British governments.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the first government of the United States called?
2. **Time Line Skills** For how long did the Second Continental Congress meet?