To recap from last week, the French and Indian War was incredibly expensive to fight, and the nation’s debt was double what it had been when the war began. George Grenville, the new prime minister, believed that the colonists should bear some of the burden of the cost of the war, especially since British troops had protected colonists against the Indians and the French. However, the colonists saw things differently.

To further recap, beginning in the 1770s, the ideas of John Locke and the Age of Enlightenment guided many of those who would become revolutionaries, including Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. Leaders on both sides of the Atlantic believed that George III ruled by the consent of Parliament, not by the old idea of divine right. British subjects both at home and in the colonies talked of the rights of Englishmen, which included trial by jury, representation, and others, which were transformed into Jefferson’s “unalienable rights” in the Declaration. This new talk of rights that existed without being conferred by an outside authority spread far beyond the reaches of Britain, and would go on to inspire revolutions in France and other nations around the globe.

Between 1747 and 1774, ordinary sailors, dockworkers and townspeople in the colonies harassed British officials, driving them out of Boston on five separate occasions. Similar acts took place in other cities. Many colonists were upset by the British policy of **impressment**, which empowered ship captains to seize people without their consent to serve on British ships. After 46 men were impressed into service from Boston in 1747, the people rebelled, driving the royal governor out of town. A successful brewer, Samuel Adams, defended their “natural right” to do so. By the 1760s and 1770s, tensions were escalating, as the British sought to impose new taxes.

The **Currency Act** **of 1764** prohibited colonists from using their own currency, and the **Sugar Act of 1764** imposed new taxes on sugar, rum, and molasses (lower taxes but actually enforced, with use of vice admiralty courts instead of local, friendlier juries). The Sugar Act caused consternation, but not nearly as much as the Stamp Act did a year later. Resistance in 1765 was even stronger thanks to the **Stamp Act**, which provided for a tax on official documents, commercial bills of lading, newspapers, and even playing cards. Where earlier acts had affected only a small portion of the colonial population directly, the Stamp Act affected nearly everyone, and as a result, colonists from different social classes united in protest. **Patrick Henry** (what a hothead—compared George III to Charles I) asked Virginia’s House of Burgesses to pass the **Virginia Resolves** opposing the tax, and the now-infamous **Sons of Liberty** sent delegates to create a kind of underground resistance movement. The **Stamp Act Congress** convened in New York City in October 1765. It was an early indicator of intercolonial cooperation and unity, and they asked for repeal of the act. Public protests mounted. Mobs broke into the homes of British officials, often drinking up all their liquor before setting fire to the property. Some crowds paraded effigies of stamp collectors through the streets; others prodded the actual stamp collector through town. Boycotts against British goods also took place.

In response, the British government (now led by the accommodationist Rockingham [GRTN]) repealed the Stamp Tax in 1766. The Brits also issued the **Declaratory Act**,which emphasized their absolute right to tax the colonists—it’s a way to save face. A year later, **Charles Townshend**, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, who’s de facto in charge because William Pitt was frequently ill, passed a series of new taxes on lead, paint, paper, and other goods. The **Townshend Duties of 1767** were equally unpopular with the colonists, who reacted with the second large-scale boycott and various mob actions. Women too, became increasingly involved in protests, calling themselves **Daughters of Liberty** and spinning their own cloth so they would not have to buy British-made products. Even elite women were proud to be wearing “homespun” clothing as a show of their disdain. During the war, women frequently protested when colonial merchants hoarded goods to drive up prices; in one case, they broke into the house of a merchant they thought was hoarding goods. (According to your book, women’s involvement may have been more symbolic and politically important than practical as far as replacing the amount of British goods previously consumed.)

* In September of 1768, British warships arrived in Boston to keep the peace in the wake of the Townshend Acts and the colonial response. (Troops had been housed all around the colonies ever since the end of the French-Indian War, and Boston had a high number stationed compared to other colonies.) The presence of British soldiers created new tensions with the colonists. Off duty soldiers were allowed to work on their own, so the new force competed with the colonists for jobs, and the British soldiers were content to work for lower wages. In March of 1770, a group of British soldiers were taunted by an angry crowd, which had grown to some 300–400 people. Shots were fired, and three men were killed, including **Crispus Attucks,** a former slave who was part African and part American Indian. Two more later died of their wounds. The **Boston Massacre** would further inflame tensions, although the royal governor did pull the troops out of Boston. (Silver engraving by that thieving rascal Paul Revere! Revere based his engraving on that of artist Henry Pelham, who created the first illustration of the episode—and who was neither paid nor credited for his work.) In the trial that followed, the troops who had been accused of murder were defended by **John Adams**, and they were found not guilty. (The trial of the British soldiers was the first time a judge used the phrase “reasonable doubt.”)

In response to mounting pressure, at the same time as the Boston Massacre but not because of it, the British repealed most of the Townshend duties, but kept the tax on tea as a symbol of its power to tax. Colonists responded by preferring smuggled Dutch tea. In 1773 the British hoped to shore up the nearly bankrupt **British East India Company** by allowing it to unload its tea on the colonies (this is the Tea Act of 1773), where it would actually be sold more cheaply than its competitors. Low prices did not tempt the colonists, though, who saw this as an insidious British effort to break the boycott of British tea. In cities up and down the east coast, Sons of Liberty convinced merchants not to allow the tea to land, but tea that would be sold by Governor Hutchinson’s sons was able to land in Boston. In response a bunch of Boston colonists loosely disguised as Mohawk Indians boarded the *Dartmouth*and dumped its store of tea into Boston harbor. The **Boston Tea Party** galvanized anti-British sentiment in other colonies. The British leveled the Coercive Acts against Boston in return. The colonists called them the **Intolerable Acts**. They limited the power of town meetings and allowed royal governors to quarter troops. They also closed the port of Boston to all shipping, sparking a financial crisis that led to further anger and unrest. Colonists insisted that since such acts had been instituted by Parliament with no representation from the colonists, Britain was violating their rights as Englishmen.

Colonists in the backcountry also revolted. Farmers in the western sections of North and South Carolina had created **Regulator** movements to address what they saw as distant and corrupt coastal authorities and lack of law and order within their own regions. Inland communities also had continuing tensions with Indians. As white settlement pushed west, attacks by Indians in frontier regions intensified. Violence in the form of Lord Dunmore’s war is another example of these tensions between east and west, rural and urban, building on the tradition of Bacon and the Paxton Boys and the Regulators of old. Dunmore (without permission or authority, Royal or colonial) attacked local Native Americans who were legally settled within Kentucky, defeating them in one big battle and taking their land. Resentment against the British, who took steps to honor the Proclamation Line of 1763, also intensified. Violence extended all along the lines of settlement, prompting General Thomas Gage, the senior British commander in North America, to complain that there was essentially no law which the frontier colonists felt that were obliged to obey. In response to all this drama, the British passed the **Quebec Act** of 1774, which assigned all lands west and north of the Ohio River to the British-controlled province of Quebec, effectively removing control from frontier agitators and also pacifying Catholic demands. The Quebec Act recognized the rights of Catholics, which deeply offended the overwhelmingly Protestant colonists. They viewed the Quebec Act as one of the many Intolerable Acts.

In 1774, all of the colonies except for Georgia sent delegates to the **First Continental Congress** in Philadelphia. Although few were ready to break with Britain, delegates wanted to coordinate opposition efforts. Before they adjourned, they declared their rights came from nature, the British constitution, and colonial charters. They also agreed to bans on imports and exports—this is the third major boycott, here in the wake of the Intolerable Acts. And they also agreed to meet again should relations with Britain not improve.

Meanwhile, word of the ***Somerset* decision** in Britain roiled the colonies. Somerset was enslaved by an American who took him to London, and while there, he ran away. He was captured and put onboard a ship bound for Jamaica; white friends petitioned for his release. In the decision, the judge declared that because Parliament had never legalized slavery in England as opposed to the British colonies, Somerset had to be freed, because slavery could not be considered a default state. The decision ended slavery in England and caused considerable consternation in the American south. Whites on both sides of the Atlantic, fx. Franklin and Otis, noted the absurdity of colonists protesting their “enslavement” by the British while holding slaves themselves. Many of the earliest protestors of the institution were Quakers, who had made it mandatory for its members to free their slaves by the 1760s.

Meanwhile, events moved closer to war. In April of 1775, General Gage ordered troops to march to **Concord** to seize stores of ammunition and arms that the colonists had been keeping. They were met by colonial militia on April 19 and shots were fired, killing eight militiamen and wounding 10 others. As the British passed through Concord, hidden militia attacked them, resulting in 273 casualties for the British, 95 for the militia. Lexington and Concord became the shot heard ‘round the world. That May, **Ethan Allen** and his backwoods **Green Mountain Boys** captured Fort Ticonderoga for the colonists, representing how revolutionary sentiment was moving west.

In the weeks that followed, the Massachusetts men began to dig in the hills around British-occupied Boston. In June, General Gage ordered an attack on Breed’s Hill, resulting in a British victory. The battle became known as the **Battle of Bunker Hill**, and it cost the British dearly in terms of victory despite the casualties.

Regarding black Africans and slaves, in 1775, **Lord Dunmore** issued a proclamation, declaring that any black enslaved or indentured white person willing to bear arms on behalf of the British would be freed. (Dunmore had been kicked out of Virginia and turned his back to the “rebel cause.”) His proclamation terrified whites, as they watched their enslaved people leaving to fight for the British. When the British landed on Staten Island in 1776, New York and New Jersey slaves rose to meet them, and still more joined the British when they attacked Charleston. British generals understood that in recruiting slaves they were also disrupting the colonial economy. By the end of the war, the British had relocated 3,000 formerly enslaved people to Canada. African Americans also served in colonial regiments, including **Lemuel Haynes**, who became one of the leading ministers in Massachusetts after the war.

George Washington, a slaveholder himself, was reluctant to arm black soldiers, but in the grim winter of 1778–79, he embraced the idea. In February of 1778, Rhode Island offered freedom to anyone willing to serve during the war; eventually one in four male slaves enlisted in what was known as the **Rhode Island Black Regiment**. Those who survived were given their freedom at the close of the war, in 1783.

In May of 1775, delegates of the **Second Continental Congress** met in Philadelphia, naming George Washington as commander of the colonial militia. Then the delegates turned to the question of what they wanted from the war. The answers illustrated the range of colonial opinion at the time, from the conservatives who sought conciliation with Britain, issuing the Olive Branch Petition (last-ditch effort to forestall violence), to more radical delegates who wanted independence. In January 1776, Thomas Paine published a pamphlet, ***Common Sense***,which would alter the debate. Paine made two basic points: that the time was right to declare independence, and that the new government should be a democracy. It stuck a chord with many colonists, and the drive was on for independence.

Eventually, a Committee of Five was selected to draft a declaration in case Congress decided to vote for independence. Thomas Jefferson was chosen to write the first draft, but in the end, many people made adjustments. The most significant changes involved removing Jefferson’s attack on the slave trade, which discomforted a number of the delegates who had slaves themselves. On July 2, a unanimous Congress voted for independence, and on July 4, they adopted the **Declaration of Independence**. A year later, Congress adopted the **Articles of Confederation**, which created a weak national government. Representatives, with the legacy of British authoritarianism fresh in their minds, purposely sought to limit the power of the national government. There was no executive branch, and Congress under the Articles lacked the power to tax.