

Period 3: 1754-1800

AP United States History

The Seven Years' War and Its Consequences

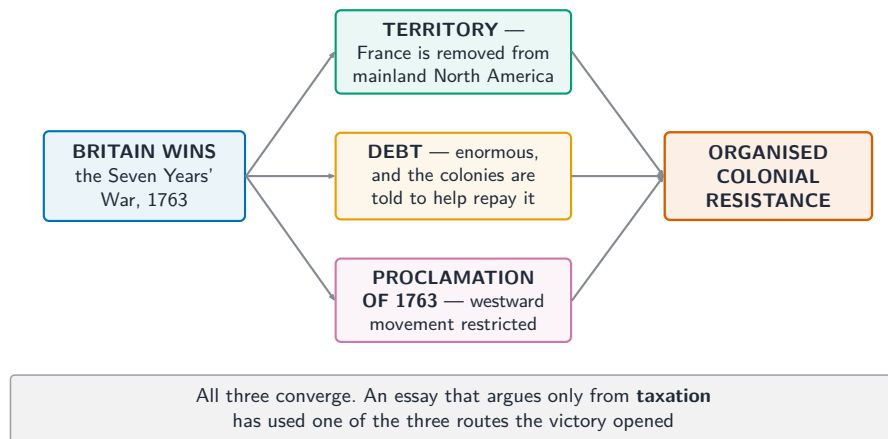
Period 3 runs from **1754** to **1800** - from the outbreak of the Seven Years' War to the end of John Adams's presidency. It contains the Revolution, but the exam treats the Revolution as an *effect*, so start with its cause.

Colonial rivalry between Britain and France intensified in the mid-eighteenth century as a growing colonial population pressed westward. The **Seven Years' War** 七年战争, known in North America as the **French and Indian War** 法印战争, settled that rivalry.

Britain won, and three consequences follow directly:

- A **major expansion of territory** 领土大扩张 - France was removed from mainland North America.
- An **enormous war debt** 巨额战争债务, which Britain decided the colonies should help repay.
- **Restrictions on westward movement**, notably the **Proclamation of 1763** 1763 年公告线, intended to prevent costly conflict with American Indians but resented by colonists who wanted the land they had just helped win.

That is the chain the exam wants: victory produced debt and new territory, and managing both required tighter control of the colonies.



Taxation Without Representation

New British efforts to **collect taxes** 征税 without the consent of colonial assemblies, and to assert imperial authority, provoked organised resistance.

Colonial leaders based their arguments on **the rights of British subjects**, on the **ideals of the Enlightenment** 启蒙思想, and on their own long experience of self-government - the assemblies built up during Period 2.

Resistance was not only argument. Facing shortages and, in some regions, British **military occupation** 军事占领, **men and women** both took part: boycotts of British goods, home manufacture, crowd action, and committees of correspondence. Leaders such as **Benjamin Franklin** 富兰克林 energised the movement, and the slogan of the period is “**no taxation without representation**” 无代表不纳税.

The Ideas Behind the Revolution

Enlightenment ideas led American political thinkers to emphasise **individual talent over hereditary privilege**, and to assert the **natural rights** 天赋权利 of the people and the **sovereignty of the people** 人民主权.

Two ideas do most of the work in essays:

- **Republicanism** 共和主义 - government rests on the consent of the governed, and citizens must show virtue by placing the public good above private interest.
- **Natural rights** - rights that exist before government, which government is created to protect, and whose violation justifies resistance.

	REPUBLICANISM	NATURAL RIGHTS
WHERE POWER COMES FROM	the consent of the governed	rights exist before any government does
WHAT IT ASKS OF A CITIZEN	virtue — the public good above private interest	nothing; the duty falls on the government
WHAT IT DOES IN AN ESSAY	explains the kind of government they built justifies the decision to resist	
They are not synonyms. Natural rights licenses the break; republicanism explains what was built afterwards		

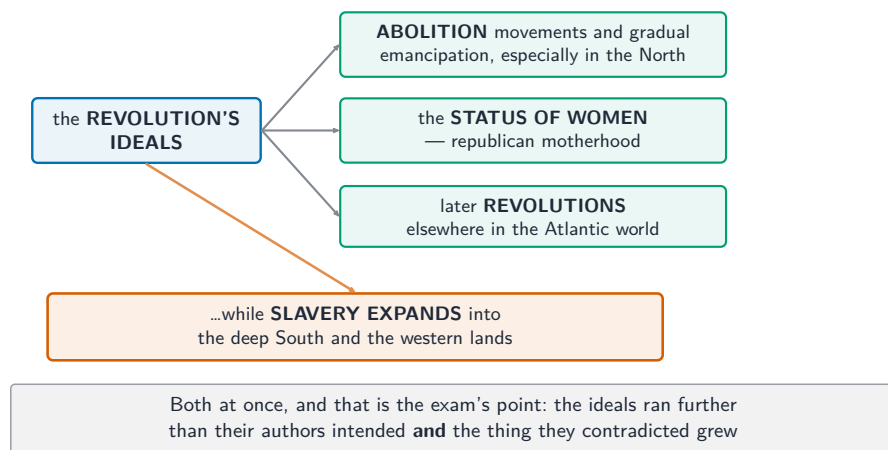
The War and Its Wider Effects

The war for independence succeeded through a combination of colonial resolve, difficult terrain, and crucially **foreign assistance** 外国援助, above all from France.

The Revolution's ideals then spread further than its leaders intended:

- They inspired **movements to abolish slavery** 废奴运动, especially in the North, and gradual emancipation laws.
- They raised questions about the **status of women** 妇女地位, expressed in the idea of **republican motherhood** 共和母亲身份 - that women shaped the republic by raising virtuous citizens.
- They influenced later revolutions elsewhere in the Atlantic world.

At the same time the **expansion of slavery** into the deep South and adjacent western lands continued, alongside rising **antislavery** 反奴隶制 sentiment - a contradiction the course returns to repeatedly.



From Confederation to Constitution

	Articles of Confederation	The Constitution	Why it mattered
Taxation	no power to tax; could only request funds	Congress may lay and collect taxes	war debts went unpaid
Commerce	no power to regulate trade between states	Congress regulates interstate and foreign trade	states taxed each other
Executive	no president	a single executive with defined powers	no one could enforce law
Judiciary	no national courts	a federal judiciary	no way to settle disputes
Amendment	unanimous consent of all states	three-quarters of states	reform was impossible

The Constitution was written to fix specific, named weaknesses - each row is one of them

After declaring independence, leaders wrote new **constitutions and declarations of rights** that reflected republican ideals, generally limiting executive power.

The **Articles of Confederation** 邦联条例 created a deliberately weak central government: no power to tax, no power to regulate commerce, no executive, and no national judiciary. It succeeded in organising western settlement through the **North-west Ordinance** 西北法令, but could not manage debt, trade disputes, or unrest.

The **Constitutional Convention** 制宪会议 of 1787 produced a stronger national government built on **compromise** 妥协, including the **Great Compromise** 大妥协 over representation and compromises over slavery and commerce.

Ratification 批准 was contested. **Federalists** 联邦党人 argued the new government was strong enough to govern yet checked enough to be safe; **Anti-Federalists** 反联邦党人 feared centralised power and demanded protection for individual liberties, which produced the **Bill of Rights** 权利法案.

The New Republic

Under **George Washington** 华盛顿 and **John Adams** 亚当斯, political leaders disagreed sharply over the **relationship between the national and state governments**, economic policy, and foreign policy. Those disagreements hardened into the **first party system** 第一政党体系.

War between France and Britain after the **French Revolution** 法国大革命 forced hard choices, and the government pursued diplomatic initiatives to deal with the continued British and Spanish presence in North America. **Washington's Farewell**

Address 华盛顿告别演说 urged national unity and warned against political factions and permanent foreign alliances.

Meanwhile a distinctive **national culture** 民族文化 developed - in art, literature, and architecture - alongside continued regional variation.

Movement and Conflict in the Early Republic

American Indian groups repeatedly **evaluated and adjusted their alliances** with European powers and the new United States as circumstances changed.

Growing numbers of migrants moved west, intensifying competition over **resources, boundaries, and trade** 资源、边界与贸易. The relationship between the federal government and American Indian tribes remained **ambiguous** 含混不清, contributing to recurring conflict. In the Southwest, the Spanish expanded their **mission system** 传教团体系, supported by the bonded labour of local American Indians.

Continuity and Change in Period 3

The period's reasoning skill is **continuity and change** 延续与变化. The strongest answers hold both: political institutions changed radically, while slavery, westward expansion, and conflict with American Indians continued and intensified.

Worked example (a real AP exam question). The 2025 exam asked, as part B of a short-answer question, “*Briefly describe one effect of the Seven Years’ War from 1754 to 1765.*” A full-mark answer names one effect and shows it is an effect: “*Britain emerged from the war with a large debt, which led Parliament to impose new taxes such as the Stamp Act on the colonies to help pay for imperial defence.*” Notice the shape: **describe one effect** needs the causal link stated, not just a fact from the period. “Britain won the war” is a result, not an effect on what followed; “the colonies were angry” is too vague to credit.

Exam tips

- Learn the causal chain: **war** → **debt and new territory** → **taxes and the Proclamation of 1763** → **colonial resistance** → **independence**.
- **Republicanism** and **natural rights** are the two ideas to name; do not just write “Enlightenment ideas”.
- For the Constitution, argue from the **specific weakness** it fixed - no power to tax, no power to regulate commerce, no executive.
- Keep **Federalist** and **Anti-Federalist** positions straight, and remember the **Bill of Rights** was the price of ratification.

- The Revolution’s effects on **slavery and women** are examinable, and both are partial: ideals spread further than rights did.
- On continuity-and-change prompts, give one of each. An answer that only lists changes has answered half the question.