

Key Events in the Revolutionary War



British surrender at Yorktown by John Trumbull
(Yale Art Gallery)

Event	Date	Location	Significance
Lexington-Concord	April 1775	Massachusetts	First armed conflict. British destroy supplies at Concord but suffer numerous casualties on way back to Boston. Propaganda victory for U.S. Casualties: U.S.:95. British: 273.
Ft. Ticonderoga	May 1775	Lake Champlain	Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold captured fort and 60 cannon later dragged 300 miles and used in defense of Boston
Breed's Hill (Bunker Hill)	June 1775	Boston	British succeed but suffer huge losses (1000 casualties) 1/6 of all British officers killed in war die here. Americans lose 400 dead and wounded. Only battle in long siege of Boston.
Invasion of Quebec	Winter 1775-76	Maine/Canada	Gens. Arnold and Montgomery attack Quebec prematurely and fail in invasion attempt of Canada
Dorchester Heights	March 1776	Boston	British forced to evacuate New England after cannon put in place.

Declaration of Independence	July 1776	Philadelphia	Following the success of Thomas Paine's <i>Common Sense</i> , many colonists urged their delegates to the 2nd Continental Congress to call for independence. The Declaration starts with an assumption (all people have equal, inalienable rights), states two premises (people establish governments to protect rights & George III has failed to defend American rights), and concludes with the assertion that Americans can rightfully overthrow British rule.
New York (Brooklyn Heights--Long Island, White Plains)	August 1776	New York	U.S. forces forced to retreat to Manhattan, then New Jersey. British General Howe offered generous terms of surrender to the Americans, but they demanded independence and talks broke down.
Trenton	December 1776	New Jersey	Hessian army crushed in Washington's raid across the Delaware River. Casualties: U.S. :4, British: 900
Princeton	January 1777	New Jersey	U.S. recovers New Jersey from British in 10 days. British retreat to New New York, where they remain for the war.
Brandywine Creek Germantown	September 1777 October 1777	Pennsylvania	British seize Philadelphia after these victories.
Saratoga	October 17, 1777	Upstate New York	Turning point of war. Convinced French of U.S. strength. Burgoyne surrenders 5800 men.
Monmouth	June 1778	New Jersey	U.S. army almost captured British but cowardice allowed British forces to escape
Savannah	December 1778	Georgia	Beginning of British push in the South. British are at first welcomed in Savannah and colonial government is restored.
Kaskaskia and Vincennes	February 1779	Western territories	Clark captures British forts which proved important in negotiations with British after the war

Charleston	December 1779	South Carolina	British gain control of South with victory here. 5000 Americans surrender and the single largest loss of troops until the Philippines in 1942.
King's Mountain	October 1780	South Carolina	Bloody victory for U.S.
Cowpens	January 1781	South Carolina	Gen. Greene divided his forces and scored a victory over Cornwallis, who had a larger force.
Guilford Court House	March 1781	North Carolina	In fierce fighting, Americans frustrate British, who control Southern cities, but not the rural areas. Cornwallis finally gives up and plans to link up with British forces in Virginia.
Yorktown	October 19, 1781	Virginia	With 7800 French soldiers and the French fleet in the harbor, Washington accepts Cornwallis' surrender as major fighting ends.

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