

In a cogent answer discuss the events that led to the American Revolution. Was the battle cry of “liberty” based on economic, political, intellectual, religious, or social issues? In other words, was it a violent reaction from colonists adamantly opposed to taxation and virtual representation by Parliament? Was it the reaction of an angry mob (“ordinary” colonists) that put pressure on an elite class reluctant to wage war? Was it rooted in a deeper cause and linked to notions of English liberties, enlightenment ideas, and the Great Awakening? Was it an organized revolt or simply a misguided, unorganized protest movement that went too far by a handful of colonists overreacting to a few unfortunate events? And finally, was it a worthy cause considering that only one-third of the colonists (patriots) supported it and that it marginalized certain groups of Americans (slaves, women, and Native Americans)?

*First paragraph*

I. Introduction: Briefly mention the possible motivations that led to the American Revolution. Make sure to state your thesis—that is your argument for why thirteen separate colonies joined together to fight the War of Independence. Discuss what you think the important issue or issues were that compelled the colonists to back the cause, and whether or not that cause was worthy. Take into consideration Jefferson’s words “all men are created equal” in the Declaration of Independence. Discuss whether the spirit of the American Revolution applied to everyone in Colonial North America including women, slaves, and Native Americans.

*Second*

II. Economic motivation for the War of Independence.

- a. Salutary neglect by England enables the colonists to tax themselves which allows a certain level of economic independence.
- b. Parliament imposes the Navigation Acts but they are largely ignored by the colonists.
  1. Writs of Assistance (search warrants to combat smuggling). The Colonists claim Parliament is exerting arbitrary power.
- c. By 1763, the British want the colonists to help pay for the Seven Years’ War.
- d. Parliament begins taxing the colonies.
  1. The Sugar Act (1764)
  2. The Stamp Act (1765)
  3. The Townsend Duties (1767)
  - 4.

*Third*

III Political motivation for the War of Independence.

- a. Colonists unrepresented in House of Commons
  1. “No taxation without representation”
  2. Virginia’s House of Burgesses approved four resolutions.

- b. Stamp Act Congress (1765)
  - 1. Boycotts
  - 2. An effigy of Andrew Oliver was hung from Boston's Liberty Tree.
  - 3. Committees of Correspondence
- c. The Stamp Act Repealed by Parliament in 1766 empowers colonists.
  - 1. The Declaratory Act (1766) (response by Parliament)
- d. Intolerable Acts (1774)
  - 1. Quebec Act
- e. Opposition to the Intolerable Acts (Worcester, Massachusetts)
  - 1. Suffolk's Resolves
- f. First Continental Congress (1774)
  - 1. The Continental Association
  - 2. The Committees of Safety
- g. Second Continental Congress (1775)

~~III~~ Intellectual and religious motivations for the War of Independence.

- a. The British Constitution.
  - 1. English liberties and rights
- b. John Locke – "Social Contract," and natural rights.
- c. Enlightenment Ideas.
  - 1. Enlightenment thinkers believed that "reason" could govern human life.
  - 2. Arminianism
  - 3. Deism
  - 4. Sir Isaac Newton – natural law
- d. The Great Awakening
  - 1. A reaction to enlightenment rationalism (Arminianism and Deism)
  - 2. Revivalist ministers encouraged independent judgment
- e. Thomas Paine's "Common Sense"

~~IV~~ Social protest toward British conflict motivates colonists to fight the War.

- a. The Boston Massacre (1770)
  - 1. Five colonists are killed but the event is used as political propaganda.
- b. The Tea Act and the Boston Tea Party (1773)
  - 1. Colonists organize a peaceful protest.
  - 2. Massachusetts gets the attention of the other colonies when the British impose strict punishment on them.
- c. Lexington and Concord April 19, 1775.
  - 1. Militiamen organize to resist the advance of British Soldiers.
  - 2. A mysterious shot is fired and a battle ensues.

~~V~~ Conclusion: Restate your thesis (argument) and briefly discuss the worthiness of the cause for independence.

Total = 6 paragraphs

Fourth

IV

Fifth

Sixth