



GENERAL OVERVIEW

Series Description

Thirteen American colonies unite in rebellion, win an eight-year war to secure their independence, and establish a new form of government that would inspire democratic movements at home and around the globe. What begins as a political clash between colonists and the British government grows into a bloody struggle that will engage more than two dozen nations and forever change the world.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION is a six-part, 12-hour documentary series that explores the country's founding struggle and its eight-year War for Independence. The film is directed by Ken Burns, Sarah Botstein and David Schmidt and written by Geoffrey Ward. To learn more about the film, visit pbs.org/americanrevolution.

EPISODE ONE

In Order to Be Free (May 1754 – May 1775)

American colonists oppose efforts by the British Crown and Parliament to seize greater control in North America, escalating simmering tensions over land, taxes, and sovereignty into violent confrontation. After protestors dump tea in Boston Harbor, the British government enacts martial law in Massachusetts. Fighting at Lexington and Concord ignites a war that will last eight years.

EPISODE TWO

An Asylum for Mankind (May 1775 – July 1776)

New Englanders rush to surround the British Army in Boston, but as war begins Americans find themselves sharply divided. After the Battle of Bunker's Hill, George Washington of Virginia arrives to command the newly created Continental Army. In July 1776, the Continental Congress issues the Declaration of Independence, insisting on the people's right to resist tyranny and govern themselves.

EPISODE THREE

The Times That Try Men's Souls (July 1776 – January 1777)

The Revolution, now a war for American independence, faces its toughest challenge yet as General Washington tries to defend New York City from invasion by sea. The resulting Battle of Long Island is a huge defeat for the Americans, who narrowly escape and spend the next several months on the run. In late December, Washington's army regroups and prepares to attack an outpost in Trenton, New Jersey.



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EPISODE FOUR

Conquer by a Drawn Game (January 1777 – February 1778)

As America braces for a third year of devastating war, British commanders launch campaigns to take Albany and Philadelphia. General Howe beats General Washington at Brandywine and Germantown, while the Continental Congress flees Philadelphia. But the Americans' surprising victory over General Burgoyne at Saratoga opens the door for France to officially support the United States.

EPISODE FIVE

The Soul of All America (December 1777 – May 1780)

Washington's Continental Army emerges from the harsh winter at Valley Forge to fight the British Army in the inconclusive Battle of Monmouth. But the alliance with France changes the war and moves it to other theaters. Navies battle off England's coast and in the Caribbean, while armies advance into Indian Country and the southern states. Together, the British Army and Navy capture Charleston.

EPISODE SIX

The Most Sacred Thing (May 1780 – Onward)

The British Army under General Cornwallis struggles to pacify the southern states. Meanwhile, one of the most respected American generals betrays the cause and defects to the British. Supported by the French Army and Navy, Washington's Continental Army wins the decisive victory at Yorktown. Peace is restored, independence is won, and Americans aspire for a more perfect union.