

Early Battles of the American Revolution

Directions: Support the main idea with evidence and analysis

Second Continental Congress

King George III had refused to address the concerns listed in the Declaration of Rights drafted in the First Continental Congress. In May 1775, **delegates** from 12 colonies met again in Philadelphia for the [Second Continental Congress](#). This second group of **delegates** from the colonies was still far from unified, but represented the first attempt at a government in the colonies.

Some of the **delegates** called for a war, others for peace. Once again they compromised. Although the Congress did not openly revolt, delegates showed their growing *dissatisfaction* and sent word to Loyalist authorities asking for new state constitutions. The congress also authorized the Massachusetts **militia** to become the Continental Army. This force would soon include soldiers from all colonies and would carry out the fight against Britain. Congress named a Virginian, [George Washington](#), to command the army.

As Washington prepared for war, the Congress pursued peace. On July 5 the **delegates** signed the Olive Branch Petition as a final attempt to restore harmony. King George refused to read it. Instead, he looked for new ways to punish the colonies.

Delegates: Representative

Militia: Volunteer soldiers

Main Idea: The colonies began to take steps toward fighting the British.

Evidence:	Analysis: (How does your evidence show the colonies getting ready to fight?)
According to the Second Continental Congress:	This shows:

Bunker Hill

Desperate for supplies, leaders in Boston sent Benedict Arnold and a force of 400 men to New York State. Their objective was to attack the British at Fort Ticonderoga. In May 1775, Arnold captured the fort and its large supply of weapons. Meanwhile, the poorly supplied Patriots kept the British pinned down inside Boston. Although British leaders were trying to form a battle plan, they awoke on June 17 to a stunning sight. The colonial forces had quietly dug in at Breed's Hill, a point overlooking north Boston. The Redcoats would have to cross Boston Harbor and fight their way uphill.

As the British force of 2,400 advanced, 1,600 *militia* members waited. Low on gunpowder, the commander ordered his troops not to fire "until you see the whites of their eyes." As they climbed the exposed hillside with their heavy packs, the British soldiers were cut down. Twice they retreated. Stepping over the dead and wounded, they returned for a third try. The colonists were now out of ammunition, and eventually they had to retreat.

This famous conflict is now known as the [Battle of Bunker Hill](#), although it was actually launched from Breed's Hill. While the Patriots lost, they proved they could take on the Redcoats. For the British, the battle was a tragic victory. To win, they had sacrificed about double the number of Patriot soldiers.

Militia: Volunteer Soldiers

Main Idea: The Patriots had success against the British early in the war.

Evidence:	Analysis: (How does your evidence show the patriots having success against the British?)

Dorchester Heights

Shortly after the Battle of Bunker Hill, General Washington arrived in Boston to command the Continental Army. Washington knew that he would need heavier guns to drive the British out of Boston. And he knew where to get them—Fort Ticonderoga. Colonel Henry Knox was assigned to transport the captured cannons from Fort Ticonderoga to Boston. He successfully brought the heavy guns over 300 miles of rough terrain in the middle of winter. When Knox delivered the cannons, Washington was ready to regain control of Boston.

On March 4, 1776, Washington moved his army to Dorchester Heights, an area that overlooked Boston from the south. He stationed the cannons and his troops on Nook's Hill overlooking British general William Howe's position. When Howe awoke the next morning and saw the Patriots' well-positioned artillery, he knew he would have to retreat. "The Rebels have done more in one night than my whole army could do in months," Howe declared. On March 7 Howe retreated from Boston to Canada. The birthplace of the rebellion was now in Patriot hands.

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Evidence:	Analysis: (How does your evidence show the patriots having success against the British?)