

Study Guide



Chapter 5, Section 4

For use with textbook pages 147–151

MOVING TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

KEY TERMS

<i>petition</i>	Formal request (page 148)
<i>preamble</i>	Introduction to the Declaration of Independence (page 151)

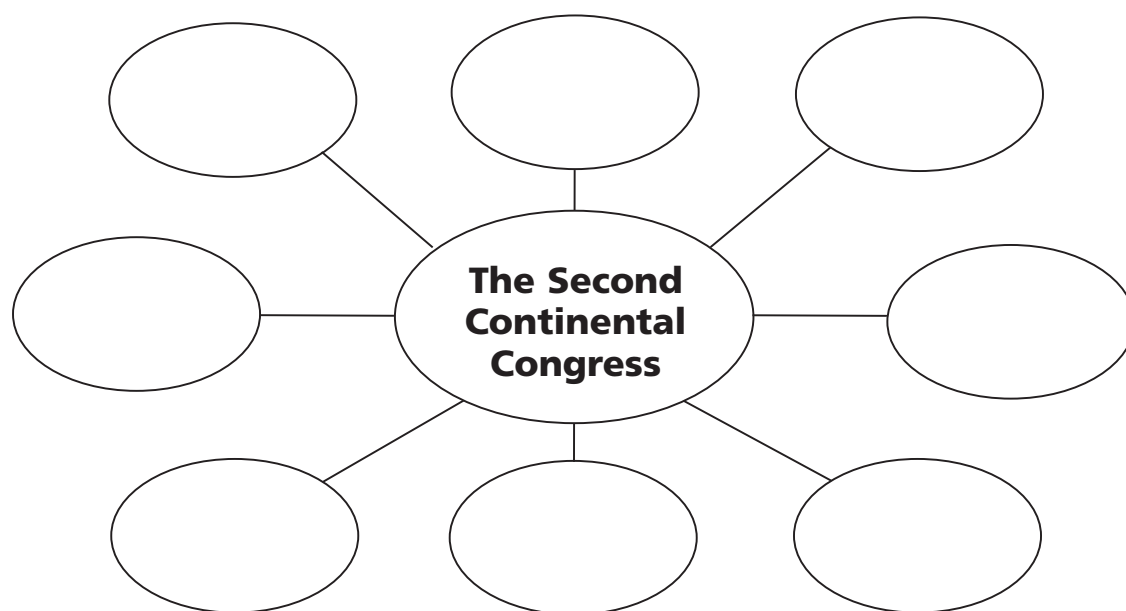
DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

Have you ever read the Declaration of Independence? Can you recall any famous quotes from this historic document? What does the Declaration of Independence mean to you?

In the last section, you read about how colonial leaders met in Philadelphia in 1774 and established the First Continental Congress. This section focuses on how the Second Continental Congress declared the colonies free and independent of Britain.

ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the chart below to help you take notes as you read the summaries that follow. Think about the accomplishments of the Second Continental Congress, which include voting to approve the Declaration of Independence.



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Chapter 5, Section 4 (continued)

READ TO LEARN

- **Colonial Leaders Emerge** (pages 147–150)

The First Continental Congress met in 1774. The Second Continental Congress met for the first time on May 10, 1775. The delegates included John Adams, Samuel Adams, Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, and George Washington. These men, the greatest political leaders in America, were also delegates to the First Continental Congress. Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, and Thomas Jefferson were new delegates.

The Second Continental Congress accomplished many things:

- A.** It began to govern the colonies.
- B.** It authorized the printing of money.
- C.** It established the first post office headed by Benjamin Franklin.
- D.** Committees were created to communicate with Native Americans and other countries.
- E.** The Continental Army, under the command of George Washington, was organized to fight the British.
- F.** Hoping to avoid all-out war, Congress sent a formal request to King George III, called the Olive Branch **Petition**, asking for peace and the protection of colonists' rights.

George III responded by hiring more than 30,000 soldiers to send to America to help the British soldiers fight. Shortly after the Battle of Bunker Hill, General George Washington began to turn the growing number of militia into an organized, trained army. The army was ready in March 1776. They surrounded Boston and fired their cannons at the British, who withdrew to their ships and sailed to Nova Scotia in present-day Canada. In November, when Congress found out that the British were planning to attack New York, Washington's army left Fort Ticonderoga and captured Montreal. American soldiers spent the winter outside of Quebec after an attack on the city, led by Benedict Arnold, failed. They then returned to Fort Ticonderoga.

In late 1775 and early 1776, more colonists began to support the idea of complete independence from Britain. In January 1776, Thomas Paine published *Common Sense*, a pamphlet that persuaded thousands of colonists that the Patriots' fight for freedom was important and worthwhile, not just a minor disagreement over taxes.

1. What was the Olive Branch Petition?

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Chapter 5, Section 4 (continued)

- **The Colonies Declare Independence** (pages 150–151)

The Second Continental Congress, with John Hancock as president, debated many issues. The most important issue, however, was whether the colonies should declare their independence or stay under British rule. In April 1776, North Carolina's delegates were told to support independence. Richard Henry Lee of Virginia proposed a resolution that the American colonies cut all political ties with Britain. While the resolution was being debated in Congress, a committee was chosen to begin writing a Declaration of Independence. The committee, including Franklin, John Adams, Robert Sherman of Connecticut, and Robert Livingston of New York, chose Thomas Jefferson to write it.

On July 2, 1776, twelve colonies voted in favor of Lee's resolution to declare independence, and New York later agreed. The delegates made a few changes to Jefferson's Declaration of Independence and approved it on July 4, 1776. John Hancock signed it first, followed by 54 other delegates. Throughout the newly declared United States, citizens and soldiers celebrated.

The Declaration has four major sections:

- A.** The introduction, or *preamble*, explains the reasons for forming a new country. It also states that all men are created equal and have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
- B.** The second and third sections list the colonists' rights and their complaints against Britain.
- C.** The fourth and final section announces the establishment of a new nation.

2. What was the most important decision made by the Second Continental Congress?
