The war before independence

from the Esri GeoInquiries™ collection for U.S. History

Target audience – U.S. History learners	Time required – 15 minutes

Activity	Discover the first shots of the American Revolution and the battles that occurred before the Declaration of Independence.
C3 Standards	C3: D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts. C3: D2.His.2.9-12. Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.
Learning Outcomes	• Students will be able to identify and explain the circumstances surrounding the battles of Lexington and Concord. • Students will be able to explain America's military successes and defeats prior to the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Map URL: http://esriurl.com/historyGeoinquiry2

❓ Ask

What was the situation like in 1775?
→ Click the link above to launch the map.
→ Click the button, Bookmarks. Select Ripe for Revolt.
❓ Which visible city is most easterly? *[Boston is visible.]*
→ With the Details button underlined, click the button, Show Contents of Map (Content).
→ Turn on the layer, Map Notes. Read the Map Note nearest to Boston.
❓ Which event happened in Boston Harbor, and in which year? *[The Boston Tea Party took place in 1773.]*
→ Open and read the Map Note in the bay.
❓ Why would Britain close the Port of Boston? *[Britain sought to punish Boston for the Tea Party.]*

⬇ Acquire

Why did the British march to Concord?
→ Click the Bookmarks button and select the First Shots bookmark.
→ Use the Measure tool to help answer the following questions.
❓ Is Lexington or Concord located farthest west of Boston? *[Concord is farther west.]*
❓ How far outside of Boston is Concord? *[It is 18-20 miles.]*
→ Open and read the Map Note near Concord.
❓ Why did General Gage send troops to Concord? *[Gage wanted to capture weapons and disarm the militia.]*

🔍 Explore

Where did the first battles occur?
→ Turn off the layer, Map Notes. Turn on the layer, Battles.
→ Hover on the layer name, Battles. Click the button, Filter. Set filter: April_1775 is YES.
→ Turn on the layer, The Regulars Are Coming! . Click the map features to answer these questions.
→ What do the blue lines represent? *[They represent early warning by Revere, Dawes, and Prescott.]*
→ What do the red lines represent? *[They represent the British route and retreat.]*
❓ Where did the fighting start? Who won? [*It started at Lexington; the British won.]*
❓ Which side won the Battle of Concord? *[The Americans won.]*
❓ How many casualties did each side experience? *[There were 78 American casualties and 250 British.]*

more ▶

📋 Analyze

Was there significant fighting before the Declaration of Independence?

→ Choose the Early Battles bookmark, and filter the Battles layer so that BEF_DOI is set to YES (making battles occurring before the Declaration of Independence visible).
? Were there many battles before the Declaration of Independence? *[Yes.]*
? What factors influenced the location of these battles? *[Important waterways, forts, and areas around Boston were influential factors.]*
? Which battle happened farthest north? Who won? *[Quebec happened farthest north; Britain won.]*
→ Click the Bookmark button and choose the December 1776 bookmark.
→ Turn on the Map Notes layer. Read the Map Note located south of Philadelphia.
? When was the Declaration signed? *[It was signed on July 4, 1776]*

☑ Act

How did the Declaration of Independence impact the war?

→ Zoom out to see all battles.
→ Filter Battles so that DOI_6MO is set to YES (displaying battles six months after the Declaration).
? Which city experienced the most fighting? *[New York experienced the most fighting.]*
→ Open and read the Map Note north of Philadelphia.
? Why did Thomas Paine write these words? *[He wrote them to inspire the U.S. Army.]*
→ Click the battle located directly over Trenton.
? What was the name of this battle and when did it occur? *[It was Trenton, Christmas Night.]*
– This battle was important because it improved U.S. morale, and soldiers re-enlisted.
? What challenges were faced by each side at the end of 1776? *[America had a young army, a lot of land, and no navy. Britain had a lot of land and coastline to control, with England 3,000 miles away.]*

MEASURE	FILTER
• Click Measure. • Click the Distance button. • Click the map, and release the button. • Drag your mouse, and then click to draw a vertex.	• Filtering is only available for certain map layers. • Click Filter icon, beneath map layer name (in Content pane). • Set Filter parameters.

Next Steps

DID YOU KNOW?
ArcGIS Online is a mapping platform freely available to public, private, and home schools. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription at http://www.esri.com/schools.

THEN TRY THIS...
• Aggregate (Count and Sum) the number of early battles by state, and then create a thematic map to show which state experienced the most battles during this part of the war.
• Create a 20-mile buffer around the major cities and count the number of battles that occurred in these areas.

📄 TEXT REFERENCES

This map has been cross-referenced to material in chapters from leading US History high school texts.

• *American History: A Survey by Brinkley — Chapter 5*
• *The Americans by McDougal Littell — Chapter 6*

• *History Alive! The United States Through Industrialization by TCI — Chapter 4*

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