**RS Notes: The American Revolution**

**Britain and British North America**

* The middle class wanted Britain’s trade and empire expanded.
  + One place for expansion was North America, where Britain controlled Canada and 13 colonies on the eastern coast of the present United States.
  + Merchants in the colonial ports of Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and Charleston did not want the British government to run their affairs.
  + Colonies had their own legislatures and often acted independently.

**The American Revolution**

* After the 7 years war- Britain needed more $ from their colonies.
  + Stamp Act- Printed material such as legal documents and newspapers had to carry a stamp showing that a tax had been paid to Britain.
    - Repealed in 1766
* Boston Tea Party
  + Tea Act of 1773- Repealed 4/5 of the taxes East India Company had to pay to ship tea.
    - Allowed them to sell it very cheap
      * Colonists thought the gov’t was trying to put them out of business.
    - Dec. 1773- 150 men boarded their ships
      * Threw the tea into Boston Harbor
* The 1st Continental Congress convened in 1774
  + They wanted to declare independence from GB
* Fighting broke out in 1775 at Lexington and Concord.
* **July 4, 1776-** Declaration of Independence signed
* Foreign countries helped out too-
  + France supplied arms and men, and formally recognized the American state in 1777.
  + Spanish and Dutch joined in against Great Britain too.
* 1781- General Cornwallis was defeated at Yorktown.
  + American volunteer army beat the well-trained British army
* 1783- Treaty of Paris-
  + America is independent
  + Control the western territory from the Appalachians to the Mississippi River.

**Birth of a New Nation**

* The 13 former colonies were now states, having created a new social contract.
  + They had little interest in forming a country with a strong central government.
* Articles of Confederation
  + Gave too much power to the states
  + Soon it was clear the government under the Articles lacked the power to deal with the new nation’s problems.
* In 1787 delegates met to revise the Articles.
  + The Constitution created a federal system
    - Power is shared between the national and state governments.
    - The national (federal) government had the power to levy taxes, raise an army, regulate trade, and create a national currency.
      * One big problem before is that states were able to print their own money.

**The Constitution**

* The federal government was divided into three branches in a system of checks and balances.
  + The president (executive) had the power to execute laws, veto the legislature’s acts, supervise foreign affairs, and direct military forces.
  + The second branch (the legislative) consisted of the Senate, elected by the state legislatures, and the House of Representatives, elected directly by the people.
  + The Supreme Court and other courts made up the third branch (judicial). The courts were to enforce the Constitution as the “supreme law of the land.”

**Bill of Rights**

* 10 Amendments

1. Freedom of speech, religion, press, and assembly

2. Right to bear arms

3. No soldier shall be quartered without consent

4. No unreasonable search and seizures

5. You do not have to testify against yourself

* + - you can only be tried for the crime once (double jeopardy)

6. Speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury

* + - * You should be informed of the accusation
      * You will be confronted with your witnesses against you

7. Common law- trial by jury

8. No excessive bail, fines, or cruel and unusual punishment

9. Any rights not mentioned belong to the people, as long as they don’t infringe on others rights

10. Any rights not given to the U.S. and not denied to the states go to the states or the people