

# The War Is Won

## Essential Question

How did the Battle of Yorktown lead to American independence?

## Reading Guide

### Content Vocabulary

ratify (p. 177)      ambush (p. 178)

### Academic Vocabulary

strategy (p. 175)      pursue (p. 177)

### Key People and Events

Comte de Rochambeau (p. 175)

François de Grasse (p. 175)

Battle of Yorktown (p. 176)

Benjamin Franklin (p. 177)

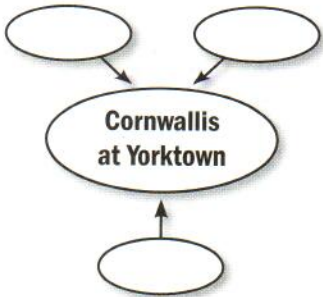
John Adams (p. 177)

John Jay (p. 177)

Treaty of Paris (p. 177)

### Reading Strategy

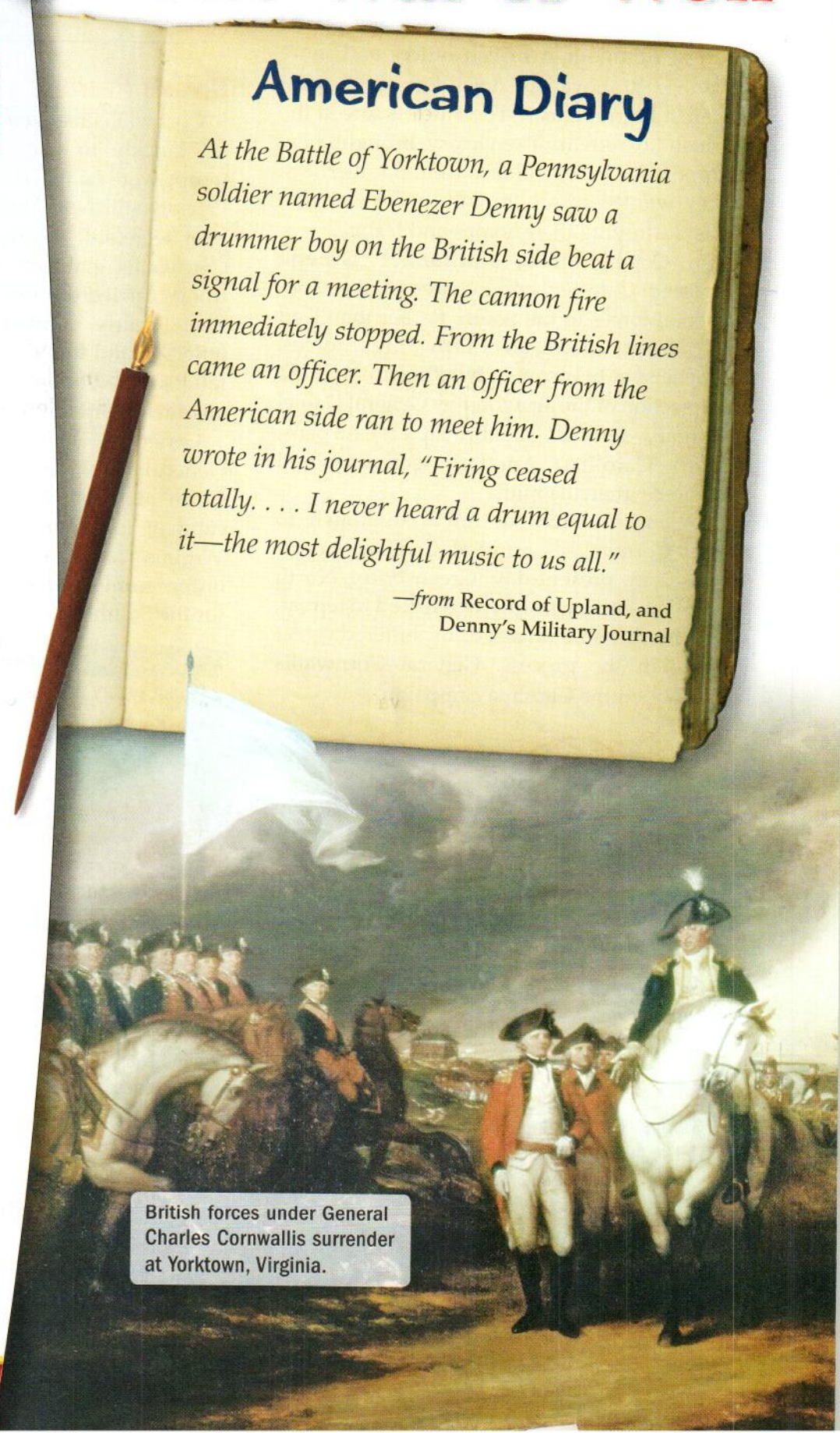
**Taking Notes** As you read, use a diagram like the one below to list the forces that met Cornwallis at Yorktown.



## American Diary

At the Battle of Yorktown, a Pennsylvania soldier named Ebenezer Denny saw a drummer boy on the British side beat a signal for a meeting. The cannon fire immediately stopped. From the British lines came an officer. Then an officer from the American side ran to meet him. Denny wrote in his journal, "Firing ceased totally. . . . I never heard a drum equal to it—the most delightful music to us all."

—from Record of Upland, and Denny's Military Journal



British forces under General Charles Cornwallis surrender at Yorktown, Virginia.

## Victory at Yorktown

**Main Idea** Washington's complicated battle plan led to the important American victory at Yorktown.

**History and You** How important is planning to the successful outcome of a project? Read to learn how Washington's planning helped the Americans win an important victory.

Denny was proud to witness the steps leading to the British surrender at Yorktown. The buildup to this great event began a few months earlier. At that time, the Revolutionary War was at a critical point and both armies sought a victory. General Washington made plans to attack the British at Yorktown, Virginia, rather than in New York City. The Patriots hoped for help from the French.

In July 1780, French warships appeared off Newport, Rhode Island. The ships carried the promised French aid: soldiers commanded by **Comte de Rochambeau** (ROH•SHAM•BOH). Unfortunately, the British fleet arrived soon afterward and trapped the French ships in Newport.

In the autumn of 1780, Washington camped north of New York City. He waited for a second fleet of French ships. He also kept a

close eye on the British army based in New York that General Clinton commanded. Washington planned to attack Clinton's army as soon as the second French fleet arrived. He had to wait a year to put this plan into action. The French fleet did not set sail for America until the summer of 1781.

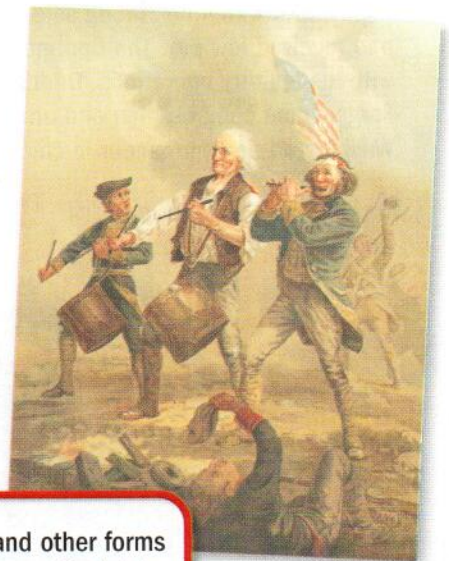
### Change in Plans

Washington followed the reports of the fighting in the South during 1780 and 1781. He knew that Cornwallis's troops were camped in Yorktown, Virginia, and that Lafayette was keeping them bottled up on the Yorktown peninsula. He also learned that Admiral **François de Grasse**, the French naval commander, was heading toward Chesapeake Bay instead of New York. Washington quickly changed his plans. He would advance on the British at Yorktown rather than at New York City.

Washington kept his new **strategy**, or plan of action, secret. He wanted Clinton to think the Patriots still planned to attack the British in New York. This, he hoped, would keep Clinton from sending aid to Cornwallis. Meanwhile, in July Rochambeau had marched his troops from Newport to join Washington.

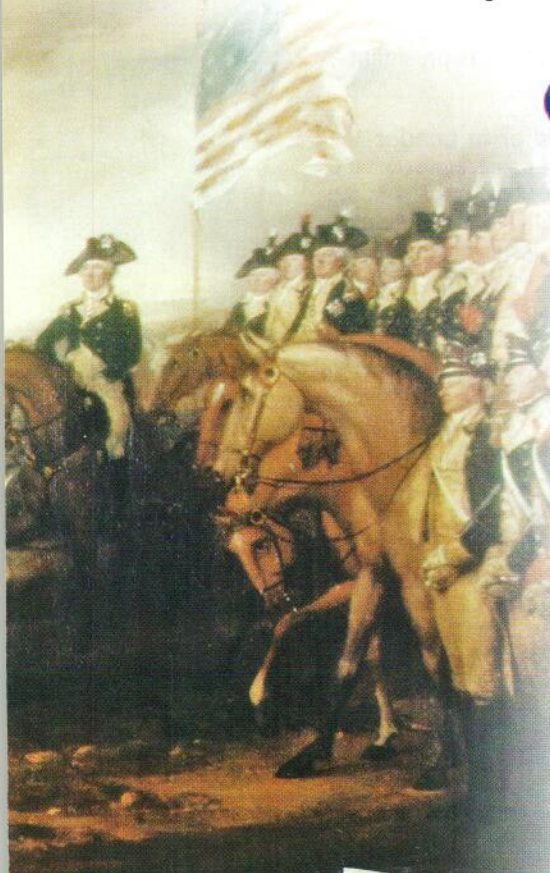
### Primary Source Revolutionary Music

**"Yankee Doodle"** The song "Yankee Doodle" was played at the Yorktown surrender ceremony to annoy the British. British forces first sang "Yankee Doodle" to poke fun at what they considered the awkward ways of the Americans. The song tells the story of a poorly dressed Yankee "doodle," or simple person. The Americans, however, quickly made "Yankee Doodle" their own. They created new verses that made fun of the British and praised the Continental Army and its commander, George Washington.



### Critical Thinking

**Interpreting** Do you think songs and other forms of music are important in fighting a war? Explain.



Washington and Rochambeau then rushed south with their armies. The secrecy was so strict that most soldiers did not know where they were going. One soldier wrote, "We do not know the object of our march, and are in perfect ignorance whether we are going against New York, or . . . Virginia."

Washington's troops marched 200 miles (322 km) in 15 days. General Clinton in New York did not detect the forces heading south toward Virginia. Three groups—Lafayette's troops, Washington's and Rochambeau's American-French army, and de Grasse's French fleet—would meet at Yorktown.

### The Siege of Yorktown

Washington's plan worked perfectly. The British were thoroughly confused. By the end of September, 14,000 American and French troops had trapped Cornwallis's 8,000 British and Hessian troops at Yorktown. Meanwhile, de Grasse's fleet kept Cornwallis from escaping by sea. General Clinton and the rest of the British army waited in New York. They were unable to help Cornwallis.

### Cornwallis's Defeat

On October 9, the Americans and French began a tremendous bombardment. One Hessian soldier wrote in his diary, "One saw men lying everywhere . . . whose heads, arms, and legs had been shot off."

British supplies began running low. Many soldiers were wounded or sick. On October 14, Washington's aide, Alexander Hamilton, led an attack that captured key British defenses. Cornwallis realized the hopelessness of his situation. On October 19 he surrendered his troops. The Patriots had won the **Battle of Yorktown**. They took nearly 8,000 British prisoners and captured more than 200 guns.

As the British marched between rows of French and American troops to hand over their weapons, a French band played "Yankee Doodle." A British band responded with a children's tune, "The World Turned Upside Down." Indeed it had.

**Reading Check** Explaining Why did Washington advance on Yorktown?

## Chance & Error in History

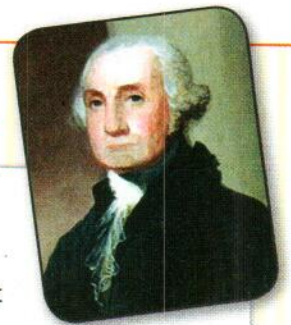
### What If Washington Had Stepped Down?

Throughout the Revolutionary War, Washington succeeded in holding his army together, despite many difficulties. He had to deal with low morale among soldiers who lived on poor rations and received low pay. The Continental Congress often interfered with his military operations. During the gloomy winter at Valley Forge, some congressmen and army officers plotted to replace Washington as commander in chief.

Washington accepts the British surrender at Yorktown. ▼



Washington as president ▶



#### From Soldier to Leader

Washington was commissioned a lieutenant colonel in 1754 in the French and Indian War. An excellent soldier, he was made brigadier general and was a major factor in Britain's defeat of the French.

Wilderness fighting had made Washington a trained military man. This training helped prepare him for his greatest military challenge—leading the American revolutionary forces.

*"The fate of unborn millions will now depend, under God, on the courage and conduct of this army."*

◀ Washington as a young soldier

# Independence

**Main Idea** The Patriots' spirit and resolve helped them win independence.

**History and You** What sort of influence do you think America's fight for independence had on the rest of the world? Read to find out how American ideals affected the world.

The fighting did not end with Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown. The British still held Savannah, Charles Town, and New York. A few more clashes took place on land and sea. The victory at Yorktown, however, convinced the British that the war was too costly to **pursue**, or continue.

The two sides sent delegates to Paris to work out a treaty. **Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay** represented the United States. The American Congress **ratified**, or approved, the preliminary treaty in April 1783. The final **Treaty of Paris** was signed on September 3, 1783. By that time Britain had also made peace with France and Spain.

The Treaty of Paris was a triumph for the Americans. Great Britain recognized the United States as an independent nation. The British promised to withdraw all their troops from American territory. They also agreed to give Americans the right to fish in the waters off the coast of Canada.

The United States, in turn, agreed that British merchants could collect debts that Americans owed them. The treaty also stated that the Congress would advise the states to return to Loyalists the properties taken from them.

## The Newburgh Conspiracy

Washington headquartered his strong army in Newburgh, New York, after the British surrendered. The Congress refused to fund the soldiers' pensions and failed to provide them with other pay. The soldiers' anger mounted. In disgust, some officers circulated a letter in March 1783. If their demands were not met, the letter said, the army should use force against Congress.

Washington realized that this threat of revolt was dangerous. The new nation could be destroyed. He persuaded the angry soldiers to be patient. Then Washington urged the Congress to meet their just demands. Washington's leadership ended the threat to the new nation. The Congress soon acted on the demands.

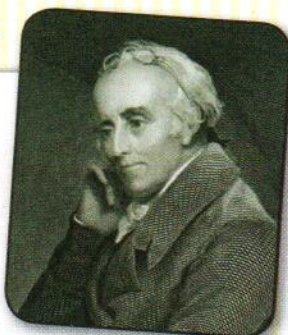
## Washington Resigns

British troops left New York City in late November 1783. The war had truly ended. Washington could at last give up his command. On December 4, Washington said farewell to his troops. Three weeks later he formally resigned at a meeting of the Second Continental Congress. Washington said, "Having now finished the work assigned me I retire . . . and take my leave of all the employments of public life."

Washington returned home to Mount Vernon, Virginia, in time for Christmas. There he planned to remain and live quietly with his family.

Dr. Benjamin Rush ▶

**Dr. Benjamin Rush**, one of Washington's critics, served as surgeon general in the Continental Army. In a letter to John Adams, Rush compared Washington unfavorably to the hero of Saratoga, Horatio Gates.



*"I have heard several officers who have served under General Gates compare his army to a well regulated family. . . . [They] have compared General Washington's imitation of an army to an unformed mob."*

### Critical Thinking

**Analyzing** What pressures did Washington face as a leader? Why do you think he did not quit?

## Why the Americans Won

How did the Americans manage to win the Revolutionary War? How did they defeat Britain, the world's greatest power?

The Americans had several advantages in the war. First, they fought on their own land while the British had to bring troops and supplies from thousands of miles away. The siege of Yorktown showed how much the British depended on the sea. When their ships were blocked, the British troops had no support. Also, the Americans knew the local terrain and where to lay an **ambush**—a surprise attack. The British, in contrast, had much difficulty controlling the American countryside once they occupied the cities.

Second, help from other nations contributed to the American victory. The French supplied soldiers, ships, and loans. The Spanish gave aid when they attacked the British in the Mississippi Valley and along the Gulf of Mexico.

Perhaps most important, the American Revolution was a people's movement. Its outcome depended not on any one battle or event but on the determination and spirit of all Patriots. As Washington remarked about the patriotic crowds, "Here is an army they [the British] will never conquer."

## Influence of the American Revolution

In 1776 the American colonists began a revolution. They made clear the principles of freedom and the rights outlined in the Declaration of Independence. These ideas bounded back across the Atlantic to influence the French Revolution. French rebels in 1789 fought in defense of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." The French upheld these principles: "Men are born and remain free and equal in rights."

In 1791 the ideals of the American and French Revolutions traveled across the Caribbean and the Atlantic to the French colony of Saint Domingue. Inspired by talk of freedom, enslaved Africans took up arms. Led by Toussaint-Louverture, they shook off French rule. In 1804 Saint Domingue—present-day Haiti—became the second nation in the Americas to achieve independence from colonial rule. "We have asserted our rights," declared the revolutionaries. "We swear never to yield them to any power on earth."

**Reading Check** **Explaining** Why did Washington take action to end the Newburgh Conspiracy?

## Section 4 Review

**History ONLINE**  
Study Central™ To review this section, go to [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).

### Vocabulary

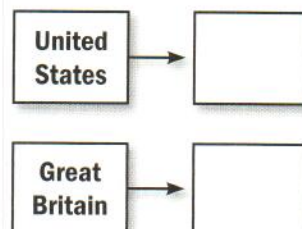
- Using complete sentences, define the following terms:  
*strategy, pursue, ratify, ambush.*

### Main Ideas

- Summarizing** What role did the French play in the Patriot victory at Yorktown?
- Explaining** Why were the Americans successful in their fight for independence?

### Critical Thinking

- Categorizing** Use a diagram like the one below to show what the United States and Great Britain agreed to in the Treaty of Paris.



- Expository Writing** Write a paragraph comparing Washington's original plans to attack the British with his new secret strategy.

- Answer the Essential Question**  
How did the Battle of Yorktown lead to American independence?