

## networks

There's More Online!

- ✓ BIOGRAPHY  
Rochambeau
- ✓ GRAPHIC ORGANIZER  
Treaty of Paris



### Lesson 4

## The Final Years

ESSENTIAL QUESTION *Why does conflict develop?*

### IT MATTERS BECAUSE

*The Patriots' and their allies' cleverness and commitment led to final victory in the Revolutionary War.*

## Victory at Yorktown

GUIDING QUESTION *What events occurred in the victory at Yorktown?*

While the British were carrying out their southern campaign, key events were taking place in the North. In July 1780, French warships appeared off Newport, Rhode Island. The ships carried French aid: thousands of soldiers commanded by Comte de Rochambeau (row•sham•BOH).

Eventually, Rochambeau joined up with General Washington, who was camped north of New York City. There the two leaders waited for the arrival of a second fleet of French ships. If and when the second French fleet arrived, Washington planned to attack the British army base in New York, which was under the command of General Clinton.

As it turned out, the second French fleet never did arrive in the North. Washington and Rochambeau would never launch the attack on Clinton. Instead, both the ships and the troops would find a better opportunity to strike at the British. That opportunity would come farther south—at Yorktown, Virginia.

### Washington Leaves for Virginia

As he waited outside New York, Washington had followed reports of fighting in the South. In 1781 he sent Lafayette and Anthony Wayne to Virginia to stop Cornwallis. The results were

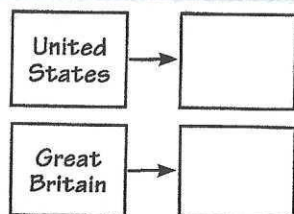
New York Academic Standards  
7.3b, 7.3d

Reading **HELP**DESK

CCSS

#### Taking Notes: Describing

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



#### Content Vocabulary

- siege
- ratify
- ambush



positive. Lafayette had Cornwallis pinned down on a peninsula, a piece of land surrounded by water on three sides. The place was called Yorktown.

Washington also got important news about the French fleet he was waiting for: The ships were heading toward Chesapeake Bay instead of New York. They were going to join in the fight to defeat Cornwallis. With this news, Washington quickly changed his plans. He and Rochambeau would advance on the British at Yorktown rather than at New York.

Washington kept his new **strategy**, or plan of action, secret. He wanted Clinton to think the Patriots still planned to attack at New York. This, he hoped, would keep Clinton from sending aid to Cornwallis.

Washington and Rochambeau then rushed south with their armies. Secrecy was strict. Most soldiers did not know where they were going. Wrote one, "We do not know the object of our march, and are in perfect ignorance whether we are going against New York, or ... Virginia."

The French and American troops marched 200 miles (322 km) in 15 days. General Clinton did not learn they were gone until it was too late. There was nothing he could do to stop the three forces—Lafayette's troops, Washington's and Rochambeau's army, and the French fleet—from meeting at Yorktown.

### A Trap at Yorktown

Washington's plan worked perfectly. By the end of September, 14,000 American and French troops stood against Cornwallis's 8,000 British and Hessian troops at Yorktown. Meanwhile, the French fleet kept guard at Chesapeake Bay. British ships could not get in to help Cornwallis escape by sea. General Clinton and the rest of the British army sat helplessly in New York. They were unable to help Cornwallis. The British were trapped. American and French forces began a **siege** (SEEJ)—they blocked off the British supply and escape routes. In this way, they hoped to force the British to surrender.

In August 1781, Comte de Rochambeau joined Washington's Continental Army in its march to Yorktown.



## Thinking Like a HISTORIAN

### Predicting Consequences

Throughout the Revolutionary War, Washington succeeded in holding his army together, despite many difficulties. One of these difficulties was political meddling. The Continental Congress often interfered with his military operations. During the gloomy winter at Valley Forge, some members of Congress and army officers plotted to replace Washington as commander in chief. How might Washington's removal or resignation have affected the war? For more about predicting consequences, review *Thinking Like a Historian*.

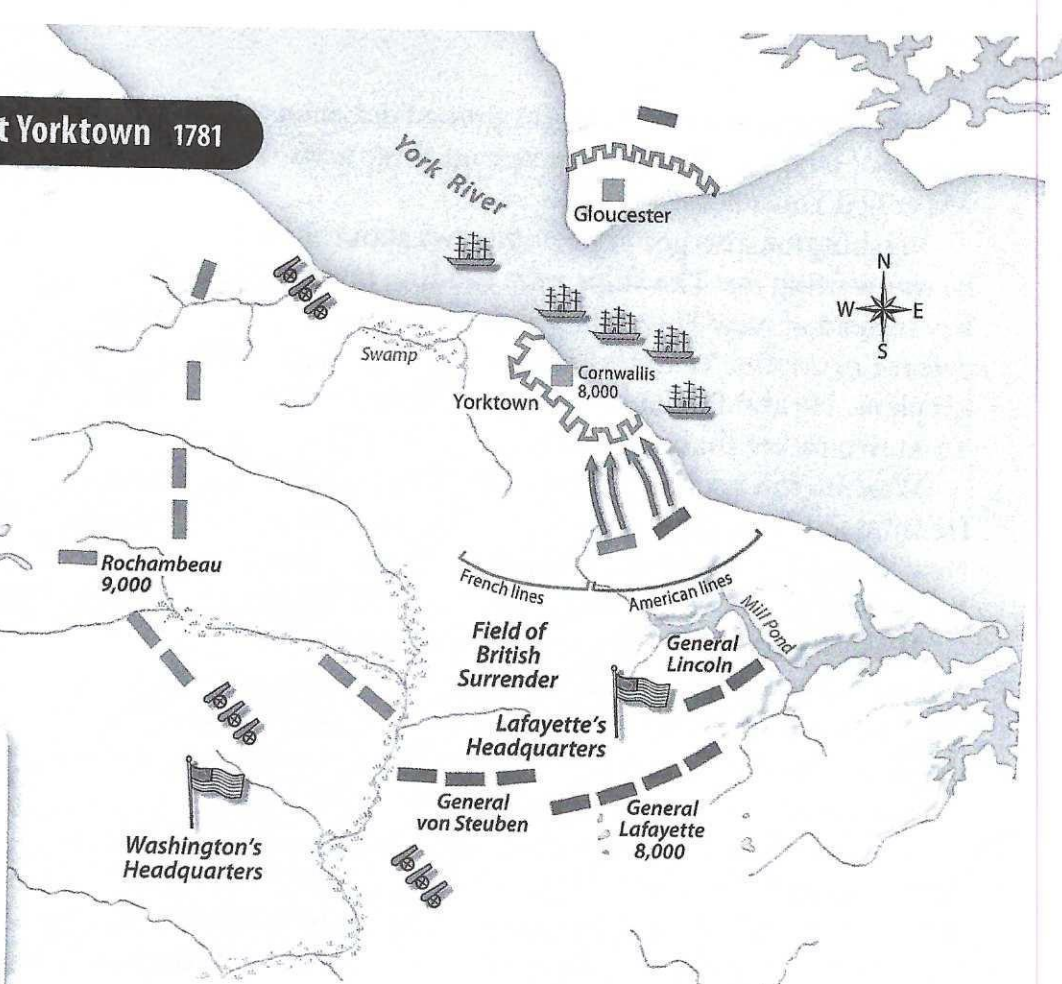
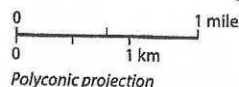
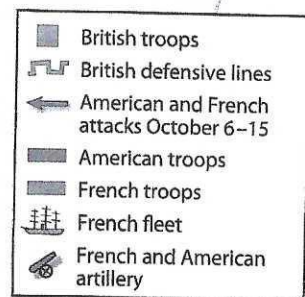
**siege** an attempt to force surrender by blocking the movement of people or goods into or out of a place

**Academic Vocabulary**  
**strategy** a plan of action





## Siege at Yorktown 1781



### GEOGRAPHY CONNECTION

General Cornwallis and his army left the Carolinas for Virginia in 1781. He wound up at Yorktown, on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay.

- 1 LOCATION** How would you describe the type of land on which Cornwallis and his forces camped at Yorktown?
- 2 CRITICAL THINKING**  
*Analyzing* Does this location seem like it would be easy or difficult to defend? Explain.

### Victory Over Cornwallis

The siege began to take effect. The British ran low of supplies and many soldiers were wounded or sick. On October 14, Washington's aide, Alexander Hamilton, led an attack that captured key British defenses. Cornwallis could see that the situation was hopeless. 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.

At the surrender ceremony, the British marched between rows of French and American troops. A French band played "Yankee Doodle." This was a song the British had used to taunt the Americans. A British band responded with a children's tune, "The World Turned Upside Down." With the mighty British surrendering to the upstart Americans, it seemed a fitting song for the situation.

### PROGRESS CHECK

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

### Reading **HELP**DESK **CCSS**

#### Reading Strategy: Sequence of Events

Describe the sequence of events from October 9 to October 19 that led to the victory over Cornwallis.



# Independence Achieved

**GUIDING QUESTION** *What helped the Patriots win independence?*

The Patriot victory at Yorktown was a terrible blow to the British and their war effort. Still, the fighting went on after Cornwallis surrendered. The British still held Savannah, Charles Town, and New York. There would be a few more clashes on land and sea. However, the defeat at Yorktown convinced the British that the war was too costly to **pursue**, or proceed with.

The Americans and British sent delegates to Paris to work out a treaty. Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay represented the United States. The American Congress **ratified** (RAT·ih·fyed), or approved, the first draft of the 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.

Under the Treaty of Paris, Great Britain recognized the United States as an independent nation. The British also promised to withdraw all their troops from American territory. They gave Americans fishing rights to the waters off the coast of nearby Canada.

In turn, the United States promised that Americans would pay to British merchants what they owed. The treaty also stated that the Congress would advise the new states to return property taken from Loyalists.

## A Conspiracy Against Congress

Many months passed between the end of fighting in the Revolutionary War and the signing of the peace treaty. During that time, Washington was unwilling to dissolve the army. Instead, he camped his idle troops in Newburgh, New York.

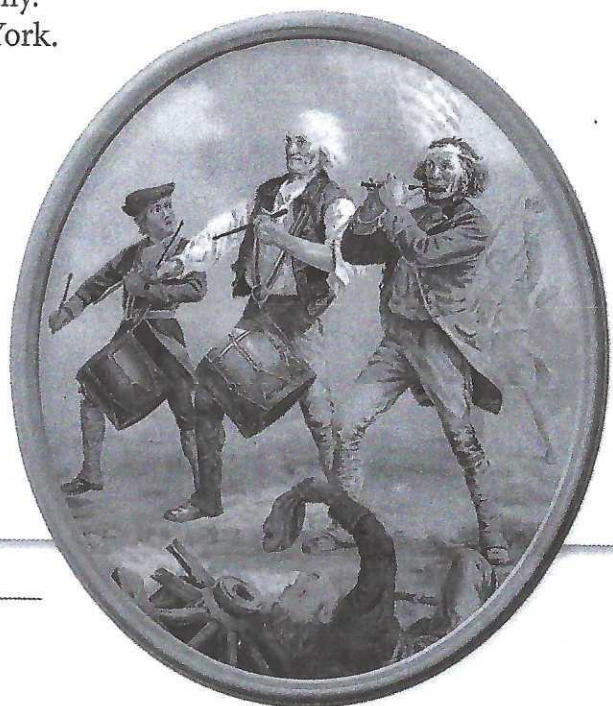
Many of these soldiers believed they were owed pay from the Congress. When this pay did not come, the soldiers grew angry. Some officers sent a letter around in March 1783. If their demands were not met, the letter said, the army should use force against the Congress.

Washington realized that this threat of revolt was dangerous. The new nation could be destroyed. In a dramatic speech, he asked the angry soldiers to be patient. Then Washington urged the Congress to meet their just demands.

British forces first sang "Yankee Doodle" to poke fun at what they considered the awkward ways of the Americans. The Americans, however, quickly made "Yankee Doodle" their own. They created new verses that made fun of the British and praised George Washington.

### ► CRITICAL THINKING

**Explaining** Why might songs and other forms of music be important in fighting a war? Explain.



**ratify** to approve officially

**Academic Vocabulary**

**pursue** to proceed with