

# What Was The Continental Congress? US History Textbook Children S American History

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The Continental Congress played a pivotal role in shaping the destiny of the United States of America. It was the precursor to the American government and a driving force behind the American Revolution. In this article, we delve into the origins, composition, and significance of the Continental Congress, exploring its profound impact on the course of American history.

## Origins and Formation:

### 1st Continental Congress:



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- **Date:** September 5-October 26, 1774
- **Location:** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- **Representatives:** 56 delegates from 12 American colonies

The first Continental Congress emerged amid the growing tensions between the British Crown and the American colonies. The colonies resented the imposition of taxes without representation, particularly the Stamp Act and Townshend Acts. The Congress convened to coordinate a response to these measures.

## **2nd Continental Congress:**

- **Date:** May 10, 1775 - March 1, 1781
- **Location:** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- **Representatives:** Delegates from all 13 American colonies

The outbreak of the American Revolutionary War in April 1775 prompted the formation of the Second Continental Congress. It became the de facto government of the colonies, assuming legislative, executive, and judicial functions.

## **Composition and Representation:**

The Continental Congress was composed of delegates from the American colonies. Each colony elected its own representatives, typically from among its leading political and social figures. The delegates varied in their backgrounds and perspectives, but they were all united in their commitment to American liberty.

## **Functions and Significance:**

### **1. Declarations and Resolutions:**

- **Declaration of Independence (1776):** Proclaimed the separation of the American colonies from British rule.
- **Articles of Confederation (1777):** Established the first formal government of the United States.
- **Treaty of Alliance with France (1778):** Secured foreign aid from France, which proved critical to the American victory.

## 2. Military Command and Finance:

- **Appointed George Washington as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army.**
- **Issued paper money (Continental currency) to finance the war effort.**
- **Established a navy and an international loan program to support the war.**

## 3. Diplomacy and Foreign Relations:

- **Appointed Benjamin Franklin as Ambassador to France.**
- **Established diplomatic relations with other European powers, such as Spain and the Netherlands.**
- **Negotiated peace with Great Britain at the Treaty of Paris (1783).**

## Challenges and Achievements:

The Continental Congress faced significant challenges during its existence:

- **Division among the delegates:** Different colonies had varying interests and agendas.

- **Financial constraints:** Funding the war proved to be a constant struggle.
- **International recognition:** Securing foreign aid and diplomatic support was crucial but not always easy.

Despite these challenges, the Continental Congress achieved remarkable successes:

- **United the American colonies in their fight for independence.**
- **Established the framework for a new nation.**
- **Laid the groundwork for a lasting system of government.**

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The Continental Congress was a pivotal institution in American history. As the forerunner to the United States government, it played a crucial role in declaring independence, establishing a nation, and securing victory in the Revolutionary War. The legacy of the Continental Congress continues to shape American politics and society to this day.



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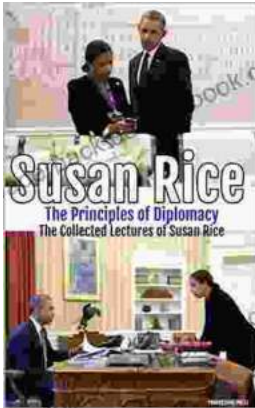
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