

The War of Independence

The decision of Britain's North American colonies to rebel against the Mother Country was an extremely risky one. Although each colony had its own militia—of varying quality—there was no Continental Army until Congress created one, virtually from scratch, in 1775. This army, placed under the command of a Virginian named George Washington, would have the difficult task of

5 taking on the world's largest empire, with a first-rate army, supported by what was at the time the greatest navy in history. Indeed, it was no doubt with these risks in mind that the Continental Congress waited until July 1776—more than a year after the outbreak of the fighting — to issue a formal Declaration of Independence.

This is not to say that the Americans lacked advantages of their own. In order to fight the colonists the British had to maintain a large army on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean—over 10 3,000 miles away from home. Moreover, this army actually had to conquer an area much larger than Great Britain itself; the Continental Army, on the other hand, could win simply by preventing this from happening. Even so, the first years of war were difficult ones for the Americans, and ultimately it required substantial aid from France to bring the war to a

15 successful conclusion.

Source (adapted): <http://edsitement.neh.gov/curriculum-unit/american-war-independence#sect-introduction>

Annotations :

militia (n.)	Bürgerwehr	maintain (v.)	unterhalten
vary (v.)	(sich) unterscheiden	moreover (adv.)	des Weiteren
virtually (adv.)	so gut wie, praktisch	prevent (v.)	vermeiden
from scratch	von Null auf	ultimately (adv.)	schließlich
issue (v.)	veröffentlichen	substantial (adj.)	umfangreich
formal (adj.)	förmlich, offiziell	aid (n.)	Hilfe
advantage (n.)	Vorteil	conclusion (n.)	Abschluss

Task: Please write Lord Cornwallis's letter to the British King George III.

Your Majesty,

Although we have fought bravely, we have lost the war because



Lord Charles Cornwallis,
commander in chief of the
British army in North America

Picture source:
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8c/Lord_Cornwallis.jpg