

Topic 3.13

Continuity and Change in Period 3

Learning Objective: Explain how the American independence movement affected society from 1754 to 1800.

The reasoning skill of “Continuity and Change” is the suggested focus for evaluating this period. As explained in the contextualization for Period 3, there are many factors to consider in the topic of the American independence movement’s effects on society and the national identity. A reasonable argument to explain the effects of independence on society requires one to examine the *relevant historical evidence*.

On the AP exam, a question may be focused on any one factor such as the impact of the ideas that stimulated independence on new values dealing with politics, religion, and society. In response, one would have to present specific historical evidence of a *change* in values, such as the expansion of rights to include recognition of a new role for women including *Republican Motherhood*. At the same time, evidence also supports a *continuity* of values in that a woman’s status was still considered inferior to men.

This period includes many examples of continuity and change in religion, commerce, foreign policy, politics, civil liberties, and relations between White Americans and Native Americans. After the United States won independence, state support for churches declined but religious fervor remained strong. One could also cite historical evidence to argue that the independence movement did not always bring change. The generally hostile attitudes of the settlers toward Native Americans continued and government legal efforts to maintain peace failed, just as they had under British rule.

QUESTIONS ABOUT CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Use the questions below to make a historically defensible claim.

1. Explain the extent to which the ideas that inspired the revolution changed society while maintaining much of British culture. For example, people examined women’s role in society more closely while they continued to follow traditional British religious practices.
2. Explain how the independence efforts supported efforts to protect individual freedoms while still continuing to limit some rights. For example, view how the Bill of Rights protected individuals while at the same time the government continued to limit the right to vote.



THINK AS A HISTORIAN: DEVELOPMENTS AND PROCESSES

To analyze historical evidence, you must be able to identify historical ideas and then explain them. Identifying a historical idea is fairly simple. You just say what it is.

The idea you identify may fall into one of three categories.

- **Historical concept:** This is the broadest category. A concept can be an idea or a general understanding of something. Colonization, religious toleration, and salutary neglect are examples of concepts.
- **Historical development:** A development is a change or occurrence. For instance, you have learned about the development of an economic and cultural system within each colony. Also, you have learned about the development of the slave trade and the development of a U.S. national identity.
- **Historical process:** A process is a series of actions or events that lead to an end. You have already learned about the political process. You have also learned about the processes of adding new states to the Union and the process of harvesting cotton.

Historians do much more than identify concepts, developments, and processes. They also explain them. This means describing what it is and how it works, and perhaps providing one or more examples.

An AP® exam might include multiple-choice questions that require you to identify the best example of a historical concept, development, or processes. The short-answer and long-answer questions will also require explanations of historical ideas. Improving your skills at identifying and explaining will help you on the AP® exams, as well as in other courses. Beyond school, they are two of the most basic, commonly used skills in work and everyday life.

For each text section below, identify a concept, development, or process in that section. Then explain it.

1. “Conflicting Views of Government,” pages 84–85: development
2. “The First Three Wars,” pages 86–87: development
3. “British Actions and Colonial Reactions,” page 92: concept
4. “New Revenues and Regulations,” pages 93–94: process
5. “Enlightenment Ideas,” pages 100–101: concept
6. “Political Demands,” page 112: concept
7. “The Path to Ratification,” page 127: process