



Day 7 American Revolution  
130 Minutes

First Continental Congress

# The First Continental Congress

## Detailed Lesson Plan with Slide Script

**Grade Level:** 5–8

**Time:** 45–60 minutes

**Unit:** Causes of the American Revolution

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## Lesson Overview

This lesson introduces students to the First Continental Congress and explains why it marked a turning point in colonial resistance to British rule. Using a short teacher-led slide presentation as an anchor, students learn why the colonies met, who attended, and what decisions were made. Students then explore a differentiated reading experience and an interactive Continental Congress chart that includes biographies, delegate information, and an integrated online or printable scavenger hunt.

A central focus of this lesson is understanding that the delegates of the First Continental Congress were **still pledging allegiance to England**, even though frustration and impatience with Parliament were rapidly growing.

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## Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain why the First Continental Congress met in 1774
- Identify which colonies attended and why one colony did not
- Describe the major decisions made by the Congress
- Explain how the Congress showed loyalty to England while also increasing resistance

- Analyze why colonial unity was historically significant

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## Essential Question

How did the First Continental Congress show both loyalty to Great Britain and growing resistance at the same time?

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## Materials

- PowerPoint presentation on the First Continental Congress
- Student devices
- Continental Congress interactive page with differentiated text and interactive chart
- Online or printable scavenger hunt

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## Hook (5 minutes)

Begin with a discussion prompt:

Imagine an authority keeps adding stricter rules while claiming to act in the best interest of everyone. At what point does respectful disagreement turn into organized resistance?

Briefly review the Intolerable Acts and explain that Parliament punished Massachusetts in ways that affected all colonies. Emphasize that many colonists believed this set a dangerous precedent.

Transition to the idea that the colonies decided to respond together.

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## Slide Script (20-25 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/presentations-and-bundles/continental-congress-power-point-presentation>

**Use only with slides covering the First Continental Congress**

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## **Slide 1 – The First Continental Congress (1774)**

In 1774, tensions between Great Britain and the American colonies reached a critical point. Parliament had passed the Intolerable Acts, and many colonists believed their rights were being ignored. Colonial leaders decided it was time to meet and respond together.

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## **Slide 2 – Why Did the Colonies Meet?**

The colonies met to discuss a united response to the Intolerable Acts. This meeting was significant because the colonies were beginning to act as a single group rather than as separate, independent colonies.

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## **Slide 3 – When and Where Did They Meet?**

On September 5, 1774, delegates from twelve of the thirteen colonies met at Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia. The meeting continued until late October and became known as the First Continental Congress.

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## **Slide 4 – Why Only Twelve Colonies?**

Georgia did not send a delegate. Georgia was the newest colony and was fighting the Creek Indians at the time. Because Georgia relied on British military support, leaders there chose not to risk angering Britain.

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## **Slide 5 – Who Attended the Congress?**

The First Continental Congress included some of the most important leaders in colonial America. Delegates came from different regions and held different opinions, but all shared concerns about British actions.

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## **Slide 6 – Loyalty to England Matters**

It is important to understand that the delegates were **not calling for independence**. The Congress still pledged allegiance to England and hoped the king would correct Parliament's actions. At the same time, patience with British rule was wearing thin for many delegates.

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## **Slide 7 – What Did the Congress Decide?**

The Congress agreed on several key actions:

- A Declaration of Rights was drafted, stating that Parliament did not have the authority to tax the colonies

- A boycott of British goods was organized
- Delegates agreed to meet again in 1775 if Britain failed to respond

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## Slide 8 – Signs of Rising Tension

Although most delegates hoped for peace, some believed conflict might be unavoidable. A few called for colonists in Massachusetts to stockpile weapons in case British officials attempted to rule by force.

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## Slide 9 – Why the First Continental Congress Was Important

The First Continental Congress marked a major step toward colonial unity. The colonies remained loyal to England, but the cracks in the relationship were becoming impossible to ignore.

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## Student Exploration Activity (15 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/causes-of-the-revolutionary-war/first-continental-congress>

Students are directed to the Continental Congress page featuring an interactive chart showing all delegates, Clickable biographies with colony, background, and viewpoints, and an integrated online or printable scavenger hunt toward the bottom of the page

Have students complete the online scavenger hunt, or, print out the scavenger hunt beforehand and distribute it to students to complete.

- Students are reminded that the delegates still considered themselves British subjects, even as frustration with Parliament increased.

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## Guided Focus During Exploration

Students should look for:

- Shared concerns across different colonies
- Differences in opinions among delegates
- Evidence that loyalty and resistance existed at the same time

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## **Closure (5 minutes)**

Discussion question:

If Britain had listened to the First Continental Congress, could the American Revolution have been avoided?

Exit ticket options:

- One sentence explaining how loyalty to England and resistance existed together
- One delegate who stood out and a reason why