



Day 11 American Revolution  
65 Minutes

Second Continental Congress

# The Second Continental Congress

**Detailed Lesson Plan with PowerPoint Script**

**Grade Level:** 5–8

**Time:** 60–75 minutes

**Unit:** Causes and Early Actions of the American Revolution

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## Lesson Overview

This lesson examines the Second Continental Congress and explains how it marked a dramatic shift from protest to organized resistance and war. Using selected slides from a PowerPoint presentation as the instructional anchor, students learn how circumstances had changed since the First Continental Congress and why colonial leaders were forced to take on new responsibilities.

Students then deepen understanding through a differentiated article, an interactive Continental Congress chart with scavenger hunt, and multiple reading comprehension activities, including a compare-and-contrast exercise between the First and Second Continental Congresses.

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## Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain why the Second Continental Congress met in 1775
  - Identify how circumstances had changed since the First Continental Congress
  - Describe the major actions taken by the Second Continental Congress
  - Explain why the Congress acted as a wartime government
  - Compare and contrast the First and Second Continental Congresses
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## Essential Question

Why did the Second Continental Congress move from protest to leadership of a war?

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## Materials

- PowerPoint presentation: *The Continental Congresses* (selected slides only)  
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  - Differentiated article on the Second Continental Congress
  - Interactive Continental Congress chart with integrated scavenger hunt
  - Compare-and-contrast reading comprehension exercise
  - Printable or online reading comprehension passage and question set
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## Lesson Sequence

### 1. Hook and Review (5 minutes)

Begin with a brief review prompt:

At the First Continental Congress, colonial leaders still hoped for peace. What events might force leaders to change their plans?

Briefly review:

- Intolerable Acts
- Outcomes of the First Continental Congress
- Continued loyalty to Britain in 1774

Transition to the idea that events in 1775 made neutrality impossible.

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### 2. PowerPoint Anchor Instruction (15–20 minutes)

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

Use only the slides from the presentation that apply to the **Second Continental Congress**.  
The script below matches those slides exactly.

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## PowerPoint Script

### Second Continental Congress

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## **Slide 8 – Second Continental Congress**

On May 10, 1775, the Second Continental Congress met at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The situation had changed dramatically since the first meeting of colonial leaders.

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## **Slide 8 – Circumstances Had Changed**

By the time the Second Continental Congress met, Parliament had ignored the colonists' earlier petitions. In April, fighting had broken out at Lexington and Concord. Both British Redcoats and American Minutemen had been killed.

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## **Slide 10 – All Thirteen Colonies**

Unlike the first meeting, all thirteen colonies sent delegates to the Second Continental Congress, including Georgia, though Georgia did not send representatives immediately.

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## **Slide 11 – A Wartime Government**

The Second Continental Congress took on the role of a wartime government. This was a major turning point. Colonial leaders were no longer only protesting British actions; they were preparing to fight.

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## **Slide 11 – Leadership and Organization**

The Congress selected John Hancock of Massachusetts as president of the Congress. This helped provide structure and leadership during a time of crisis.

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## **Slide –12 The Continental Army**

The Congress authorized the creation of the Continental Army to fight British forces. George Washington was named Commander-in-Chief, giving the colonies a unified military leader.

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## **Slide – 13 Financing and Diplomacy**

The Second Continental Congress authorized the printing of paper money. It also took responsibility for signing treaties and appointing ambassadors, acting as the voice of the colonies.

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## Slide – 14 British Response

Britain rejected the Olive Branch Petition, the colonies' final attempt at peace. The British government hired about 30,000 Hessian soldiers from Germany to help fight the war.

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### 3. Core Reading Activity (15 minutes)

Students read the **differentiated article on the Second Continental Congress**.

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

Guided reading focus:

- How the Congress responded to armed conflict
- Why leadership decisions mattered
- How actions taken went beyond protest

Students may complete the associated reading comprehension passage and question set.

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### 4. Interactive Chart and Scavenger Hunt (10–15 minutes)

Students explore the **interactive Continental Congress chart**.

Notes for instruction:

- Some students may have already completed this activity during study of the First Continental Congress
- Returning to the chart reinforces continuity and change
- The integrated scavenger hunt helps highlight new responsibilities taken on in 1775

Focus questions:

- Which leaders gained new roles during the Second Continental Congress?
  - How did responsibilities expand compared to the first meeting?
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### 5. Compare and Contrast Activity (15 minutes)

<https://learnaboutamerica.com/american-history/revolutionary-war/revolutionary-war-literacy-and-comprehension-activities/comparing-and-contrasting-the-first-and-second-continental-congresses>

This activity provides short descriptions of both congresses and then challenges students to find three similarities and three differences between the two.

Suggested focus:

- Goals
- Membership
- Actions taken
- Relationship with Britain

Students identify similarities and differences in preparation for discussion or written response.

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## 6. Optional Reading Comprehension and Literacy Activities (15-20 Minutes)

These activities provide a reading passage and between seven and ten multiple choice questions. Use your discretion to assign the activity that best suits the needs of your students or classes.

- [Second Continental Congress Online Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1100
  - [Second Continental Congress Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 1100
  - [Second Continental Congress Printable Reading Comprehension](#) - Lexile 850
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## Closure (5 minutes)

Discussion prompt:

Why did the Second Continental Congress make independence more likely, even before it was officially declared?

Exit ticket options:

- One major difference between the two Congresses
- One action that showed the colonies were preparing for war