



Pacific  
Ocean

Atlantic  
Ocean

Gulf of Mexico

# Continental United States

## Geography

- Atlantic and Pacific Oceans most influenced U.S. foreign policy throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Oceans on the east & west coasts helped the U.S. maintain its foreign policy of neutrality during much of the 1800s.
- **Natural harbors** contributed to the **development of commerce**.
- **Appalachian Mountains** served as the western boundary for British colonial settlements prior to the Revolutionary War.
- **Proclamation Line of 1763**- Border established by Great Britain in order to avoid conflicts between American colonists and Native Americans.
- Early colonial settlements were similar in that each developed near the coast line. EX) Jamestown (1607) Plymouth (1620) New Amsterdam (1625)
- **New England Colonies**- Influenced by good harbors, abundant forests, rocky soil, and a short growing season. Geographic factors influenced the economy of New England by promoting the growth of trade and manufacturing. Developed villages with town-hall meetings. Had small farms, commercial fishing, and the first American college.
- **Southern Colonies**- The climate and topography of the southeastern U.S. had a major impact on the history of the U.S. before 1860 because the region provided agricultural products that were processed in the North and in Europe. Developed plantations (large farms that used slave labor) because of fertile land and a long growing season.
- **Great Plains** The relatively **flat, grassy region** of the U.S. **between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains** is known as the Great Plains. The states with the largest percentage of land used for agriculture are located in areas with relatively flat terrain. Known for producing grain crops (aka food).

## Colonial Period

- **Triangular Trade**- led directly to the increased importation of enslaved Africans to the Western Hemisphere (colonies)
- **British Mercantilism**- Economic policy used by the British in which the American Colonies served as a source of raw materials and a market to sell goods. British buy raw materials from the colonies and sell them finished products. **Limited manufacturing** in America. **Limited colonies' trade with other nations**. This policy would eventually become **one of the reasons for the American Revolution**.
- **Salutary Neglect**- Period of time when the British ignored the colonies because they only wanted to benefit from the economic prosperity of the colonies. Led to the **development of independent colonial trade practices**.
- **French and Indian War**- Caused by disputed land claims in the Ohio River valley between the French and the British (the French and Indians were on the same side). War **led to the end of the period of Salutary Neglect**, because of the British need to tax the American colonists in order to pay for the war. This increase in taxes became one of the major causes of the **Revolutionary War** (war for American independence from Great Britain).
- **Virginia House of Burgesses/Mayflower Compact/Town Hall Meetings**- Early colonial efforts in self-government. They all contributed to the development of **representative democracy**.
- **Albany Plan of Union (1754)**- Early attempt to unify American colonies but under British rule. Many colonies objected to it because colonial assemblies did not want to give up their individual power.

## Independence Movement/Revolutionary War (American Revolution)

### Declaration of Independence-

- States the colonial grievances against British rule (**a list of reasons for separating from Great Britain**).
  - Written by **Thomas Jefferson** who was most **influenced by** the writers of the **Enlightenment**.
  - Is described as a statement of democratic principles rather than a framework for government.
  - Takes ideas from **John Locke's theory of natural rights**-power to govern belongs to the people ("*consent of the governed*").
  - Contributed to the political development of the U.S. by presenting a clear statement of the **social contract theory of government**- the fundamental purpose of government is to secure the natural rights of the people. If a government denies its people certain basic rights, that government can be overthrown.
  - Similar to the Bill of Rights because both documents support limitations on governmental power and stress the importance of individual liberty.
  - **NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION**- Many colonists believed they could not be taxed by the British because they had no representatives in the British government, which means that the British did not have **consent of the governed**.
- **Thomas Paine**- Published *Common Sense* which was influential in persuading American colonists to support colonial independence from Britain. Convinced many Americans who had been undecided on declaring independence from Britain.
  - **Response to Mercantilist Policies**- Committees of Correspondence/Non-importation Agreements/Boston Tea Party First Continental Congress

### Major Events Leading to Revolutionary War-

**Sugar and Stamp Acts**- tax foreign molasses and printed material. **Quartering Act**-requires colonists to house and feed British soldiers. **Townshend Acts**-taxes imported goods and tea. **Boston Massacre**-five people killed by British soldiers.

- Revolutionary War begins shortly after the signing of the **Declaration of Independence**.
- American Colonies win the war and independence with the help of familiar land and foreign aid (France).
- At the end of the Revolutionary War the **Mississippi** became the **western boundary of the U.S.**

### Articles of Confederation

- First form of government used by the U.S. after independence from Britain. First plan of union for the original 13 states.
- At this point many **Americans distrusted a strong central government** because of their experiences under the rule of **Great Britain**. They wanted to limit the central government's opportunities to infringe upon the people's liberties so they established a **decentralized** (*power is broken up and divided among many groups, not unified*) political system in which the state governments had all the power.
- **Problems and Weaknesses**- Largely unsuccessful at solving many major problems because **most power remained with the state governments**. Congress depended on the states for men and money to support an army. National (aka Federal) government could not enforce its laws. Congress constantly overrode the President's vetoes.
- States had the power to collect taxes, coin money, and control trade.